Evaluation of Information and Communication (I&C) activities of DG TREN - ManagEnergy

A Final Report to DG TREN

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Contents

Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of this evaluation of information and communication activities of DG TREN under the ManagEnergy Initiative has been to determine, as far as possible given limitations of information availability, time-scale and resources, information on the following:

- Continuing validity of the initiative in terms of strategic need
- Level of awareness
- Achievements and impacts
- Perceived value to users
- Additionality [EU added value]
- Lessons learnt from experience to date in terms of functionality and content
- Overall quality and value for money for the EC

The research work comprised desk-based contextual analysis, an online survey of users, analysis of user statistics provided by the web service contractor, views of the ManagEnergy Reflection Group, discussions with DG TREN personnel and information from interviews conducted with the two contractors responsible for the ManagEnergy web services. The remaining elements of ManagEnergy (workshops, Annual Conferences and collection of best practice material) were not included in this evaluation.

The evidence provided by the research suggests the following:

Continuing validity of the initiative in terms of strategic need
The need for improved dissemination and exchange of best practice among energy actors (and in particular local and regional ones) remains valid given the continuing concerns over meeting EU targets for sustainable energy and the considerable market barriers that still exist. The role of local and regional actors in overcoming and reducing these barriers is becoming increasingly important, so dissemination products are an essential component to provide EU-wide promotion and help to share best practice. The demand is demonstrated in the significant usage of the ManagEnergy website, as evidenced by the user survey and website statistics. The continuing need is also supported by the views of the ManagEnergy Reflection Group. It is important that the scope, in terms of the RES/RUE[1] action at a local/regional level, is retained. This does not mean to say there is no room for expansion, far from it in fact, but rather that the unique brand, or niche, is preserved. One way this might be achieved is by the introduction of thematic sections.

Level of awareness
The number of registered users has increased steadily since the website was launched in 2002. There are more than 6,000 contacts on the mailing list and 2,000 organisations registered on the database. In comparison, there are fewer than 4,300 registrants for the weekly DG TREN Newsletter. Given that the latter list is probably a fair measure of a core of energy actors across the EU, the size of the ManagEnergy register is impressive. Data

[1] Renewable Energy Sources/Rational Use of Energy

contained in the web statistics shows that a significant number of external websites include a hyperlink to the Managenergy.net site, demonstrating a high level of connectivity and comparing favourably with other similar sites. The visibility of the .tv site is much less. However, close to 40,000 video presentations have been seen by almost 10,000 viewers in 2004. Participation among the EU-15 is consistent with, or exceeds, that which would be expected from population size, whereas participation among New Member States, while encouraging, generally shows relative under-representation. In general however, there are no examples of critical under-representation.

Achievements and impacts
A measure of the achievements and impact of the web service is provided by the number of users and the positive responses received to the user survey. Strong participation by New Member States is particularly encouraging. The number of reports hosted on the website has increased steadily since launch. The degree of integration and therefore synergy between the web services and other aspects of ManagEnergy is high. The relatively weak uptake of the web chats is not necessarily a cause for concern as a degree of experimentation may be considered desirable.

Perceived value to users
The user survey provides ample evidence of the high value placed on the web service by its users. For example some 60 per cent of respondents find it the most important or one of the most important websites for information on energy efficiency and renewables. Overall, respondents felt that the website offers a high quality, user-friendly service. Positive options on the usefulness of the content extended across all sections. For the .tv website, the live broadcast elements were the most favoured. The user survey showed that users find case studies valuable, and would like more, perhaps better structured examples, to be provided. There is some scope for improving the navigation of the site as users can find the current structure confusing, and a little cumbersome. Many users would prefer the site to be structured into thematic sections. The survey also revealed an appetite for more information on EU policies, programmes and legislation.

Additionality
Participation is seen across all member states, with the degree of usage reflecting population size. The significant number of users and regular users indicates that what is provided represents a useful service in addition to any national dissemination sources. DG TREN has been careful to focus on activity at an appropriate level to preserve EU added value, where necessary encouraging actors at national and local level to take the lead (in providing translations for example).

Lessons learnt from experience to date in terms of functionality and content
The website appears to have evolved in response to changing circumstances and feedback from both users and clients.

Overall quality and value for money for the EC
The overall quality of the service provided is high, based on level of use, together with user and stakeholder feedback. While it is difficult to make direct comparisons with other EU-

funded websites, a brief review does provide evidence that, given the resources expended on ManagEnergy web services, value for money is being achieved. This conclusion is based on the scope of the websites, breadth of audience appeal (national, sectoral), the innovative element (in particular for .tv), the large user base and volume of information made available.

Implications for the new service contracts

In addition, given that contracts for the two web services will be awarded shortly, we would draw DG TREN's attention to the following more detailed points regarding priorities for the future development of the two ManagEnergy websites:

- The homepage should be re-structured to fit the 800x600 screen resolution as it is estimated that about a third of users still use this format.
- The .tv website is significantly better than the .net site in terms of its underlying structure and code. The latter is not state of the art.
- The poor underlying structure of the .net site could be having a negative impact on download speeds.
- Accessibility (to disabled people) of neither site meets minimum standards, although again the .tv site is significantly better.
- However, any significant revisions of the structure to bring the .net site up to current standards of best practice should be considered carefully in terms of cost/benefit.

The following indicators of success are proposed for the new contract:

Indicator	Objective/Impact	Action/output
Total number of users	Maintain current rate of growth to attain 12,000 registrants by end of contract period.	Increased publicity at energy events and targeted e-mail campaigns.
Composition of the user community	Increase registration of: - Public administrations, and - Schools, to comprise 50% of all users by end 2007. Increase registration of: - Organisations in New Member States, such that the participation rate is proportionate to population size, by end 2007.	As above, but targeted at specific potential registrants through national and European representative and trade bodies, e.g. education ministries, local government associations etc.
Expansion of content on the .net website	- Continuously add new case studies, achieving representative coverage of all relevant themes and presented using an upgraded, standard template. - 500 case studies to be available	- Agree standard format and structure with EC - Email campaign to solicit contributions from registered users

	by end 2007	
Availability of website content (.net and .tv) in languages other than English	Increase the number of content items (documents, reports, case studies, videos etc.) available in languages other than English.	Establish section inviting users to vote for translated documents as a means of gauging demand and applying pressure to local and regional actors to take the lead in this respect.
Usage of features on the .net website	- Increase use of the Partner Search facility by a significant degree. - Reduce average download time significantly on the .net website - Improve accessibility to achieve WC3 Level 2 standard by end 2005.	- Improve user-friendliness of section and promote the benefits on the website using examples of success stories. - Upgrade navigation to improve clarity and usability - Upgrade web structure and design
Usage of features on the .tv website	- Reduce volume of technical problems - Increase number of downloads - Improve accessibility to achieve WC3 Level 2 standard by end 2005.	- Work with local, regional actors to reduce demand for technical support - Advertise and promote .tv services - Upgrade web structure and design
Overall appeal and value to users	Make it easier for visitors to find material relevant to them quickly.	Establish a series of thematic sections to structure content. This might be done by user (local authority, school, Agency etc.), or by technology (solar, wind biomass etc.)
User satisfaction	Provide quantitative and qualitative evidence of high levels of user satisfaction	Using the online survey completed for this evaluation as a baseline, carry out subsequent annual surveys, using the same template to enable direct comparison.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this evaluation has been to determine, as far as possible given limitations of information availability, time-scale and resources, information on the following:

- Continuing validity of the initiative in terms of strategic need
- Level of awareness
- Achievements and impacts
- Perceived value to users
- Additionality [EU added value]
- Lessons learnt from experience to date in terms of functionality and content
- Overall quality and value for money for the EC

The evidence to be used to draw some conclusions on these questions comprises:

1. Desk-based contextual analysis to describe the genesis of the ManagEnergy web service, the strategy from which it flows and the intervention logic behind it.
2. An online survey of users, to gauge views on the website's quality and usefulness.
3. Analysis of user statistics provided by the web service contractor to reveal patterns of use.
4. The views of the ManagEnergy Reflection Group
5. Discussions with DG TREN personnel responsible for managing the ManagEnergy service
6. Information from interviews conducted with the two contractors responsible for the ManagEnergy web services, CPL and Noterik.

Our approach has been to draw on all of these sources of evidence, in particular in attempting to correlate between the information provided by the user survey and the statistics on web usage. The sequence of tasks carried out has been such that we have used the results of the survey to inform discussions with the contractors and therefore focus on emerging key issues. Similarly, the views of the Reflection Group were sought on the basis of the preliminary findings of the survey and initial analysis of the user statistics.

For each element of the research (document review, survey, statistical analysis, interviews) we have set out a number key messages. Our final analysis then summarises these and uses the evidence collated to identify:

- What is working,
- What is not, and
- Recommendations for the future.

The main component of the project is the ManagEnergy website, which has been in operation since March 2002. Following a conference held in 2001 by the Commission, the website solution was proposed as a simple and easy to use solution to address the lack of communication between actors in the energy field and to create synergies between the different Community financed programmes.

At the same time, a "Reflection Group" comprising representatives and experts were nominated who can be consulted at a strategic level by the Commission to give feedback on new initiatives and policies. This Group is not however directly linked with the management of the website.

The website has now been operational for nearly three years. It comprises two main strands: .NET which provides the information and web content, and .TV which provides web broadcasting and live coverage of conferences. .TV has only been operating for one year. The website direction is managed overall by DG TREN, in conjunction with two external consultancies for the two strands. The two separate contracts are due for renewal in late 2004, and the new tender procedures were launched in the Official Journal (OJ) in February 2004.

The website has been very successful to date in terms of its level of usage. Within three years the number of registered users has grown to more than 6,000. With the forthcoming award of the new contracts, DG TREN consider that now is an appropriate time to make a more detailed study of the website, to gauge its real value, and to help with refocus the direction of the project where appropriate in the new contracts.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

In this section we review the EU policy context that provides the strategic basis for energy-related interventions, including ManagEnergy.

The EU's energy policy has been developed to address the increase in demand for energy and security of supply issues arising from the EU's increasing dependence on energy supplied from non-EU countries because of the inability of indigenous production to keep up with demand. It also tackles the environmental damage caused by the energy supply system in particular its contribution to CO_2 emissions, and helps the competitiveness of European industry. The following targets have been set for the EU:

- doubling the share of renewable energy sources in EU energy consumption to 12 per cent by 2010,
- increasing to 22 per cent the share of electricity generated by renewable sources in the EU-15 (21 per cent in the EU-25) by 2010,
- having 5.75 per cent of biofuels in all petrol and diesel used for transport by 2010,
- stabilising energy consumption and reducing energy intensity, aiming at saving at least 1 per cent more energy each year.

However, enhanced action at Community and member state level is required if the EC are going to achieve these targets. There are considerable market barriers that exist that prevent the diffusion and take-up of the use of renewable energy sources and ways to increase energy efficiency. The role of local and regional actors in overcoming and reducing these barriers is becoming increasingly important. There is a need for action to boost energy efficiency and reduce energy intensity and to provide measures to support the promotion and development of new and renewable energy sources.

There is a lack of awareness of the benefits of sustainable energy use across the EU amongst energy users and providers. This is due to limited dissemination and promotion of best practice in this field. Stakeholders must have access to quality information which clearly indicates the economic and environmental benefits of investing and using sustainable energy products and technologies. Dissemination products are therefore, an essential component to provide EU-wide promotion and help to share best practice.

The Intelligent Energy – Europe Programme (EIE) is the Commission's main tool for achieving energy policy goals. (EIE combines the previous SAVE, ALTENER, STEER, and COOPENER programmes.) It is the support programme for *non-technological* actions in the field of energy efficiency and renewable energy sources. Energy aspects of transport are also included. The programme addresses the EU's agreed target areas for sustainable energy and contains actions to focus on and work towards achieving the targets.

The central focus of the EIE programme addresses the fact that there is a slow uptake of sustainable energy technologies, insufficient to meet EU targets. The programme provides assistance to address the non-technological barriers that still exist, in particular institutional

barriers, low levels of investment, low demand, lack of awareness and low levels of dissemination and promotion of the benefits of sustainable energy.

Three sources of information in particular provide some conclusions on the performance of EU energy initiatives that is especially relevant to the ManagEnergy initiative. These are: a report on the activities of SAVE agencies, a market impact assessment on ALTENER and the mid-term evaluation of the Energy Framework programme[2]. These included, *inter alia,* a common message that while these initiatives have been successful in terms of achieving their deliverables, dissemination of completed projects was weak and represented a significant failing. In terms of dissemination, these studies broadly concluded that:

- the results of the programmes were not being adequately disseminated to the relevant stakeholders,
- there was a lack of feedback from stakeholders for Commission decisions on new initiatives and policies,
- there was insufficient contact between stakeholders themselves.

2.1 Energy actors

The aim of the ManagEnergy Initiative today is to support the work of different actors working on renewable energy and energy demand management at local and regional levels. There are a number of local and regional energy actors across the EU, including energy agencies, municipalities, Energy Service Companies (ESCOs), consultants, Small and Medium sized Enterprises and policy makers. ManagEnergy's primary aim is to facilitate the sharing of information between the Commission and local and regional actors, and between local and regional actors themselves. It does this through its website and helpdesk and through events and publications - by providing a forum for exchange of ideas and experiences. In particular, ManagEnergy supports the collection and dissemination of good practice throughout the network. It also helps organisations to find partners to implement projects, and provides information on EU policies and funding opportunities in the energy sector.

In November 2001, a Conference was held for Local and Regional Energy Management Agencies, which confirmed that these were committed to work together in a European partnership with the Commission. The Conference concluded that there was a huge potential among the agencies to learn from each other, and other actors, but there was a need for improved communication and information dissemination on locally-relevant energy issues to enable this to happen. The ManagEnergy initiative was proposed as a simple and easy-to-use solution to address the lack of communication between actors in the energy field and to create synergies between the different Community-financed programmes. It was created to promote better communication, capacity building and replication of existing solutions. The website and database was to be part of this initiative, and was to provide information on good practice and other relevant energy data for the needs of local actors on energy efficiency, renewables and local transport, including a full list of all European energy agencies with descriptions of

[2] Report on activities of Local and Regional SAVE Energy Management Agencies,
Market impact assessment of ALTENER projects, 2004
Mid term Evaluation Of The Energy Framework Programme (1998-2002)

their main expertise, address details, etc. The Conference identified the following items to be provided by the ManagEnergy website[3]:

- Profiles, including addresses of energy agencies and other relevant organisations focusing on renewables, energy efficiency and clean urban transport at local and regional level.
- Case studies illustrating good energy practice within Europe.
- Access to relevant EU and national legislation, norms, standards, etc.
- An interactive thematic discussion forum.
- Partner search function.
- Activities related to the development of new Community energy and transport legislation and action relevant to local and regional level.
- Details of a series of thematic workshops and conferences leading to training in good practice.
- Publications produced by energy agencies and other energy and transport actors.

2.1.1 Energy agencies

Energy agencies form a set of core actors on energy efficiency and renewable energy at local and regional levels. They support the introduction of good energy management practices and the concept of sustainability at local and regional levels. The roles and responsibilities of different energy agencies vary across the EU, but include participating in transnational activities, providing information to local and national policy makers and stakeholders, providing guidance to energy consumers, energy efficiency auditing, and numerous activities based on specific local needs, such as promotion of new and innovative energy technologies. Local and regional energy agencies have considerable influence on local energy policy and decision-making. Specific priorities for energy agencies activities include:

- Raising awareness of the needs of energy efficiency and renewable energies
- Promotion of legislation
- Day-to-day co-operation with stakeholders
- Dissemination and communication
- Technology transfer and promotion of local businesses
- Mobilisation of investments
- Provision of advice and consultancy services
- Participation in public programmes
- Networking with other agencies and institutions
- Giving and receiving training and education

The ManagEnergy network features local energy agencies, National Energy Agencies, Regional Energy Agencies, SAVE Agencies and Transnational Energy Agencies.

[3] ManagEnergy European Partnership on Local and Regional Energy and Transport Action. Follow-up Action to the Conference on Local and Regional Energy Management Agencies held on 6 November 2001.

Today there are some 380 energy agencies within the ManagEnergy network, and new agencies will receive support on a regular basis, through the Intelligent Energy Europe programme. The Commission also expects to approve funding for a number of additional local and regional energy agencies in the new Member States in the coming years through the Intelligent Energy Europe programme.

2.1.2 OPET

The Organisations for the Promotion of Energy Technologies (OPET) Network is a European Commission initiative, set up in the late 1980s. Its aim is to promote the benefits of innovative energy technologies, and to promote public awareness of current energy research results. This complements the ManagEnergy initiative by providing the technological detail and information on renewable energy and energy efficiency. The OPET Network is designed to enable the smooth integration of EU policy priorities, new technological research, and market sustainability and competitiveness.

