CampaignXChange Deliverable 2: Emerging Best Practices

Introduction

Behavioural changes play an important role in energy transitions towards net zero. In the IEA Net Zero Emissions by 2050 Scenario, behaviour changes result in around 9GJ of energy savings per capita by 2035, ranging from modal shifts in transport to more efficient control setting of space heating and cooling. In the NZE Scenario, these savings happen mostly in advanced economies, where per capita energy consumption is highest.

Governments have many tools to encourage more efficient energy use, including mandates, subsidies, and information campaigns. For the purposes of this Task, a campaign is defined as a government-led and organised call to action, with a defined start date, involving TV, radio, print, or online media dissemination. Since 2022, more than 20 energy-saving campaigns were launched globally as a response to the energy crisis. These campaigns targeted actions people could take to reduce energy demand in buildings, transport and industrial sectors.

This overview paper summarises best practices that governments have reported throughout design, implementation and tracking of energy-saving campaigns. Investing in best practice approaches, based on behavioural science and enhanced understanding of the target audience, may add to the cost of campaigns, but brings in the return on investment in terms of the enhanced impact.

The insights are drawn from the information provided by the Task Participants, interviews with policy makers, campaign outcomes shared with the IEA and other relevant data. This is a developing field, affected by the new insights from behavioural science, practical experience from the private sector and results from current campaigns. This document aims to capture and share the insights gained by multiple governments through their energy efficiency campaign design, implementation and tracking. The IEA continues to analyse behavioural change campaigns as part of broader ongoing work on this topic.

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A. Campaign Design

This phase involves setting up a dedicated team and determine the goal, audience and message of the campaign.

1. Campaigns have benefitted from a dedicated government team working on strategy and design.

- Governments reported having a dedicated team working on the design, implementation and tracking of campaigns helped streamline the decision-making process internally and ensured consistency in delivery of the core message. Expertise that may be useful in such a team include communications, energy efficiency policy, behavioural economics, and marketing.

Example: Finland has a long-standing team that works on Energy Saving Campaign and Ireland formed the Energy Security Communications Subgroup in 2022. These groups comprise of a diverse mix of experts from across government and include behavioural insight experts, which can help design an effective campaign.

- Some countries noted that external behavioural, advertising, and marketing experts, can offer advice or advertising services when it comes to physical promotion (e.g. bus-stop or metro advertisements), digital promotion (via online advertisement purchasing) and design. Countries stressed, however, that it is important to keep government's ownership and control over the process, and to not fully outsource the campaign design to creative agencies.

2. Defining the goals and the target audience early on can improve the effectiveness of the campaign.

Example: Finland launched their down a degree campaign through a cooperation between the Finnish Prime Minister's office, various ministries, the Energy Agency, Motiva and the Investment Fund Sitra. This created a unified message and a consistent long-term strategy. They also worked with an external marketing agency to bring in specific expertise.

- Defining clear campaign objectives early on helped several countries to identify the target audience, the messaging and the implementation strategy. During the winter of 2022, campaign objectives ranged from energy saving, lowering of energy bills, reducing dependence on Russian gas, to action against climate change more broadly. Segmenting the defined audience and analysing their needs was key for some governments in shaping the narrative and choosing the communication channels.

Example: Sweden aimed to reduce electricity demand and focused its campaign on single-family homeowners. Similarly, the UK government in the 'it all adds up' campaign, focused on cost savings as this was shown to be the most important motivator for the target audience.

- Convening a representative sample for in-person focus groups helped governments to test messages and find the best approach for dissemination. Focus groups are routinely used to gather qualitative data and in-depth insights to assess the viability of an ad or a narrative. Online surveys can also be used to test messages.

Example: The Irish government made sure to actively listen to the public. A nationally representative group was surveyed regularly to test messaging and consumer sentiment. Crucial was understanding and responding to the needs of Irish citizens to provide relevant and timely advice. Insights from behavioural science to inform communication best practices were also used.

3. Creative, clear, and consistent messaging can connect people with the campaign.

- Governments found that bringing in an emotional layer to a message helped make a lasting impression on the audience. Storytelling is a powerful communication tool to inspire action. Some of the most popular advertising commercials that connected with people on a deeper level resulted in greater activation. Several government campaigns did the same and appealed to people's values, aspirations and motivations, which they reported increased engagement.

Example: Finland's down a degree campaign illustrates the power of creative visual content with a strong core message that aims to bring the society together by appealing to the toughness of the Finish people. In Japan, to cope with the consequences of the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake in 2011, the government launched its Setsuden campaign, asking citizens to make changes to their daily habits, which continues to be implemented. In Mexico, to promote cycling, the EcoBici campaign sought to portray biking as a healthy and empowering choice.

