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Since 2015, Brussels Environment, the public administration responsible for environment and energy in the Brussels Capital Region, has been working on a support scheme for the renovation of condominiums. The scheme builds on contacts with a large set of stakeholders and on numerous existing services and tools. Their coordination combined with an upgrade of the successful “Sustainable building facilitator” coaching service gave birth to the Brussels’ one-stop-shop.

PROJECT ID

One-stop-shop name	Sustainable Building Facilitator (Faciliteur Bâtiment Durable)
One-stop-shop location	Brussels Capital Region, comprising 19 municipalities, including the City of Brussels (1.2 million inhabitants)
Business Model	Coordination model
Legal status of the project company	Regional public service
Project sponsors	EU Horizon 2020 programme, Brussels Capital Region
Types of residential buildings targeted	Condominiums in private co-ownership with a focus on buildings containing 10 to 50 housing units.
Cost of energy renovation works in the area	Deep renovation in medium-sized condominiums: €30,000 – 40,000 per unit. For smaller buildings, the cost per household tends to be higher, for larger buildings, lower.
Project kick-off	The Brussels one-stop-shop is an upgrade of existing services. The pilot was launched in 2018 with 4 condominiums and the final version of the one-stop-shop will be launched in 2021.
Number of refurbishments performed	Since January 2018, the Sustainable Building Facilitator has provided basic advice to some 3,500 clients per year. Four condominiums have received a tailor-made support and eight more are being followed by the renovation coaches. Due to the complicated decision-making process spreading over several years, we expect to complete the renovation in at least 3 condominiums by the end of 2021.



LOCAL POLICY OBJECTIVES IN A NUTSHELL

In April 2019, the Brussels Region voted a 2050 Renovation Strategy. It is a regional contribution to the National Energy and Climate Plan, setting the building performance goal at 100kWh/m²/year for 2050. The target for reducing the greenhouse gas emissions is set at 40% for 2030 and 95% for 2050 (compared to 1990).

An average renovation rate of 6% per year is necessary to achieve this target, i.e. six times higher than the 2019 rate. The strategy will make **home renovations mandatory starting in 2025**. Ahead of this deadline, the region implements various activities to raise awareness amongst condominium owners and building managers.

The main pillar of the Brussels Region renovation strategy is the implementation of a mandatory 5-step renovation plan. In 2025, the Energy Performance Certificate¹ (EPC) will become an obligation for every home. It will be delivered with a roadmap for the specific home towards an EPC level C (100 kWh/m²/y in primary energy), to be reached by 2050. This regional renovation strategy further contains 34 action sheets, from general to specific actions for each target group, all converging towards the upcoming obligation and putting in place support mechanisms for homeowners. For condominiums, the actions range from a specific EPC for multi-apartment buildings to an interactive website offering tools and templates as well as revamped financial products such as the Brussels Green loan, the renovation grant and the energy grant².



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WHAT SERVICES DOES THE ONE-STOP-SHOP PROVIDE TO HOMEOWNERS?

Engagement process	✓
Energy renovation and financial plan	✓
Coordination of the renovation process	✓
Long-term and affordable financing	✓
Guaranteed results & post-work monitoring	✗

1. www.certibru.com/en/epb-certificate-residential-house-apartment-brussels/epb-certificate-residential-house-apartment-brussels-information

2. https://environnement.brussels/sites/default/files/user_files/strategie_reno_fr.pdf



Engagement process

The one-stop-shop has activated professional networks of building managers and co-owners who promote the service towards their members. The Sustainable Building Facilitator is now a well-known service receiving a constant amount of requests from homeowners. However, a new, broader communication campaign is planned for 2021. Homeowners or building managers contact the one-stop-shop by email or phone and briefly explain their request. The starting point of the coaching process is a first visit to the building by an energy coach and a social mediator.

Energy renovation and financial plan

After the energy and sustainability check of the building, the coach prepares a report with at least three renovation scenarios including the costs and discusses the optimal choice with the building manager and the representatives of co-owners. Later on, the coach presents the chosen scenario to all co-owners at the general assembly where the final decision is taken. For ambitious projects, two meetings are very often necessary. The co-owners' association then signs a contract with the one-stop-shop, to formalise the collaboration and establish the conditions of access to the service.

The renovation plan includes all additional studies necessary before starting the refurbishment. For ambitious energy refurbishments, the one-stop-shop coach will stress the importance of working with an architect, which many condominiums avoid contracting because of extra costs. A pro-bono architect can help condominiums in a precarious state. Brussels Environment is developing the pro bono program to be launched in 2021.