3.0 THE MANAGENERGY INITIATIVE

3.1 Introduction

ManagEnergy is managed on behalf of the European Commission, and is run by a service provider (STEM), and (via a sub-contract) a website manager (CPL Press). Support for ManagEnergy's virtual facilities is provided by Noterik, under a separate contract. The first contract for the ManagEnergy initiative was awarded to STEM for 'Support Services for European Local and Regional Energy Management Agencies'. The aim of this contract was

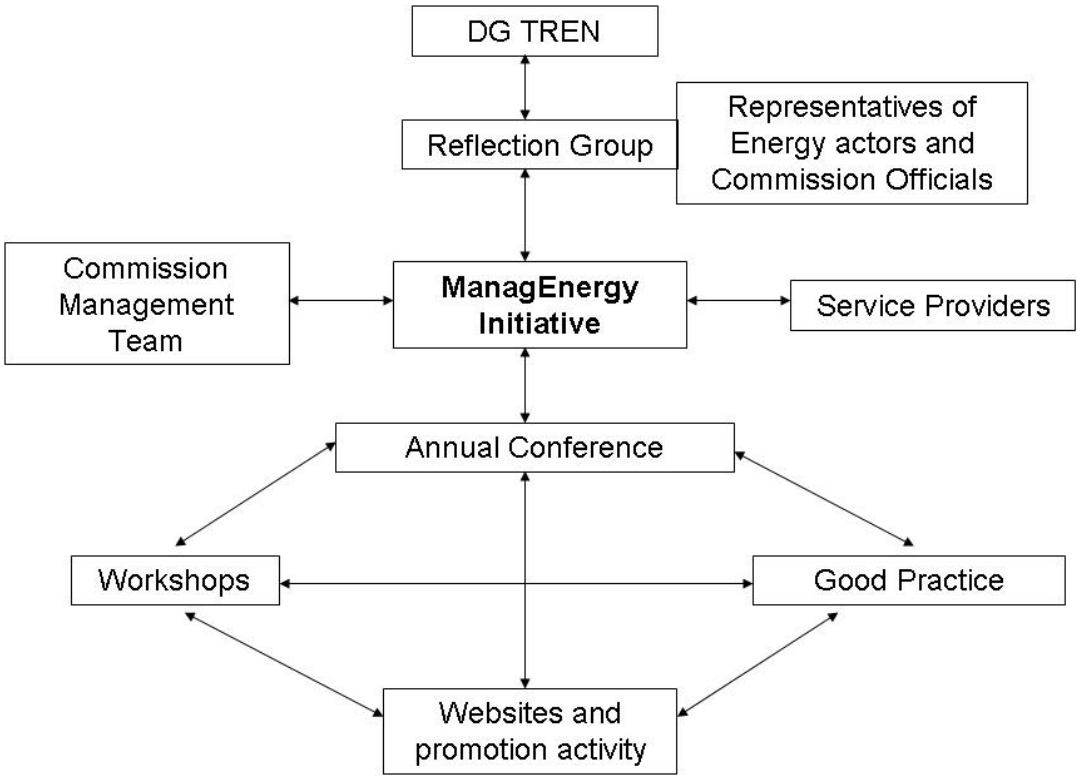
'to reinforce the impact of the implementation of Community policies on energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources through support to the existing local and regional energy management agencies.'

The focus of this support was on facilitating the transfer of expertise. This involved identifying, collecting, storing and editing good practice information, and ultimately disseminating this amongst energy management agencies and other actors.

Launched in March 2002, the ManagEnergy website (www.ManagEnergy.net) has now been operational for nearly three years. A second website, launched in the beginning of 2004, is a media server; .tv, which provides web broadcasting and live coverage of events. During the development period of the current broadcast portal and applications, (the trial period was during 2002 and 2003), a basic service was provided through the .net website, but with media files hosted on a series of other servers. In its current format, the Internet broadcast portal .tv was launched in April 2004.

The ManagEnergy initiative is run under DG TREN's Directorate D – New and Renewable Sources of Energy, Demand Management and Sustainable Development, under the Promotion and Dissemination of Programme Results unit. The following diagram shows the roles and responsibilities of the ManagEnergy team.

Figure 1 ManagEnergy Team



3.2 Reflection Group

The ManagEnergy Reflection group is composed of representatives of actors that are active on energy and transport issues at local and regional levels. They are not directly linked with the management of the website. The group includes representatives from Energy Agency Associations, Representatives from the Candidate Countries, and European Networks and Associations. The objectives of the Reflection Group[4] are to:

- Advise the Commission on Community legislation, local initiatives, partnerships and good practice that can help identify policy priorities of the EU.
- Suggest supplementary areas of action, which can be particularly recommended on the basis of the experiences at local and regional level.
- Disseminate Community policies and project results to actors at the local and regional level.

The main benefit of the Reflection Group is that locally relevant Community energy and transport legislation and action will benefit from the expertise of local actors, and local actors will benefit from better formulated Commission proposals and measures.

[4] ManagEnergy Reflection Group, www.managenergy.net/refgrp.html

3.3 Web service (.net)

The overall aim of the ManagEnergy initiative is to support the work of actors working on renewable energies and energy demand management at local and regional levels. It is based on the principal of *'think globally, act locally'*. Support provided by ManagEnergy includes dissemination of good practice, facilitating transnational co-operation based on selected themes and improving contacts between those promoting local, regional, national and European actions of relevance to local and regional energy action and development.

The original specification of the website was to improve communication between local energy agencies and the European Commission. This was then increased to include all regional and local energy actors, not just agencies. A section on local authorities has been proposed, but there have been difficulties in obtaining this information and making sure it is up to date.

Key elements of the website include good practice information, a European energy events calendar, a partner search engine, and a comprehensive Internet broadcasting service for energy events and programme information days. This initiative means that the Commissions policies and activities can be communicated to thousands of local and regional actors in real time.

Information on the site is intended to serve the needs of local and regional energy agencies as well as possible when further disseminating information and informing local decision-makers, energy consumers and other groups. The .tv site broadcasts all workshops and conferences, which are translated into several European languages. Chat discussions are organised in conjunction with the live Internet broadcasts.

3.4 www.ManagEnergy.tv – Virtual facilities

Since 2001, ManagEnergy has been using on-line services such as live internet streams and video-on-demand for communicating with the large number of actors involved. This is in line with the objectives of the White Papers on European Governance and Towards eCommission.

After the initial experience of streaming in 2001 and 2002, the Commission conducted a trial on the development of virtual facilities[5] in 2002, aimed at developing technology and practices to allow better communication between energy agencies and the Commission. The main conclusion from this trial is that the virtual facilities bring important savings in terms of money, energy, environment and time for both the event organiser and the user.

Subsequently, a contract was awarded for the virtual facility services provided, including the development of the streaming application and portal, online streaming, Video on Demand, and Audio on Demand. Over the last year this has been provided by Noterik. The contract aimed at developing virtual facilities to support the Commission in streaming 21 multilingual events on the Internet. The emphasis was on professional and user-friendly presentation of

[5] Report on the Development and use of virtual facilities, under the Commission ManagEnergy Initiative on 2001 – 2002. European Commission.

streaming and video-on-demand services on the Internet. Key requirements were to support and promote the use of virtual facilities among clients, in the form of a Help desk, FAQ page, call service, a targeted capacity building action on the use of modern information technology, and other similar support. Statistical information on the viewing of these events was also required to be collected.

The facilities were specifically required to offer a developmental approach by offering more user-friendly and cost-efficient solutions, based on the market evolutions in technology and user habits.

3.5 Costs

The budget allocations for the contracts are as follows:

- Support services for European local and regional energy management agencies, 2001. Three year contract, **968,670 EUR** (expired at end of 2004)

- 10 events from 6/11/2001 to 26/6/2003, with 7 different service contracts and 4 different service providers, in total **122,000 EUR**

- Virtual facilities for local and regional energy and transport actors, November 2003 to November 2004. 20 events over 13 months, **315,000 EUR**

For the future:

- ManagEnergy initiative: information, communication and capacity building action for energy and transport actors at local and regional levels and for selected final energy users, such as municipalities and schools, 2004. Three year contract, **1,399,000 EUR**

- ManagEnergy initiative: virtual facilities for energy and transport actors at local and regional levels, 2004. 20 events over 18 months, **318,172 EUR**

3.6 ManagEnergy development

The mid-term report on the ManagEnergy initiative concluded that the website is ***the*** key product of the whole initiative[6]. The site was found to be good, and well appreciated. The number of users has increased, and more and more information is being downloaded. The evaluation concluded that it is important to keep the site updated and feed in new information and services continuously. The ManagEnergy initiative has established increased communication and networking among agencies, as well as increased collaboration.

The conclusions from the ManagEnergy Conference in 2003 agreed that ManagEnergy should continue playing a greater role in sharing information. The link between energy agencies and municipalities should be reinforced.

[6] ManagEnergy mid-term report, December 2001 – May 2003, STEM

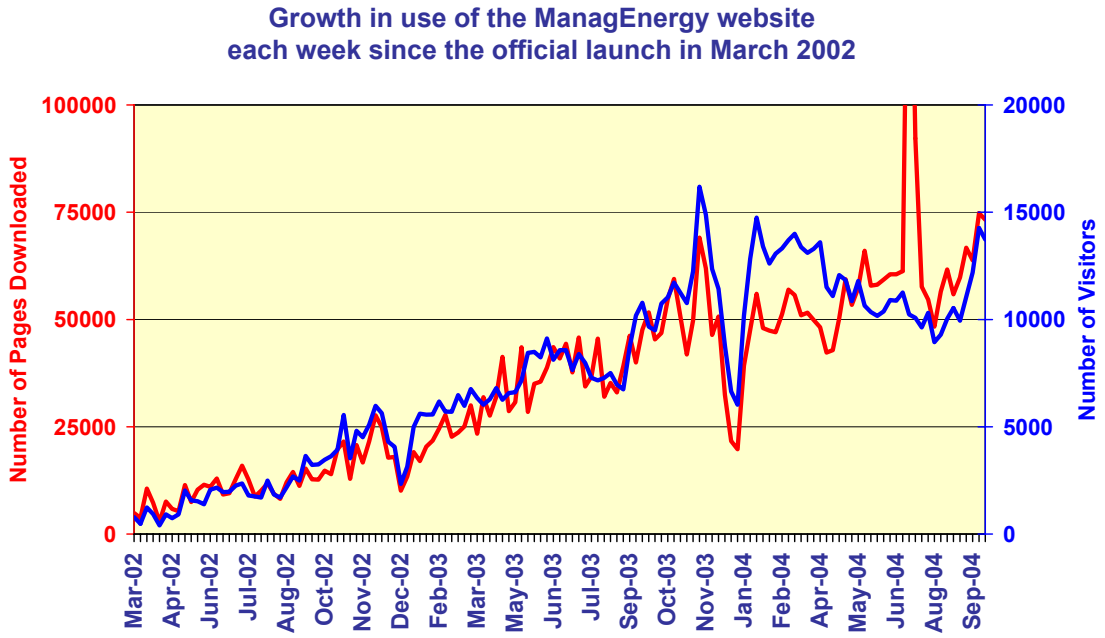
Overall, the initiative has helped to improve communication between local actors, and has increased the number of beneficiaries from Community energy and transport policies and activities.

4.0 RESULTS

The following analysis describes the results from the three research tasks. The first section discusses the website statistics, the second section discusses the results from the user survey, and the final section summarises the key messages from consultations.

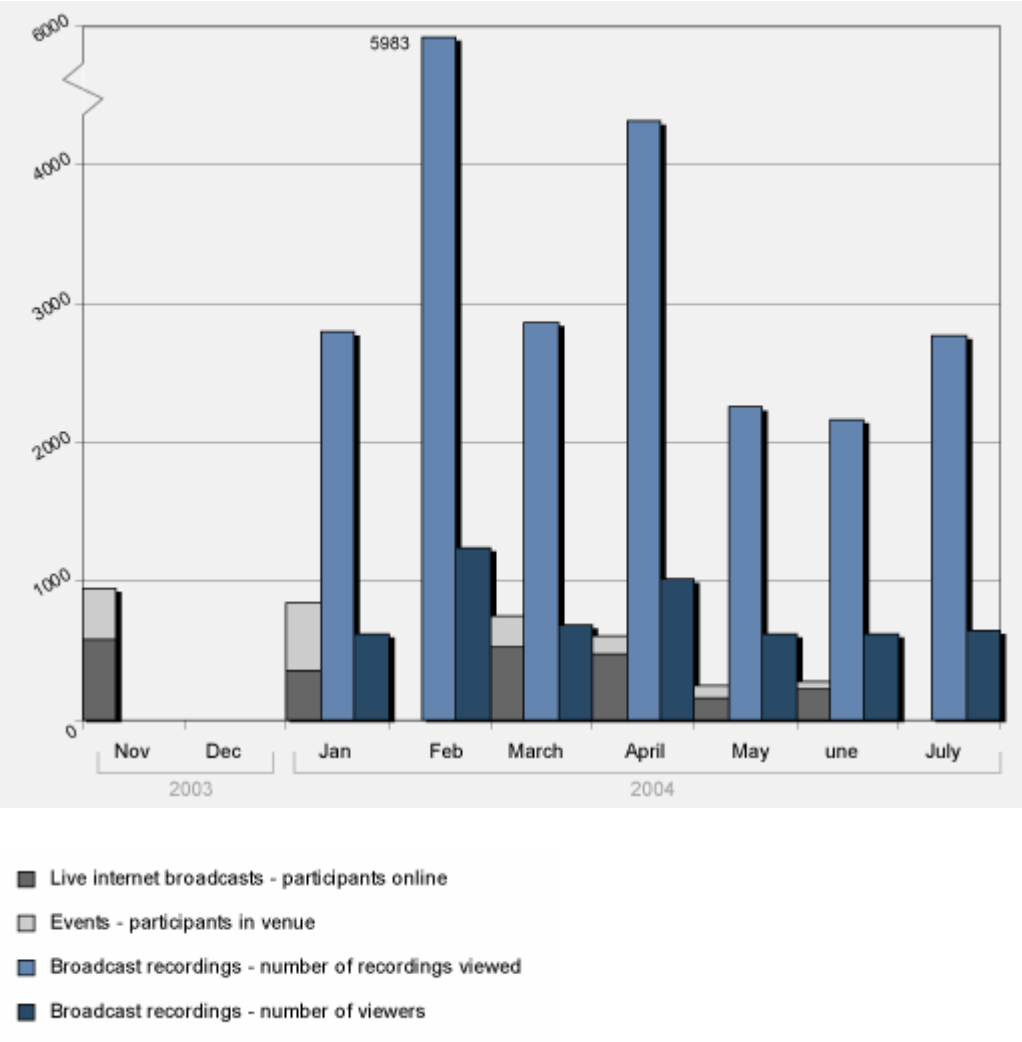
4.1 ManagEnergy User Statistics

The ManagEnergy website was launched in March 2002. The following graph shows the growth in the use of the website, since the official launch. This shows the various peaks and troughs in usage of the website, the number of pages downloaded, and the number of visitors, has risen dramatically over the eighteen month period. The website now consists of over 10,000 pages, and up to 70,000 are downloaded each month, by up to 15,000 visitors. The total number of people registered is currently 6,000. There is a steady rise in visitors to the site and pages downloading until November 2003, when it shows signs of reaching a plateau.



The following chart shows the growth in the use of the Internet broadcasts. The ManagEnergy.tv website was officially launched in April 2004. Before this, the videos were provided on media servers of various providers with links from the www.ManagEnergy.net website. The official launch of the .tv website saw a steady increase in the number of visitors, and number of pages viewed in that month. This is continuing to increase as more videos are provided for downloading. A process which will delete the least used videos will start in the beginning of 2005, as the number of speeches and presentations has reached the limit of 700.

