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Dear Reader,

Almost two years ago, me and a few colleagues started realizing how much renewable energies had become central in contemporary society and it is there that CIVIS started moving the first steps. Yes, it was just a fuzzy idea that in no way resembled a high quality research project. However, the feeling it could be fruitful to link the potentialities of people who join together with the challenges portrayed by climate change and the diffusion of renewable energy, was already there.

Before that idea reached the shape of a full-fledged research project, it took us many months, many meetings, many discussions and a lot of feedback from colleagues and friends, old and new ones. In the meantime, the idea kept growing by taking advantage of the confrontation with experts in different disciplines and cutting-edge perspectives coming from different research areas. A kind of effort that also the European Commission acknowledged at the moment of the project evaluation.

When we finally submitted the project proposal, we were confident we had put a sound and interesting document on the Commission's table, but we did not expect they would acknowledge CIVIS visionary goal in such a positive way. Our proposal was positively evaluated for the excellent composition of the research Consortium, for its truly interdisciplinary nature and, most of all, for its visionary goals. It has been a great reward for the long and intense preparatory work.

It is now time to make a renewed effort for bringing to reality the idea of a community where citizens ("cives" in Latin) are empowered with increased awareness and better control over the energy they consume, save and produce. Furthermore, a community in which energy is turned into a collectively managed good that can foster social innovation, benefiting the society at large, well beyond the monetary dimension only.

It is with pleasure that I introduce you the first CIVIS newsletter which provides you a snapshot of the key activities that we were occupied with since October 2013, when we officially launched the project activities.

We hope you enjoy reading it and that you continue following us!

Best regards,
Matteo Bonifacio – CIVIS Project Manager



CIVIS project has received research funding from the European Union



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Cities as Drivers of Social Change – CIVIS

The overarching goal of the CIVIS project is to enhance, integrate and validate enabling ICT solutions able to reduce energy use and carbon emissions in smart cities by leveraging on the potential of social networks and communities.

The CIVIS project will provide answers on:

- How to handle, measure and incentivise peer production and consumption of renewable energy and distributed energy storage in households;
- How to benefit from individual and collective social dimensions in the provision of new services and opportunities in the energy value chain;
- What kind of ICT system architecture can enable these new services;
- How to make this system scalable in the ‘horizontal’ sense (widening potential target users and cities) and in the ‘vertical’ one (improving the services offered).

The project is financially supported by the European Union under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013).

CIVIS started in October 2013 and will run for three years.

CIVIS Project Outcomes and Impacts

The main outcome of the CIVIS project will be an integrated ICT platform and a decision support system able to achieve energy savings and CO₂ emission reduction by enabling a close interaction between prosumers and main stakeholders.

CIVIS will enable a more efficient, sustainable and CO₂-aware energy system in smart cities. CIVIS will foster the adoption of more energy-aware behaviours through the deep involvement of the social system and the leverage on community-based dynamics in the energy system.

CIVIS will enable communities, interest groups, business and non-business players to decide how to allocate energy according to shared goals, intents and beliefs. This will foster the arising of new forms of social aggregations able to enact new energy eco-systems.

CIVIS will enable the emergence of new actors in the value creation process. In particular, the technology developed in CIVIS will empower end-users with more control over the usage of the energy they generate.