- Delivering information in way that is digestible to people who do not think about energy efficiency on a daily basis, has been shown to have a positive impact on engagement levels. Governments found that offering tips that are both simple to understand and implement such as controlling the thermostat, turning off lights, taking shorter showers, insulating windows, or reducing car use can be helpful. While the message can be clever and culturally relevant, above all it ought to be clear.

Example: Switzerland's thermal heat images in their campaign immediately speak to the imagination of individuals about avoidable energy waste. Abu Dhabi continues to encourage its citizens to reduction energy and water consumption through their Use it Wisely campaign. Part of this campaign was a Save at Home competition to promote the culture of energy conservation and stimulate members of society to share their behaviours. This cleverly builds on a well-known behavioural concept called 'Keeping up with the Joneses'.

- Governments reported that creating a unique campaign name and slogan helped to stand out. Campaigns with distinctive taglines prove to be more effective than those with generic names. Those with generic names tend to become lost and untraceable, especially given the intense global competition of other messages and slogans.

- Governments reported that a stronger integration of behavioural economic levers were crucial to bridge the "intention-action-gap". This included prompt reaction to the feedback from target groups, generating social norms, gamification and focusing on the most effective measures.

- Most countries developed an appealing visual identity to convey their message using images, videos, icons and a colour scheme, to establish an emotional connection to the energy-saving messages. Some campaigns created a mascot to represent a campaign, some used figurative imagery of people, others focus on icons almost exclusively. Images and visual style can appeal to communal ethos and the spirit of collective action.

Example: The Energy Saving Championship Scheme, part of a Hong Kong Energy Saving Campaign, uses the element of competition combined with bright and recognisable Mascots and bright appealing imagery. Argentina provides citizens with detailed tips for each room in the house using colourful pictograms that grab the attention. Argentina also set up Energy Learning Networks for companies, where they can exchange best practices on energy management. Chile on the other hand launched its '*it's in your hands*' campaign to promote reduction of energy consumption.

4. Highlighting existing subsidies, grants and support schemes already in place can increase uptake.

- Increasing awareness of support measures can make energy saving easier. Multiple campaigns tried to make information tools more accessible on the website to lower the barrier for people to act. For instance, referring people to subsidies for insulation and heat pumps and connecting people to contractors and financing through one-stop-shops.

Example: The Belgian campaign links people directly to the pages of the different regions (Flanders, Wallonia, Brussels), which contain detailed information on financial support in case of energy bills concerns, different grants for insulation, heat pumps and solar panels, and channels to apply for personalised energy advice. Switzerland directs consumers to the appropriate grants and support schemes for them, through easy to follow paths on both their website and through their francs énergie website.

- Providing an overview of the available information on a centralised platform is ideal, but multiple websites are also possible if they refer to each other and offer unique benefits.

B. Campaign Implementation and Promotion

This phase involves using most effective channels and methods to communicate the message.

1. Working with industry groups and community associations can help amplify campaign's messages.

- Expanding and diversifying the messengers can help inform a larger audience and increases the probability to reach specific groups. Some governments found that sing existing networks in the private and non-profit sectors is an easy and quick way to amplify the messages. Collaborating with, for example, business associations, and youth groups, to tailor the message for their members can improve the relevance of the campaign.

Example: The Energy Savings Alliance in Switzerland and the Energy Savings Coalition in The Netherlands brought together companies, cities and other stakeholders to contribute to the campaign and its goals.

- Working closely with businesses such as supermarkets, DIY/hardware shops and other local companies can contribute to wider dissemination, according to some governments. Storefronts can function as information centres by offering posters and flyers or having the tools for simple energy-saving measures directly at the counter.

Example: In South Africa, a consumer campaign to improve the uptake of energy efficient appliances held 'in-store activation days' to engage with citizens. A Swiss supermarket and a Dutch hardware store sold draught strips and radiator foil at the counter next to flyers of the campaign to directly allow people to act.

2. Showcasing government actions to save energy sends a powerful message.

- Leading by example in public buildings by dimming their façade lighting, turning down the thermostats, and conserving water, can send a strong message of solidarity. For many citizens, measures taken by their local administration are the most concrete evidence of government action. Some governments reported facing criticism when they were seen as not contributing, for instance by leaving lights on at night in public buildings, while calling on citizens to act.

- Working with politicians and influential people to boost public engagement and interaction with the campaign can be an effective dissemination strategy. However, governments noted this should not distract focus from the message.

Example: In France, the government turned off the lights on the Eiffel tower, a symbolic gesture which sent a message of leading by example. In the Netherlands, the government dedicated a specific web page to show people the actions the government was taking to reduce its own gas consumption by 15%. To make this action visible, different government departments and municipalities turned off the lights at night in buildings and monuments such as the skyline of The Hague and the Erasmus bridge in Rotterdam.

