

CO-DESIGNING AN AMBITIOUS NATIONAL BUILDING RENOVATION PLAN

July 2025 | Workshop
KEY FINDINGS



WORLD
GREEN
BUILDING
COUNCIL

**#BUILDING
LIFE**



STRUCTURE

Acknowledgement

Executive summary

Barriers to Energy Renovation

- Residential
- Non-Residential

Practical Tools for Engagement & Action

- Residential
- Non-Residential

About the IGBC

About the Process



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Irish Green Building Council (IGBC) would like to thank all the participants who attended and contributed to our workshop. **All participants are listed in the About the Process section.**

This document is part of a series of factsheets being developed by the IGBC on the transposition of the **Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) Recast 2024 (Directive (EU) 2024/1275)** into Irish law.

A workshop on the implementation of **Article 9.1 - Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS)** in Non-Residential Buildings was held in September 2024. The report is [available here](#). The IGBC will be hosting similar workshops focusing on other articles in 2025 and 2026 to support this process.

Learn more at www.igbc.ie.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – 1 / 5

- **Barriers** to deep energy renovation in Ireland relate to **funding, lack of awareness and data** – especially, on actual energy performance - as well as **broader political and regulatory challenges**, and **skills and labour shortages**.

- **Key Recommendations:**

Detailed recommendations are presented below, but avoiding a "one-size fit all" approach is critical when it comes to energy renovation. All segments of the market have different needs (e.g., SMEs vs larger organisations).

- **Financial:**

- Simplify existing grants (and application process)
- Better target specific parts of the market and address the "viability gap" i.e., review existing grants to leave no one behind (e.g., households that are "too rich" for free energy upgrades, but cannot afford to go through the one-stop-shop model), and introduce better support for tenants (residential), as well as small landlords and SMEs (non-residential).
- In both residential and non-residential markets, consider introducing tax credits for energy renovation, as well as alternative funding mechanisms – e.g., a "PRSA model" for energy renovation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2/5

- **Key Recommendations:**

- **Awareness Raising:**

- Pro-actively outreach to specific groups (e.g., SMEs)
- Utilize existing structures within local communities to raise awareness about the benefits of energy renovation, including the organization of information days and open-day-style events to showcase energy renovation projects
- Develop and support a network of "energy renovation ambassadors" (including organisations) to maximise impact.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3/5

- **Key Recommendations:**

- **Technical Support:**

The new requirements introduced by the EPBD to have physical information hubs on energy renovation across the country (art. 18) provide an opportunity to address gaps in relation to the provision of reliable, independent information on this topic.

- Build upon existing infrastructure (e.g., SECs, libraries, and citizen information centres) to set up a comprehensive network of sustainable information hubs.
 - These should be tasked with the provision of independent, trusted advises to small building owners, including homeowners.
 - Set up a dedicated network of information hubs/advisors located within the hubs to help small commercial building owners and SMEs on their renovation journey.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 4/5

- **Key Recommendations:**

- **Data Gap:**

- Invest in the development of high-quality data on Ireland's building stock, and, more specifically, its actual energy and carbon performance.
- This is urgent as the gap impacts Ireland's ability to set robust benchmarks and targets (e.g., on Minimum Energy Performance Standards - MEPSs) and to track progress effectively. Ultimately, it prevents the development of strong evidence-based policymaking.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 5/5

- **Key Recommendations:**

- **Political & Regulatory Framework**

- While acknowledging progress, workshop participants expressed concerns about an over-reliance on BERs as part of policy-making.
- Clear communication is needed from Government on the priority being given to renovation and re-use (vs. New build).
- In the non-residential sector, the introduction of **Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPs)** - Art. 9.1. of the EPBD - is an opportunity to drive energy renovation at scale. It requires clear, and early communication from Government on the timelines and approach taken. Furthermore, to deliver carbon emission reduction, MEPs cannot rely exclusively on BERs and must take actual performance into account.

