EIE-06-085 SOLPOOL

Intelligent Energy Europe

Work Package 5: Evaluation

D19: guideline, continuation SOLPOOL promotion

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1. Introduction

The main objective of the SOLPOOL project was to develop and implement campaigns for the increased use of solar thermal systems for the heating of outdoor swimming pools. The campaigns, carried out from March 2008 until May 2009, targeted the owners and operators of swimming pools, as well as installers and distributed of solar energy devices in Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Slovenia. The project partners were responsible of organizing all the workshops and dissemination activities at national and regional level, having a common European approach for the promotion of solar energy for the heating of outdoor swimming pools, strategy developed during the first part of the project.

During the execution of the project SOLPOOL a set of dissemination materials, planning tools and guidelines were developed and distributed among the key stakeholders. These include: the **Impact Advisor**, decision-making tool to estimate the effectiveness and economic impact of the use of solar energy for outdoor pool heating; **17 best practices fact sheets** examples across Europe, containing the characteristics of the swimming pool and the description of the solar system installed; **8 information posters** (in English, Czech, French, German, Hungarian, Greek, Italian and Slovene) that have been displayed in more than 200 swimming pools in Europe; **an information flyer** containing the information about the project, the economic and environmental benefits of installing solar systems and the available technologies; **a manual for installers, planners and operators/owners** in 8 languages, describing the main components, the system, the installation and the costs; **a manual for end-users of solar heated swimming pools**; and the SOLPOOL web page containing information of the project, the pdf. version of the above mentioned documents as well as the impact advisor, a data base of stakeholders, links to national web pages and a list of awarded swimming pools.

It is estimated that SOOLPOOL directly reached about 1.500 swimming pools in the targeted countries, with more than 10.000 hits in its web-page of interested public looking for information related to solar heating in outdoor swimming pools. However, the dissemination activities are planned to continue after the project end, and therefore a plan for further dissemination of the knowledge and a continuous spreading of the message is needed with the aim of supporting the partners of SOOLPOL in their future mission. This document has been planned to serve as a guidelines for future promotion activities, and has been prepared based on the lessons learned during the 30 months of this venture. The idea is to ensure the sustainability of the project after the end, guaranteeing that the efforts of the SOOLPOL partners in producing the material and building-up the network of stakeholders are not in vain. Applying the strategies proposed and following the suggestions given will ensure that the message of SOOLPOL, promoting the use of solar energy systems in heating outdoors swimming pools, continues to be brought to the target regions.

2. Future use and distribution of the main dissemination and training material

Thanks to the joint efforts of the project partners, the project SOLPOOL was able to deliver dissemination and training material of great quality, which has the potential to be further distributed among the other stakeholders maximizing the impact of the project after May 2009, when the project ended. The following section summarizes the main products of SOLPOOL, describing in a broad sense the possible channels of distributions and the main targeted audiences.

Impact Advisor

The Impact Advisor is a basic decision tool for policy makers or investment decision makers to pursue the idea of solar pool heating. The simple excel based Impact Advisor software tool provides the following technical capacities: calculation of dimensioning, building and operation costs, economic gains, energy savings and reduced CO_2-emissions for solar pool systems against the existing or conventional heating. The impact advisor is available in English, German, Slovenian, French, Czech, Greek, Hungarian and Italian.

Figure 1. The SOLPOOL impact advisor

Possible channels of distribution:

-Currently there are thousands of Facebook groups related to swimming pools worldwide: more 500 containing the Spanish word “piscina”, more than 500 containing the word English “swimming pool”, more than 500 groups with the French word “piscine” and around 60 with the German words “Schwimmbaden” or “Schwimmbecken”. This shows the enormous potential of using the latest ICT tools to market the use of the Impact Advisor. The idea could be to develop and test a novel public e-awareness campaign using the latest ICT tools such as text messaging, facebook, Youtube and others mainly among young people, recognizing the enormous multiplier effect potential of these channels.

-A direct link to the Impact Advisor web link http://www.solpool.info/2104.0.html available at web pages of other projects, municipalities, energy agencies, associations, conferences, etc.

