



Energy Caravan, Freiburg's path towards future- proof building stock

Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany

IN A NUTSHELL

Through the Energy Caravan, the City of Freiburg is working to climate-proof its building sector. The Energy Caravan enables Freiburg's climate action team to inform homeowners of their individual options when contemplating major renovations of private buildings and to support the implementation of those renovations, for example by facilitating financial support, thus allowing the administration to effectively reach out to citizens.

Building refurbishments for climate neutrality by 2035

Freiburg's climate goal is to reach climate neutrality by 2035. In this context, the city is implementing two main strategies: increasing the available funds and subsidies to approximately 120 million euros by 2028, and promoting renewable energy and refurbishment of the building stock.

In 2019, Freiburg published the city's climate protection plan, which proposes phasing out natural gas in the heating sector and promotes refurbishment of the building stock to increase the city's renovation rate to 3%. However, the city is aware that a climate-neutral energy supply cannot be achieved without the engagement of all citizens and other stakeholders. For this reason, Freiburg has invested in reducing energy consumption in buildings through its "climate-friendly living" programme. It has provided financial grants and free initial consultations for energy-related building refurbishments since 2002. The programme offers advice on:

- Building an optimally insulated shell
- Efficient and renewable heating and ventilation
- Local production of renewable energy

Moreover, since 2017, Freiburg has been participating in the energy caravan campaign to motivate as many citizens as possible to join the fight against climate change.



FREIBURG



Wind turbines in the background and the tower of Freiburg Cathedral, © Michael Spiegelhalter (2005, <https://www.spiegelhalter.eu/>)

Population:

232,000

Area:

153.1 km²

Signatory to the Covenant of Mayors

since:
2008

Overall CO₂ emissions reduction target:

60% GHG emissions
reduction by 2030
95% GHG emissions
reduction by 2050

Energy Caravan: engaging citizens in the transition

Energy Caravan is a municipal energy consultation campaign designed to increase the rate of energy-efficient refurbishments of private buildings, thus reducing energy consumption and CO2 emissions. Freiburg launched its first campaign in 2019, allocating approximately €60,000 for energy consultations during the campaign. Under this framework, Freiburg provides free energy advice to owners of freestanding or semi-detached houses in selected neighbourhoods – ideally ones with around 400 households.

Consultations take place on site and cover matters relating to building fabric and use. Because of the neighbourhood approach, the Energy Caravan is just as suitable for municipalities with fewer than 3,000 inhabitants as for big cities. In terms of average impact, 25% of homeowners take up the municipal offer of an energy consultation, and 60% go on to implement measures.

Partnering with non-profit organisations to engage with citizens

The local authority has been working with fesa e.V., a regional non-profit organisation located in Freiburg, to facilitate implementation of the campaign in the city. Fesa's long-standing experience with local citizen-led climate action has enabled the municipality to develop detailed and personalised refurbishment campaigns.

The organisation is in charge of contacting homeowners in the selected neighbourhoods on behalf of the City of Freiburg and offering free advice from qualified and independent energy consultants. The initial communication is in the form of an individual letter signed by the Mayor of Freiburg. The letter describes the standardised campaign approach and invites citizens to attend a local kick-off event. Fesa then contacts homeowners by phone to gauge their interest in making an appointment for an energy consultation.

Lessons learnt and next steps

The first five campaigns took place in Freiburg's outer suburbs. By the end of 2024, the city will have run two additional campaigns in urban areas, closer to the city centre. The first five campaigns are expected to reduce GHG emissions by 1,250 tonnes per year. Lessons and feedback from the campaigns have helped to optimise the Energy Caravan in the City of Freiburg. This process shows that the campaign can be adjusted to include specific neighbourhood requirements, such as district heating and serial refurbishments.

Freiburg will continue campaigns to promote renovations in the city, aiming to achieve the action plan objective of renovating at least 3% of the building stock each year. In 2023, two campaigns are scheduled to reach out to the urban districts of Kappel and Haslach-Haid. In 2024, an eighth campaign will address the district of Hochdorf. These campaigns will assist the municipality to future-proof the building stock and contribute effectively to the overarching plan of a climate-neutral Freiburg by 2035.

In summary, the City of Freiburg Energy Caravan is a prime example of highly effective municipal climate action. It is benefitting from a tried-and-tested campaign approach, drawing on Fesa's experience of supporting more than 100 municipalities with more than 200 campaigns. Through the campaigns, the city is providing an important advisory service for its citizens at a time of massively increased energy prices.

KEY FIGURES

2019: Start of the campaign

5 campaigns implemented by 2022 (urban districts of Munzingen, Tiengen, Opfingen, Waldsee and Waltershofen)

486 consultations performed

Expected results: **-1,250 tonnes** of GHG emissions per year, equivalent to **450,000 litres** of heating oil OR **450,000 m³** of natural gas per year

FINANCING THE PROJECT

€12,000 – 15,000 per campaign – fully covered by the City of Freiburg

USEFUL LINKS

- » <https://www.freiburg.de/pb/1734319.html>
- » <https://www.freiburg.de/pb/1163661.html>
- » <https://www.freiburg.de/pb/432117.html>
- » <https://www.freiburg.de/pb/Lde/881080.html>
- » <https://www.fesa.de/projekte/klimaschutzkampagnen/energiekarawane/>
- » <https://www.climatealliance.org/activities/campaigns/energy-caravan.html> (EN)

CONTACT

City of Freiburg: Iris Basche,
iris.basche@stadt.freiburg.de

fesa e.V.: Isabella Goletzko, goletzko@fesa.de

Climate Alliance: Jan Schwarz,
j.schwarz@klimabuendnis.org