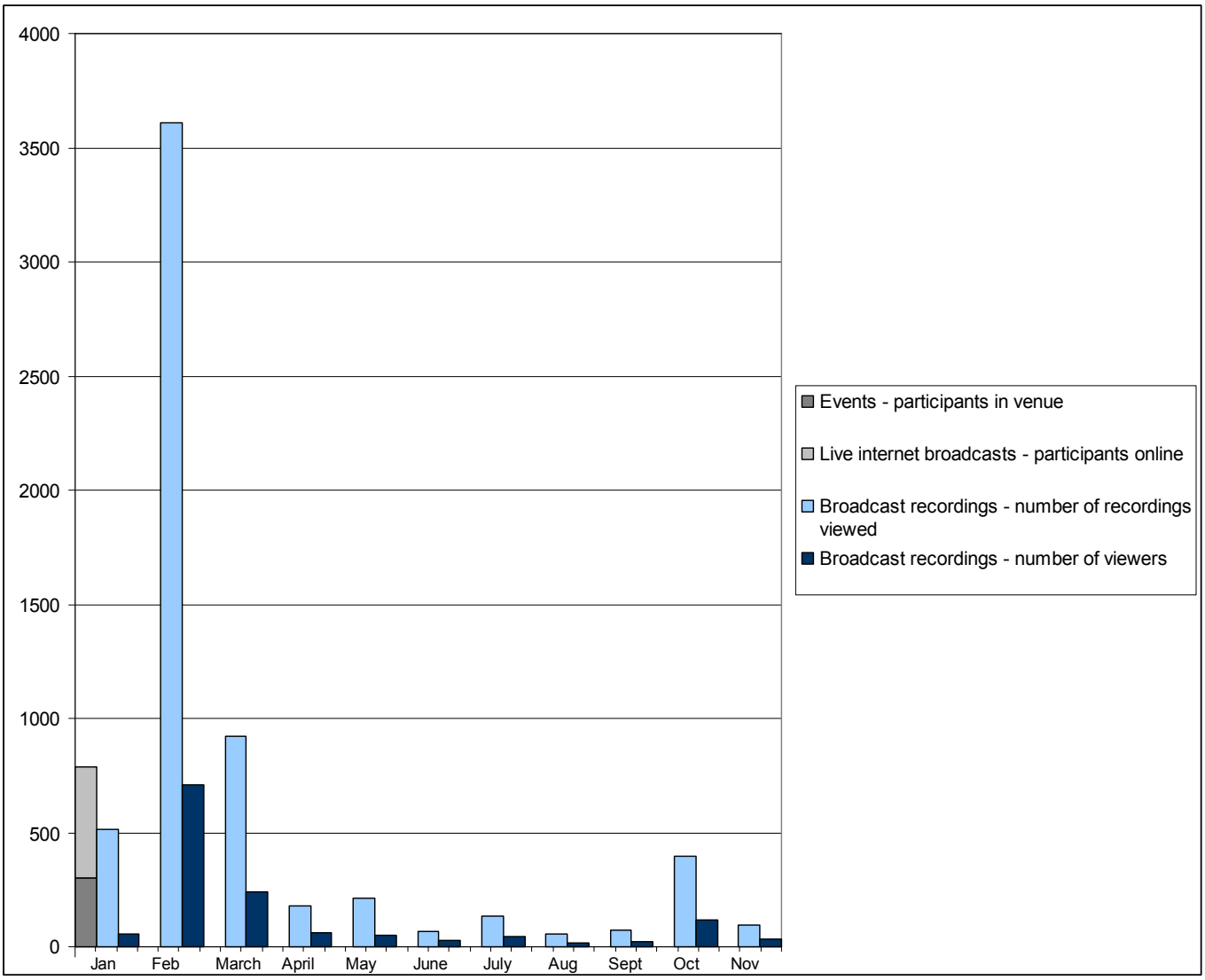
ManagEnergy internet broadcast monthly statistics, November 2003 - July 2004



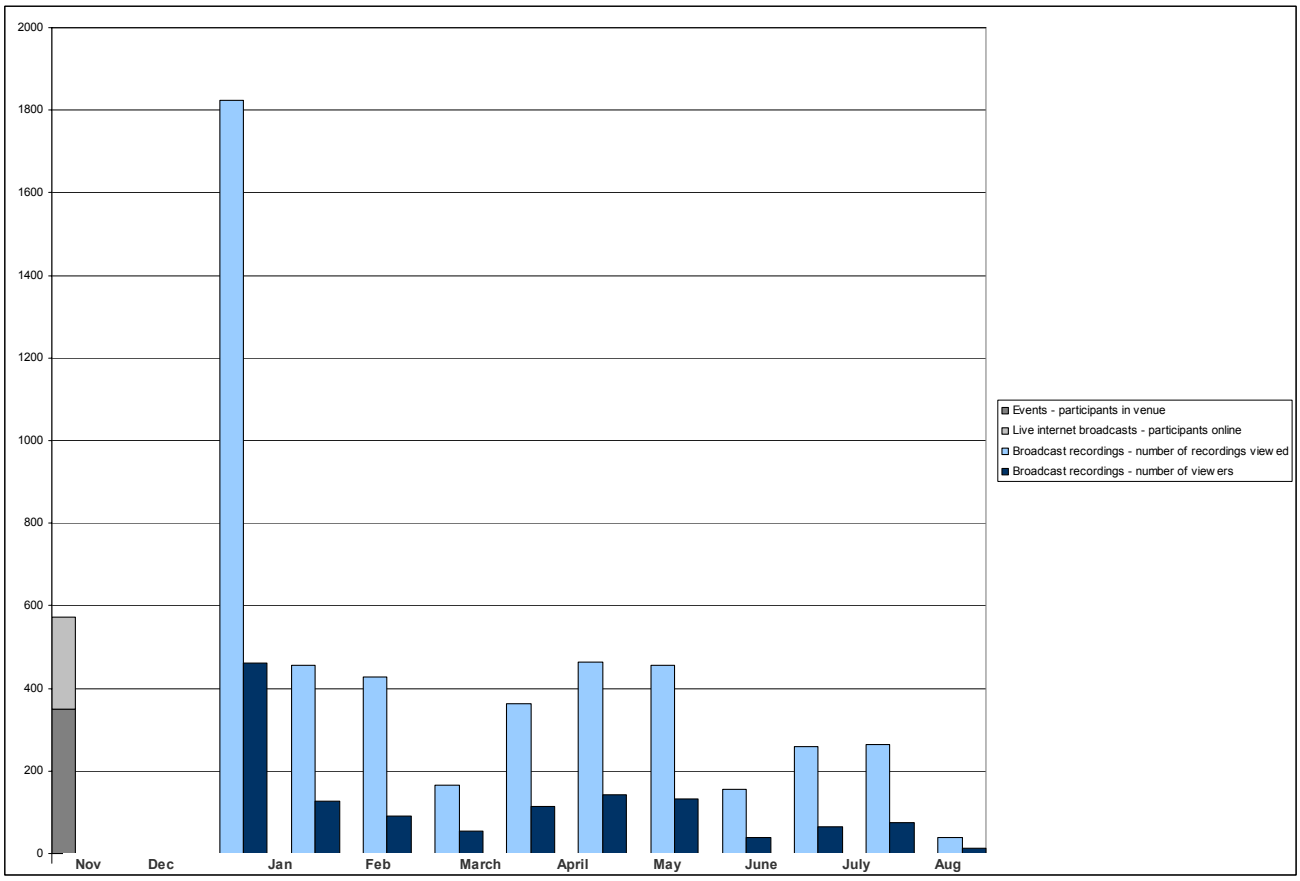
The number of participants that view the web videos varies depending on the event. However, for the majority of them the month after the event sees the most number of viewers. These seem to trail off after a few months (see the following graphs for three different events). This shows that the majority of people are more likely to view the videos in the immediate months after the event because the information is up to date.

Between November 2003 and November 2004, there were 3,702 participants in ManagEnergy events in total. Of these, 37 per cent (1,372) were 'virtual' participants in live internet broadcasts. On the .tv website, 8,135 viewers viewed 38 videos in total (that is, each viewer has seen on average some five individual speeches/presentations).

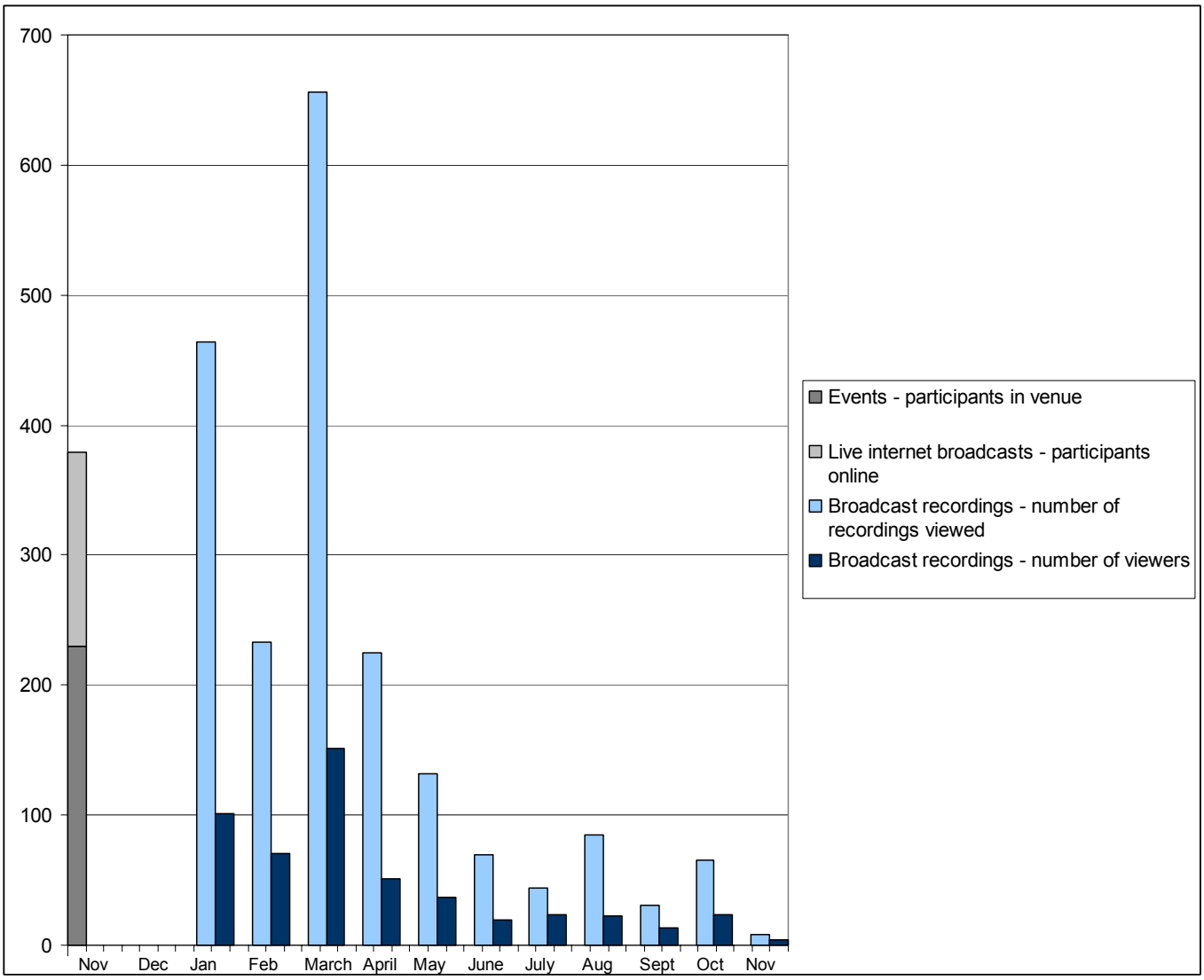
European Conference for Renewable Energy, 19-21 January 2004



European Conference on Local Energy Action 2003, 26-27 November 2003

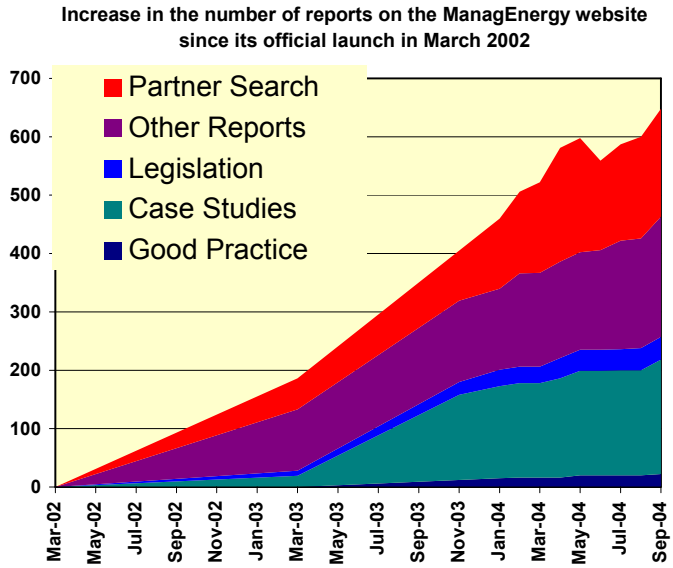


Intelligent Energy - Europe Information Day, 28 November 2003

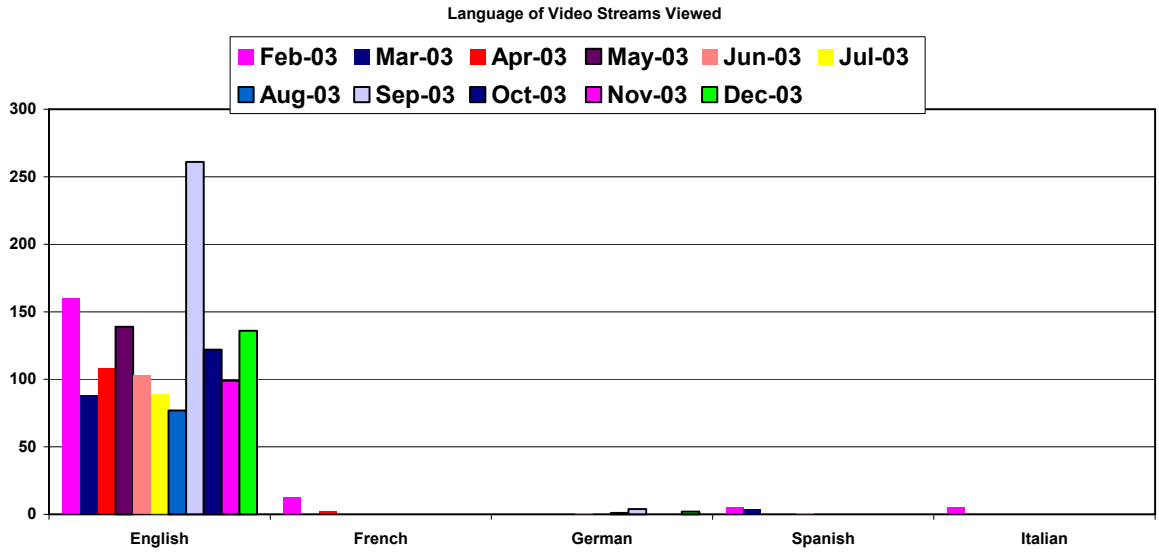


The following chart shows the increase in the number of organisations registered on the website, and the number of contacts on the mailing list. The organisations on the website are the people who have submitted their information to add to the database of organisations on the website. Contacts on the mailing list are people who have registered for information updates only. There are over 6,000 contacts currently on the mailing list, and 2,000 organisations registered on the database. This has increased steadily since the launch of the ManagEnergy website.

The following chart shows the number and type of reports on the ManagEnergy website each month. Since the launch of ManagEnergy the number of reports on the website has risen steadily, and there are now over 600 reports on the website. This obviously has implications on the arrangement and layout of the site, as these reports will need to be categorised in some way to allow ease of access. There are many more reports on the site than originally anticipated. The number of reports has increased as more and more people submit information, and more events are held.

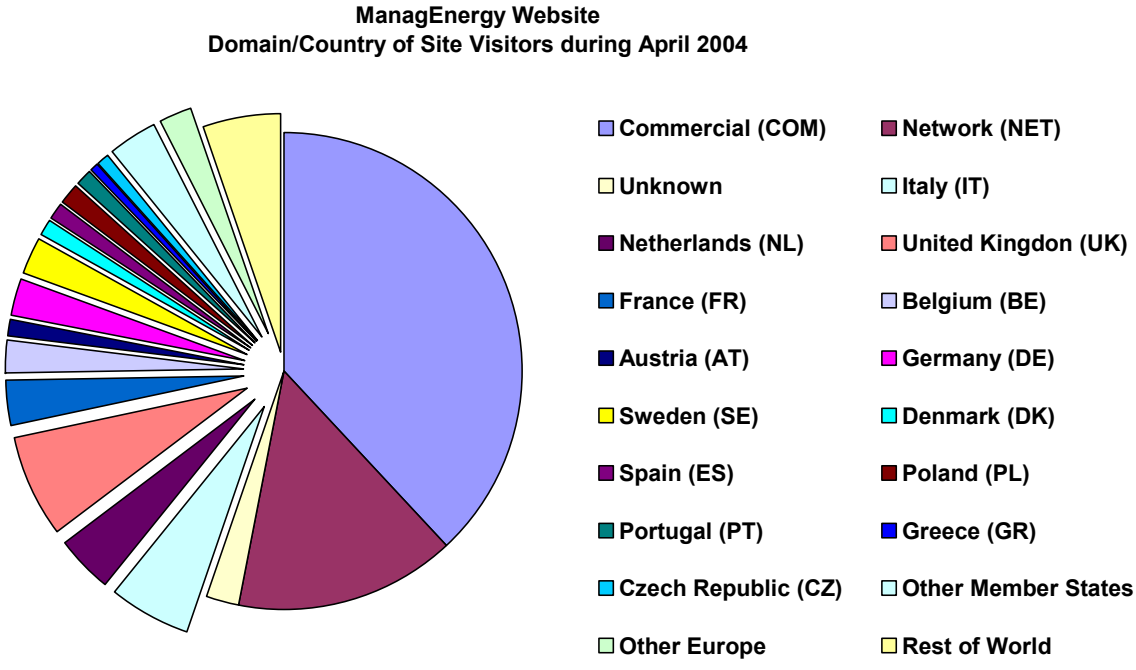


The following chart shows the language of the video stream viewed. As can be seen, the most popular language is English, with just a few people using French, German, Spanish and Italian. It seems to be the case that most people will listen to the English language videos, even if English is not their mother tongue.

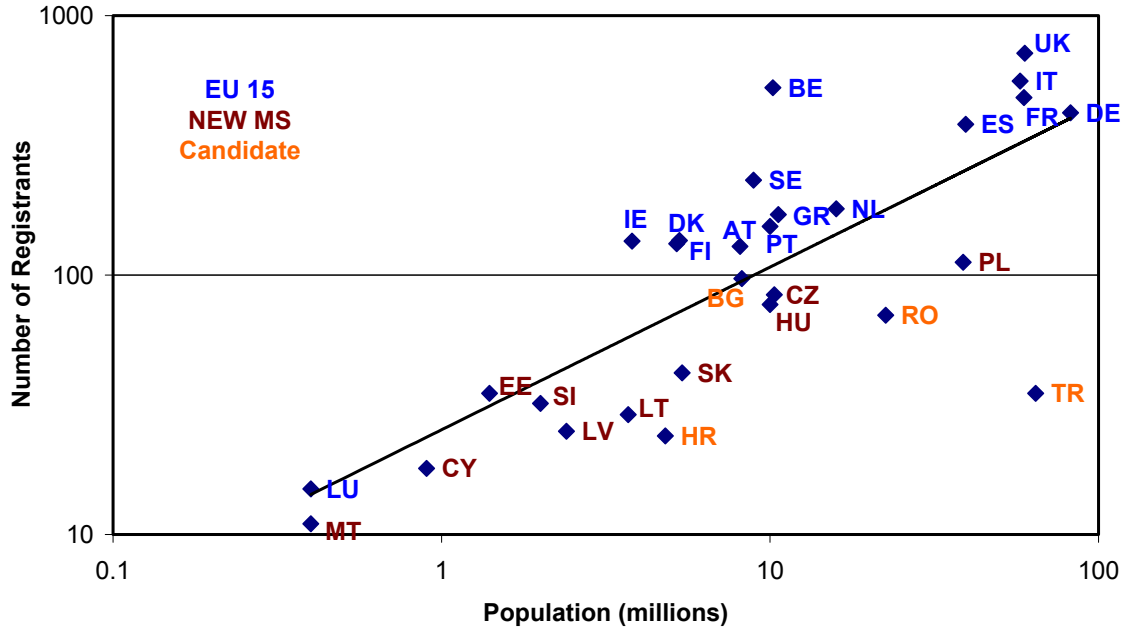


The following chart shows the domain origin of visitors during April 2004. Note that a significant number of people (38 per cent) come from a .com domain, so their country of origin is not known. Consequently, any comment or analysis on country of origin must be treated with caution.