- **Skills & Labour Shortages**

- Further incentivise upskilling across the industry, e.g., through the introduction of a "Sustainability Pass"

BARRIERS TO ENERGY RENOVATION



**#BUILDING
LIFE**



BARRIERS

Residentials

1. Financial Barriers (Cost & Affordability)

- While the current **grants** are **helpful**, they are **not always sufficient** and an **"affordability gap"** remains for many householders.
- Financial barriers are clear in the **private rental market**: There are few win-win incentives for landlords, the financial return on investment is often perceived as poor or non-existent, and tenants in energy poverty cannot avail of grants.
- Better, more practical grant schemes are also needed for **apartment blocks**.

2. Awareness, Motivation & Understanding (across society)

- An **"information deficit"** still exists, which could be partly addressed through **better support for decision-making on renovation**. Addressing this challenge is particularly key in incentivising older and wealthier homeowners (who may not face financial barriers) to retrofit.

BARRIERS

Residentials

3. Workforce & Skills Shortages

- Despite a number of courses being available, further **incentives for upskilling** are needed.

4. Supply Chain & Market Capacity

- The housing crisis, and the **priority being given to other sectors** (e.g., new build and data centres) further exacerbate challenges around labour shortages, making energy renovation more complicated and expensive.

5. Policy & Regulatory Challenges

- In addition to conflicting priorities (e.g., housing crisis vs. retrofitting), and the polarisation of the debate on climate issues, some participants felt current policies and programmes **focus too much (almost excessively) on promoting heat pumps** and do not consider alternative options.

BARRIERS

Residentials

6. Data & Information Gaps

- Finally, it was felt that the **lack of data on the housing stock**, including its **actual performance** and **traditionally built buildings**, **harms the development and implementation of impactful and evidence-based policies.**

BARRIERS

Non-Residentials

1. Financial & Economic Barriers

- **High upfront cost** – especially for **decarbonisation**, coupled with **limited financial incentives** for building owners - including landlords.
- Lack of **understanding of the cost-benefits of actions**.
- Access to **grants** perceived by some participants as overly **bureaucratic and time-consuming**.
- **Split incentives** between landlords and tenants, especially with 'old tenants' that pay relatively low rents.

2. Awareness, Motivation & Cultural Barriers (1/2)

- Low **awareness of the benefits of energy renovation, especially among small business owners**, and lack of buy-in.
- Need for **clearer communication from Government on timelines around upcoming regulatory changes** (e.g., art. 9.1 and MEPSs).

BARRIERS

Non-Residentials

2. Awareness, Motivation & Cultural Barriers (2/2)

- **Insufficient technical support for SMEs** - Need to set up **one-stop-shops** for small businesses.
- **Higher energy use post-renovation** (despite BER improvements) could jeopardise energy renovation at scale in the medium term.

3. Skills, Workforce & Capacity

- **Skills shortages across the industry**
- Specific **skill gaps** identified:
 - **Legal knowledge** (e.g., green leases clause)
 - **Energy renovation of traditionally built buildings**
 - **Communication** – Need to improve the **hand-over process** (to tackle the performance gap mentioned in 2).
- Lack of knowledge transfer on **best practices and lessons learned**.

BARRIERS

Non-Residentials

4. Data, Monitoring & Benchmarking

- **Lack of high-quality data** at national level will impact Ireland's ability to set robust renovation needs/targets, and track progress
- Suggestion to introduce **BER for all commercial buildings and to track post-renovation performance.** E.g., France's model of annual energy use reporting.
- **Lack of data sharing:**
 - On the **actual energy performance of commercial buildings** (needed to set strong benchmarks and targets)
 - Between **tenants and landlords.**

BARRIERS

Non-Residentials

5. Policy, Regulation & Planning

- **Conflicting national priorities** (e.g., need build vs. renovation), and **changing EU rules**, creating uncertainty.
- **Lack of national plan** to coordinate efforts in the sector, set goals, and align stakeholders.
- **Lack of communication** on upcoming legislation **on MEPSs** from Government.
- A **narrow BER-centric approach** – excluding considerations of real-world operational use.

