



FEASIBLE

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D5.5 Operative guidelines to replicate the refurbishment interventions.

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Index of contents

1	These guidelines	3
2	Approaching and developing integrated services to support the renovation of residential buildings.	3
2.1	The theoretical reference framework	3
2.2	Ideas and suggestions to be drawn basing on the experience of the Parma OSS.....	7
2.3	Strengths and weaknesses of the Parma OSS activity, the difficulties encountered and the corresponding countermeasures adopted.	9
3	The main aspects to carry out a facilitation activity in the condominiums.	13
3.1	Communicate and promote facilitation.	13
3.2	The composition of the psycho-social team	15
3.3	Recognize the intangible/social value of the process.	17

1 These guidelines

These guidelines intend to give operational indications to the local energy authorities or local energy agencies that intend to develop information and consultancy services within their reference area to improve the energy performance of the residential buildings. To this end, these guidelines start providing a broad picture of the challenges and solutions suggested for offering and developing these services and then compare these indications with the experience of what has been developed in the FEASIBLE project.

As described in the various deliverables produced by the project (see in particular the Final Publishable Report, www.feasible.it) FEASIBLE has in fact launched and then gradually developed a One Stop Shop called "Condomini & Energia" (Condominiums & Energy) whose objective has been to offer technical-administrative and facilitation services to the condominiums of the city of Parma and to other smaller municipalities of its province, to give them support in the procedures for obtaining the so-called "Superbonus"¹

The experience of FEASIBLE therefore surely offers hints and suggestions for those who want to replicate a similar experience, but taking in mind that the project action is limited to condominiums and circumscribed within the procedures for obtaining the Superbonus. For this reason, as above outlined, it was considered appropriate to frame this experience within a broader vision for the launch of this type of services. This broader vision is briefly described in paragraph 2.1 of the following chapter while the indications and suggestions that can be drawn from the experience acquired in FEASIBLE are highlighted in paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3.

Despite the relatively limited outreach of the Parma OSS, it worth noting that, in addition to the technical services, it has experienced a psychosocial facilitation activity conducted within the condominiums, which can be seen as a real innovation of the FEASIBLE project. This experience has in fact shown and proven how much a serious activity of social involvement of the inhabitants of a condominium can facilitate the achievement of the necessary consensus for taking the most demanding decisions. The main aspects of this activity, its requirements and methods for organizing and managing it are illustrated in chapter 3 of these guidelines while some notes on the resources used in FEASIBLE for its development are reported at the end of the chapter 2.

2 Approaching and developing integrated services to support the renovation of residential buildings.

2.1 *The theoretical reference framework*

The need to develop integrated services to support the renovation of residential buildings is strongly felt in all European countries. Indeed, in this sector, the market offer for sustainable energy upgrades is fragmented, composed of a myriad of micro and small companies, and mostly uncoordinated. At the same time most homeowners lack the capacity to set-up and supervise complex and ambitious projects and the cost of the renovation works is very often a problem due the difficulty to access to the required financial resources. As highlighted in the Renovation Wave initiative of the European Green Deal, there is a need to develop a coordinated and coherent

¹ The "Superbonus measure", Article 119 of the Italian Relaunch Decree, law issued on 18 July 2020, give the homeowners the possibility to receive a grant up to the 110% of the renovation costs of their building.

response to the needs of homeowners, in order to make their renovation process as painless as possible.

This topic was addressed in a recent article presented by two experts of CINEA, the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency, in the framework of the ECEE Summer Studies of 2021 and entitled: "Towards large-scale roll out of "integrated home renovation services" in Europe"²

In this paper the authors noted that: “it is not the lack of participants in the market that explains the low uptake of energy renovation, but rather their absence of coordination and their diverging interests which prevent a holistic answer to the needs of the homeowner. Public intervention is needed to create and strengthen the missing links between fragmented market offers, and to accelerate the transformation of practices towards low energy renovation.”

Starting from this consideration, the authors outline a set of services that, ideally, a public administration should design and manage, through the creation of a dedicated desk, in order to meet the information needs required by homeowners and provide them with the related technical and procedural support.

These services are gathered within three different categories or models of increasing complexity and responsibility: advice, support and implementation, with the provision of financial services as an additional option. These services should be then managed by a public help desk that the authors suggest calling IHRS, Integrated Home Renovation Services rather than OSS (One Stop Shop), as they are usually known.