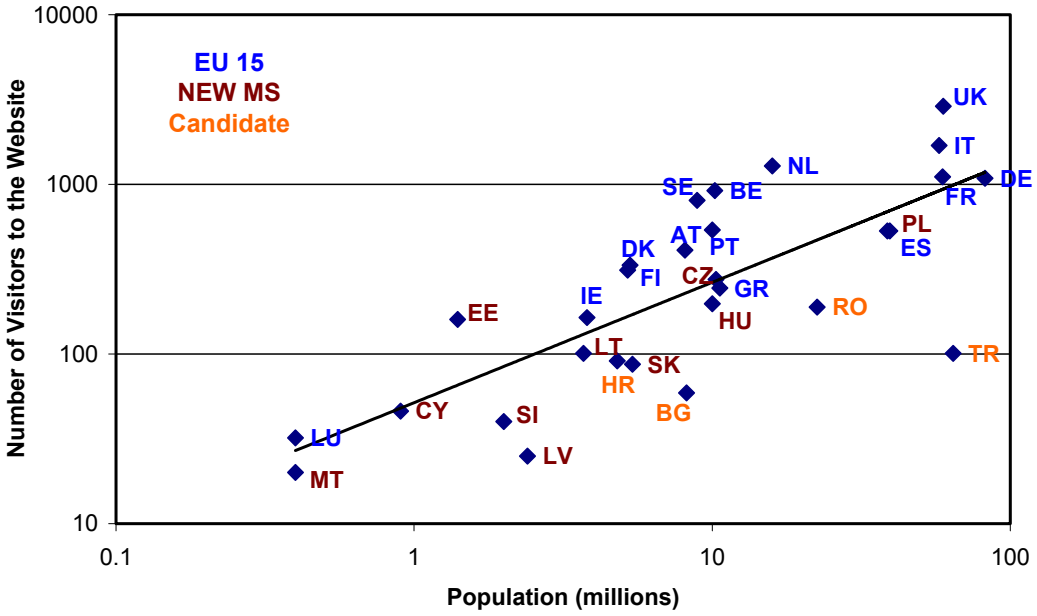
The countries with the most number of visitors are the UK (7 per cent), Italy (5 per cent), and the Netherlands (4 per cent). This distribution is similar to that received from the user survey, where the UK and Italy had the most number of responses.



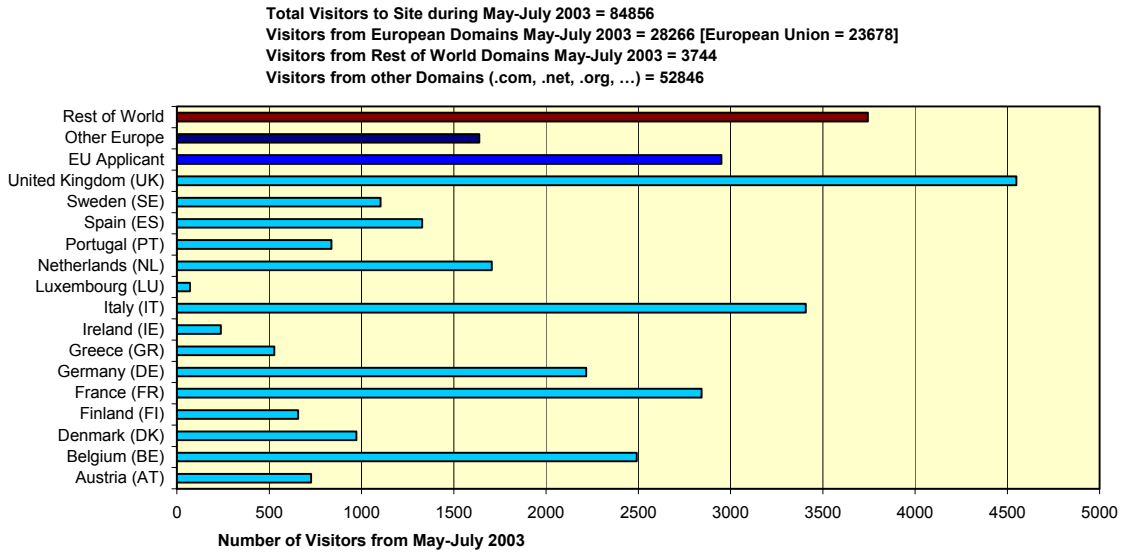
The following chart shows the number of registrants to ManagEnergy correlated against the size of population. This chart shows a clear correlation between these two indicators. It shows that the larger the country, in terms of population, the more registrants to ManagEnergy there are. The country with the most number of registrants is the UK. Belgium is over-represented in terms of number of registrants, which is probably because of a relatively high number of visitors from the European Commission and from the large number of representative bodies that are located in Brussels. On the graph, all countries in the EU15 are above the line of proportionality, and most Candidate and New Member State countries fall below the line. The aim for the new contract is to increase the usage in New Member States and Candidate countries, and to raise them above the line.



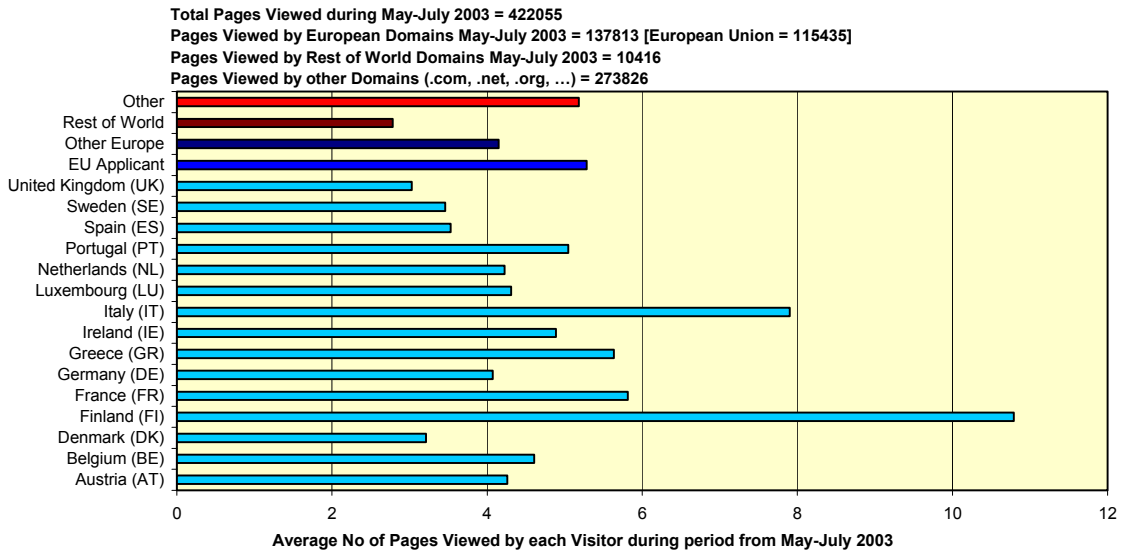
The following chart shows the number of visitors to the website, again correlated against population. Once again, there is a clear correlation between the number of visitors and the size of the country in terms of population. This shows a similar pattern to the previous graph, although more countries from EU15 fall below the line.



The following chart shows the total number of visitors to the ManagEnergy website during May – July 2003. In total there were 84,856 visitors to ManagEnergy during this period, 33 per cent were from European domains. A further 4.5 per cent are from the rest of the world. The countries with the most number of visitors are the UK (4549 visitors), Italy (3407 visitors), France (2843), Belgium (2492) and Germany (2217).



The next chart illustrates the average number of pages viewed by each visitor (May – July 2003). A total of 422,055 pages were viewed in this period. Again, 33 per cent of these were from European domains. Visitors from Finland, on average, viewed 11 pages per visit; this is the most number of pages per visit. Visitors from Italy also viewed a large number of pages – up to eight per visit.

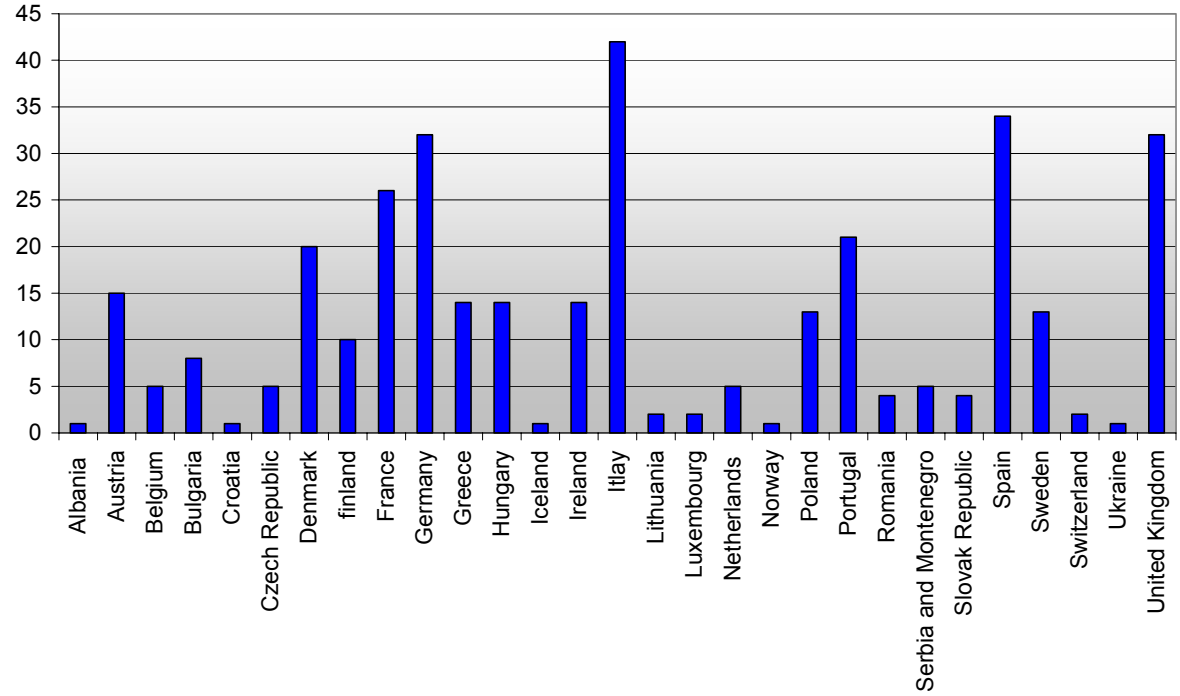


The following table sets out the 30 most popular pages on the ManagEnergy website in October 2004. The home page received 8972 hits during October, out of 15,000 visitors (almost 60 per cent of visitors). This figure increased from 8096 hits in September 2004. Perhaps not surprisingly the page for the Annual Conference 2004 was the second most popular page. Within the top ten pages are the energy agencies home page, the case studies search, ManagEnergy events, programmes and funds, partner search, and legislation search. A number of country pages are in the top thirty for October, including UK, Italy, and France.

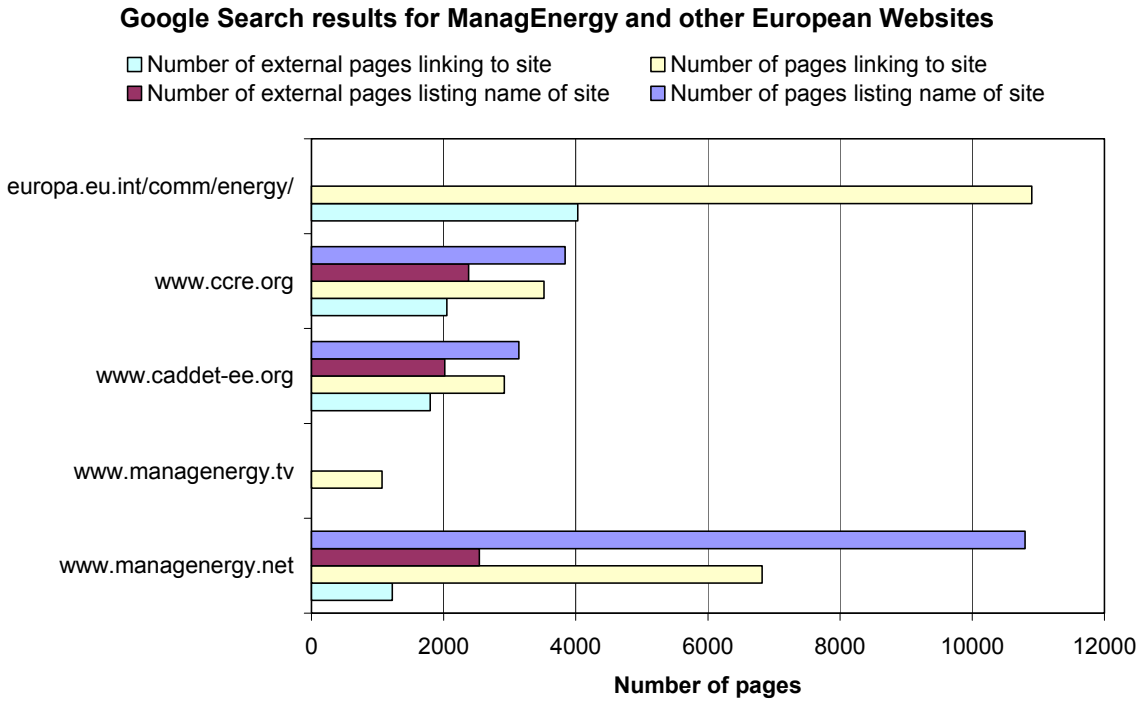
Oct (Sep)	Page	Hits Oct 04	Hits Sep 04
1 (1)	Home Page	8972	8096
2 (7)	ManagEnergy Annual Conference 2004	4597	1602
3 (3)	Energy Agencies - Home Page	2829	2484
4 (2)	Case Studies Search	2797	2534
5 (4)	ManagEnergy Events	2707	2471
6 (-)	EIE & FP6 Info Day	2659	-
7 (5)	Programmes and Funds	2423	2173
8 (6)	Partner Search	1989	1708
9 (9)	Legislation Search	1436	1199
10 (-)	ManagEnergy Newsletter - October 2004	1389	-
11 (8)	Links	1363	1250
12 (12)	Biomass & Bioenergy - Index Page	979	808
13 (10)	Renewable Energy Sources & Systems - Index Page	973	855
14 (11)	Internet Broadcasts	795	812
15 (13)	United Kingdom - Country Page	780	699
16 (14)	Energy Efficiency - Index Page	700	669
17 (16)	Italy - Country Page	619	631
18 (19)	ManagEnergy Registration Forms	616	538
19 (18)	ManagEnergy contacts page	590	564
=20 (26)	Seminars in Latvia and Lithuania: Make the renewable vision real!	577	421
=20 (-)	ManagEnergy Annual Conference 2004 - Registration Form	577	-
22 (=24)	Pellets & Pelleting - Index Page	572	425

=23 (=24)	Buildings - Index Page	521	425
=23 (23)	France - Country Page	521	427
25 (20)	ManagEnergy Registration Form & Questionnaire	520	455
26 (21)	Home Page – français	517	443
27 (22)	About ManagEnergy	499	436
28 (17)	Charlemagne Building	470	604
29 (28)	Wind Energy - Index Page	469	408
30 (-)	Home Page – Deutsch	454	-

Across Europe there are 347 energy agencies. The distribution of these is shown in the graph below. As can be seen, the majority are located in Italy (12 per cent), Spain (10 per cent), the UK (9 per cent) and Germany (9 per cent).



ManagEnergy conducted an internet search using Google to search for ManagEnergy and other European websites. The following graph shows the results in terms of the number of pages listing the name of the site, the number of external pages listing the name of the site, the number of pages linking to the site, and the number of external pages linking to the site. The results show that there are a number of pages linking and listing the ManagEnergy.net site. Compared to other European websites, ManagEnergy has a large number of links and listings on other internet sites. Clearly there is an issue with very few sites listing the ManagEnergy.tv site.



europa.eu.int/comm/energy is the European Commission's Energy website.
www.ccre.org is the Council of European Municipalities and Regions.
www.caddet-ee.org provides information on commercial energy-saving and renewable energy technologies.

4.2 Key Messages

- The steady rise in the number of visitors to the site and numbers of pages downloaded appears to be showing signs of reaching a plateau from about November 2003 onwards, although a recent sharp upward trend may have resumed from July 2004. These figures could be interpreted as signs of a maturing audience base.