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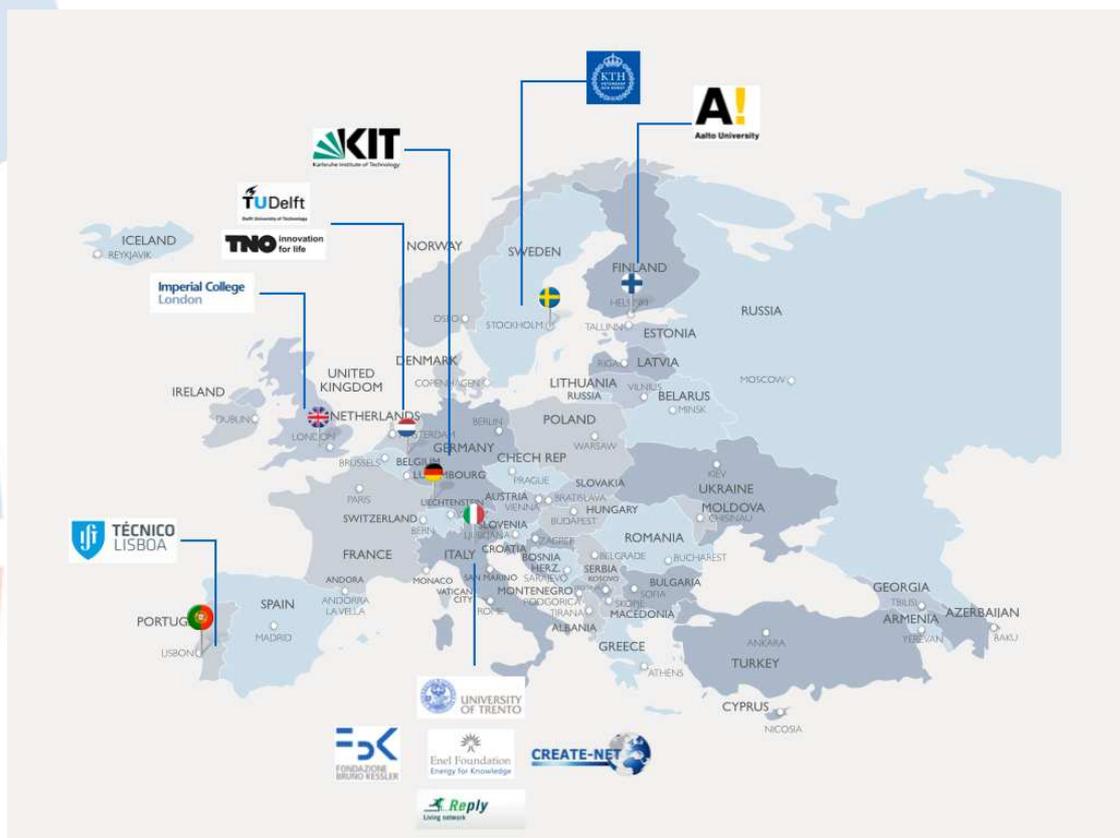
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Courtesy Omar Shafqat

More information about the CIVIS project can be found at: www.civisproject.eu



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Stakeholders Meeting Brussels, 16 December 2013

On the 16th of December 2013, in the beautiful and cosy rooms of the Common Representation of the European Region Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino in Brussels, CIVIS held the first Stakeholders Meeting. 23 people representing five stakeholders from the test sites and ten project partners attended the meeting.

This meeting had been designed as an important step for establishing fruitful relationships between CIVIS and the stakeholders of the energy value chain in the project's test sites (Trento and Stockholm).

The main goals of the meeting were to establish concrete connections with the stakeholders and to know the details of their local contexts; to explain them the overall design of CIVIS; to investigate their willingness and interest in getting involved into the project; and to outline an initial method for collaboration. In order to fulfil these goals a dense and varied agenda was set for the day.

The morning started with presentations sessions that allowed both parties, CIVIS project partners and the stakeholders, to better know each other. Afterwards, three different brainstorming sessions took place. These were particularly relevant to highlight, on the one hand, why CIVIS needs an active participation of the stakeholders and, on the other hand, what kind of benefits they could derive from their involvement in the project. Indeed, besides needing their consent for the practical reason of getting access to the data, CIVIS key goal is to promote responsible behaviours and make energy consumption more efficient and sustainable. Stakeholders are therefore in a privileged position in helping us understanding what are the critical aspects that CIVIS may work upon in their local contexts.

The part of the day devoted to brainstorming started with a nice drawing exercise for context and stakeholders mapping: all attendees were asked to draw themselves at the centre of a blank paper and then to surround their figures by drawing the elements that, energy-wise, fill their daily lives. This exercise had a twofold purpose. Firstly, it provided inputs for the scope of CIVIS Work package 1 that aims at defining the requirements for the overall design of the smart energy cities. Secondly, it allowed us to kick-off more concrete discussions about the peculiarities of energy-aware behaviours, ICT and energy infrastructures in EU countries and, in particular, in Italy and Sweden.