-Promotion of the software in fairs and exhibitions of swimming pools and renewable energies in which the partners will participate.

-Repeatedly sending invitations to the mailing lists of members of associations of swimming pools and SMEs of solar energy installers and distributors.

Key message to the stakeholder: *"It is free to download, and will help you save money in energy costs"*

Key message to the partner: *"The Advisor is on-line, be creative when promoting it!"*

SOLPOOL leaflets

Flyers dealing with basic information on solar heating of outdoor swimming pools and the objectives of the SOLPOOL project were prepared at the beginning of the proyect. More than 1000 flyers were produced in 8 languages, bringing information about the project and additional information technical and economic information to the stakeholders. The leaflets were distributed in the workshops and in different conferences and currently, they are available in the web page http://www.solpool.info/2499.0.html.

Figure 2. The SOLPOOL leaflet in English

Possible channels of distribution:

-The basic problem with the distribution of the hard copy of the leaflet is the costs for printing. However, it must be taken into account, that the flyers could be printed in simply A4 paper. Printing the flyer in recycled paper will give a "green imagine" to the message, and it will help the partner to save costs of producing it.

-Usually the partners assist to conferences and fairs within their normal day-to-day activities. These events are always a place to keep bringing the message. Meetings with other partner

organization could be also an option for spreading the materials, especially if the partners have access to a further network of partners.

-Repeatedly sending the pdf version of the flyers to the mailing lists of members of associations of swimming pools and SMEs of solar energy installers and distributors.

Key message to the stakeholder: *"Just a few lines to get an inside of how to save costs in swimming pool heating"; "Bath in renewable warm water".*

Key message to the partner: *"Just a few flyers in the briefcase do not weight that much".*

Manuals for end-users and manuals for installers and operators

Two types of manuals were prepared in the frame of SOLPOOL, targeting end-users, and installers and operators. The first manual, a booklet of 12 pages intended for end-users, describes the concept of solar energy, its advantages for heating outdoor swimming pools, the types of absorbers, the typical design, the basic requirements for implementation, planning and dimensioning, costs and yields, options for national financing, and the "5 steps to a gut solar system". The second manual, a booklet of 16 pages, includes the sections mentioned above plus more technical information, as it was produced for installers and operators, such as the components of solar thermal systems for outdoor swimming pools, available concepts/designs, the differentiation among systems, installation, operation and maintenance. The manuals produced in 8 languages are available in pdf format for download from the website http://www.solpool.info/2499.0.html.

