



EURO
CITIES



Zoom in on your roof

Raising awareness of loft insulation

'Zoom in on your roof' uses a thermographic satellite map of the city to highlight the importance of household energy efficiency and roof insulation to Antwerp's residents. Launched in 2009, residents are able to 'zoom in' on their own roofs. Different colours on the map indicate the insulation quality of the roofs, with blue and green the most efficient and orange and red the least.

To complement the map, which is available on an interactive website, the city hosts demonstrations, offers personalised advice on financing available to homeowners and provides a set of tools to support residents in achieving better household energy efficiency. The demonstrations also ensure that the project reaches as many citizens as possible, including those without internet access.

Support through subsidies

Raising awareness of roof insulation is just the first step. The city and regional governments have teamed up to offer grants to homeowners wishing to install new insulation. A total of €10/m² of insulation is available, with €6 coming from the regional government and €4 from the city. Extra incentives are available to those fitting organic insulation. A federal tax reduction of 30% also applies, to ease the financial burden.

The city also advises on green loans, which are designed to finance energy saving investments in homes. For Antwerp's residents, these are available at up to €10,000 per housing unit or €50,000 for owners of multiple units.

For residents wishing to become more eco-friendly, these loans offer an attractive deal, with low, or even non-existent interest rates and a payback period of 60 months. By May 2012, 1,500 green loans had been awarded.

“Studies have revealed that the 'zoom in on your roof' campaign is popular among Antwerp's residents. The project has led to a significant increase in requests for insulation grants, scans and energy loans and the thermographic map is an excellent tool to support and complement Antwerp's environmental policy at a city level.”

Luc Redig, project coordinator, Antwerp

cities in action

July 2013

where: Antwerp, Belgium
what: environment, knowledge society
when: 2009-2010, 2013-2014

Promoting energy awareness

The city already has a number of initiatives in place offering energy efficiency advice.

These include the 'Ecohouse' demonstration and advice centre, providing information on sustainable building and housing, and 'Dr Ecohouse', which connects residents with local architects who provide advice on sustainable building practices.

This made it easier to raise awareness amongst locals about 'zoom in on your roof'.

Information was disseminated using brochures sent to households, an advert in a local magazine and via a local TV channel.

Mobile expos travelled to nine districts and posters were put up in 100 bus stops around the city.

This led to a considerable uptake on the scheme. The website has recorded 125,000 clicks so far, and the 'energy tour' demonstrations have welcomed some 1,600 people.

Municipalities have noted considerable interest from residents in better household energy efficiency, and an increasing number of applications for grants have been recorded.

The project has also attracted attention and replication from outside Belgium, with National Geographic publishing an article on the 'Belgian heat survey' and cities in France, Germany and The Netherlands implementing similar schemes.

Overcoming challenges

The total cost of the project was an affordable €160,000, and Antwerp managed to disperse the costs by setting up a cooperation with 20 municipalities, who divided the expense according to their surface area and number of residents.

However, the city has dealt with a number of challenges throughout the process.

Recording the image required the conditions to be just right, with clear skies and temperatures of around 0°C.

Fortunately, suitable conditions in March 2009 allowed the project organisers to take a series of images from which they built the

thermographic map.

Other challenges were around interpreting the image. The image resolution could have been better, which would have allowed homeowners to zoom in more accurately on their roofs.

Some residents could not remember if they were home that night, which would of course affect the level of heat being emitted from their home.



Nevertheless, the project, which was designed to complement existing initiatives, is already making a difference.

A total of 423,603m² of roof area has been insulated, putting the city on the right footing to secure warmer homes for all residents by 2020. The city has chosen to repeat the project in 2013-2014, addressing technical improvements such as improved resolution.



Now other cities in Belgium, as well as five in France and one in Germany, are following Antwerp's lead—a sign that in some parts of Europe, coal deliveries will be down in December.



'Belgian heat survey', 14 January 2011, National Geographic Magazine

