



# POWERPOOR

Empowering Energy Poor Citizens through Joint Energy Initiatives

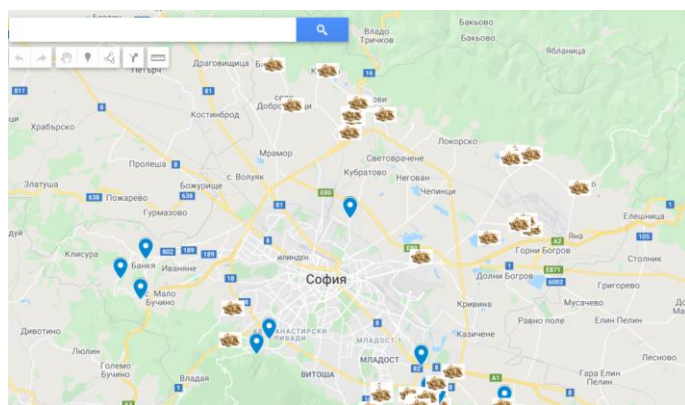
## POWERPOOR Key Results in Bulgaria

Working on the ground with energy-poor households and policymakers to mitigate energy poverty.

[www.powerpoor.eu](http://www.powerpoor.eu)

## The POWERPOOR Project, the 'Improvement of ambient air quality in Sofia Municipality by replacing solid fuel heating devices with environmentally friendly alternatives' Project, and Sofia Municipality

Being part of the **Improvement of ambient air quality in Sofia Municipality by replacing solid fuel heating devices with environmentally friendly alternatives** Project of Sofia Municipality, SOFENA had an obligation to monitor the process of replacement. This provided the team with an opportunity to visit households and to see the living conditions of the families. Whenever it seemed that a certain family is energy poor or vulnerable, an Energy Supporter was also invited to visit. He/ She used the POWERPOOR Toolkit in order to evaluate the situation and to offer soft measures for improvement of the energy efficiency of the house and for reducing energy consumption. Thus, the synergy of the two projects added value to both, while the **Improvement of ambient air quality in Sofia Municipality** project was supplying a modern heating system, the POWERPOOR approach proposed measures to enhance further the energy efficiency and was able to identify energy poor citizens who could benefit from the POWERPOOR Toolkit.



## The POWERPOOR Project and the nZEB Roadshow for energy efficiency

The notion of energy communities as legal entities is very new in Bulgaria. In fact, there is no legal framework for their establishment yet. Consequently, there is very little awareness about the possible benefits of joint energy initiatives among the citizens of Bulgaria. SOFENA team joined forces with the nZEB Roadshow in order to disseminate the POWERPOOR Toolkit and to promote innovative financing schemes and the POWERFUND tool as a way to finance Collective Energy Initiatives. On June 2 – 3, 2022, in the City of Burgas was held the National Conference on Sustainable Financing of Projects for Energy Efficiency and RES. As part of the conference exhibition, a POWERPOOR stand was build offering information on energy poverty and advice about energy efficiency, and how citizens can use the POWERPOOR Toolkit as a way to improve their households' power consumption. In addition, the Conference programme included a lecture **POWERPOOR Toolkit for energy poor citizens** discussing especially Collective energy initiatives and the POWERFUND tool. The talk was attended not only by experts in the field but also by many local citizens who expressed interest in being kept informed in the future about the possibilities for the establishment of energy cooperatives in Bulgaria.



## The POWERPOOR Project and the City of Vidin

Located on the bank of the river Danube and lacking adequate infrastructure to connect it to the major economic centres of Bulgaria, the Municipality of Vidin has been severely affected by an economic crisis leading to a progressive depopulation of the region. Today the Municipality of Vidin is the poorest in Bulgaria, with high unemployment rate, few business opportunities, and aging population. Since there is still no legal definition on energy poverty in Bulgaria, it is difficult to estimate the levels of energy poverty, especially in areas like Vidin, where income poverty is on a steady rise.

The Mayor of Vidin approached the POWERPOOR project expressing interest in learning more about energy poverty and how to identify energy poor citizens. On July 13 – 14, 2022, together with the mayor's office of Vidin, SOFENA organised a special POWERPOOR training session for the employees of the Municipality of the city of Vidin. The event was attended by 20 participants who work for different departments and are responsible for various aspects of the city's administration. All attendees were very active during the discussions and expressed interest in establishing a Local Energy Poverty Alleviation office in Vidin. (This is still to be done after the 2023 elections in Bulgaria.) As a result of the training 19 Energy Supporters and one Energy Mentor (including the deputy Mayor Dessislava Todorova) were certified. The trained Energy Supporters were very interested in the POWERPOOR Toolkit and its application. They discovered that using it, it is not only easier to measure the level of energy poverty of a given household but also it is possible to provide right away a useful advice on soft measures, which would have an immediate effect on the household comfort and their energy saving. The Municipality of Vidin has incorporated activities related to energy poverty alleviation in its work. Their results can be used as an inspiration for other municipalities to tackle energy poverty.



## The POWERPOOR Project and the Association of the Bulgarian Energy Agencies (ABEA), The 16th National Conference of ABEA, Nov. 29 – 30, 2022

Since its very beginning, the POWERPOOR Project has been benefitting from the vast network of ABEA and has been informing the members of the Association about the project's activities and results. The topic of the 16th National Conference of ABEA, held in Sofia, Bulgaria, on Nov. 29 – 30, 2022, was *Energy Efficiency and RES – the challenges of the energy transition and energy poverty*. Clearly, a great opportunity for the POWERPOOR Project to present its latest achievements. On Nov. 30, 2022, SOFENA took part in the Conference with two lectures related to energy communities in the EU, their definition, and their legal framework (Nadya Nikolova-Deme), and one talk presenting the development of the POWERPOOR National Road Map for alleviating Energy Poverty in Bulgaria (Lilly Stammmler). The Conference was exceptionally well attended, in person and remotely, and it was covered in the media. More information about it can be found on the website of ABEA: [new.abea-bg.org](http://new.abea-bg.org).

The event proved useful for the popularisation of the POWERPOOR approach, since after it several cities (Sitovo, Radnevo, Shabla, Valchidol) decided to include the POWERPOOR approach as a good practise in the chapter on energy poverty of their programmes for energy efficiency/ for promotion of energy from RES and biofuels.