6. Infrastructure & System-Level Limitations

- Capacity issues around the national and local grids
- Need to **better balance top-down infrastructure (e.g. grid) with bottom-up efforts to decarbonise**: Energy efficiency should be prioritised before considering system replacements.

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT & ACTION



PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT & ACTIONS

Residential

1. Financial Incentives

- **Simplify and review existing grants** to address the "**affordability gap**", i.e., consider introducing:
 - A **sliding-scale**
 - **Better prioritisation of households** as part of the free energy upgrade programme (e.g., referral by GPs),
 - **Specific grants/mechanisms** for **first-time buyers** – a trigger point for renovation, and **private renters**.
 - **Better support for aggregation** – e.g., "Use it or lose it" approach for housing estates.
- **Review existing green loans and mortgages** to make them more competitive.
- Introduce **tax credits for renovation** - e.g., lower local property tax post-renovation.
- Pilot new **crowdfunding mechanism** - Similar to PRSA (see next slide)

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT & ACTIONS

Residential – Innovative idea

This concept was developed by one of the Working Groups at the Workshop

About the Concept: Funding energy renovation through "Crowdfunding" - Using a "Personal Retirement Savings Account" (PRSA) like **mechanism at a community scale** - Participants (the community) in the scheme would save for five years to get a 20% profit. The money will then be used to renovate homes.

Desired outcome: Supporting energy renovation at scale, and empowering building up community by saving together for a common good. Scaling home energy renovations by pooling community resources and involving local businesses in retrofit projects.

Potential challenges:

- Need people to lead this community together.
- Legal challenges: Guaranteeing the return promised could be a challenge. Without state backing, legal and regulatory risks are high. Requires a legal structure to manage funds safely (credit union, cooperative, or regulated investment vehicle).

Actions required to address these barriers/challenges:

1. Secure Government's contribution and local business donations - Need 2 or 3 people leading it at local level.
2. Approach coordinated by Local Authorities.
3. Need to secure buy-in from credit unions.
4. Transparency and certainty will need to be provided. This could be achieved through a renovation plan for all properties covered.

Key partners: Credit Unions, Central Government, Local Authorities, NOPs, local businesses



PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT & ACTIONS

Residential

2. Access to Information

- Improve access to **impartial independent technical support** through the development of **physical "information hub" across the country**. Use the requirements of the EPBD (art. 18) as an opportunity to do so.
 - These "information hubs" should be **located within existing structures** such as libraries, citizens' info centres or SEC hubs **to ensure sustainability**. See example on next slide.
 - The development of "mobile" information hubs should also be considered to reach wider audiences.
- Consider introducing mandatory Renovation Passports (alongside BERs) to facilitate energy renovation.

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT & ACTIONS

Residential – Innovative idea

This concept was developed by one of the Working Groups at the Workshop

About the Concept: Developing a network of **physical "Community Energy Hubs"** across the country

- **Desired outcomes:** Supporting energy renovation at scale through the development of physical "Community Energy Hub", including "mobile" hubs. These could be located in existing structures such as libraries, to speed up delivery and reduce cost. These hubs should also work in close cooperation with Sustainable Energy Communities (SECs) to maximise impact.

- **Potential Challenges:**
 - Communities' buy-in and trust.
 - How to support landlords who may not live locally.
 - Do people living in a city-centre see themselves as part of a community – Do we need different approaches for different locations?
 - Cost of running these hubs in certain locations.

Actions required to address these barriers/challenges:

- Develop and run proactive, local marketing campaigns
- Include a digital aspect to it – To keep in touch with people, etc.

Key partners: SEAI - GAA (other local sports clubs) - Local businesses – Credit Unions, and service providers (e.g., Builders Merchants)



PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT & ACTIONS

Residential

4. Community-Level Engagement and Trust

- Better **use locally trusted sources**, such as friends, neighbours, and local tradespeople networks to **create "energy renovation contagion"**. See "Climate Leadership in Communities" example on next slide
- This might be achieved through networks of local **"renovation champions"**, **community-based incentives**, as well as **community events**, workshops, info talks and **"open house" days** to "make it possible".
- At larger scale, implement **"Climate Leadership" by large social landlords** to bring smaller Approved Housing Bodies along the retrofit journey



PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT & ACTIONS

Residential – Innovative idea

This concept was developed by one of the Working Groups at the Workshop

About the Concept: Supporting Climate Leadership in local communities

Desired outcomes: Encouraging local organisations to act as leaders to catalyse action, increase the rate and depth of energy renovation, and reduce carbon emissions.

