

## **Informal session on multiple benefits, ECEEE Summer Study, 4 June 2015**

### **Present:**

Johannes Thema, Wuppertal Institute  
Stefan Thomas, Wuppertal Institute  
Jack Hulme, BRE  
Peter Bach, Danish Energy Agency  
Niall Kerr, University of Leeds  
Charles Michaelis, Databuild  
Melanie Slade, IEA  
Regina Betz, Zurich University of Applied Sciences  
Dominique Osso, EDF  
Theresa Weinsziehr, University of Leipzig  
Catherine Cooremans, University of Geneva  
Yann Blumer, Zurich University of Applied Sciences  
Stephen Berry, University of South Australia  
Anise Sacranie  
Gavin Killip, University of Oxford  
Nick Eyre, University of Oxford  
Tina Fawcett, University of Oxford (facilitator & note taker)

Plus a few other people whose names I didn't catch including people from the Swedish Energy Agency, Danish energy management company, Danish ecological NGO.

### **Requests for information & forthcoming events**

Theresa Weinsziehr, University of Leipzig (co-ordinating evidence group for the IEA) would like evidence on multiple benefits: [weinsziehr@wifa.uni-leipzig.de](mailto:weinsziehr@wifa.uni-leipzig.de)

Johannes Thema, is undertaking a Horizon 2020 project on multiple benefits (COMBI) and would like feedback on the tool they are developing via this survey:

<http://wupperinst.limequery.net/index.php/survey/index/sid/416989/newtest/Y/lang/en>

Charles Michaelis is leading a panel on multiple benefits at the IEPEC conference August 2015. IEA and IEPPEC ([www.iepec.org](http://www.iepec.org)) are working together to develop an improved approach to evaluation of multiple benefits and is aiming to report on progress at the IEPPEC conference in Amsterdam in June 2016

### **Notes from introductions**

Quite a number of the participants were involved in some way in the IEA multiple benefits book recently published, IEA workshop and ongoing work to develop the IEA initiative further. Several hundred people were involved in providing the evidence base for that book - the question is now, where to take it next. The multiple benefits arguments can have particular resonance in developing countries, where energy efficiency is not high on the agenda. This is particularly the case for fuel security / reduced costs of imports arguments, and outdoor air pollution - notably in China.

### **More research needed?**

There seemed to be few areas where people felt that knowledge was complete enough for no new research

to be needed. There is better evidence on some multiple benefits than others - e.g. the benefits of reduced building maintenance are better understood than those from increased productivity (which could be far larger). Even in areas where the scientific research or economic evaluation of a particular benefit/ impact may be settled, the issue of transferring results from one country / context to another was still felt to be insufficiently well understood.

However, it was agreed that carbon benefits of energy savings are well enough understood and not a research priority area.

Macro-economic analysis of benefits was not generally thought to be a particularly useful tool in making the argument for multiple benefits. However, there was debate about this - given that any positive impact on GDP could result in a very big number - can these be ignored?

### **Health benefits - indoor**

There was thought to be quite a lot of data on this for some air quality issues - but still the issue of how data from one national context is relevant to another. The New Zealand study on the health benefits of energy efficiency is much reported - but it is too influential? A large-scale UK study looking at the health benefits of a insulation and heating improvement programme (Warm Front) was inconclusive.

### **Typologies and frameworks**

Hundreds of multiple benefits have been identified. Therefore if you are talking to people about these, it is easy for confusion to arise. There was a call for a typology and a common framework for benefits, which would incorporate analysis, quantification and communication.

### **Costs and benefits**

Distribution of costs and benefits is uneven - the distributional impacts are important, not just net benefits. Who benefits, and are they the decision-maker? The same intervention can have costs for one actor and benefits for another. Governance of this?

Which benefits can be quantified, and which cannot? What do we do about the benefits which cannot be quantified, how do they get included in a tool or a decision-making process?

The fact that some benefits are difficult to quantify is not a unique problem in decision-making. Lots of business decisions include hard-to-quantify elements, and yet decisions are made.

### **Changing the focus**

There are policies whose focus is very far from energy efficiency, which nonetheless deliver energy efficiency - e.g. health policies which pay for insulation as the most cost-effective means of delivering health benefits. Can we map these policies?

### **Communicating around multiple benefits**

There was an example of multiple benefits evidence being presented to very high level decision makers, and their reaction was, if you're having to add in this many things to make your case, you must be desperate. What are the risks of using multiple benefit arguments to increase action on energy efficiency?

Could we learn from communication strategies used to promote other 'unsexy' ideas like health and safety in buildings?

What is the iPhone of multiple benefits? Can we create a simple tool which communicates these ideas (however complex and involved the data, analysis and ranking which sits behind the tool)?

### **Terminology**

Multiple benefits / multiple impacts / co-benefits

There was some disagreement as to which language was thought to be most appropriate - the majority of those who commented supported the use of 'multiple impacts'.

### **Disbenefits / negative impacts**

If you are going to talk about benefits, then it is hard to justify not talking about any disbenefits which there may be. These need to be acknowledged and analysed. It might also be important to acknowledge that the multiple benefits claimed could be delivered by initiatives other than energy efficiency.

### **General discussion**

- Distinguish between different types of benefits - and which ones matter to which actors?
- Different actors (and individuals / organisations) will value benefits differently.
- Local level analysis is important - how will the benefits affect which actors in this local area?
- Variation of national contexts: Some contexts are more similar than others - for example impacts relating to energy efficiency in industry are likely to be much more similar across EU countries than in, say, residential buildings.