The coach will also offer an overview of all existing financing schemes available in the Brussels Region (the Brussels green loan, subsidies, etc.). In the future, the one-stop-shop will have an accreditation to provide more tailor-made financial advice adapted to the homeowner's situation.

Coordination of the renovation process

The energy coach follows all stages of the renovation process, supporting the architect in charge of the project. However, for the time being, the coach does not provide any guarantee of the quality of works (the issue is currently being discussed).

The one-stop-shop does not have a direct contract with suppliers. In the future, the Ecobuild Cluster (a publicly funded cluster grouping 200 sustainable building professional members) will be in charge of coordinating the supply side on behalf of the one-stop-shop. It will provide homeowners with a list of suppliers, an interactive tool to find the right practitioner and an online quoting service. Extending their market is of interest to the members of the cluster.

Long-term and affordable financing

Homeowners can benefit from the Brussels Green Loan. Furthermore, the regional subsidies will be adapted to condominiums. This product has specifically been designed for energy efficiency measures. The Green Loan is a Brussels Environment product, managed in partnership with a cooperative bank (Credal) and the Housing Fund. The Green Loan can be combined with other energy and renovation grants. Energy grants provided by Brussels Environment are available for individual measures: the higher the ambition the higher the grant.

Guaranteed results & post-work monitoring

The contract between the one-stop-shop and the co-owner association outlines the ambition of the refurbishment. The coach will provide a monitoring manual for the owners and the building manager. The co-owner association will have to prove the results through technical documents and pictures. In case the condominium has worked with a regional pro-bono architect, he/she will give the guarantee of results. The one-stop-shop could develop further technical solutions (still to be determined).

BEHIND THE SCENES: HOW BRUSSELS CAPITAL REGION DEVELOPED ITS ONE-STOP-SHOP STEP-BY-STEP

Market Gap Analysis

The first step towards a one-stop-shop was a complete market gap analysis, conducted in 2017. At that time, the Brussels Region already had **two public services** supporting citizens in the home renovation process:

- **Homegrade:** for private homeowners and small condominiums of up to six units.
- **Sustainable Building Facilitator:** for the service sector, public building owners and tenants, architects and consultants, social housing companies and private co-owner associations.

In addition, nine associations known as the **Housing Network** acted as renovation facilitators in specific neighbourhoods of the city.

Despite all the available help, the renovation rate remained very low, especially in condominiums representing 40% of the housing units.

Condominiums are a target group hard to get in contact with and experience many difficulties with their management in general. Moreover, the number of existing actors and initiatives does not make it easy for homeowners to know where to start and who to ask for advice.

We also revealed the **lack of trust** between all parties as a major barrier.



Business model

Based on the results of the market gap analysis we chose an iterative process to develop the one-stop-shop for condominiums. We organised a number of workshops and meetings with stakeholders and target groups. In 2018 we started a pilot project involving four condominiums (out of 15 condominiums foreseen in the beginning) that allowed for testing the one-stop-shop methodology and tools. We will officially launch the one-stop-shop in the first semester of 2021. During the first two years, the coaching method will be regularly adapted according to the results we will obtain.

Following a standardised process, each project will require on average 10 to 15 days of coaching which includes:

- **A coaching service** for homeowners and building managers through every stage of the renovation project.
- **A coordination of the supply side** through the involvement of the Ecobuild Cluster.

In the first years of its operation, the one-stop-shop services will be free of charge for condominiums. In the second phase, these may partly become a paid service. The Region will select, through a public tender in the second semester of 2020, a one-stop-shop provider who will be able to charge a fee for its services.

The one-stop-shop will emerge from the already existing Sustainable Building Facilitator. This service was launched in 2006 and gives technical advice to condominiums and building professionals.

Brussels Environment will bear 100% of the costs.

The total budget for the Sustainable Building Facilitator is €1.8 million per year. The one-stop-shop that will be launched in 2021 with an estimated team of 16 people will cost **€500,000 per year**, with little development costs, as the basic version of the service is already up and running.

In addition to architects, engineers and energy experts, the one-stop-shop team will also include social mediators. The 'human factor' has been identified as being very important to trigger renovations, especially during the recruitment and decision-making phase in a condominium.

An interactive website such as CoachCopro¹³ by Paris Climate Agency will be developed with a specific budget of €70,000. The city of Liège has already adapted the tool for the Belgian context in the framework of the ACE-Retrofitting project⁴.

Key partnerships

In order to build trust, a **network connecting renovation professionals and target groups** was established. In addition, a working group, bringing together public administrations, the private and associative sector, was created to better coordinate the multitude of players on the supply side.