



5 ORGANISING USERS CLUBS

- ✓ **European Users Clubs**
- ✓ **National Users Clubs**
- ✓ **Local Users Clubs**

How to organise a Users Club

You have already carried out a successful local communication campaign, the local actors are mobilised and you have a system in place to evaluate your results and the reactions of the public. What next?

An important point not to forget when participating in Display is that you are not alone – this is a European Campaign with hundreds of other local authorities and a growing number of private companies (see participants section of the website). Therefore, in this chapter we want to stress the importance of sharing your experience with other members of the Campaign by attending or organising a Display Users Club. During these meetings you can **pool resources** and **discuss successful initiatives**, and common obstacles.

Display Users Clubs can be organised at different levels and are always linked to the needs of the participants. Currently there are three levels of Display users clubs, namely: European, National and Regional/Local.

European Users Clubs

European Users Clubs take place **on average once a year** and are normally organised during the Energie-Cités Annual Rendezvous or after the “Towards Class A” Award ceremony. This is an important meeting where members from all over Europe meet to share their experiences and are able to think beyond National and local issues.



The aim of these clubs is to gather feedback from diverse Display participants and discuss the recent changes at the European level and compare what is happening at the National and local levels. The following are common topics that are dealt with at a European club:

- The state of the art of the Campaign in Europe,
- Technical advice on how to manage a communication campaign,
- New orientations that the Campaign is taking.



As well as the external influences on the Campaign such as:

- Changes to the EPBD National adaptations of the EPBD.

The European Users Club is essential to maintain the consistency between local and National activities and maintain the very important European identity of the Campaign.

National Users Clubs

Swiss French speaking cities started using Display with the help of an INTERREG IIIA project called REVE Jura Léman. During one of the REVE project meetings the Swiss communes expressed a need to meet to exchange their experiences and discuss obstacles and challenges. The first Swiss Users Club was organised in 2006 initially with a small group of actors specifically around the challenge of initiating local communication campaigns (this was identified as the first



challenge). Today this group is much larger uniting all Swiss Display users (over 30) and meets **twice a year**. Below is a list of steps that you can follow to set up a Users Club in your own country inspired by the work carried out by the Swiss:

Step 1 – Preparation

- ✓ Gather a list of Display users (e-mail addresses and telephone numbers) in your country or cities that are interested in communicating the energy performance of their public buildings. Energie-Cités can help you compile this initial list.
- ✓ Choose a **meeting place** that is easily accessible for all the participants (in Switzerland the group meets at a meeting room at the train station in Yverdon-les-Bain, in France the group meets in Paris).
- ✓ Find a source of **funding** to help you. This is not very costly but it does help to have money to pay for the meeting room or the time it takes you to organise the meeting. NB: participants come to the meetings at their own costs.
- ✓ Designate a **person** who will facilitate the meetings.
- ✓ Decide **how often** you should meet (once a year, bi-annual, tri-annual?).

Step 2 – What is on the agenda?

The focus is on how to carry out a local communication campaign. It is useful to choose one of the participants who has already initiated a campaign to provide a testimony of what they did etc. For the first meeting it could be helpful to invite a representative from an advanced city from a neighbourhood country, a coordinator of a national users club or of Energie-Cités' Display Team.

You can also invite external communication specialists who can provide their professional advice (Remember most of the people who are responsible for managing the Display Campaign in the local authority are energy specialists and not communication specialists!)



Round table discussions between participants are very important to ensure that the meeting remains interactive and participative. Try not to have too many presentations and foresee enough time for discussion.

A topic that is often on the Agenda is what is happening nationally. How is the EPBD being transcribed nationally and what is the role of Display?

Step 3 - Leave a trace

Create a specific website where you can publish presentations, the agenda, participants list, etc. Make sure that minutes are produced and placed on this website or sent to all the participants and interested parties.

Local Display Clubs

The need to organise Display users clubs at a local level was first identified in the Grenoble conurbation. As there are a large number of towns or villages outside of the main city of Grenoble participating in Display, the local energy agency decided to set up a local users club to deal with the specific needs of these smaller towns. In general local users clubs are useful if there are a large number of Display users (normally smaller towns) within the same geographical area.



Local users clubs are adapted to the needs of the smaller towns and generally deal with the following issues:

Presentation of the calculation tool – as many of the smaller towns do not have the capacity to employ technicians to deal with Display often more time is needed to explain the calculation tool.

Pooling resources – Often smaller towns have limited budgets to produce communication materials and it is wiser for them to pool their resources and ensure that they all use one supplier to print their Display posters and other communication materials.



Conclusion

The local energy agency in Grenoble was able to produce an annual bulletin highlighting all the activities of the towns in the Grenoble conurbation thus increasing the visibility of the work carried out by each of the towns.

Unfortunately one of the biggest constraints at the local level is finding the funding to carry out these meetings. In France this is often done by an energy agency.