Potential challenges:

- Community Resistance to change.
- Creating “accessible”, engaging plain language information.
- Ensuring that local communities also get the technical and financial support they need (at the right time).

Actions required to address these barriers/challenges:

- Support the organisation of local awareness events, including with local construction companies working in this field.
- Run it in parallel with a strong national awareness campaign, and financial incentives. E.g., Property Tax Reduction post-renovation, Carbon Tax Rewarding based on actual improvement in operational performance.

Key partners:

- NATIONAL: Government – SEAI - Utility providers - Housing Agency - Banks and Credit Unions - Approved Housing Bodies - Irish Council for Social Housing .
- LOCAL: Local Authorities, including Building Control Officers and Fire Officers - Community Groups - Local branches of Banks and Credit Unions - Owners Management Companies.



PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT & ACTIONS

Non-Residential

- **Incentives and support** should be **increased first**, but ultimately regulatory changes/penalties are needed.
- Government should avoid a “one-size” fit all approach as **SMEs’ needs are very different from multi-nationals**.

- **Financial Tools & Market Incentives**
 - **Current drivers:** Attracting and retaining tenants (and employees) - Green premium associated with energy efficient buildings, improving marketability, and ESG reporting - Investors’ expectations (future proofing stock and avoid stranded assets).
 - However, these are not sufficient to support the energy renovation of the whole commercial building stock.
 - **Additional financial incentives are needed to make projects more attractive/feasible**, esp. among SMEs.
 - Look at **green finance options, tax incentives, and tax breaks** for renovated buildings.

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT & ACTIONS

Non-Residential

- Regulatory & Policy Instruments

- A **strong / clear regulatory framework is needed** - The introduction of **MEPSs presents a perfect opportunity to improve data collection** / benchmarking, and to communicate clearly on legally binding timelines, and the consequences of non-compliance.
- This should be complemented by the **introduction of compulsory BERs** - similar to NCTs for cars – see next page for an example, **introduction of green lease clauses in legislation**, and use of tools such as the CO₂ performance ladder to drive energy renovation through procurement – see p.27 for an example.
- Mandatory **renovation passports** could help track, enforce, and reward progress.



PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT & ACTIONS

Non-Residential – Innovative idea

This concept was developed by one of the Working Groups at the Workshop

About the Concept: NCT for buildings covering key operational issues (and going beyond BER) and to include milestones to be accomplished.

Desired outcomes:

- At national level, this would support evidence policymaking, including the development of robust benchmarking and targets.
- At building level, mandating regular check of building performance would lead to actual reduction in energy consumption and carbon emissions.

Potential challenges:

- Securing buy-in for the industry, including International investors - who may not want to invest in the country if the requirements are too strict.
- Cost and time associated with its development and implementation.
- Enforcement, and agreeing on the consequences of failing to comply.
- Labour and skill shortages.

Actions required to address these barriers/challenges:

- Set benchmarks, methodology, and timeline.
- Work on associated penalties (e.g., insurance).
- Train inspectors.
- Raise awareness about the scheme.

Key partners: Government - SEAI – CIF – Utility Providers - Legal and Insurance bodies



PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT & ACTIONS

Non-Residential – Innovative idea

This concept was developed by one of the Working Groups at the Workshop

About the Concept: Launching an Energy improvement ladder, based on the model of the CO2 Performance Ladder, whereby organisation bidding for public works could get credits for using the ladder at tender stage, and tax credits based on proof of performance.

Desired outcomes:

A system linked to the BER for primary calculation, but also to post-renovation result (actual performance) to support commitment (i.e., split payment of grants or additional tax credits).