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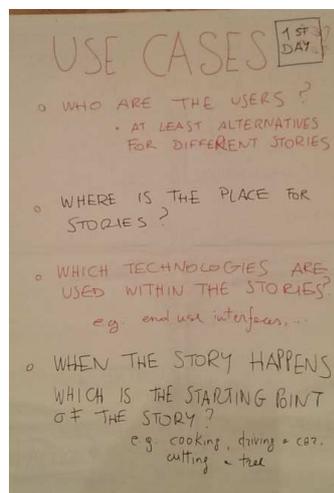
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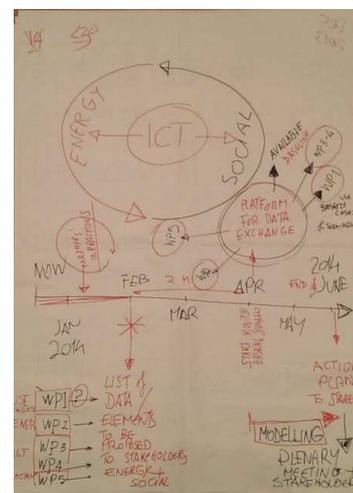
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Two more traditional brainstorming sessions for ideas generation were used to deepen the understanding of these aspects. The first one focussed on the recognition of the hindrances standing in the way of a concrete collaboration between CIVIS and the pilot sites stakeholders. These aspects were identified as potentially problematic due to the differences between the pilot sites: the demographic characteristics; the institutional and organizational settings of actors of the energy value chain; the privacy concerns; the capabilities of cogeneration and the presence of prosumers. The second brainstorming session focussed on the possible directions to take for overcoming such obstacles. Here, an important step was to recognize that most of the issues could be turned into concrete areas of intervention and investigation. Stakeholders highlighted how important would be for them to find proper terms of comparison between small and large living areas and how typical energy-related challenges are dealt with in different contexts. For instance, peaks of energy consumption and efforts towards energy load-shifts emerged as two among many aspects that are really worth working on, despite the differences between the pilot sites.

The whole day was accompanied by a friendly and lively atmosphere. The discussions were actively sustained by all participants despite the different backgrounds and expertises. Moreover, as the day went on and the details of the two pilot sites got uncovered it became clearer to all participants how much the two cases could learn and teach each other. Therefore, at the end of the working day, it came as no surprise that the stakeholders manifested their curiosity to see how CIVIS will unfold and what impact will have in their local contexts, and their willingness to investigate further concrete levels of collaboration.



Use cases definition



CIVIS project vision



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Use Case Workshop Helsinki, 26 January 2014

It was Sunday and very cold winter day in Aalto University campus area but still around twenty CIVIS members arrived to our Helsinki workshop on 26th of January in 2014. The goal of the first day was to create use cases for the two pilot sites in Stockholm and Trento.

After catching up and having nice lunch together, the workshop participants were divided into two working groups: Stockholm use cases and Trento use cases. Both groups had their own facilitators and creative secretaries. A co-design method called “Storytelling Group” was applied for describing our pilot site end-users, their motivations and possible energy practices enhanced with CIVIS technologies, this was done in a narrative forms.

After three hours working on the narratives and on intensive and multidisciplinary discussions in the two working groups, both groups presented their results. In the wrap-up discussion it was noticed that both Trento and Stockholm use cases focused on families with teenagers. Also billing is an interesting channel to get in touch with families or community managers. Both groups were also interested in ICT tools for families and community managers that could help to find out what are the best practices for reducing energy consumption in everyday life and sharing this information within community and with other stakeholders. An important difference between Trento and Stockholm use cases was that Trento includes prosumers and must be focused on tenant level, whereas the Stockholm does not include prosumers, and the situation in Stockholm makes it possible to include housing associations.

On the second day of the workshop, on Monday 27th of January 2014, when the winter wind was even colder than on Sunday we had a guest from Technical Research Center of Finland, Senior Researcher Janne Peltonen. He presented their project “Otaniemi EcoCampus” and the possibility to collaborate with them was discussed. They are willing to provide some energy data that they have been collected for a couple of years from the campus area buildings.