Taking up the definitions provided by the article, the three models of services are described as follows:

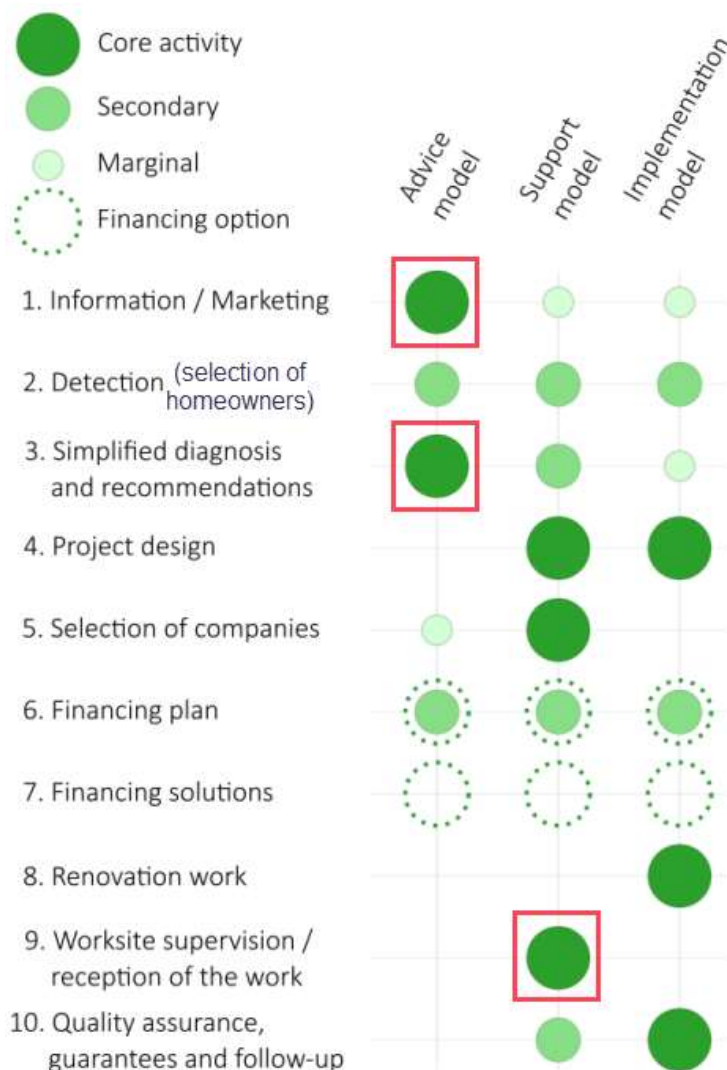
- Advice model: the IHRS focuses mainly on the upstream parts of the customer requirements, essentially information and first level advice, without getting into specific project details.
- Support model: the IHRS supports homeowners in the detailed design of their energy renovation project. The IHRS makes a first qualitative leap by being fully engaged in market activities, taking position and incurring professional liability for the support provided. In concrete terms, the switch from the advice to the support model can be materialised by the existence of a service contract, for instance, but not only.
- Implementation model: the IHRS makes a second qualitative leap by not only providing detailed advice but also carrying out all or part of the renovation work. As a result, and without prejudice to the quality of the advice provided, the IHRS no longer works exclusively in the interest of the homeowner but also has an economic interest in delivering works.

The paper then outlines a list of 10 services that can be offered by a HIRS, with different modality, approach and completeness. These 10 services are then cross referenced with the three models outlined above, and the result of this one-to-many relationship is shown in Figure 1.

What matters here is to frame the services offered by the Energia & Condomini Desk within the services-model scheme shown in Figure 1. These services are highlighted by a red frame and, for the most part, are included in the first of the three models, i.e., the one relating to advice services.

² C. Milin, A. Bullier: Towards large-scale roll out of "integrated home renovation services" in Europe, ECEEE summer study, 2021, CINEA

Figure 1: Main models of integrated home renovation services



Source: cited paper

The 10 services outlined in Figure 1 are shortly described below according to the definitions provided in the cited article. Please refer to the reading of the cited paper for a more exhaustive definition on this topic. Again, we have highlighted in red the services provided by the Energia & Condomini Desk.

Information / marketing. The aim here is to raise homeowners' awareness on how they consume energy, the importance of controlling their consumption and the means to do so. *In this context, an important support was provided by the facilitation activity carried out in FEASIBLE within the condominiums (see chapter 3) which helped to convince the homeowners and their condominium administrators to request the Superbonus incentives by being supported by the Energy & Condominiums Desk.*

Detection. As homeowners are rarely ready to make major decisions and the window of opportunity for an ambitious renovation is quite small. It is important for the IHRS to detect and target more precisely those households who are more likely to undertake a renovation. *In*

FEASIBLE this partly happened but more on the basis of the will of the condominium administrators to access the Superbonus incentives than on the starting condition of the buildings.