Potential challenges:

- Assessing the risk for each project, and if such a scheme could scale .
- Risk of fraud – E.g., Superbonus scandal in Italy.
- Budget impact of the process | Impact on the cost of doing business.
- Independent verification of BERs.
- Proportionality of credit at the submission stage, and tax credit provided based on actual performance.
- Marketing, education, communication.

Actions required to address these barriers/challenges:

- Develop a framework that is relevant to businesses and area-based – to ensure grassroots level support.
- Develop and run strategic, structured education and communication

Key partners: Public sector – Retrofit Companies - Social enterprises with experience in this field.



PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT & ACTIONS

Non-Residential

• Communication, Awareness & Motivation

- Run awareness campaigns focusing more on health, well-being, cost-saving, and the business benefits of energy renovation
- **Proactively reach out to businesses, esp. SMEs.** This could be achieved through "Climate Action Champions". See next slide for an example.
- Develop a network of One-Stop-Shops for SMEs, and small commercial landlords.
- Incentivise the sharing of best practices between businesses.

• Data, Monitoring & Reporting

- Establish **robust, shared systems for tracking performance and guiding decisions** - Including Operational energy and carbon tracking linked to BER and Renovation Passports.
- Develop **consistent and simplified reporting systems** (e.g., tenant-landlord shared tools).
- Introduce disclosure requirements for energy use and carbon emissions post-renovation.
 - All of these are critical in setting robust benchmarks, and in supporting evidence-based policymaking.

• Skills, Capacity & Delivery Infrastructure

- Develop specialist training (e.g., for traditionally built buildings) and incentivise upskilling in industry.
- Prioritise addressing shortages of retrofit project managers.
- Develop technical guidance on retrofitting different building types (incl. Traditional buildings).
- Use SEAI as a central info hub on energy renovation for businesses.



PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT & ACTIONS

Non-Residential – Innovative idea

This concept was developed by one of the Working Groups at the Workshop

About the Concept: Develop and run a proactive outreach campaign targeting businesses and commercial building owners. Highlight case studies promoting awareness around the benefits and supports

Potential challenges:

- Identifying key property owners, and how best to reach them.
- Funding an ambitious outreach programme separately targeting owners and occupiers
- Outreach through multiple existing networks plus additional channels required
- Interface with national capacity issues eg .electrical grid limitations

Actions required to address these barriers/challenges:

- Set ambitious goals for commercial buildings' energy renovation
- Sharing data and metrics for comparable typologies focusing on operational data in addition to asset data
- Additional outreach through Local Authorities' rate payers datasets
- Develop a comprehensive strategy to reach to target organisations.

Key partners: SEAI - Local Authorities – Tailte Eireann



About the IGBC



**#BUILDING
LIFE**



- IGBC to share final findings WS 1 – 29th August
- National Building Renovation Plan – Public Bodies – Week of the 3rd of Nov? To cover public social housing too (as per requirements EED)?
- Building Renovation Passport Workshop – Week of 17th or 24th Nov?

Background Information



**#BUILDING
LIFE**



ABOUT THE EPBD

In March 2024, the European Parliament approved the new [Energy Performance of Buildings Directive \(EU 2024/1275\)](#). The directive sets a clear direction for the full decarbonisation of the European building stock by 2050, with clear goals and tools to achieve that vision, including strengthened provisions for energy renovation.

To kick-start a renovation wave across the continent, the directive requires member states to develop **national building renovation plan (art. 3)**, and to introduce **Minimum Energy Performance Standards** (see next section) as well as **voluntary renovation passports** (art. 12), alongside **financial and technical support for deep renovation (art. 17)**. Other measures include a **solar mandate** that aims to increase the number of buildings that produce solar power, **the phasing out of all fossil fuel boilers by 2040**, and greater **focus on indoor environmental quality** in buildings.

The new EPBD also stipulates that **from 2030, all new buildings must be Zero Emission Buildings (ZEBs)**, which must not produce any emissions on-site and must run on a very small amount of energy, such as renewables or district heating where feasible. For the first time, the directive also requires member states **to regulate the embodied carbon of buildings**. Starting in 2030, embodied carbon emissions must be measured for all new buildings, and for larger buildings from 2028. This marks a first for Ireland, as current building regulations have only addressed operational carbon to date.

