



Parliamentary action on energy in buildings

Buildings and construction account for 36% of global energy use and 39% of energy-related CO₂ emissions. Poorly insulated buildings waste vast amounts of energy for heating or cooling. As the planet continues to heat up dangerously, we will need ever more air-conditioning. Energy-efficient and low-carbon heating and cooling technology could reduce final energy demand in buildings by 25%. Better insulation can save even more money.

The importance of energy-efficient buildings often gets lost in discussions about climate. The majority of national commitments (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement do not even mention specific targets related to energy performance in buildings. And yet this represents a huge opportunity, as developing countries still

have much construction to do. Building floor area in Africa, for example, is expected to triple by 2060.

Close to 4.9 gigatonnes of annual carbon dioxide emissions could be avoided if countries were to include ambitious low-carbon and energy-efficient building technology deployment in their NDCs.

Effective policy interventions include energy efficiency codes for new and existing buildings (which many countries still lack), green rating and certification programmes for buildings, tax incentives for energy efficiency, and grants for insulation. By pressing for government action in this area, parliamentarians can achieve big emissions reductions while saving their countries a lot of money.

What action has been taken so far?

- **Rwanda** established, in 2018, mandatory green building certificates for buildings occupied by more than 100 people. The certificates are part of the Rwanda Green Building Minimum Compliance Building Code.
- The **Nigerian** Federal Ministry of Power, Works and Housing launched the country's first building energy code in 2017. The code established a set of minimum standards for energy efficient building construction in the country. It includes guidelines on how to design, build and operate energy-efficient buildings.
- **India** has created a certificate trading mechanism for commercial buildings. The market mechanism Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) enables high performing commercial buildings to trade energy saving certificates with other commercial buildings that are unable to reach the required standards.
- In 2017, **Mexico** published a roadmap to guide future building energy codes and standards, with the goal of achieving zero-energy and zero-emissions buildings.
- **Costa Rica's** energy plan requires that all new buildings should be designed and built for low emissions by 2030.

Model letter/questions to Minister

By questioning Ministers and monitoring progress, Members of Parliament can help to speed up the adoption of energy-efficiency standards for buildings. A letter along these lines can be signed by one MP, or better still by a cross-party group of MPs, and addressed to the President, Prime Minister or the Ministers responsible for housing, construction and energy. Alternatively, the questions contained in the letter can be asked as Parliamentary Questions.

Dear Minister,

We are writing to you about the urgent need to improve standards of energy efficiency in buildings. Buildings and construction account for 36% of global energy use and 39% of energy-related CO2 emissions. Poorly insulated buildings and inefficient air conditioning waste large amounts of energy which is needed elsewhere, and cost our country a lot of money to pay for that wasted electricity.

As well as making us richer, energy-efficient buildings can make a major impact on carbon dioxide emissions at a relatively low cost. Ambitious targets for efficient buildings should be included in our Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for the upcoming UN climate summit (COP26) in Glasgow. We would be very grateful if you could let us know your thoughts about three questions regarding how we can advance more quickly:

1. Considering the major savings in both energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions to be achieved by better building insulation and efficient air conditioning, **is the Government considering new national standards or financing mechanisms to promote energy efficiency in buildings?**
2. **Does the Government have any plans to strengthen regulatory codes related to energy efficiency for new and old buildings?** If so, how will compliance be monitored?
3. Will the Government include targets and measures for energy efficiency in buildings in our country's revised **Nationally Determined Contribution for the upcoming UN climate summit?**

Thank you very much for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Key documents on energy in buildings can be found in the Action Ideas section of the Climate Parliament website at www.climateparl.net. For more information or to be connected to expert advice, contact info@climateparl.net.