Simplified diagnosis and recommendations. Beyond the provision of information, a further step is to provide advice to homeowners, i.e. to guide them in their choices. Such advice is not necessarily limited to technical aspects and may also cover financial aspects (focused here on the investment profitability), including information on available subsidies and the way to mobilise them. *As far as the Energy & Condominiums Desk is concerned, this was the most important class of services provided by it. In particular, the support, in addition to including the technical aspects, has in fact also provided information of an administrative and procedural nature to obtain the Superbonus incentives.*

Project design. To better support the homeowners in their energy renovation project an IHRS can decide to go one step further: firstly, by carrying out a detailed on-site energy audit, to analyse the specific situation and determine potential savings; secondly, by defining in details the work to be performed, including specific requirements

Selection of companies. This is a sensitive step because may interact with the homeowners and, especially, the condominiums managers preferences. Here the authors suggest three different approaches for the IHRS organization:

- Assistance: the IHRS works in the exclusive interest of the homeowner, which means that it must have no contractual relationship with the companies performing the refurbishment. Furthermore, while it advises on the choice of companies (e.g. by making available a directory of (possibly certified companies), it does not select them on behalf of the homeowner, who remains fully responsible for this choice and its consequences.
- Delegation: the IHRS works in the exclusive interest of the homeowner and receives part of the homeowner's prerogatives through a delegation contract. Although the homeowner ultimately assumes all consequences, the IHRS may perform certain acts defined in its mandate (such as, for instance, signing contracts with construction companies).
- General Contractor: the IHRS not only proposes to design but also to carry out the renovation work. This is tipping point between a "support model" and an "implementation model"

Financing plan. Here the IHRS needs to identify precisely the household's self-financing capacity (its savings and incomes), the amount of public grants which can be accessed, the amount to borrow but also that of other outstanding loans, which condition the homeowner's capacity to repay.

Financing solutions. Here an IHRS can provide different services, potentially in combination: i) support in accessing public grants, ii) pre-financing of public grants, (this means that the homeowner must have the capacity to finance the full investment, including the pre-financing of the grant amounts; IHRS can improve this situation by providing pre-financing solutions which can take the form of a short term loan), iii) pre-qualification for a retail bank financing offer. Although the bank will usually make its own analysis of the homeowner's financial situation, the IHRS can facilitate due diligence, notably by providing the information in a standardised format, in agreement with the bank. Autonomous financing solutions. The IHRS can even include a standalone financial offer within the package of services.

Renovation work At this stage, the work is carried out by one, or more likely several, construction companies, usually organised as separate and uncoordinated trades. The added value of the IHRS is to organise and rationalise their different interventions.

Worksite supervision / reception of the work Worksite coordination and supervision are essential to avoid faulty work by contractors, which can lead to serious problems for the building (e.g. moisture due to thermal bridges, lack of ventilation, quality of the wall insulation works) and can also have financial consequences if grant requirements are not met. *Where possible, i.e. for those condominiums that have started their renovation works before the end of the FEASIBLE project, the Energia & Condomini Desk has conducted this type of activity, considering it very important and qualifying for the reputation of its support activity: the desk is on the part of the homeowners and guarantees them respect for the most serious problems that may arise during the renovation works.*

Quality assurance guarantees and follow-up. The IHRS can provide a guarantee on the quality of the work performed (i.e. guarantee on the materials and methods used, also referred to as intrinsic energy performance guarantee), with a clear commitment to correct defaults that lead to lower energy performance than planned. *This service is certainly qualifying and important and the Energia & Condomini Desk performed it within the previous service but limiting itself to checking that the quality of the materials used was declared. To carry out this service adequately and reliably are required resources in terms of time and personnel that the Energia & Condomini Desk did not possess.*

2.2 *Ideas and suggestions to be drawn basing on the experience of the Parma OSS*

The set of services outlined before shows how an IHRS can be organized if it wants to give qualified support to homeowners who want to renovate their homes. The level of services to be offered is naturally a function of the human and financial resources a IHRS can achieve and manage to carry out its activity with the awareness that the provision of these resources is gradually more demanding moving from the first to the last of the three service models described in the previous paragraph.

Since in these guidelines we want to refer to the experience accrued by the Energy & Condominium helpdesk, our analysis will be mainly limited to the first of these three models: the advice one, which is the model that better describes the type of services offered by the Desk activated in the city of Parma.

To describe in operative terms this experience, in order to give some suggestions to those who want to replicate this activity, we thus:

- a. outline the contents of these services, framing them in the conceptual scheme elaborated by the cited paper;
- b. refer these services to the obtained results, in terms of number of involved condominiums and the time required to involve them;
- c. outline the resources used to achieve these results.

A final critical analysis on strengths and weaknesses that emerged in carrying out this activity, its limits and the difficulties encountered carrying it out, concludes this compendium on the activities carried out by the Parma office.

