



Press release

For immediate release

French town wins Topten energy audit by sharing its life-cycle costing approach

Freiburg 19 January 2012 – The town of Venelles celebrated the New Year knowing it is on the way to dramatically improving its energy efficiency. It was selected as the winner of a free energy audit worth up to €7,500, funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe programme. The small commune near Aix-en-Provence, with just over 8,000 residents, impressed the judges in the Topten Life-cycle Costing in Public Procurement competition with its ambitions to retrofit its public buildings. The Mayor, Jean Pierre Saez, said “the cheapest energy is the energy you don’t use.”

To enter, public authorities had to describe the actions they have taken to improve energy efficiency in their purchasing. In 2007, the Municipal Council of Venelles decided to start implementing environmental criteria in its procurement. From sourcing more sustainable food for its school canteens to introducing electric and hybrid vehicles for its municipal fleet, Venelles has put the decision into action.

The competition aimed to draw attention to the use of life-cycle costing (LCC) in procurement. LCC is a way of calculating all the costs associated with a product, service or work throughout its life-cycle. When applied to the procurement of IT equipment, vehicles or lighting, for example, it may result in the decision to purchase more energy-efficient products.

The energy audit will be carried out on the École Marcel Pagnol, a primary school with 122 students built in 1960. The audit will cover all aspects of the school’s energy consumption and recommend improvements. Venelles has already taken steps towards improving its buildings, with the installation of a photovoltaic system at the City Hall saving 23 776 tonnes of CO₂ in four years.

With over 2 trillion Euros is spent on public contracts on a yearly basis in the EU, translating to 19 percent of its GDP, it is clear that there is huge potential to make this spending more sustainable. The Topten Project (funded by Intelligent Energy Europe) and ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability are working to help public authorities apply tools like LCC in their procurement. The website www.topten.eu/pro offers guidance and sample tender documents for procuring more efficient and environmentally friendly products while complying with the EU rules.

Word count: 376

Background:

Topten is an independent international program to create a dynamic benchmark for the most energy efficient products. In 17 countries around the world, Topten presents the best products on national markets. Topten is neutral, rigorous and transparent in that there is no influence from manufacturers or retailers and the selection methodology is explained fully online. Apart from consumer information, Topten aims at providing policy recommendations based on its overview of the high efficiency product market.

More information: http://www.topten.eu/english/services/about_topten.html

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is an international association of local governments and national and regional local government organisations. ICLEI currently has 1,100 members worldwide and 200 in Europe. Founded in 1990, ICLEI provides technical consulting, training, and information services to build capacity, share knowledge, and support local government in the implementation of sustainable development at the local level.

More information: www.iclei-europe.org

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