Ireland and other Member States have until May 2026 to transpose the provisions of the updated EPBD.



ABOUT THE NATIONAL BUILDING RENOVATION PLANS: Art. 3

Under Article 3 of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, each member state must establish a national building renovation plan (NBRP) **to ensure the renovation of the national stock of residential and non-residential buildings, both public and private, into a highly energy-efficient and decarbonised building stock by 2050**, with the objective to transform existing buildings into zero-emission buildings.

The first draft building renovation plan is to be submitted to the Commission by 31 December 2025. NBRPs take over and upgrade the role of the previous Long-Term Renovation Strategies (LTRS) that EU countries have submitted since 2014, serving as comprehensive roadmaps for renovating residential and non-residential buildings in line with the EU's climate neutrality goals.

Each Member State must set out detailed targets for 2030, 2040, and 2050, along with policies, measures, and investment needs to achieve a zero-emission building stock. They are more than just vision documents; they are actionable plans with concrete targets, milestones, and policy measures. NBRPs aim to ensure that the Renovation Wave is underpinned by **robust national planning, stakeholder engagement, and regular monitoring.**



ABOUT THE PROCESS

The Irish Green Building Council (IGBC), in partnership with the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (DCEE) organised a workshop, on July 16th, 2025, to help support the transposition of the EPBD 2024 Recast (2024/1275) into Irish law. The workshop began discussions on the development of Ireland's first National Building Renovation Plan (NBRP), with a specific focus on private buildings.

It is anticipated that a similar workshop focusing on public buildings will take place in autumn 2025. The purpose of the workshop was to help participants gain a better understanding of the new EPBD requirements, specifically Article 3, and how these might impact them. It also aimed at informing the public consultation on the first draft of Ireland's National Building Renovation Plan (NBRP) to be launched by DCEE later this year.

The workshop was designed to ensure the broadest engagement in the development of the Plan and maximised the potential for creative input. The workshop brought together over 30 key stakeholders from governments, energy agencies, construction companies, research and academia, and NGOs – These are on the next page.



ABOUT THE PROCESS

The workshop began with a pre-recorded welcome address by Darragh O'Brien T.D, Minister for Climate, Energy and the Environment, followed by a presentation by Stephen Brophy, Head of the Non-Residential Energy Efficiency Section at DCEE. Stephen gave an overview of the EPBD Recast and the transposition process, and informed participants on the development of Ireland's first NBRP, and key things to consider in relation to privately owned buildings.

A PDF version of all the presentations given on the day is [available here](#).

Following the presentations, participants took part in workshop discussions on key actions required to increase engagement in energy renovation in privately owned buildings. This document summarises the key discussions and takeaways that came out of the workshop.



PARTICIPANTS

30 Participants

- Axis Engineering
- Baily Labs
- Banking & Payment Federation Ireland
- Bord Gais
- Carrig Energy Consultancy
- CBRE
- Climate Change Advisory Council
- Codema
- Cooperative Housing
- Cora Consulting Engineers
- Cork City Council
- Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (DCEE)
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH)
- Disability Federation Ireland
- Ecological Building Solutions
- Energy Elephant
- Failte Ireland
- Friends of Earth
- Goodbody Clearstream
- Hardware Association Ireland
- Hibernia Reg
- IDA
- Irish Green Building Council
- Irish Property Owners Association (IPOA)
- Irish Rural Link
- Irish Wheelchair association
- Jacobs
- Kennedy Wilson
- Kore system
- MABS
- NWCi
- ORS Building consultants
- Passive House +
- Retrokit
- RIAI
- RPS Tetrattech
- Savills
- Scott Tallon Walker Architects
- SCSi
- SEAI
- SEEA
- Shannon airport group
- Social Justice Ireland
- Technological University of the Shannon
- Threshold
- Tuath Housing
- Uadras