Description of the services provided by the Parma OSS

Information / marketing: fundamental both at the beginning of the activity, to make citizens aware of the existence of the desk and its services offered and, in its continuation, to deal with the questions of the users to whom the desk is addressed. To make its business known, the Parma desk

made use, thanks to the resources made available by the Feasible project, of the services of a communication and marketing company. This company conducted an extensive communication campaign making use of road posters, articles and videos distributed to local media, press releases and the production of printed information material. The impact of this campaign was overall positive, even the advent of COVID and the subsequent movement restrictions partially diminished its effect. After this initial communication campaign, the helpdesk followed providing a continuous information service, mostly delivered electronically. The people who turned to the desk were mostly private citizens (79%), followed by condominium administrators (11%) and technicians (10%). Moreover the desk contacted condominium administrators and technicians directly, organizing numerous meetings with them, practically all online.

Simplified diagnosis and recommendations. This service represented the fulcrum of the Desk's activities and was carried out for about 2 years practically until the end of the FEASIBLE project, providing continuous technical and administrative support to the condominiums. The service is divided into the following five consultancy activities:

- **Introduction to the access of the documents and verification of the urban compliance of the common parts.** The OSS has launched this activity to fulfil the regulatory requirements for acceding the Superbonus and to deal with those difficulties incurred by several technicians and administrators (e.g., inability to accede the municipal archives given the Covid-related restrictions, excessively long service timings with respect to the users' needs). The partnership with the Municipality of Parma historical archives has enabled the OSS to directly accede, find and rapidly make available all the documentation needed to evaluate whether the incentives can be acceded or not, on behalf of the involved condominiums.
- **Drafting the SIMPLIFIED EPC, (Energy Performance Certificate)³,** a tool made available by the Superbonus to evaluate the effectiveness of the energy interventions that Condominiums may undertake in order to upgrade the energy efficiency of at least two classes. This tool, which is a necessary condition to accede the Superbonus, enables to verify the energy saving rate generated by the restructuring of the condominium.
- **Partnership with the *Sportello Edilizia (Building Desk)* of the Municipality of Parma** during the publishing of the updated FAQs. Such activity has been launched answering to the questions submitted to the helpdesk by the technicians and administrators, often finding it difficult to integrate, in occasion of efficiency upgrading activities, the rules of Regolamento edilizio Comunale (Municipal Building Regulation) and those related to the Superbonus. Such FAQs can be consulted on the Parma website of the Parma municipality
- **Creation of the COMMISSIONING activity.** The accompanying activity of the OSS with respect to the realization of the project provides a technical consultancy in the design phase to respond effectively to constantly changing legislation. This, for example, led to a punctual confrontation with some technicians to verify the possession of the technical requirements of the materials to be used (e.g. transmittances and MEC (Minimum Environmental Criteria)) necessary to obtain the Superbonus.
- **Controlling the correct documentation involved in the procedure.** This activity has been designed to enable the Condominium administrators to identify the correct procedures to document the interventions in case the legally authorized entity carries out controls (Ente per le nuove tecnologie, l'energia e l'ambiente – ENEA) during the eight years following the completion of the work and at the request for fiscal deductions.

³ Document certifying the improvement of at least 2 energy classes of the building (or a single energy class if the building already starts from class A3) or the buildings constituting the Condominium.

Worksite supervision. For the construction sites that started up by December 2022, an on-site inspection was carried out in order to: update the progress of the works of the condominiums, analyse any problems (e.g. delays in the supply of materials) and unforeseen events that appeared during the of the construction site, which can also determine variations at the executive project level as well as highlight critical issues and inconveniences reported by the condominiums during the execution of the works.

Achieved results.

Following the initial campaign of information and telephone contacts, personal or established by e-mail, **86** condominiums (equivalent to about a thousand apartment owners) were initially informed about the opportunities offered by the Energy & Condomini desk and the related services the Desk made available to them.

Of these 86 condominiums, **48** have agreed to undertake the process of obtaining the incentives offered by the Italian state for their energy renovation.

Of these 48 condominiums, **11** have started energy renovation works, **16** are ready to start but have not still found, or selected, (at the date of the end of the FEASIBLE project) the company to which entrust these works, **20** have renounced to proceed.

The services of simplified diagnosis and technical and administrative advice was carried out for all the 48 condominiums while the commissioning and, especially, the worksite supervision where addressed to the condominiums that have accepted to proceed or have initiated the renovation works.

Resources and timing

The activity of the Parma OSS within the FEASIBLE project lasted about two years. In this period the staff of the desk was constituted by three technicians, including the director, of which two at half-time and one subcontractor – and two administrative, both part time.. Overall, the work commitment was of 33 person-month plus 17,500 Euro of subcontracting.

The cost of the initial information campaign, entrusted to a communication firm, was of 70,000 Euro.

2.3 Strengths and weaknesses of the Parma OSS activity, the difficulties encountered and the corresponding countermeasures adopted.

