

## Press release

### Enefirst - Making *Efficiency First* operational: New project aims to support policy makers put the European guideline into practice in view of the EU Green Deal

#### For immediate release

**BRUSSELS, Belgium, 12 February, 2020** – The [Enefirst](#) consortium has launched its first publication, which defines the principle of *Efficiency First* (E1st) in a way to make it operational. The 2.5-year project, funded under the EU's Horizon 2020 programme for Research and Innovation, seeks to provide decision makers in Europe with concrete policy recommendations based on quantitative analysis and best practice mapping. The publication represents the consortium's first step towards meeting its goal of embedding E1st across EU policy related to energy, buildings and related infrastructures

#### ***Efficiency first* is of high political relevance**

The aims of the project are of great political relevance given the current policy context in the EU. The EU adopted *efficiency first* as a guiding principle in the Clean Energy for All (CE4All) package in 2018. To date, the concept has not been applied evenly for lack of clear definition and understanding of its practical implications. Even if rooted in more than 40 years of improving energy efficiency, this is still a recent development in policy making. Evidence-based implementation support to policymakers is thus of vital importance as the European Commission plans to roll out its “renovation wave” strategy for the buildings sector later this year, in the context of the EU Green Deal.

#### **Providing a fair basis to compare demand and supply investments**

The Enefirst consortium will help policy makers set a level playing field for both the demand and supply side, when comparing possible options for investment decisions related to energy. While the project focuses on energy end-uses in buildings, however, implementing E1st means considering the related impacts on energy systems such as electricity and gas networks or district heating.

**Vlasis Oikonomou**, Enefirst project coordinator and senior researcher at the Institute for European Energy and Climate Policy Foundation (IEECP), explains, “*Efficiency first means weighing direct investments in energy-saving actions or demand-side measures against building new infrastructure or generation plants from a societal perspective; it requires a systemic approach.*”

To do this, the consortium will **assess and quantify the impacts of E1st on the European energy system** through an economic analysis of total energy system costs, as well as a multi-criteria analysis focusing on trade-offs between end-use efficiency and network/supply investments. The Enefirst team will also analyse barriers and success factors of specific policy options for implementation in the EU building sector, resulting in concrete E1st **policy recommendations**.

**Oikonomou** continues, “*Through this exercise, the Enefirst consortium is looking to solve a fundamental problem for policy makers, which is: **how do we put efficiency first, in practice? Implementing the concept is a challenge because it requires us to re-think policy making and decision paths.** We are excited to provide clear answers through Enefirst and contribute to ongoing discussions that will help the EU Green Deal deliver for Europeans.*”



## About Enefirst

"Efficiency First" (E1st) is a fundamental principle applied to policy making, planning and investment in the energy sector, which is gaining visibility in European energy and climate policy. Funded by the European Commission under the Horizon 2020 programme for Research and Innovation, **Enefirst** is a project that seeks to make the E1st principle operational in Europe, through defining its relevance for energy demand and supply and its broader impacts across sectors and markets, focusing on the buildings sector. The main objectives of Enefirst are: 1) to **define** the principle of E1st in practical terms; 2) to **assess** how it has been applied internationally and how it applies to the EU context, 3) to **measure the value** of applying E1st across different policy areas for buildings' end-use energy efficiency and 4) to **quantify the impacts** of increased building energy efficiency for the future energy system in the EU, and 5) to **identify key policy areas** for the application of E1st and develop policy proposals for its implementation in the EU Buildings Sector.

Led by the Institute for European Energy and Climate Policy (IEECP), Enefirst gathers expertise from RAP – the Regulatory Assistance Project (European organization), BPIE – Buildings Performance Institute Europe (European organization), the Fraunhofer Institute (Germany), the Technical University of Vienna (Austria), the Institute for Resource Efficiency and Energy Strategies (Germany), and the Central European University (Hungary).

### For more information see:

- Enefirst website: <http://www.enefirst.eu>
- Read the latest report here: [Defining and conceptualising the E1st principle](#)

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