3. Using multiple channels to promote campaigns can help reach a wider audience.

- Using both digital and physical promotional channels is important to reach multiple audiences. Some governments consulted with media experts to help identify the channel(s) best suited for the target audience. Online promotion could involve having a dedicated campaign website, search engine advertisements, social media advertisements and organic engagement via Instagram, X, LinkedIn, Facebook, and other social media. Content tailoring for each social media platform is important, according to some governments. For instance, longer videos are best suited to YouTube, while short vertical videos can perform well on X and Instagram.

- Holding regular press briefings and updates could help facilitate organic publicity through opinion pieces in newspapers and TV segments.

Example: A wide variety of media channels were used in Sweden to promote the message that every kilowatthour counts. They made advertisements for social media such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram and YouTube, but also used printed newspaper and no-lighting billboards to convey their message. This ensured a wide audience could be reached. In the UK, newspapers were used to launch the campaign, but also to reach specific audiences and publish in-depth articles to explain more complex measures. India's government encouraged people to post selfies while taking a public bus, as part of the #IrideEbus campaign, for a chance to win an iPad.

4. Refresh the messages to avoid potential campaign fatigue.

- Many governments found that seasonally updating the messaging, and suggested energy-saving tips, can increase campaign relevance. While turning a thermostat down may make sense in the heating season, citizens can be reminded to adjust the settings to their air conditioners and other cooling installations in summer.

- Allowing for flexibility to address relevant, and potentially unexpected, current events is useful in keeping the campaign relevant and effective. For example, if energy prices increase significantly, the campaign can be reframed to address these concerns and support citizens who may be struggling.

- Governments found that communicating the actual 'real life' situation, regarding energy generation, supply and cost issues was important in ensuring transparency and trust in their messaging. It also assisted in directing their message to the correct target groups for different scenarios.

Example: The Canadian government made smart use of the changing seasons. In winter, tips revolved around lowering your thermostat and adding insulation. When spring came around, people received a spring cleaning checklist for energy efficiency. Summer tips included preparing for the pool season and understanding efficient use of air conditioners. Ireland refocused its campaign and has rolled out additional measures to specifically support energy poor consumers.

C. Campaign Tracking

This phase involves tracking to assess the effectiveness of the campaign, to inform potential adjustments in future phases and to justify time and resources.

1. Tracking immediate campaign results can help tailor the messaging.

- Several governments reported that monitoring the immediate campaign results, including numbers of website visitors, clicks, and impressions on social media can inform policymakers whether certain links to resources are used more than others or whether certain events result in spikes in web traffic. Additionally, web analytics data can be used to analyse engagement with different parts of the site, for example tracking the number of users that scroll down to see links to the support schemes, which may trigger a website re-design. Consulting user experience specialists improved the website according to some governments.

Example: Most countries put in place some degree of tracking and used the insights to adapt subsequent phases of the campaign. For instance, the Netherlands decided to emphasise the exemplary role of the public sector and companies more, and Ireland shifted focus to "Stay Warm and Well" when energy bill concerns were increasing.

- Conducting surveys both online and in-person can help obtain more qualitative data and better understand peoples' attitudes. Survey data may reveal where most people are receiving their campaign information, thus result in the re-evaluation of media buys and channels used. Qualitative insights can inform message adjustments.

Example: Finland surveyed more than 2000 adults of all ages in 2023 to assess attitudes toward energy and energy savings and to inform the future focus on the campaign. Key findings include: 40% admitted enjoying energy saving, 89% of people now follow the price of electricity at least occasionally, 60% learned new ways to save energy during the crisis. The survey revealed the need to focus more efforts on appealing to men under 35.

2. Assess longer term impact of a campaign to determine its effectiveness.

- Some countries worked with utilities to gather consumption data and, if possible, linking it to the weather to better understand the level of savings achieved can reveal the impact of behavioural campaigns. In-depth studies, looking an energy consumption behaviour during the campaign, can provide insights into broader consumption patterns. Surveys that look at a long-term campaign results can also be used to give additional perspectives. CampaignXchange Deliverable 3: Data Collection Protocol intends to better define some of the tracking mechanisms to assess the impact of campaigns.

Example: Japan analysed the impact of behaviour change in residential consumers on electricity peak savings, overtime and by region. Their methods involved modelling using a combination of appliance usage surveys, hourly electricity consumption data, temperature by region, and the number of people in each household.

3. **Communicate results to maintain support internally.**

   - Actively sharing the results of the campaign internally can help maintain support for the campaign and, in some cases, bolster the case for more resources. For instance, facts and figures on achieved savings, and increased awareness levels can support increased resource deployment.

4. **Track uptake of measures against a baseline control group to analyse direct effects of the campaign.**

   - Setting up a baseline ahead of the campaign's launch can help understand its potential impact on the uptake of renovation measures and government subsidies. For instance, the sales of heat pumps have significantly increased in 2022 and tracking the utilisation of subsidies promoted by a campaign can help discern campaign's role in such an increase. Some governments monitored visitors to the campaign website applying to grants, indicating the direct role of the campaign in subsidy uptake.