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On Monday the two pilot sites were compared and possibilities to do studies in them were analysed. In Trento the focus will be on load shift, providing comprehensive data to end-users, Social ICT Tool, user involvement and empowerment. In Stockholm the focus will be on user involvement and empowerment, communication with users and stakeholders, social ICT Tool, increase awareness (own consumption, association level and overall savings) and system level energy plan. On the basis of these focus areas a wish-list for pilot site stakeholders to support the CIVIS' research activities was elaborated.

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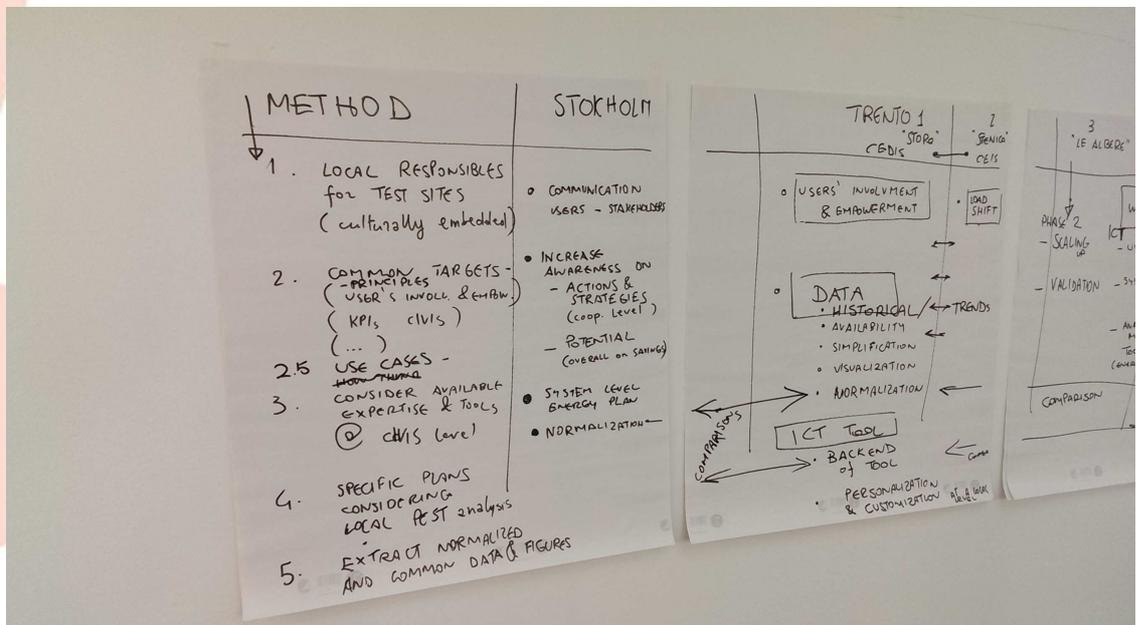
Later on, it was decided that we will call the narratives "user stories" and not "use cases" for now on in the CIVIS project. Moreover the importance of the user stories for the whole projects was realized and it was proposed that we will continue to process them all together as a concrete communication tool inside the project that is very multidisciplinary.

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The CIVIS kick-off meeting was held on 22nd and 23rd October 2013 in Brussels at the Common Representation of the European Region Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino.

32 Participants attended the meeting, two of them were external observers. All CIVIS beneficiaries were present at the kick-off meeting with at least one representative.

The kick-off was important to analyse the critical issues of the project and start the definition of strategies to face these issues.



Kick-off meeting participants

To optimize the results of these two days meeting, the agenda included work groups sessions.

The attendees were divided in three work groups in order to analyse critical issues and needs at three different levels:

- Energy/ICT level;
- Social dimension level and
- Test site level.

The Energy/ICT level group listed the key measurements in a preliminary “wish-list” with the target of measuring the relevant energy data in residential environment.

In the Social dimension group the discussion was focused on the proactive way of involving the communities, on the CIVIS platform development and on the social goal of the project.

The third group (Test sites) discussed a pyramid model of stakeholders’ engagement, from a top with few data and low engagement to the bottom with more data and high engagement.



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