

Concept for a campaign to promote balcony power plants in Germany: #Pimp your balcony with solar!

The past few weeks have been marked by tough political disputes in German politics about planned measures for the building sector, which aim to reduce CO₂ from heating in private households. Although all democratic political parties have made a commitment to the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement, the discussion did not lead to factual disputes about the best way to achieve them. The discussion was received very unfavourably by the population. It is to be feared that many citizens will question the climate targets and the energy transition as a whole due to the dispute in a poisoned political atmosphere, instead of talking about **opportunities** and **innovations** as a contribution to **climate neutrality**.

Why?

On the other hand, it is positive that policy is currently underway to simplify the operation of balcony power plants, easy plug-and-play installations, by removing a number of formal hurdles and permitting more capacity. This should enable not only homeowners, but **also tenants** to play a more **active role in the energy transition**. Once the political decisions have been made, a **major campaign** could accompany the rapid and pragmatic implementation of the new regulations to **reap the low-hanging fruits** and send a positive signal:

Campaign

Target group

The campaign is aimed at young tenants, especially students or apprentices in Germany, who would like to play a positive and **active role in the energy transition** and live in student residences or shared flats.

Message

Every citizen can contribute to the **energy transition** by strengthening renewable energies, produce electricity itself, reduce energy consumption and change habits. Balcony power plants are a simple and inexpensive way to promote renewable energies by **becoming an actor in the energy transition**. At the same time, dealing with the topic, taking care of your own energy production system and identifying electricity guzzlers in your household can lead to questioning your own energy consumption and initiate change.

Campaign idea

The target group is motivated to install a balcony power plant that they receive for free (or at an extremely discounted price). The campaign pursues the goal **'500,000 plants up on the balcony!'** (#pimpyourbalconywithsolar) within a limited period of time. The target group has a particularly high interest in a sustainable future, a high level of social media competence and a financial interest in saving energy, as they do not have their own regular income yet. The generation can be an intermediary (Spread the word!) to older generations (their parents and grandparents) and motivate them to do the same.

Implementation

The campaign is to be carried out over a limited period of time (several weeks/a few months) and goes with a comprehensive social media campaign by the organizers. **Students and apprentices in their houses can apply for a free balcony power plant, as long as they have a balcony or other mounting option** (first come, first served). To achieve the widest possible reach, beneficiaries will be obliged to **communicate about the initiative via their social media channels**:

Beneficiaries **actively participate in the social media campaign**: videos, pictures and stories are to be distributed via various channels, explaining the advantages of balcony power plants and showing how easy it is to produce electricity yourself. Content/message could be:

- > It's easy to install, look & see
- > Calculate savings
- > Show the growth of the total energy production in numbers
- > Recognize power guzzlers in your home and ban them

Financing/funding

In an initiative, producers/distributors of mini solar energy systems provide the initiators (e.g. joint campaign of foundations and national lotteries that support environmental projects) with up to 500,000 systems at a preferential price to enable a high number of plant installations at short notice. The initiators provide the plants to the beneficiaries for free. In return, the supporting producers/distributors receive visibility within the framework of the campaign.

Risks/conditions

- Balcony power plants are not a panacea for the energy transition, but they can be a concrete contribution to the energy transition by substituting up to 10-15% of a household's electricity demand and foster renewables.
- The campaign can give citizens a more **active role** (empowerment) and is to strengthen **awareness** about energy consumption.
- The campaign addresses the more active groups in society when it comes to energy transition; **challenge remains** to reach out to other groups and communities that are sceptical or more reluctant.

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June 2023