- There has been a steady increase in the incidence of videos downloaded.

- In terms of registered users, while those of organisations continue a slow, steady increase, the steeper increase in individuals registering on the mailing list shows clear signs of slowing down.

- The numbers of reports on the site has shown a strong increasing trend, although for two types in particular (case studies and legislation), there appear to be signs of flattening out from the end of 2003.

- The breakdown of registered users by country mirrors population size. Participation rates are higher than might be expected from population size alone for the EU-15 and less for the New Member States.

- There is a small but significant degree of interest from the rest of the world (at least 5 per cent).

5.0 USER SURVEY

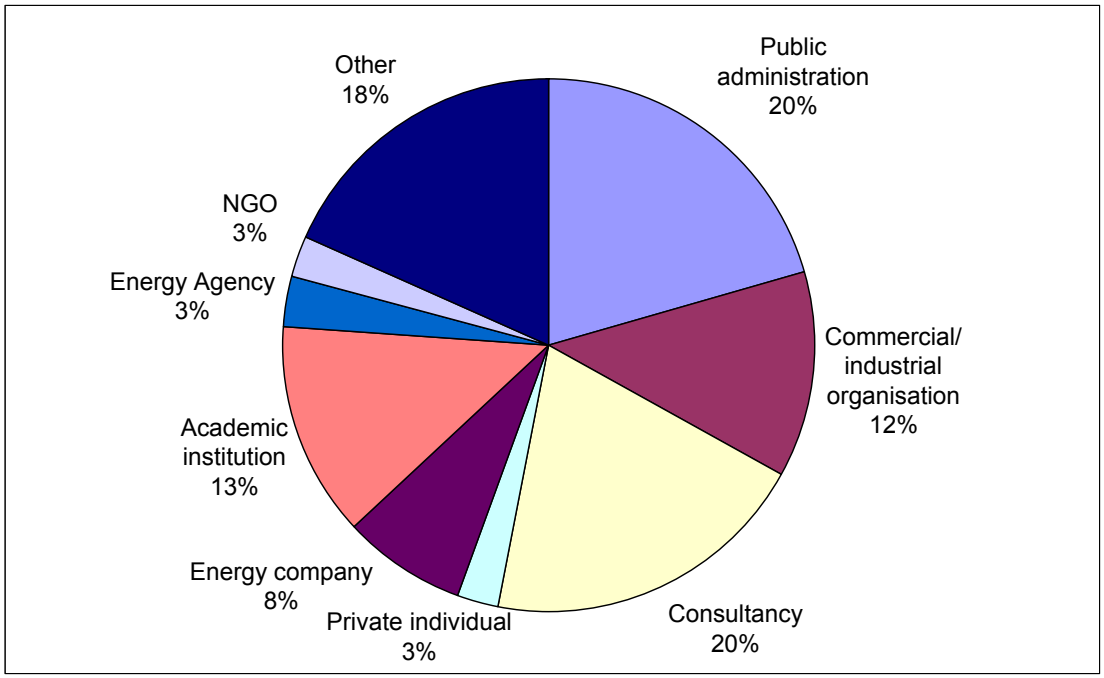
5.1 Introduction

A survey was carried out to gauge user views of the ManagEnergy website. The link to the survey was sent out to all 6,000 registered users of the ManagEnergy website on 11th October 2004, with a deadline of 29th October 2004. A total of 315 responses were received, (5.6 per cent response rate). An analysis of the results follows. The questionnaire used is included in Annex A.

5.2 Sample

5.2.1 Type of Organisation

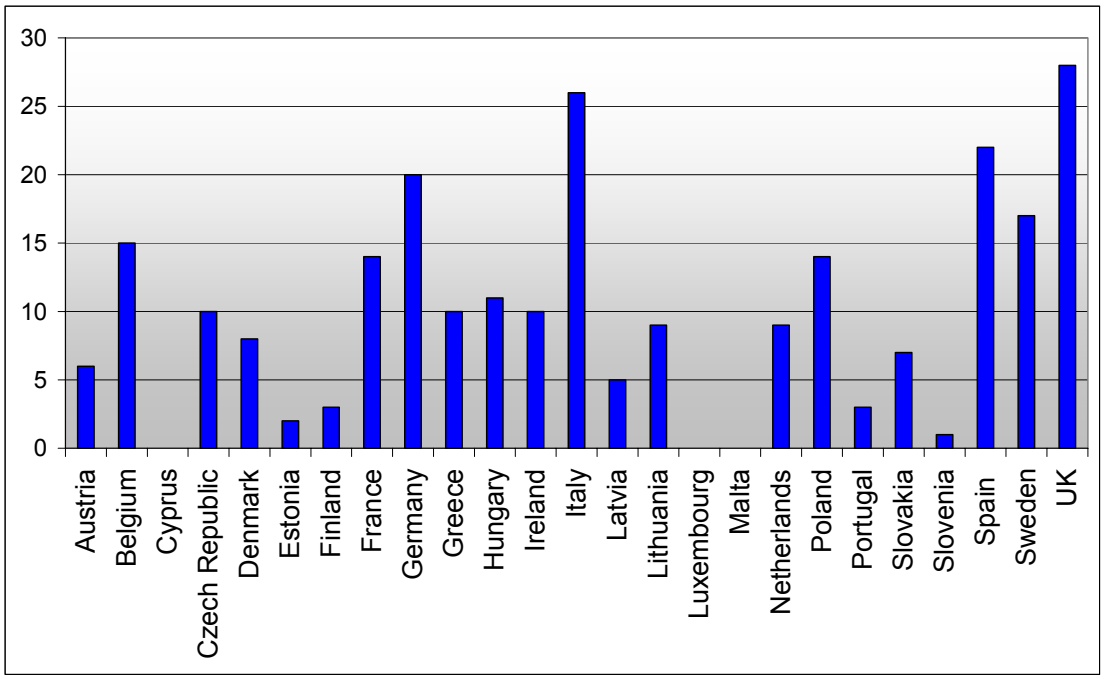
A range of types of organisations responded to the survey. The biggest groups were public administrations (20 per cent) and consultancies (20 per cent). Commercial/ industrial organisations and academic institutions also made up a large proportion of respondents (12 per cent and 13 per cent). The relatively low response from energy agencies could be due to that fact that a survey of energy agencies was being run at the same time. Also, energy agencies may fit into an alternative category, for example public administration.



5.2.2 Country of Work Base

Respondents came from a wide geographical base. The graph below shows the breakdown of respondents from the EU countries. As can be seen, the majority of EU countries were covered, with just Cyprus, Luxembourg and Malta having no coverage. Cyprus and Malta do not have any energy agencies, and Luxembourg only has two. Countries with the largest

number of respondents include the UK, Italy, Spain, Germany, and Sweden. All of these countries, with the exception of Sweden, have the most number of energy agencies, and hence will produce a large amount of activity.

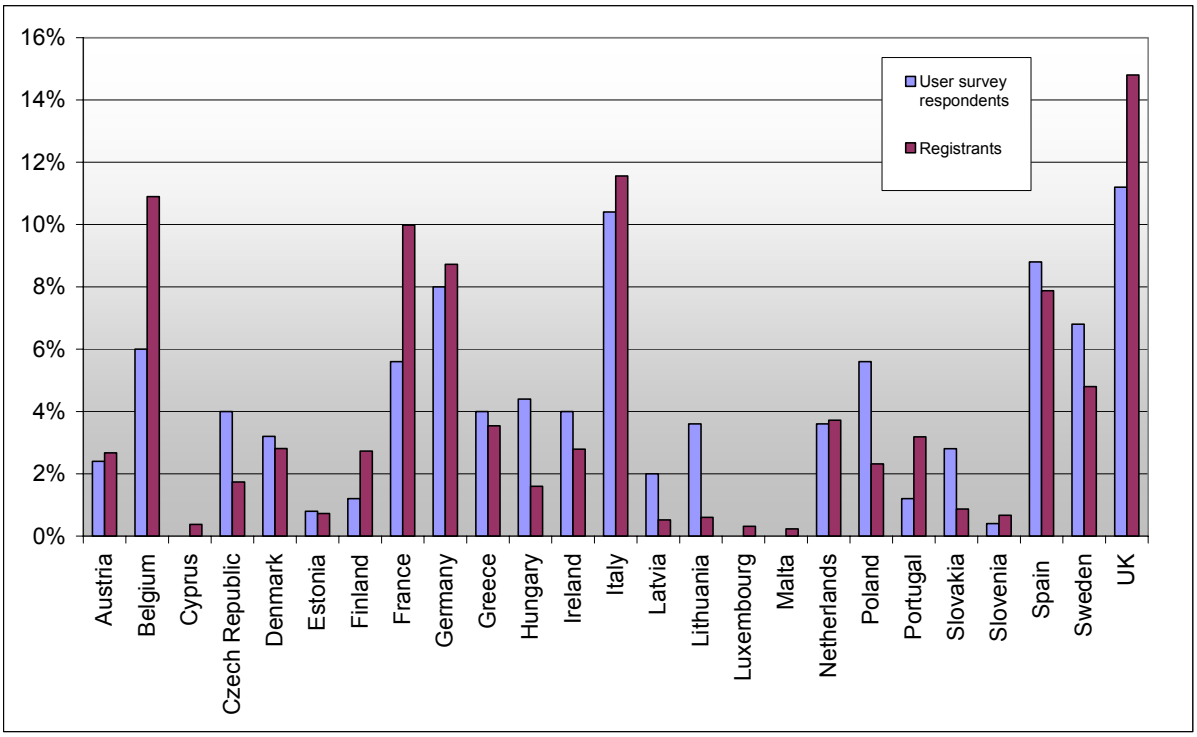


The table below shows the prevalence of non-EU respondents. Again, a broad geographical coverage is shown, with a number of people responding from Romania, Bulgaria, India, Norway and the United States. This is a particular achievement of the website, as it is reaching a number of actors from across the globe, which was not part of the remit of the initiative.

Albania		Macedonia	x 2
Argentina		Malaysia	x 2
Australia		Moldova	
Bangladesh	x 2	Montenegro	
Bosnia And Herzegovina		New Zealand	
Brazil		Nigeria	
Bulgaria	x 6	Norway	x 5
Canada	x 3	Peru	
China		Romania	x 8
Croatia		Russia	
European Commission	x 3	Serbia	x 3
Gambia		Sri Lanka	
Georgia		Switzerland	
Honduras		Turkey	x 2
India	x 5	Ukraine	
Israel		United States	x 5

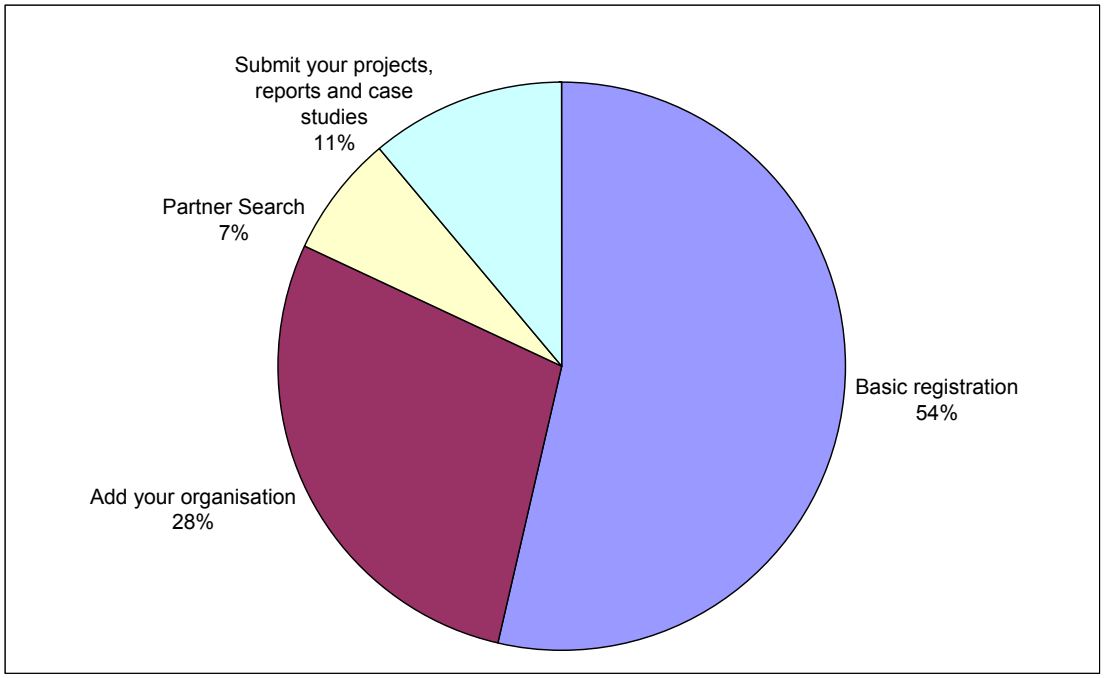
The distribution of respondents by country is similar to that of the distribution of registrants. Therefore, the survey is representative of the survey population. This is shown in the graph

below. The countries that are least represented in the survey are Belgium, the UK, and France, however the distribution of respondents is no more than five percentage points less than the overall population. The countries over-represented in the survey responses are Hungary, Lithuania, and Poland (all by just three percentage points). These small variations in representation do not reduce the validity of the survey results.



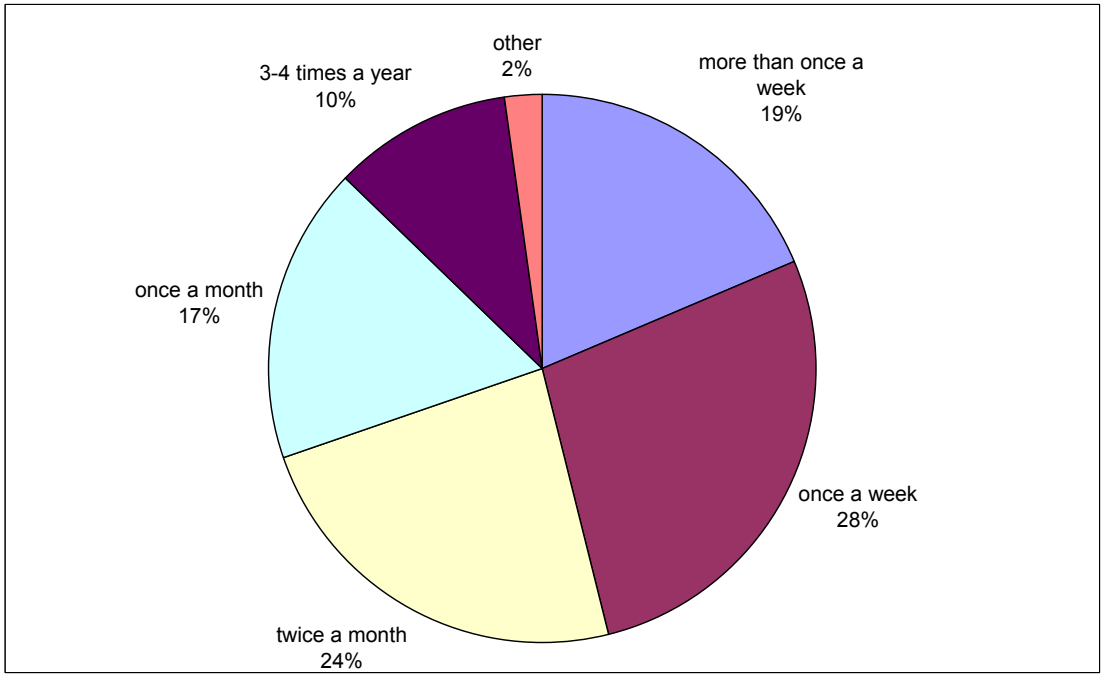
5.2.3 Type of Registration

More than half of the respondents registered for information updates only (basic registration). Almost a third (28 per cent) registered by adding their organisation to the site. 7 per cent registered for a partner search, and 11 per cent submitted their projects, reports and case studies. This is similar to the distribution of people registered on the ManagEnergy site as a third registered by adding their organisation to the site.



5.2.4 Frequency of Visits

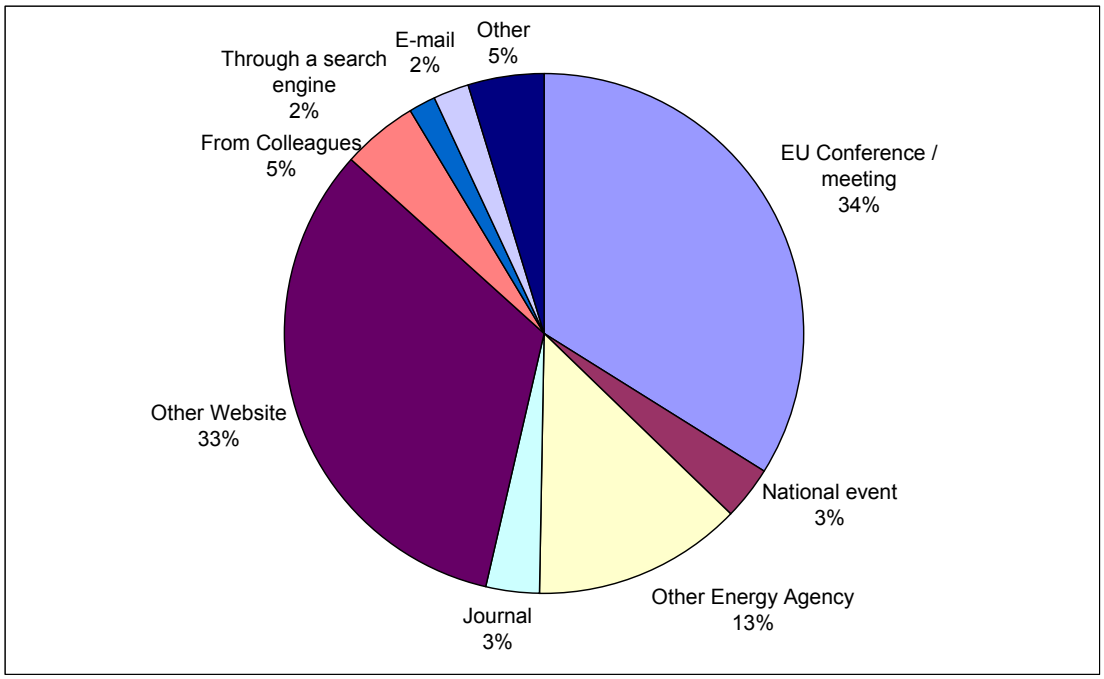
The majority of respondents are regular visitors to the ManagEnergy website. Nearly half of respondents visit the site at least once a week (47 per cent). A further 41 per cent visit between once and twice a month.