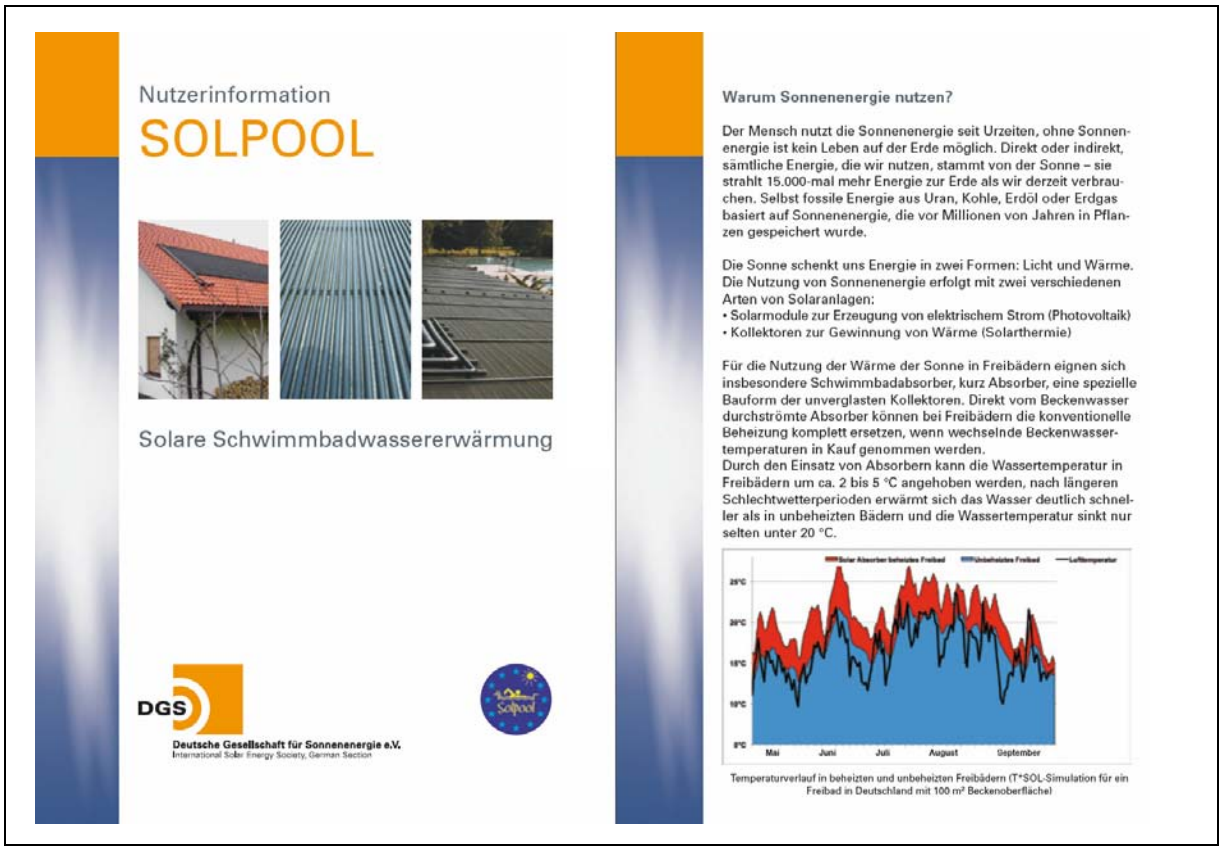


Figure 3. The SOLPOOL manual for end-users in German

Figure 4. The SOLPOOL manual for installers, planners and operators/owners

Possible channels of distribution:

-Printing the manuals using the own funds of the partners would be an unrealistic expectation; therefore, further financing means are to be planned. The most successful way to sponsorship the production of the manuals in the future is making it an advertising business. Selling the advertising spot in the manual, in a way that companies distributing and implementing solar systems promote their business, is a win-win deal.

-Distribution of the manuals to planning and implementing companies, engineering offices, suppliers and distributing SMEs, since they receive visitors interested on swimming pools or renewable energies.

Key message to the stakeholder: *"Don't you know how to start your solar energy system in your swimming pool? Here you will find the information that you need!*

Key message to the partner: *"Make sure you distribute the already printed manuals which are laying in your desk".*

Best practice examples

Best practice sites and case studies were checked and visited by the partners in their own countries. 17 Swimming pools were identified by the team across the region, in which the solar energy systems were installed. Fact sheets with information about the swimming pool

and the technology implemented were prepared. Currently these sheets, in different languages, are ready to download at http://www.solpool.info/2268.0.html.

Figure 5. Two examples of the SOLPOOL best practices in Germany and Greece in English (and Greek)

Possible channels of distribution:

-Fact sheets could be printed in recycled paper, to save in printing costs. As well as in the case of the leaflet, this will also give a "green image" to the project.

-Distribution of the fact sheets among planning and implementing companies, engineering offices, suppliers and distributing SMEs, since they receive visitors interested on swimming pools or renewable energies.

-Ensuring the promotion of the web-page among partners and colleagues. This is the main source of information, containing all the results of the project. Keeping the link of the partners organization to the SOLPOOL site, ensures the continuously visibility.

-Showing already implementing projects encourages swimming pool owners to install their own system. These sheets are, without a doubt, the presentation cards of the project. A broaden impact will be achieved if all 17 sheets are translated to the national languages, therefore it is recommended to take the time to translate them.

-Preparation of on-line "SOLPOOL best cases campaigns". A 17 weeks on-line campaign to show, for instance every Monday, one of the fact sheets to the members of mailing-lists, could be a way of further distributing the information gathered in the sheets. The texts of the E-mails could be extracted directly from the web page, making sure that they are attractive to the audience. Perseverance is needed to make an impact.