To conclude this overview of the activities carried out by the OSS of Parma, we show two tables which provide: i. the first with a critical analysis of the strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats to be taken into consideration for the replication of a similar experience and ii. the second a summary of the difficulties encountered during the first two years of activity of the Desk, of the corresponding countermeasures adopted, the level of effectiveness of these countermeasures and advices for future initiatives

Table 1: Final considerations on the usefulness of the OSS activities: strengths and weaknesses

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>The offer of the facilitation service in conjunction with the technical ones has proved in many cases successful and indispensable for overcoming understanding and conflict obstacles in condominium assemblies.</p>	<p>The design and implementation of the OSS services is very focused on the present opportunities offered by the Superbonus incentives which have features such that they cannot be seen as a permanent reference model and have expiring dates.</p>
<p>An important strength in the performance of our services and much appreciated by our interlocutors was the criterion of neutrality with respect to the offer of the companies.</p>	<p>The possibility of offering free services very much depends on the support of European projects like FEASIBLE and now EASIER and this, if alternative solutions are not found, can endanger the continuation of the same OSS.</p>
<p>We were able to answer the 100% of the requests received from citizens, administrators, technicians, having several professional figures ready to interact and solve problems.</p>	<p>The role of economic operators, and, in particular, of their trade associations, has been used below their potential in a context which, on the contrary, should lead them to be co-protagonists of the services offered by the OSS. Greater involvement can allow the addition of more demanding "qualitative" parameters with respect to both the duration and effectiveness of the services offered.</p>
<p>We adjusted and tailored our services' organizational modalities taking into account the suggestions received from the stakeholders who participate the project.</p>	<p>The fact of having granted economic incentives to fully cover the restructuring costs has weakened the attention to the final energy saving of these activities. It would therefore have been appropriate to highlight this aspect at the end of the works to give due weight to the theme but this was not possible given that the project, in most cases, was finished before the end of the works.</p>
<p>We supply free services and technical information on very critical topics especially in a moment when the normative situation is constantly changing and difficult to interpret.</p>	<p>The accession of condominiums to the incentives granted by the Superbonus and, consequently, to the services offered by the OSS, was slower than expected given the still serious situation of uncertainty about the Superbonus regulation.</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Networking together with other subjects who currently manage OSS in Italy while maintaining a predominantly public-oriented vision, can be useful for strengthening the OSS "format" for the Italian reality, creating economies of scale with respect to some infrastructural services (e.g. platform of matching dedicated to the demand and supply of energy requalification services) or generic consultancy services.</p>	<p>The distortion of the market caused by poorly calibrated incentives (for example the excess of demand over supply which causes a generalized increase in prices and the shortage of building materials) as well as the uncertainty of the legislation subject to continuous modifications deter the homeowners from launching the requalification process in their condominiums or in their private houses. These same reasons also hold back those companies that prefer not to change their organization or hire staff only to respond to needs perceived as temporary.</p>
<p>Increasing the involvement rate of some stakeholders, even considering them as project partners (market operators, professional figures, condominium administrators) in order to achieve consolidation goals.</p>	<p>Uncertainty regarding the future and timing of the Superbonus make it more difficult for owners to choose a precise course of action.</p>
<p>The extension of helpdesk services (e.g. energy poverty or renewable energy community) improves the robustness of the offer, also by expanding the range of services to new sectors (banks, microcredit sectors and training firms)</p>	<p>The way in which the Superbonus was set up inherently points toward the use of traditional materials and technologies (e.g., gas condensing water heaters), instead of orienting the interventions (and the market) towards solutions that may significantly contribute to the decarbonization process (e.g., electric heat pumps combined with PV).</p>

Table 2: difficulties encountered, countermeasures adopted and advices for future initiatives

Difficulties encountered	Countermeasures	Level of effectiveness			Advices for future initiatives
		High	Med	Low	
Numerous regulatory changes for condominium access to the Superbonus	Implementation of the services offered by OSS	X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain high flexibility in the offer of OSS services to respond quickly to requests from Condominiums. • Analyse needs in detail throughout the value chain to identify new services
Difficult to find interdisciplinary figures to expand the skills of the OSS	Participation in informal meetings between professionals to strengthen the multidisciplinary skills of the OSS staff	X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the collaboration between OSS and local technicians. • Increase multidisciplinary in the composition of the Team
Inability to respond to some requests from condominiums related to finding companies to carry out the work	Involvement of trade associations interested in the customer journey for energy renovation as privileged interlocutors	X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate ways of crossing supply and demand while maintaining a third-party position • Promote a greater involvement of construction companies by identifying demanding “quality” parameters with respect both to the duration and the efficacy of the work phase. • Elevate the market operators as co-protagonists of the services offered by the One Stop Shop.
Presence of dissenting homeowners	Activation of the facilitation process in the condominium	X			Flank the facilitation activity with the technical support of a third party (OSS) to overcome misunderstandings.