5.2.5 Initial Source of Information about ManagEnergy

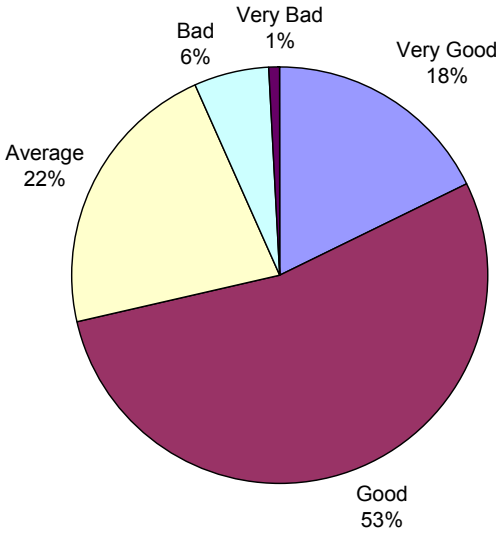
Respondents were asked how they first heard about the ManagEnergy initiative. A third of respondents first heard about ManagEnergy through an EU conference or meeting. Another third first heard about ManagEnergy through another website. 13 per cent of respondents had been recommended by another energy agency, and 5 per cent had heard from colleagues.

Only a small minority (2 per cent) actually found out about the site through using a search engine.

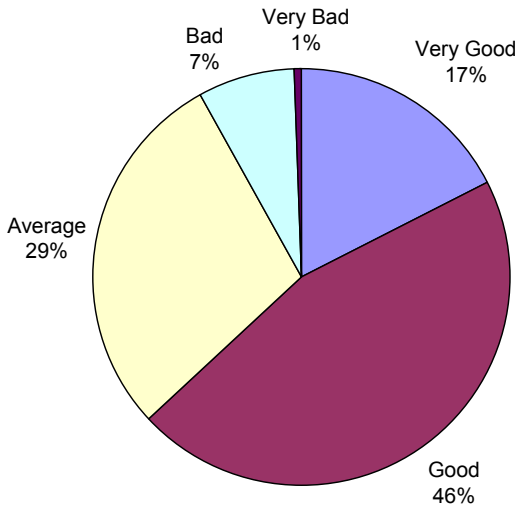


5.3 www.ManagEnergy.net

Respondents were asked to rate the user-friendliness of the ManagEnergy website. The response was positive, with 71 per cent of respondents stating good or very good. Only 7 per cent found the website not user-friendly.

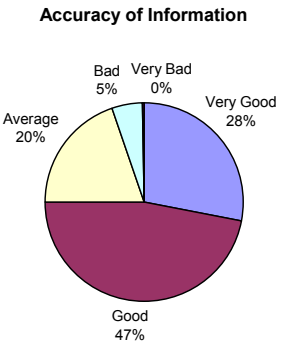


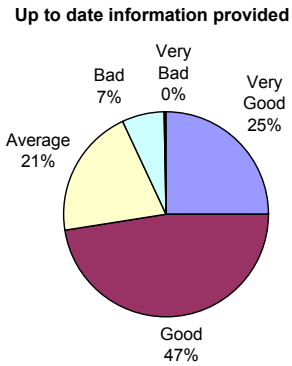
Respondents were asked to rate the visual design of the website. Again, the response was positive, with 63 per cent stating good or very good. Some 7 per cent considered the visual design to be bad.

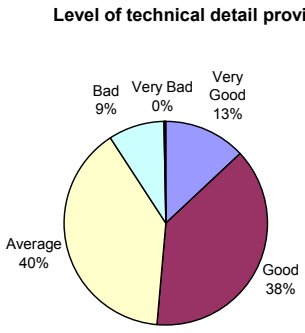


5.4 Quality of the website

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of the website in terms of accuracy of information, up-to-date information provided and level of technical detail. The graphs below show that the respondents were generally pleased with the quality of the site. On all three aspects, more than half rated the website as good or very good. The weakest area is the level of technical detail provided, where 9 per cent rated the website as bad, and 40 per cent found the level of detail average.



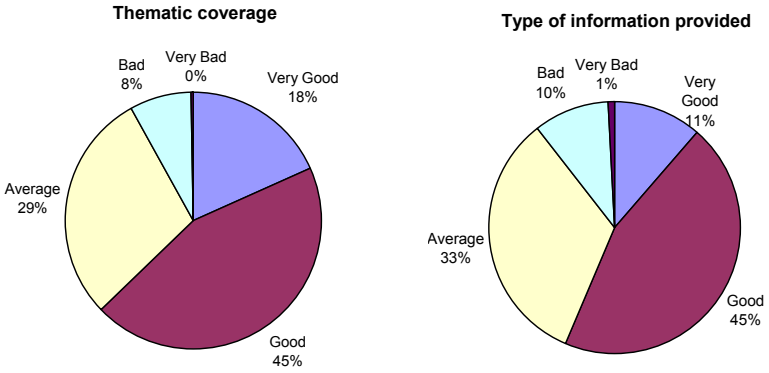




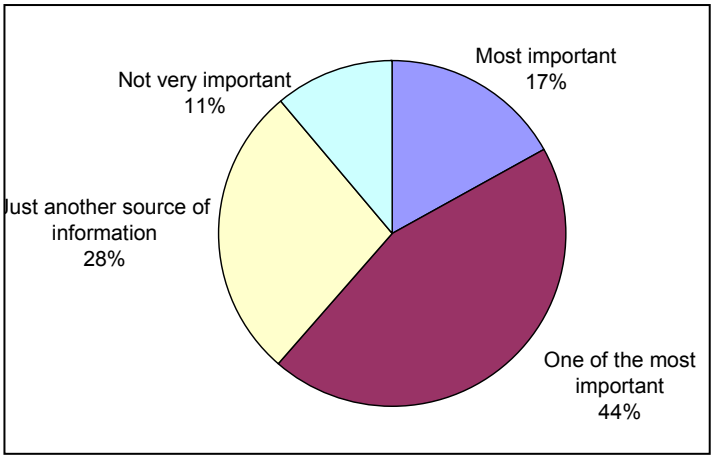
5.5 Relevance of the Website

Respondents were asked to rate the relevance of the website in terms of thematic coverage and type of information provided (e.g. policy, legal, technical, commercial etc.). Once again, only a very small proportion rated the website bad on both of these aspects. In terms of

thematic coverage, 63 per cent rated the website as very good or good, and in terms of the type of information provided, 56 per cent rated the website as very good or good.



Respondents were asked to rate the importance of www.ManagEnergy.net in promoting locally-relevant information on energy efficiency and renewable energy. 17 per cent thought ManagEnergy was the most important source of information, and a further 44 per cent felt it was one of the most important. Only 11 per cent felt ManagEnergy was not very important.



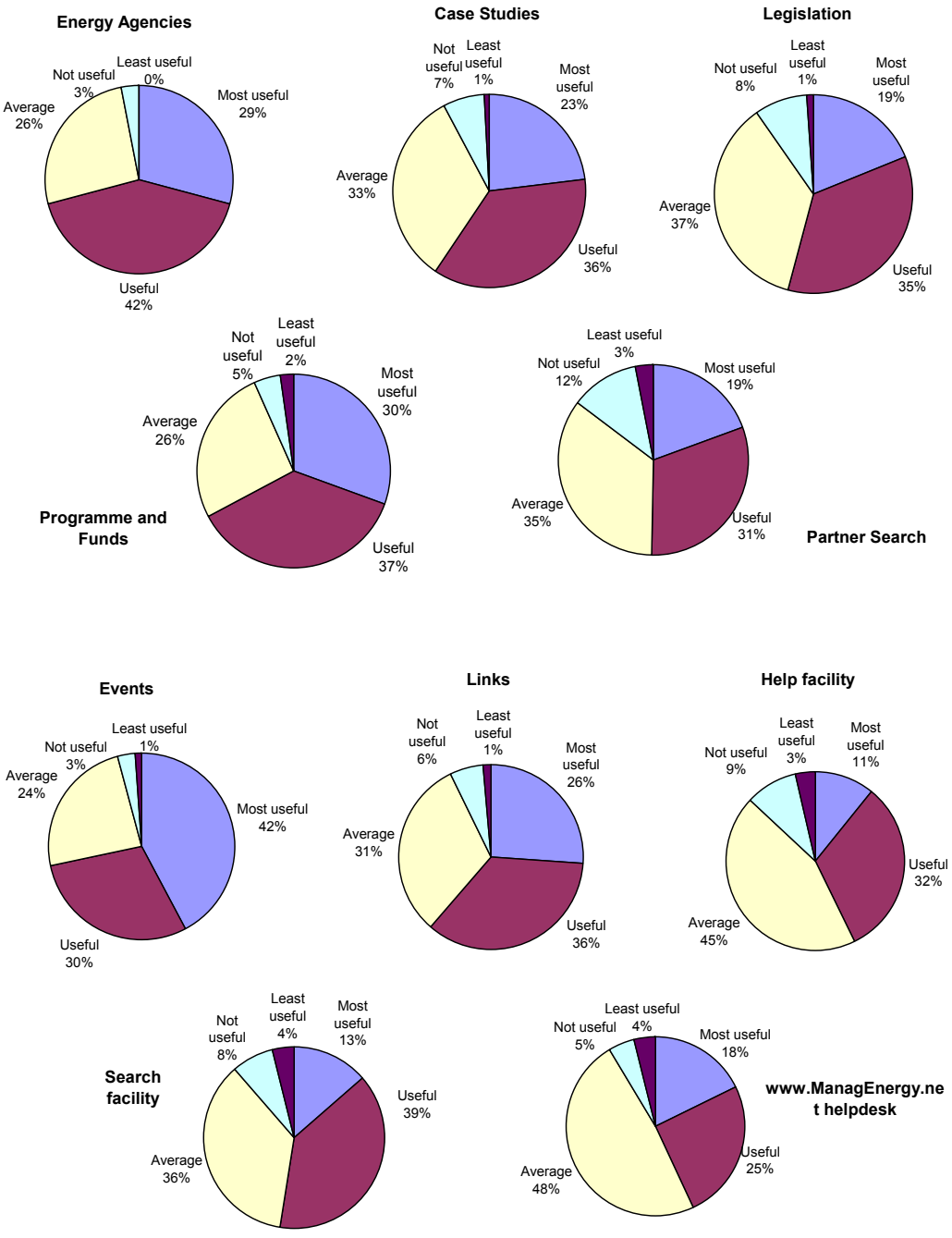
5.6 How useful is each section under www.ManagEnergy.net?

Respondents were asked to rate the usefulness of the following sections under www.ManagEnergy.net:

- Energy agencies
- Case studies
- Legislation
- Programmes and funds
- Partner search
- Events
- Links
- Help
- Search
- www.ManagEnergy.net helpdesk

Overall the general response was positive. All sections of the website had a higher rating of being useful than not useful. The sections which have the highest rating of being useful by respondents are energy agencies, events, programmes and funds, and links. The sections with, relatively speaking, the lowest rating of usefulness are the partner search, and the help and search pages. 48 per cent of respondents have used the helpdesk; of these, 43 per cent found it useful.

The most widely used section of the website is the events page, and the programme and funds page (used by 94 and 91 per cent of respondents respectively). The section with the least number of users is the ManagEnergy helpdesk (used by only 48 per cent of respondents).



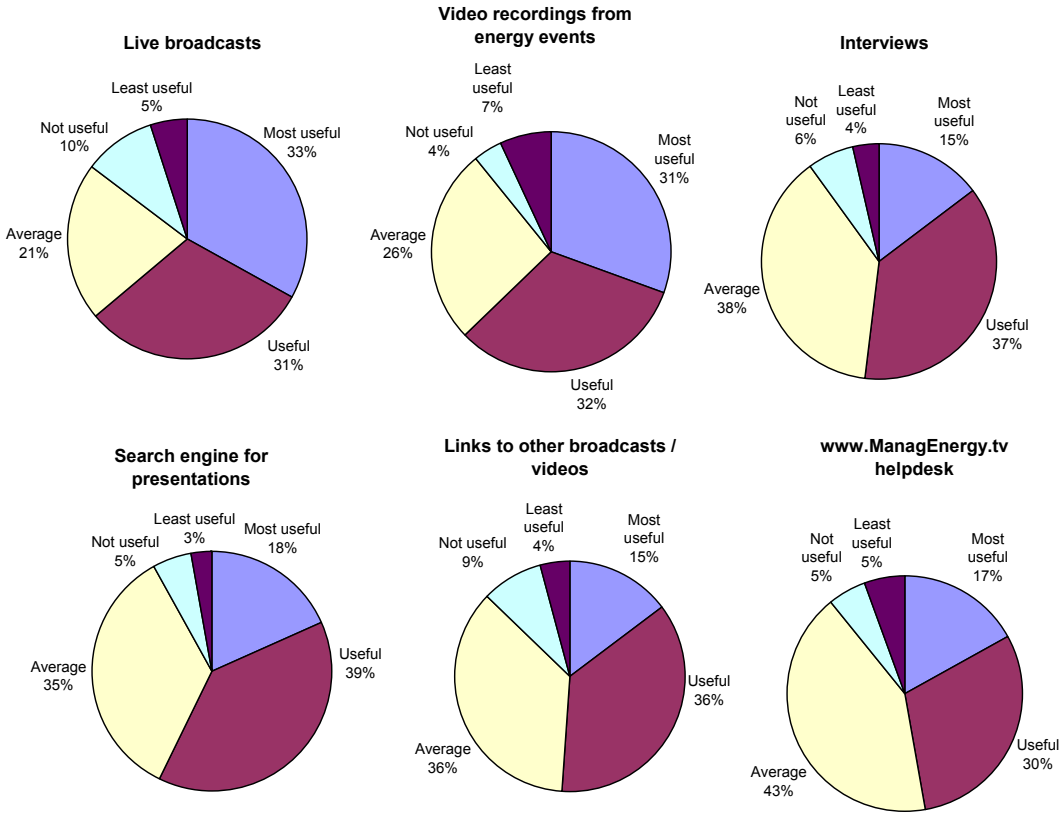
5.7 How useful is each section under www.ManagEnergy.tv?

Respondents were asked to rate the usefulness of the following sections under www.ManagEnergy.tv:

- Live broadcast
- Video recordings from energy events
- Interviews
- Search engine for Presentations
- Links to other broadcasts/ videos
- www.ManagEnergy.tv helpdesk

For most sections, more than half of respondents found them useful. The most useful sections are the live broadcasts, and the video recordings from energy events (rated good or very good by 64 per cent and 63 per cent of respondents, respectively). 41 per cent of respondents had used the .tv helpdesk, of these, 47 per cent found it useful.

Compared to the www.ManagEnergy.net website, fewer respondents have used the www.ManagEnergy.tv website. The most used section is the video recordings from energy events, and the Search engine for presentations, which were used by almost two thirds of respondents. There is potential to develop the search engine for presentations as it is a good facility. There are statistics available to provide information on, for example, the top ten viewed presentations, the top ten searches of the week, etc. This would add value to the .tv website.



5.8 www.ManagEnergy.tv events

Half of respondents have registered for an online event. Only 18 per cent of respondents have participated in a chat discussion. 29 per cent of respondents have considered organising a local media conference (16 per cent did not know what this was).

Less than half of respondents have used all the facilities on the .tv website. This could be an issue in terms of advertising and marketing. Many people are using the .net website, but few are using the .tv website – maybe they do not know that this exists, or do not realise that it is related to the .net website. Also, there is the issue that one main reason for going to a conference is to 'network' and meet people. This cannot be done whilst on the internet. However, this is an issue that can be tackled in the new contract – there are possibilities of setting up a 'virtual network' for people to share information.

17 per cent had experienced technical problems whilst using the sections under www.ManagEnergy.tv. It seems that the majority of problems are at the user end, and are not problems with the ManagEnergy site. The main problem encountered was with Internet connections; people's connections were too slow, and ran out before the streaming was complete. Another problem was with the software used, as some do not seem to have access to the relevant software and some have problems with using certain software such as Windows Media Player.

A number of people mentioned problems with the chat discussions, and with accessing live broadcasts and streaming of events. Firewall problems were also mentioned, usually related to company restrictions on Internet access, and therefore outside the contractor's control. There are indications that people experience problems the first time they use .tv, but that less so on subsequent visits.