Key message to the stakeholder: *"Energy savings in swimming pools by heating with the sun? Yes!, it is possible. Just take a look!"*

Key message to the partner: *"Integrate the best cases fact sheets to your day-to-day advocacy strategy".*

Posters

The consortium prepared 8 information posters (in English, Czech, French, German, Hungarian, Greek, Italian and Slovene), which have been displayed in more than 200 swimming pools in Europe

Possible channels of distribution:

-Posters need to be printed in good quality to make an impact in the end-user. For that, it is required to find sustainable financing for the continuously printing of the material. The local energy agencies could be the allies for the production of the posters. Conferences of swimming pools are the best place to distribute the posters among pools owners.

-Distribution of the fact sheets among planning and implementing companies, engineering offices, suppliers and distributing SMEs, since they receive visitors interested on swimming pools or renewable energies.

Key message to the stakeholder: *"A free poster to contribute to save energy"*

Key message to the partner: *"The most posters displayed, the higher the chances to make a difference".*

Figure 6. The SOLPOOL poster in English and Slovene

3. Guidelines for future dissemination and exploitation of knowledge

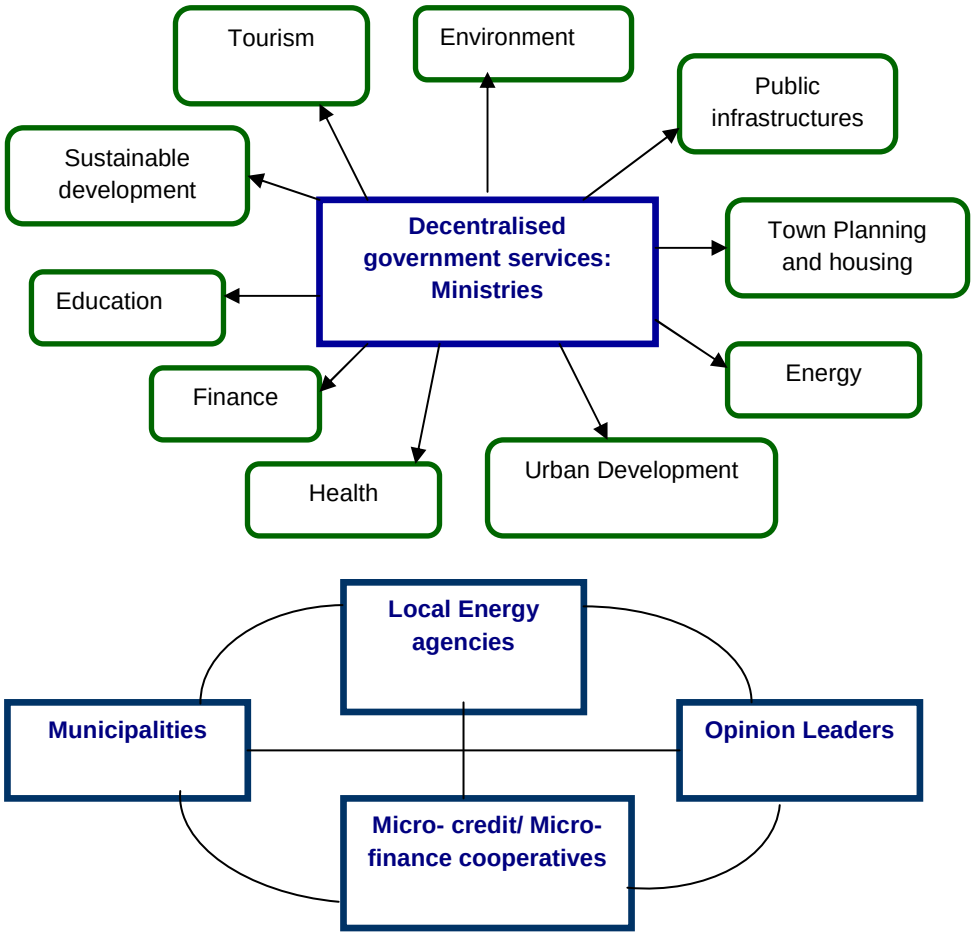
The following guidelines have been prepared based on the lessons learned during the SOLPOOL project time frame, and after the brainstorming that took place during the final meeting in Lecce, Italy from 6th to 7th of April, 2009. It aims to streamline the processes of the future dissemination activities of the SOLPOOL consortium according to a set of steps to build up further strategies of dissemination, together with suggestions that will enhance the impact of the actions.