Difficulties encountered	Countermeasures	Level of effectiveness			Advices for future initiatives
		High	Med	Low	
Presence of homeowners with situations of social hardship or poor financial capacity					Identify microcredit financial instruments aimed at non-bankable subjects
Lack of awareness of the expected benefits of energy requalification Difficulty in coordinating a unitary project in condominiums with more than one building in the event that the works concern only some of these buildings	OSS technical consultancy to facilitate the understanding of complex technical topics in the assembly and anticipate potential problems		X		Orienting condominiums towards conscious and rational choices, not (not only) driven by the personal advantage to take advantage of free of charge interventions, but rather based on the awareness of the collective environmental and energy benefits deriving by the energy renovation works.
Presence of law building restrictions Presence of discrepancies with respect to what is authorized	Partnership with the Parma Municipality “Sportello Edilizia” (building desk) and publication of FAQs	X			In the event of energy efficiency interventions, to integrate the rules of the Municipal Building Regulations with those relating to the law incentives.

3 The main aspects to carry out a facilitation activity in the condominiums.

The attention and care of the subjective dimension and the "non-technical" aspects of the efficiency intervention through facilitation was an important feature of the FEASIBLE project.

The reason for this choice and how the facilitation was carried out have already been described in D5.4.: Methodological guideline to set up and carry out a consensus building process within the Italian condominiums. In this part, three aspects of crucial importance are highlighted if the process is to be proposed again.

1. Communicating and promoting facilitation: How to ensure that the care of the subjective dimension and the use of facilitation have the right of citizenship in projects of an eminently technical nature? In summary, how to convince the various decision-makers on the importance of the facilitation, so that they can include it in their measures and work plans?

2. The psychosocial team: Professionals who usually deal with the subjective and intersubjective dimensions generally work in other contexts like in social, educational or health services. How to bring these professionals to work in this context? Here arises the problem of selection, training and field support.

3. Recognize the intangible value for the process: How to promote and make the value of the non-economic and non-technical effects of the process recognizable, among institutions, citizens, local actors, as a generator of relational goods such as, for example, neighbourhood solidarity?

3.1 *Communicate and promote facilitation.*

Facilitation, like any other service, requires someone who decides to carry it out. In the absence of this condition, facilitation cannot be performed.

Now it should be noted that in our country facilitation is a particular and, in many respects, innovative service. It is therefore little known or known in a distorted or partial way. Furthermore, due to its nature it is also difficult to tell it and make it understandable to those who do not have direct experience. In the preliminary phase, therefore, there is a problem of communication, though not quite, of the "sale" of this service.

How to present the facilitation to the various subjects who plan use, it or encourage its use, avoiding that it is seen only as a mediation of conflicts or even only as consensus building practice or, even worse, as an "embellishment of the project"?

In our case these subjects are:

- a) Condominium administrators.
- b) The technicians involved in the project.
- c) The inhabitants of the condominiums.
- d) Public authorities.

Most of these subjects don't have direct experience of facilitation and each tells it in his own way. It is therefore necessary to identify the key words that describe the service and to develop suitable communication strategies for the various interlocutors.

a) Condominium administrators

The involvement of condominium administrators is crucial for the success of the project. Without their collaboration it is not possible to enter the condominiums and therefore, in normal circumstances, not even to propose the facilitation. If effectively involved, they will then be the ones to present and propose the facilitation in the condominiums they manage.

Administrators must be able to see the usefulness that facilitation can have for them too and for their work and not see it as an element of disturbance and complication.

In the world of administrators we find everything: qualified operators and improvised ones. However, they are all very busy, have little time and often operate under stressful conditions and as a category they do not have a great social reputation. Rightly but also wrongly, a series of hardships and tensions that characterize condominium life are unloaded on them. In essence, they are crucial but difficult interlocutors at the same time.

The relationship with the administrators cannot be improvised and nor can it be left to chance. It requires care and attention right from the design stage.

To involve them and to present them with the facilitation and therefore to establish an effective communication strategy, two ways can be identified:

1. Identify the single condominium administrators that we want to engage, organize individual meetings with them, first by telephone and then in person.
2. Work with the associations to which the administrators belong to organize awareness-raising and training meetings aimed at making them understand what facilitation consists of, make them perceive its usefulness, and develop their skills in presenting it correctly to their clients.

b) The technicians involved in the project

They are the technicians who collaborate with the facilitators in the operational phase and who often participate together in the condominium meetings, with roles and responsibilities distinct from those of the facilitators who, however, they must know and respect.