A few people mentioned that they had used the ManagEnergy helpdesk, which helped to solve the problems. However, for a number of people the problem has not been solved, and they still cannot watch these events. The full responses are in Annex B.

5.9 Other websites used

Respondents were asked which other websites they used for similar information. A large number of alterative websites were mentioned, including a range of European, national, and local websites. There is no evidence to suggest that there is one particular website that most people turn to for energy information. The full responses are in Annex C.

5.10 Key Messages

Key messages from the user survey are:

5.10.1 Profile of users

- The sample is representative of the distribution of registrants by country.

- A range of organisation types using the website responded to the survey.
- Respondents came from across the EU, and further a field.
- More than half of respondents registered for information updates only.
- Most respondents are regular users of the website. Nearly half of respondents visit the site at least once a week. A further 41 per cent visit between once and twice a month.
- Most respondents heard about ManagEnergy through either an EU conference or through another website.

5.10.2 Rating ManagEnergy

- From the survey, the overall rating of the website was positive. The respondents were positive about all aspects of the user-friendliness, visual design, quality and relevance of the site.
- The respondents rated the most useful sections of the .net website to be the sections on energy agencies, events, programmes and funds, and links. The least useful were the partner search, and the help and search pages. The helpdesk was the least used section.
- The respondents rated the most useful section on the .tv website to be the live broadcasts and the video recordings from energy events.
- 17 per cent of respondents had experienced technical difficulties whilst using the .tv website. Most problems are encountered at the user end and are not problems with the ManagEnergy site. There seems to be problems with internet connection, and the software used. Some of these problems were resolved, but for others no solution has been found.
- 61 per cent of respondents feel that ManagEnergy is either the most important, or one of the most important sources in promoting locally-relevant information on energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- However, more promotion and dissemination about what the website contains is needed – both the .net site, and the .tv site. A number of the comments from people were asking for information that is already provided, such as legislation, programme information, participant lists etc. It seems that maybe they are only using the website for one purpose, and they are not using all the features available. Also, maybe it is not obvious that some information is available, which raises issues related to the structure of the site.
- The most important aspect is to keep the site simple, direct and to the point.
- The search tool can sometimes be difficult to use, and it can be difficult to find information you are searching for, even though you know it is there. The search tool is based on the Google website (www.google.com).

5.10.3 Website Content

- The language of the website can pose a barrier to some. Three per cent of respondents specifically noted they would like the site to be translated into other European languages, other than English.
- The language of the website is a key issue for some – translations into languages other than English are important.
- It is important that information is provided on all member states, and non-EU countries, where relevant.

- Documents and information to download should be provided in a range of alternative formats e.g. Word, PDF, and Excel if possible. This would make them easier to fill in and/ or look at.
- The live broadcasts are popular – assuming there are no technical problems. However, as people do have problems with these, some would like to have the option of downloading (and saving) the presentation so they can view them later, and have access to a detailed report and summary of the event, with key conclusions (for live events, videos are always provided afterwards).
- Case studies are a popular part of the website, respondents asked for more to be provided. Respondents suggested more technical details and economic information should be provided, also whether any funding bids had been successful, or not. It is also important to keep all information provided on case studies up to date. The case studies will improve as people have more experience in writing them.
- It is important to ensure web links and all information is kept up to date, and to remove old information.

5.10.4 Website Relevance – thematic, type of information

- 63 per cent of respondents rated thematic coverage as good or very good in the survey. However, the comments received indicated that thematic coverage needs to be improved.
- A popular idea was to provide information in relation to themes such as wind energy, environmental economics, cogeneration, alternative sources of energy etc. Then all information relating to these themes should be provided in one easily accessible place.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

Consultations were conducted with the service provider (STEM), both website managers (CPL for .net and Noterik for .tv), the ManagEnergy Reflection Group, and officials from DG TREN. The Reflection Group and DG TREN Officials were provided with a background paper, which contained the key messages from the user survey, which they were asked to comment upon. This can be seen in Annex E. The website managers were asked to comment on the user survey results, and to provide their comments on the following topics:

- The history of the development of the website
- Views on how the project has progressed
- The overall performance of the project
- The project's strengths, weaknesses, successes and failures
- The project's operation and key achievements
- Any valuable lessons learnt
- Future prospects for the project – possible expansion or improvements
- Any gaps in types of users

6.1 STEM

An interview was conducted with Christopher Walden, the ManagEnergy service coordinator, from STEM (Swedish Energy Agency).

STEM feels the website has developed beyond original expectations, and has become the key part of the ManagEnergy initiative. The website works particularly well as a centralised point for all information related to the initiative, and compliments the other ManagEnergy activities. The development of the website has taken more time and resources than originally expected, because of the level of success.

The number of visitors and registered users is a key achievement of the site. A particular strength of the site is that it is updated regularly and is a 'living' website. People can go the site each week and know that new and up-dated information will always be there.

A possible weakness of the site is that it now contains almost too much information, and is in too many languages. All this information and translations could confuse users. STEM feels that the home page is a bit cluttered, and contains too much text. There may be opportunities to re-design this page. STEM also feels that the events page should be re-designed as this looks confusing.

STEM feels that the facilities on the .tv website are particularly good and valuable. As more people become familiar with them and use the tools, then the value will increase and they will become more popular. There still needs to be investment in this site and the facilities it provides, because they are a unique facility for the ManagEnergy initiative.

STEM does not feel that the website should be expanded, but that it should be improved for its current local and regional users. The site should be developed into thematic areas for the

existing user groups. STEM feel that it is important that the ManagEnergy branding is not lost. It is a well-known name amongst its user groups, and holds much value.

6.2 CPL Press

An interview was conducted with Katy Hall, the ManagEnergy website manager, from CPL Press.

CPL confirmed that the overall development of the website has been much more extensive than expected. In the beginning of the contract there was a high degree of uncertainty, and few stakeholders wished to be involved in the site's development. However, as the website has grown, more and more people are willing to get involved and contribute.

CPL feels that one of the main strengths of the ManagEnergy site is its continuity and sustainability. CPL feels that it is important to maintain an initiative like this, and to continue the amount of support provided to the local actors.

The development of the website is based on CPL's experience with website design. Initially, a great deal of work was required to deliver the right design and format for the website. CPL was able to draw on previous experience, specifically with www.biomatnet.org, and influence the development of the ManagEnergy site. CPL recognises that it is important to be flexible when working with the Commission. They feel that a particular strength of the website management is that they are adaptable and approachable, and can make changes at short notice. They have a clear procedure for getting things done. CPL is very responsive to the users needs. All developments and changes to the site have come from feedback from the users or client.

CPL would like to be able to put the whole website onto a CD so people do not need to be on the internet to browse the site. CPL would like to develop a thematic index on the website, to assist people to find all information related to one particular theme. This may help people navigate the site.

CPL has presented the website at a number of meetings, and would like the opportunity to do this more regularly, to make more people aware of how the website could help them. They would also like the opportunity to have demonstration or training sessions at meetings. They have been asked to write a 'how to use' document, and have this translated. But there is no ONE way of using the site – it is difficult as not everyone is looking for the same information.

CPL feels that the web chats are not as popular as they might be, and people do experience technical problems. CPL feels that more people should benefit from these chats and would like to increase the number of participants. They feel that one way of doing this would be to have the events recorded, so people can watch them as and when, and then to arrange a 'chat' afterwards, and to include key speakers in the chat. This would give people time to think about what questions to ask, and to be able to listen properly to the speeches.

6.3 Noterik

An interview was held with Siem Vaessen and Peter Maas, from Noterik, which runs the ManagEnergy.tv website.

Overall, Noterik is pleased with the development of the website. Initially there was no plan to have the videos on a separate website, but it was decided to make all videos and multimedia material available in a centralised location.

Noterik has developed a number of technical tools to aid the development of the website, and to reduce the problems experienced by end users. However, these developments are not always seen by the end user, so they do not realise progress has been made. They recognise that it is difficult to set priorities and to decide what to invest in as there are many problems to be overcome. It is difficult to know what would benefit the most people and add the most value.

Noterik feels that communication between partners has improved considerably. This has allowed them to concentrate more time and money on solving problems with the website, than solving problems with communication.

Noterik feels that the .tv site is not marketed or advertised enough. This could be the reason for the site attracting fewer users than expected. A number of tools that have been developed have not been used or promoted at conferences. More people need to mention the facilities available on the .tv site at conferences and meetings, to enable full utilisation, and to get the most benefit.

Noterik does experience some difficulties with the technical staff and IT suppliers at conferences. Sometimes contractors are asked to perform technical tasks on-site, with which they are not familiar, which can create problems. This can result in difficulties for people trying to view the videos on-line, but unfortunately such instances are beyond the control of the ManagEnergy team. Consequently these staff need to work with the ManagEnergy team to ensure that all technical problems are dealt with quickly and efficiently. The local facilities at conference halls may cause a problem, as not all of them are fully developed enough to cope with the facilities needed by the ManagEnergy team.

Noterik recognises that a major, obvious weakness with the virtual conference is that people do not have the opportunity to meet each other. One of the main reasons for going to conferences is the networking opportunities, which are often at the reception events, afterwards or during breaks. Noterik is hoping to develop a networking tool to overcome this, to allow people to ‘talk’ to each other and share experiences.

Noterik recognises that the search facility on the .tv site is valuable. They feel there are opportunities to develop and extend this facility, which would increase value for the users. Noterik feels that it could introduce a facility for the most popular speeches, the most recent downloaded presentations etc. These statistics are also likely to be interesting for the speaker, and would add value to the user.

A key improvement on the .tv website is that, originally, the site was only provided in English. Now the presentations are provided in five languages (English, French, Italian, Spanish and German). This range should be extended to target New Member States.

A large number of videos are stored on the .tv website. These are taking up a significant amount of space, and almost half of them are now never used. There are clearly issues with what should be done with these.

Previously, presentations and speeches have been provided on CD, but this is not part of the contractor's remit, and is costly in terms of time and budget. It is technically possible to provide CDs or DVDs of the speeches and presentations but this would require a significant amount of effort, in terms of time and budget. It is not in the contract, and the resources required could be invested in solving other issues. It would also be difficult and expensive to ship the discs out to people. This would again raise copyright issues. Interpreters may not give their permission to be on the disc. Overall providing the events on a DVD or CD may be a viable option but it is a separate issue, and would require a new budget and specification.

6.4 ManagEnergy Reflection Group

The response of the ManagEnergy Reflection Group was compiled by Dr Gerry Wardell, the group's chairman.

The Group is very pleased with the development of the website and considers it a valuable tool, which has been particularly successful. It feels that the website works well as a 'one-stop-shop' for all information related to local energy issues. The Group feels that a particular asset of the website is the management and delivery. It feels that CPL are very good at what they do, and always respond quickly to queries and requests. CPL has been sensitive to the needs of users, and has kept the website simple, which the Group believes has certainly contributed to its success.

The Group recognises that the partner search concept is an inherently difficult area as it tends to be used by the inexperienced people. The Group suggest that a helpdesk in each member state providing assistance from a more experienced level may help the less experienced organisations on a range of issues.

The Group feels that rather than expecting the ManagEnergy team to deal with all requests for information and translations, that local actors should be used to provide translations and information related to their local needs. The local agencies should deal with local dissemination, and complete the chain of communication.

The Group feels there is no need to expand the website, but that it is more important to keep it continually refreshed and up to date. They feel it has probably reached the limit with the type of information it can provide. The Group feel it is important for the website to retain the local focus. It is important that it does not go beyond the remit of the project. The website must focus on non-technological support – and must not be overloaded with technological information.

6.5 DG TREN

A background paper was also sent to the management officials of the ManagEnergy Initiative in DG TREN. The following represents a summary of the replies.

DG TREN officials feel that ManagEnergy represent a valuable single online forum for local energy information. The main achievements of the site have been reaching higher audiences and providing reliable information. The website is particularly unique because of its local and regional focus, despite the fact it is managed by the European Commission.

Some DG TREN officials recognise that the webchats have not been very successful so far. But they believe that as people become more familiar with the tools on the site, and they have more experience with using them, then the tools will become more popular.

Some DG TREN officials feel that municipalities are under-represented, and that they should be targeted. A way forward could be to include more promotional activities focussing on the benefits of the website to municipalities. Another way could be to add a thematic section on municipalities to the website.

Some DG TREN officials feel that the consolidation and constant update of material should be a priority over the coming years. Others see the developing of 'Kids Corner' and more features addressing schools as a step in the right direction.

DG TREN officials also recognize that the users of ManagEnergy should be more involved when it comes to improving the website for the future.

6.6 Key Messages

- All consultees were positive about the development of the website. It has grown much more than originally expected and has reached a wider target audience.
- The website has been developed in response to user needs, and with the experience applied from the two website managers.
- Weaknesses of the site include the technical problems people experience when using the .tv site, and the limited number of people who participate in web chats.
- The partner search section is recognised as a problem area as this tends to be used by inexperienced organisations.
- One possible addition to the service is to provide the .net site on a CD for people who have problems accessing the internet. This solution is not appropriate for the .tv site because of the amount of additional work this would entail.
- A new user group that should be targeted is municipalities, as they are currently under-represented.
- There is a general consensus that the website does not need to expand in its scope, and it is important that it does not lose the local/regional focus. The continued consolidation and constant update of material should be more of a priority.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Indicators of success

Overall, the response about the website has been positive from the users and providers. The website appears to be working well as a 'one-stop-shop' for information related to local energy use. The site has been very successful in terms of level of usage and information provided. The key indicator of success is the significant number of people registered, and the number of people who use the site regularly, as revealed in the statistics of usage and the user survey. The website is a very valuable tool, for many in the field and is therefore widely regarded as a success.

Overall the development of the website has been more extensive than originally envisaged. The site was originally developed for energy agencies to share best practice and to develop case studies. Now, the site contains a large volume of information as a result of its expansion to include and target all local and regional energy actors.

The website is considered to be user-friendly and is kept up to date – this is a high valued quality.

The e-mail bulletin is seen by users as a useful part of the service provided. All e-mails are text only and have no attachments; to reduce the potential for problems with viruses and spam. However, the ManagEnergy team does sometimes experience problems with spam filters and security protection.

The internet recordings represent a new and pioneering approach, which will inevitably experience some technical challenges, but, nonetheless provides valuable lessons for the future developments. The .tv site is particularly useful for the more experienced internet user, although the technical jargon can sometimes be difficult to interpret. The responsibility for overcoming many technical problems lies with local actors.

A key achievement of the .tv site is the active participation from across Europe, especially from New Member States, as shown by the user statistics. At the Annual Conference in 2004, the 'virtual' participants were more likely to ask questions than the people who were actually at the conference.

The table below summarises indicators of success that are proposed for the new web service contracts.

Table 1 Recommended indicators for the new web service contracts

Indicator	Objective/Impact	Action/output
Total number of users	Maintain current rate of growth to attain 12,000 registrants by end of contract period.	Increased publicity at energy events and targeted e-mail campaigns.
Composition of the user community	Increase registration of: - Public administrations, and - Schools, to comprise 50% of all users by end 2007. Increase registration of: - Organisations in New Member States, such that the participation rate is proportionate to population size, by end 2007.	As above, but targeted at specific potential registrants through national and European representative and trade bodies, e.g. education ministries, local government associations etc.
Expansion of content on the .net website	- Continuously add new case studies, achieving representative coverage of all relevant themes and presented using an upgraded, standard template. - 500 case studies to be available by end 2007	- Agree standard format and structure with EC - Email campaign to solicit contributions from registered users
Availability of website content (.net and .tv) in languages other than English	Increase the number of content items (documents, reports, case studies, videos etc.) available in languages other than English.	Establish section inviting users to vote for translated documents as a means of gauging demand and applying pressure to local and regional actors to take the lead in this respect.
Usage of features on the .net website	- Increase use of the Partner Search facility by a significant degree. - Reduce average download time significantly on the .net website - Improve accessibility to achieve WC3 Level 2 standard by end 2005.	- Improve user-friendliness of section and promote the benefits on the website using examples of success stories. - Upgrade navigation to improve clarity and usability - Upgrade web structure and design
Usage of features on the .tv website	- Reduce volume of technical problems - Increase number of downloads - Improve accessibility to achieve WC3 Level 2 standard by end 2005.	- Work with local, regional actors to reduce demand for technical support - Advertise and promote .tv services - Upgrade web structure and

		design
Overall appeal and value to users	Make it easier for visitors to find material relevant to them quickly.	Establish a series of thematic sections to structure content. This might be done by user (local authority, school, Agency etc.), or by technology (solar, wind biomass etc.)
User satisfaction	Provide quantitative and qualitative evidence of high levels of user satisfaction	Using the online survey completed for this evaluation as a baseline, carry out subsequent annual surveys, using the same template to enable direct comparison.

7.2 Key achievements and developments of the site

Most developments and changes to the site have been implemented as a result of feedback and suggestions from users and the client. A specific example of this is translation of the home page into all 25 EU languages, and the flags linking to these. Overall the statistics on user numbers and visitors to the site show the success of the site. The site provides a balanced portfolio of information types and formats.

Communication between partners involved in the ManagEnergy project has improved considerably over the life of the project. This has meant more time can be devoted to improving the website.

A key improvement on the .tv website is that originally the presentations were only provided in English. Now the presentations are provided in five languages (English, French, Italian, Spanish and German), and sometimes more. There are issues over whether this translation should be extended further, for example, to target New Member States. Translations would obviously have implications for the budget, and it may add more value if this money were to be spent elsewhere.