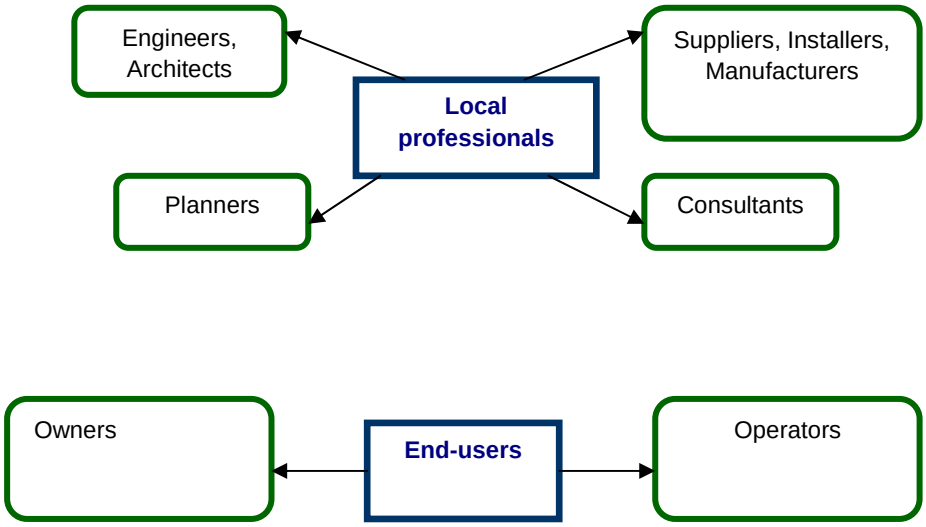
The following steps show a proposed routine to plan and implement future strategies of dissemination and exploitation of knowledge.

STEP 1: Identification of target audience

A dissemination programme should be focused on informing and training of national, provincial or divisional and local stakeholders from top to low level decision makers and actors, all those whose work support the implementation of renewable energies in swimming pools, so that they should have a vested interest in raising awareness and promote solar systems to the other stakeholders with whom they deal, enabling them to pursue solar energy projects and select the appropriate technologies.

A non-exhaustive list of target audience groups has been identified by members of the SOLPOOL consortium within the relevant authorities, decision makers, end users and professionals:





The SOLPOOL data base of stakeholders is a great place to contact different stakeholders and invite them to participate in the activities. This data base is available at: https://www.easy-business.biz/solpool/list_solpool.aspx