As happened in FEASIBLE, the technicians working in the One Stop Shop can participate in the initial training together with the facilitators, both to make the facilitation and the role of the facilitators known, and learn to work in teams.

c) The inhabitants of the condominiums

The inhabitants of the condominiums are the final recipients of the facilitation. No matter how hard we try to present it, they will understand its function only when they see it in action. When they decide to use it, in general, they have no direct experience of it and can only adhere to the idea if they trust the person making the offer. At the beginning the facilitator is a stranger and the distrust towards new people who promise things is high and not always unjustified. Facilitators earn the required credibility, esteem and authority by carrying out their work in the field.

“Showing how it works” or even “how it worked” in other contexts is the best way to get approval. In addition to the support of the condominium administrator, the testimony of someone who has experienced the facilitation with satisfaction and can tell about her experience can be useful.

Naturally, it can help to have informative material that explains the objectives and ways of facilitation (leaflets, brochures, postcards, etc.) to be distributed in the condominiums and which refer to the website, online videos or Facebook pages.

But communication based only on these tools is not enough.

Operative guidelines to replicate the refurbishment interventions

There is a need for warm communication, we could say empathetic, which only face-to-face communication can allow.

d) Public authorities

The public authorities directly involved in, or flanking, these projects are different: they can be mayors or municipal councillors, but they can also be members of associations of municipalities (like ANCI in Italy). They are subjects whose consent is essential for any project closely tied to the local dimension, both in terms of the objectives and the paths that are planned to achieve them.

These subjects have their own idea of facilitation. Sometimes they are attracted to it and expect a return from it in terms of consensus. Sometimes they are threatened by it. They may have an ambivalent attitude towards participation and in some cases even unrealistic expectations.

The relationship with politicians and administrators is an essential part of the facilitation work. The facilitation team cannot neglect it or delegate it to others.

It must therefore be taken into account that facilitators will be engaged at different levels and on different fronts. Their task will not be limited to making the single meeting in the condominium go well. They must have a clear understanding of the entire process and not lose sight of the detailed map of the various project stakeholders.

3.2 The composition of the psycho-social team

It is obvious that ensuring attention and care for the subjective and intersubjective dimension requires specific skills that the technicians who, generally, have the leadership of these projects don't have. Furthermore, professionals dealing with subjective and intersubjective issues from a psychosocial point of view usually operate in other contexts with other mandates.

So what skills are needed to carry out this job? How can we recruit them and enable them to perform at their best?

To answer these questions, three aspects need to be addressed:

- a) The search and selection of professionals.
- b) Training before starting the operative activities.
- c) Flanking and supervision in the operational phase

a) The search and selection of professionals

The work proposed in this project, in addition to the specific professional skills, requires personal characteristics such as flexibility, the desire to learn, the tolerance of uncertainty, the possession of what are defined as social skills necessary to operate in social contexts, often disrupted and full of conflicts.

Both technical and psychosocial professionals involved in the project must have a balanced mix of motivations and skills.

To select suitable people, it is not enough to consider the educational qualification. Value must be given to previous experiences and other suitable tools available in the field of personnel selection must be adopted, in particular the motivational interview and, why not, also the group assessment.

b) Training before starting the action in condominiums.

If the selection process has been well conducted, we can assume that the selected people have the basic skills and personal characteristics necessary to carry out the facilitation work.

However, a better understanding of the role of facilitation, of the context and of the process in which it has to be implemented is a goal of the training.

In our case, the training, conducted in a facilitating and participatory way, addressed the following aspects:

- 1) The function of facilitation in the FEASIBLE project.
- 2) The characteristics of the context (the condominium).
- 3) The process in which the facilitation is inserted.

1) The function of facilitation in the FEASIBLE project.

Facilitation is inevitably a "place based", tailor made or even "clinical" intervention, in the sense that it must be appropriate to the specific context, to the different phases of the project and to the type of situations that may be encountered. All without losing sight of its dual objective: i. facilitating decisions with respect to the efficiency improvement intervention; ii. promoting the condominium community.

Awareness of the objectives, knowledge and use of coherent and appropriate techniques and behaviours are the conditions for the effectiveness of the facilitation.

Facilitation therefore goes beyond the techniques used. It supports participation and collaboration, processes that have meaning for the life of the community and in the production of relational goods.

2) The condominium

The condominium is the context of the intervention. At the same time, the condominium community is the subject that must take the decisions. Therefore the condominium must be seen as a system/community and as an indivisible unit of environment and people.

To conduct the facilitation at the best it is necessary to understand people and their relationships in the specific context. Understand the condition in which they are and how they live it: how they deal with some current issues/problems such as fear, anger, conflict, pain, etc.