There have been many technical developments related to the .tv website. A key development has been the production of a system checker for the .tv website. This was developed in response to a need for more information about why people are having problems. This has helped users to understand if they will be able to use this website and if not what the problems may be. If people still experience problems after using this checker, it gives the helpdesk team more information about what the potential problems may be. This should mean that problems are more likely to be solved.

7.3 Some potential weaknesses

Not all facilities on the .tv site have been used to their full potential, in particular the web chats, and interaction between virtual participants and speakers at conferences. This can only

be developed as people begin to use the site and understand what features are available. This is a particular aspect of the site that could be developed in the new contract. For example, there is an option for speakers to ask questions to the internet audience, but this has not been used as often as it should have been. This was used at the Annual Conference 2004, and was viewed as a success by the web service provider. This facility needs to be promoted and used more often, as it could be a key strength of the site.

The web chats have not been as successful as expected as they are used by few people. The chats themselves tend to be dominated by consultants or advisors- people that know the background/ policy. More people use the chats for the info days rather than the conferences. This could be because people want specific information out of it and feel they get more value.

Local IT suppliers and technical staff at conferences need to work in cooperation with the ManagEnergy team to ensure that all technical problems are dealt with quickly and efficiently and minimise negative impacts on the service to participants.

The partner search is not as popular as expected. This is an inherently difficult area as the people who are most experienced will already have contacts so are unlikely to use it. A possible solution would be to set up a helpdesk in each Member State to help the less experienced people. This would provide assistance from a more experienced level and could cover a range of issues. The partner search section may prove to be more useful to organisations in the New Member States.

The events page has received criticism from users for being unclear. This is a difficult area and the style has been changed a number of times because of the inherent growing nature of the page. Initially there were only a few events to promote. However, as the site has grown the number of events has also grown quite rapidly. This raises issues for the structure of the site. ManagEnergy has tried using sub-pages to overcome this problem, but with limited success.

7.4 Lessons learnt

The original ManagEnergy website design is based on CPL's experience – in particular with www.biomatnet.org, which has been running successfully for ten years. Noterik also has experience in video streaming for the internet, which has been fed into the development of ManagEnergy websites. It is important to be flexible and adaptable to change when working with the Commission. The service providers must be able to cope with peaks and troughs in their workload.

Previous Commission websites have tended to lapse after the contract has run out. The aim with ManagEnergy is to achieve continuity and sustainability. The ManagEnergy brand name belongs to the Commission, therefore, when the contract runs out the Commission keeps the name, and the information on the website. The web code needs to be portable so that if the service provider changes it should be easy for them to take on the original website and make changes to it.

A number of lessons have been learnt related to communication with and between partners and technicians. For example, Noterik requires the PowerPoint slides to be sent to them at least a week before the event, so they can be put on-line and can be viewed with the live recordings. However, there are problems when people add in another slide, or change the order of them, as the speech will not stay in sync with the slides on the internet. This could be overcome by showing the images from the conference, rather than the original PowerPoint presentation.

A discussion forum was trialled on the website, but did not prove popular and was abandoned. This is by no means an unusual experience for websites of this type.

The size of the home page can be a problem with some computers as it is too wide for smaller screens so the menu on the right of the screen, with latest news, events and recordings is not visible. All other web pages should be the right size for smaller computer screens. This is an issue for the Commission to resolve.

7.5 Recommendations for changes

Given the solid record of success built upon over a number of years, it is important not to make dramatic changes to the websites as this may deter current users. However, the website functions and lay out must develop in line with the development of the content and users. Given the growing amount of information (text and videos), new search tools and interfaces are planned under the new contracts, and this is to be welcomed.

A thematic index on the website is a potential area for change and development. The site does have a keyword search at the moment, which can be used. However, more needs to be made of this to make it more obvious. There is now enough information to develop a thematic section – previously this was not possible as many sections would have been empty.

The search facility on the .tv site is valuable. There are opportunities to develop and extend this facility further, which would add value for the users. They could introduce a facility for the most popular speeches, the most recent downloaded presentations etc.

Live events are of high quality, but few people take part in them. The chat transcripts do not always work during the live event. A solution to this problem would be to have the events recorded, so people can watch them as and when, and then to arrange a ‘chat’ afterwards, and to include key speakers in the chat. This would give people time to think about what questions to ask, and to be able to listen properly to the speeches. It may also reduce the problems with the site and streaming the presentations. Obviously there are issues over whether the speakers would be able to give their time to contribute to these debates. However, there is no reason why they could not do it over the internet themselves.

Clearly, during a virtual conference, people do not meet each other. One of the main reasons for going to conferences is the networking opportunities, often at the reception events afterwards or during breaks. Of course, there is no interaction with other delegates during an internet broadcast. The ManagEnergy team are hoping to develop a networking tool to

overcome this. This would allow people to 'talk' to each other and share experiences etc. This should be encouraged and expanded as it may add more value to the site and could get more people participating in the internet broadcasts.

There are a large number of videos stored on the .tv website, almost half of which are now never used. There are clearly issues with what should be done with these, and whether they should be removed. The statistics clearly show that most people watch the videos in the immediate weeks after the event.

As conferences take place during office hours, it is unrealistic to assume that people will be able to watch a conference on the internet all day long. It may be useful to develop an alert system, possibly by e-mail, which people can sign up to, so they can be alerted when a particular speech or presentation begins. This would mean that people do not have to watch the conference for the full day.

Some people have proposed that ManagEnergy provides some presentations on the .tv site on CDs or DVDs. However, there are limits to what can be done because of the file design and size. Previously, information has been provided on CD, but this is not part of their remit. It is technically possible to provide CDs or DVDs of the speeches and presentations but this would have implications for the budget of the service. It is not in the contract, and the money involved in this could be invested in solving other issues. It would also be difficult and expensive to ship the discs out to people. This would also raise copyright issues, and interpreters may not give their permission to be on the disc. Overall providing the events on a DVD or CD may be a viable option but and would require a new budget and specification. A possible addition to the .tv website would be to add links to company websites, together with the resume of the speaker. However, these would have to be kept up to date, and may cause problems when people change companies or jobs etc. There are also privacy issues, as some may not want their resume to appear on-line.

7.6 Potential expansion

It is not necessarily important to expand the scope of the website (RES/RUE at local and regional level), as distinct from the services and type and volume of information. It is more important to ensure it is consistent, relevant, and kept up to date. It is important to make sure the site does not lose its focus on rational use of energy and renewable energy and continues to meet the needs of the core users. The website should however try to reach new users who are within this scope. The site must focus on non-technological support, and must not be overloaded with technological information. It is important to ensure the website can be continued in its current state, even if the service provider changes. The website has been developed so it is adaptable; however, it is limited by budget.

The website could potentially reach an even larger number of users, in particular those in municipalities and schools. This is being addressed in the new contract, which has a specific requirement for the development of a 'kids corner'.

The use of local actors in providing information should be developed and enhanced. It is not and should not always be the responsibility of the ManagEnergy team to provide all the information. Local actors need to be encouraged to develop localised literature in their own language and tailored to their own needs. They could help to overcome the language barrier by providing translation as and when it is needed and disseminating it to their public.

7.7 Future prospects

It is important to ensure that if the service provider is changed then this is done smoothly, to minimise disruption to the site and overall management of ManagEnergy. This should also ensure that the good work continues and that all information and developments are consistent. The ManagEnergy team has continued to respond to new issues and any potential problems. It is important that this continues under the new contract, and that it does not lose its focus.

The need and demand for the website is still valid. Energy efficiency and the use of renewable energies is an increasingly important issue. The EU has a number of targets to meet regarding the efficient use of energy. New energy agencies are still being set up, and it is important that these can learn from the experience of others. The same applies to municipalities, national administrations and other energy players in the market. There is therefore is a clear need for continued dissemination and promotion of experience. The role of energy agencies and other relevant actors in New Member States is also becoming increasingly important. These are likely to need more support than those in the EU-15, and can learn a great deal from previous experience, via ManagEnergy.

It may be useful to have a demonstration/training session at meetings for the ManagEnergy website. CPL has been asked to prepare a 'how to use' document, and have this translated. It would be useful to a number of users to provide the whole .net website on a CD, specifically for remote users. This would mean people do not need to be on the internet to browse the site.

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the local agencies to take the lead on local dissemination, and to complete the chain of communication. Local agencies could produce a brochure in local 'jargon', specifically related to local needs, on a range of issues. This would reduce the pressure on the ManagEnergy team to provide translations and information in other languages. It would mean that they would be able to concentrate time and money on developing the website content and design, and adding more value for the end user.

There is demand for more web material in languages other than English. The question is how this is to be met cost effectively. This should be a matter for the local and regional actors to lead on, rather than DG TREN funding a significant volume of translation itself, with consequent impact on the project budget. However, the web service provider can play a key role in promoting and facilitating such developments. For example, a section could be established on the website, inviting visitors to follow a link in their own language and asking them to indicate which documents they would most like to see translated into their own language. Such a system might provide a valuable way of determining demand, by language and content-type, while at the same time applying pressure to the relevant national, regional and local bodies to respond positively.

Promotion of the two web services should be increased, to target specific groups including municipalities and schools. Particular attention should be paid to secure greater participation by these organisations in New Member States. This could be achieved by a combination of more publicity at events, targeted e-mail shots, encouraging local actors to increase numbers of users (for example through provision of information in different languages) and a press campaign to coincide with any re-launch of a revamped web service.

7.8 Website design

A very brief review of the two ManagEnergy web services has been carried out to provide observations that may assist in the management of the new contracts due to commence in the next few months.

The size of the .net home page is a problem for people using smaller screen-resolution size. Statistics[7] show that 52 per cent of users do use larger screen resolution (1024x768). However a significant number still use a smaller screen resolution (32 per cent use 800x600). Users of smaller screen resolution do not see the menu on the right side of the page, and have to scroll across for information. The design of .net should be updated in order to make the larger screen resolution adapt automatically to smaller screen resolution as in .tv.

The website appears to work well in the most common browser types.

The html style of the .net website is poor and the underlying structure cumbersome. There are no headings and the structure is based around tables, which can cause accessibility problems.

Currently the .net website does not validate to html standards. If it were compliant with these standards it would reduce the file size of the site and may save bandwidth. The site would, in effect, become more efficient, which is likely to lead to cost savings. Currently the .net homepage takes on average 22 seconds to download on a 56k modem. Re-structuring the site is likely to reduce this download time, which would reduce problems for users.

Currently the .net website does not meet basic standards of web accessibility guidelines for people with disabilities. The European Commission is committed to ensuring public administrations', and hence Commission, websites meet minimum accessibility standards[8]. Accordingly, the websites should be updated after the forthcoming Communication is published, if necessary. This is clearly an issue for the new contract to address.

The .tv website uses a more up-to-date structure, coding style and layout, and is more accessible. The site still does not meet accessibility and html standards, but it is a significant improvement on the .net site, and perhaps provides an example of how the .net site could be designed. There are a few minor changes that could be made to improve the accessibility of

[7] Source: www.thecounter.com, resolution statistics, November 2004
[8] http://europa.eu.int/information_society/topics/citizens/accessibility/web/index_en.htm

the .tv site, however, and it would be easier to effect these because of the better structure of the site.

It is not critical at this stage that the structure of the .net site is updated, and it works well as it is. Re-structuring the site may require time and money. However, there are benefits from doing this as it would improve the accessibility of the site, and searches performed by search engines. The costs and benefits of re-structuring would have to be considered carefully by DG TREN and the contractors.

The site is currently hosted with HotChilli, a well known and secure Internet Service Provider. All content is edited off-line and uploaded by FTP – hence is not vulnerable to unauthorized editing of the data online. The password for FTP is known only to STEM, CPL and the European Commission. Because the content is edited off-line, there is always an offline copy of the entire site available. This is backed-up daily onto a separate backup drive. Copies of the website are also periodically provided to STEM and the Commission. Care should be taken to ensure that similarly robust security arrangements are put in place by the new contractors.

7.9 Benchmarking

Benchmarking the ManagEnergy websites to other, similar web services is problematic, given the widely differing remits of individual websites and contracts. However, the results of a brief review of four EU-supported websites do allow some interesting conclusions to be drawn. These are presented below:

Website	Cost	Description	Comment
Organizations for the Promotion of Energy Technologies, (OPET) Network http://www.cordis.lu/opet/home.html	433,000 Euro over 2.5 years	Focuses on the technical aspects of new energy technologies. Organised around seven thematic fields, an approach recommended for the ManagEnergy.net website. These are in effect a series of sub-sites, operated by different contractors. As a result however, formats are different for each field. A large number of case studies are available as is thematic information on policy and legislation. Common sections include news and events.	An interesting approach, which is based around discrete thematic projects, separate sub-sites and contractors. There may be a degree of overlap with ManagEnergy, in particular on legislation. If redesigned, it would be more appropriate for the ManagEnergy sites to retain a greater degree of integration and commonality of format. The OPET sites are more database-driven than ManagEnergy currently is, and the latter would benefit from adopting such a structure for data storage and retrieval.
CIVITAS www.civitas-initiative.org/civitas/home.cfm	Not available	The CIVITAS initiative on cleaner and better transport in cities, has 19 cities collaborating on four projects. Features include news section, events, pressroom, library, conferences	Although more limited in focus than the ManagEnergy sites, the website's database structure allows searching by a number of topic parameters, which represents a very useful feature.

		and a newsletter. Each city has a series of web pages providing information on project progress and results. Sections are also provided on each of the four EC-funded projects. There is a powerful topics section where the user can select from a series of themes to use in a multi-parameter search. There is also a CIVITAS Forum virtual network. There are no web casts or similar features. The gallery feature provides only static photo images from conferences.	
BioMatNET www.nf-2000.org/home.html	243,431 Euro over 43 months	This website provides information on projects funded under EU RTD Framework Programmes 4, 5 and 6 in the field of the integrated production and exploitation of biological materials for non-food use. The focus is on disseminating the results of individual projects. The emphasis is on project results but news, events and legislation sections are also included.	Much more technically orientated than ManagEnergy, this website and is very specifically tailored to one particular aspect of EU RTD activity. The search function is relatively unsophisticated.
Innovation Relay Centre IRC Gateway http://irc.cordis.lu/success/home.cfm	Not available	Designed as on online marketplace, the gateway structure is based around the type of information the user is searching for, rather than thematically. The presentation of (115) success stories is particularly strong, with a common format and appropriate length. The events and partner search sections are also very strong.	This website provides some useful functionality that might be reviewed as the ManagEnergy websites are reviewed and developed further. The partner search in particular, a fundamental objective of the IRC website may provide valuable lessons, as might the way the success stories are presented and accessed. There is no interactive element.

In conclusion, the very brief review provided above illustrates the unique scope, focus and extent of the ManagEnergy web services. No other site, in the energy or any other field, would appear to offer such a comprehensive series of online information and services. The size of the network of energy actors supported by ManagEnergy alone would also appear to far exceed any similar network. However, the websites considered above do exhibit some particularly well developed features (thematic approach, case studies and partner search), which provide useful models for any re-structuring of the ManagEnergy website (.net in particular).

While not providing a rigorous basis for benchmarking with respect to value for money, taking account the resources expended on ManagEnergy web services, together with the scope of the websites, breadth of audience appeal (national, sectoral), the innovative element (in particular for .tv), the large user base and volume of information made available it is reasonable to conclude that value for money is being achieved.

7.10 Summary of conclusions

Indicators of success

- The key indicator of success is the relatively large number of registrants and levels of use. This strong demand has resulted in the site becoming more extensive than originally envisaged.
- The service provided by the .tv website is a new and pioneering approach, which is proving valuable to its relatively small number of users and in terms of pointing to future potential developments in this field.

Key achievements and developments of the site

- The key achievement of the .net website is the significant number of organisations and individuals registered and using the service, demonstrating strong, continuing demand.
- The .net website has developed substantially over the life of the contract and many of the improvements implemented appear to be the result of feedback from users and clients.
- The .tv web service has, despite the technical challenges, built a consistent core of users.

Potential improvements

- The .tv website has unfulfilled potential, in particular with respect to web chats, which more intense promotion will help to address.
- The partner search needs to be upgraded to boost participation, and the events page needs to be re-designed.

Lessons learnt

- A trial discussion forum was unsuccessful.
- The size of the .net homepage is such that some users cannot always see all the content.

Recommendations for changes

- A thematic structure would improve appeal and usability.
- Improvements to the web chat element will increase the level of participation (for example, extending the search facility, recording events and developing a virtual networking tool).

Potential expansion

- There is considerable potential for expanding the numbers of users, without moving away from the primary scope (non-technical renewable energy and energy efficiency information for local and regional energy actors).

- This could be achieved by a combination of more publicity at events, targeted e-mail shots, encouraging local actors to increase numbers of users and provide more localised literature, and a press campaign to coincide with any re-launch of the web service.

Future prospects
- The need and demand for the website is still valid.
- The role of energy actors in New Member States is becoming increasingly important and these are likely to need more support, including *via* ManagEnergy, than those in the EU-15.

Website design
- The design of .net should be updated in order to make the larger screen resolution adapt automatically to smaller screen resolution as in .tv.
- The html style of the .net website is poor and the underlying structure cumbersome.
- Neither site meets basic web accessibility guidelines.

Benchmarking
- While no directly comparable website can be identified, the ManagEnergy web services do compare favourably with other websites and appear to offer value for money, in particular given the significant level of usage achieved for the .net site.
- The quality of the web services is high, although lessons can be learned from other EU-funded sites vis-à-vis the functionality of some features.