

## Relevance of behavioural actions and EU policy: benefits and snowballing effects

Behavioural measures refer to policies, programmes and initiatives aimed at changing behaviour related to energy use, including energy-efficient habits, smart technologies, low-carbon solutions and awareness of consumption patterns. Their importance has been demonstrated through energy-saving campaigns across Europe. While technologies, standards and financial incentives provide the structural backbone for reducing demand, effectiveness often depends on active engagement by citizens, households and businesses.

The aim is to explain, through evidence and factual analysis, why local and regional actors should support or implement behavioural measures that promote changes in energy use habits, consumption patterns, purchasing decisions, and renovation choices.

Over the past two decades, energy behaviour campaigns have shown quantifiable impacts. Evaluations of EU-wide programmes show that when behavioural insights are combined with education, equity provisions, and targeted communication, their effect on energy demand can rival the impact of purely technical interventions (Figure 1). The aggregated evidence compiled confirms that behavioural measures typically achieve savings of 8–15%, with country-level variations reflecting differences in design, institutional support, and citizen engagement mechanisms. Results range from 5–10% in Western Europe to 10–20% in Northern and Central Europe, with some exceptional short-term savings of 15–18% for gas consumption during crisis-driven national campaigns. However, less empirical evidence was found for Eastern and South-Eastern European countries, where documented evaluations of behavioural campaigns remain scarce.

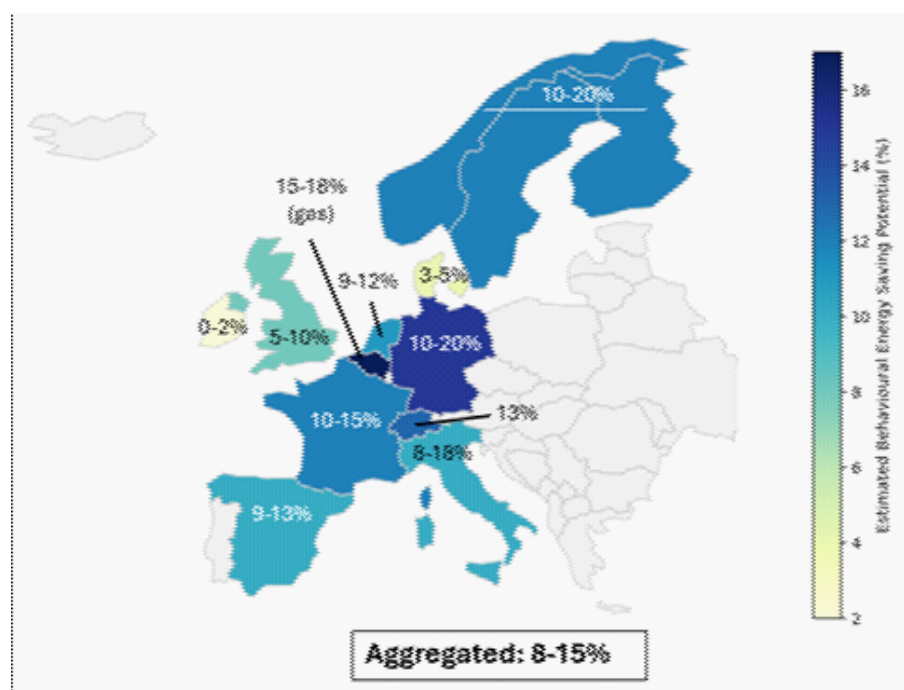


Figure 1. Estimated behavioural energy-saving potential in Europe.

Despite advances in behavioural insights, significant gaps persist. Existing collections are often unsystematic, lack country coverage and provide limited analysis of behavioural dimensions. Additionally, conducting impact assessments is necessary to measure effectiveness. This involves collecting baseline data and using metrics like reduced carbon emissions and cost savings for quantitative evaluation. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of behavioural changes is another critical aspect. While behavioural interventions can initiate short-term shifts, maintaining changes requires reinforcement to sustain behaviours for lasting impact.

Designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating behavioural energy campaigns is central to the mission of the **Energy Behaviour Forum**, which supports local and regional authorities in integrating behavioural insights into energy efficiency interventions.