To understand the condominium it may be useful to adopt the community profile technique and focus on the following aspects:

- The building, its history, its environment
- The inhabitants: how many there are, who they are, what stories they have
- The main condominium dynamics
- The presence of internal leadership
- Possible themes/areas of conflict
- The administrator of the condominium

3) Understand and stay in the process

In this kind of projects, the facilitation is not an episodic fact, it must accompany and "facilitating" the process up to a decision, possibly also in the implementation phase of the decisions taken, and in the management of the effects of this implementation.

It may be useful to articulate the process in different phases and to understand how facilitation is engaged in each of them.

We can identify the following phases:

- the preliminary phase
- the decision-making phase
- the post-decision phase
- the execution phase of the works

The characteristics and possible problems of each phase will have to be described and tools identified to prevent or manage them in the best way. It would be nice if the facilitation could be extended to the execution phase of the interventions for the energy efficiency improvement and if it could manage the inconveniences and difficulties that could arise at that time.

Therefore, while active listening must be guaranteed throughout the process, specific facilitation tools must be used in the various phases, to deal effectively with problems and inconveniences that may arise, to manage dissent and conflicts between condominiums and / or between condominiums and administrator.

4) Other focuses of training

Given the specific nature of the FEASIBLE project, a training meeting was also be dedicated to providing the main elements on energy consumption and energy management of the building system. The strengths and weaknesses of the Eco-bonus and Sisma-bonus measures and the role and the services offered by OSS was also discussed.

Finally, a focus on online communication tools will be useful. Little used before the COVID, they have now become essential resources of facilitation.

c) Accompaniment and supervision

Even competent and trained, facilitators cannot be left alone in the field. The work they are supposed to do is complex and the variables involved are many. It does not proceed on fixed tracks; it is dotted with difficulties and also full of pitfalls. It is necessary to avoid discouragement, disorientation, very predictable in these work contexts, and to maintain coherence between objectives and tools.

For this purpose, in addition to the coordination function, it is useful to implement supervision, through periodic and regular group meetings and ad hoc meetings, even individual ones, in case of particular need.

3.3 Recognize the intangible/social value of the process.

Recognizing and showing the intangible value that the process can have if conducted in an appropriate manner is a requirement of the project itself.

After all, if we look carefully, the goal of efficiency concerns the quality of life of people, for the present and for the future. It concerns the attention to the environment, to the responsible use of resources. In our case, energy resources which can also be seen as a common/shared good. It is the idea of energy communities. Spatial proximity, often experienced as a problem, can become an opportunity to feel better, to save money, to make less effort, to be able to count on mutual help.

If people experience a positive way of being together, the energy efficiency intervention can become an excellent opportunity to engage people in this kind of reflection and to promote these objectives.

The facilitation activity can support a process that can produce, or contribute to producing, other effects, in addition to efficiency which, even if they are not specific to the project, have a significant social value and can help make the condominium a place better to live.

These are some of the possible effects:

- a) The generation of social capital and relational goods.
- b) The promotion of neighbourhood solidarity.
- c) The development or training of social skills and civic competences.
- d) The reduction of destructive conflict or, at least, the reinforcement of negotiation methods for managing neighbourhood conflicts.
- e) Contribution to collaborative living practices.
- f) A better and greater communication between condominiums can contrast phenomena of loneliness and isolation.
- g) The birth of a community-based organization in the condominium context can be encouraged.
- h) A better social climate can be fostered.

These aspects, which to some extent also have to do with democratic practices, should be included in the planning and impact assessment. A commitment is therefore needed in the planning phase to make them recognized by the institutions and public opinion and to make them adequately valued.

We can and we must also value the educational work that can be carried out in the process regarding energy practices and energy saving, the circular economy and reuse, developing skills on "how to use new buildings" and how to work together to define shared rules in the use of home automation, common spaces, etc.

The experience of facilitation carried out in the FEASIBLE project confirms that people find it difficult to manage the problems and resources they share in common, due to many factors, starting with the fact that they are increasingly different, that they have lost some relational skills and that individuals and families are increasingly "closed in their apartments". But it also suggests that the answer to these difficulties lies not in putting more rules or stricter rules, but in providing support through projects and, even better, outreach services to these communities.

3.4 The work done and the resources used in the FEASIBLE project.

The activity described in the previous paragraphs consisted, in the two years in which it was carried out in parallel and in synergy with the technical services performed by the Parma OSS, in proactive participation in condominium assemblies, both informal and formal, in meetings with groups of apartment owners in the various condominiums in which this activity was carried out, in the involvement and support of the condominium managers to agree on the practical way of carrying out this activity.



This work was carried out by a staff composed by two leading experts in the facilitation activities supported by 4 facilitators with both social and technical skills that was ad hoc trained within the FEASIBLE project. The activities of the facilitation team were trained and then supervised by an phyco-social expert with long experience in this field.

All in all, in the two years of the team's activity, the resources made available for this activity consisted of a total of more of 18 person month.