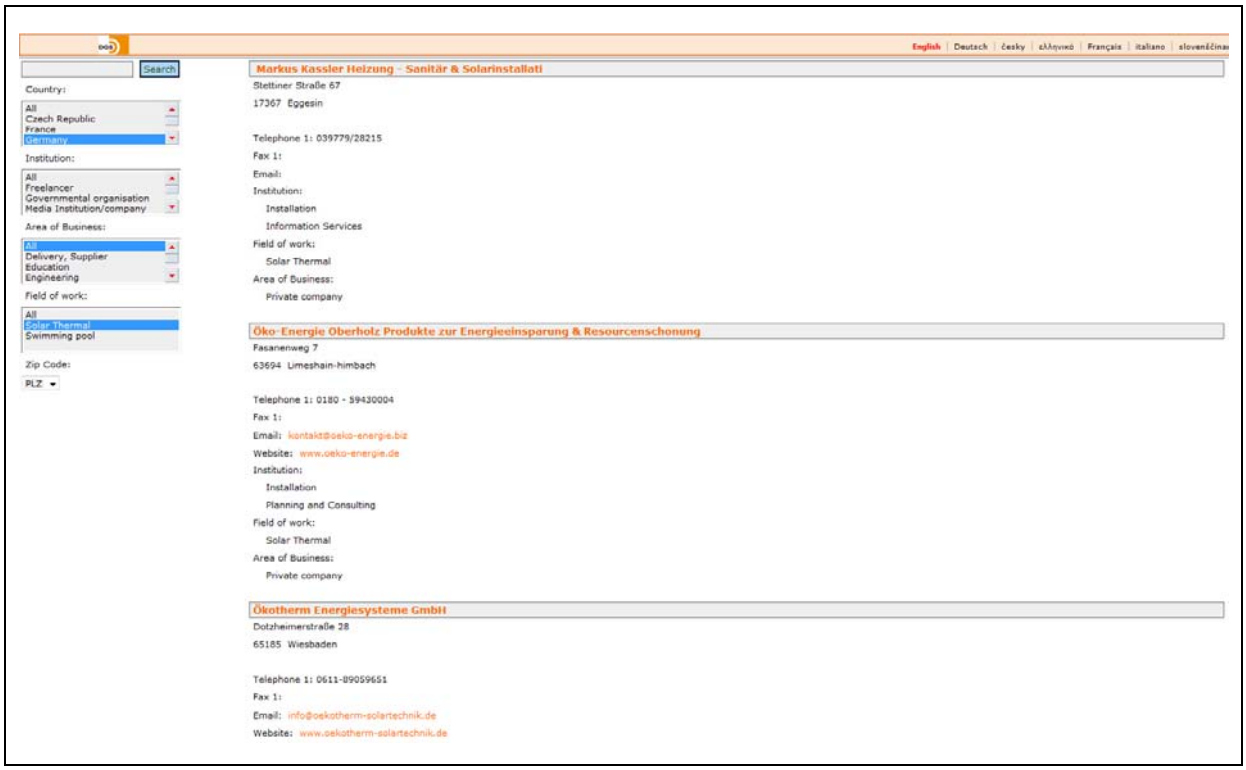


Figure 7. The SOLPOOL data-base of stakeholders

STEP 2: Identification of constraints in promoting solar energy heating in swimming pools

The identification of the barriers and constrains will help to focus the dissemination campaign and design the key message. Typical constrains are: technical barriers (e.g. unreliable components, lack of trained and competent planners and installers), financial barriers (lack of incentives, high investment costs, etc.), political barriers (e.g. legal aspects, necessary permits, etc.) and societal barriers (e.g. lack of consumer awareness).

STEP 3: Setting objectives and goals

The training programme objective and expected outputs must be defined according to parameters such as training duration, the needs, financial resources available, etc. Each objective will be related to complementary outputs, activities and inputs. Outputs will reflect capacities achieved, while activities will describe the actual acquisition and development of capacities and the related changes; the objectives must be simple, achievable and verifiable.

STEP 4: Preparatory and conducting activities of dissemination and exploitation of knowledge

4.1 Preparatory activities: Any dissemination programme has to be carefully planned. Systematic preparations are required to be undertaken, followed by selection of the message, the media to be used, the didactical methodology, teaching/training material, adjusted to the target audience and the local circumstances.

4.2 Guidelines for implementation: To ensure that the material prepared within the project is used in the dissemination campaign.

-Impact Advisor

-Best practices fact sheets examples across Europe

-Information posters

-the information flyer

-the manual for installers, planners and operators/owners

For the successful implementation, the following points should be considered for the dissemination and training activities:

- Funds are a prerequisite:

- Potential obstacles and issues that should be addressed before the workshops

- All needed tools and materials should be ready.

- Stakeholders expectations of should be tacled

- Interactivity should be ensured through group working.

STEP 5: Monitoring and evaluation

Awareness rising is a long process, which needs to be planned, and monitored and evaluated over the time. To do it, a plan should be developed. This plan should include all dissemination activities, corresponding timeframes, and the involved actors with their respective roles and responsibilities.

3. Recommendations for an effective continuation of SOLPOOL promotion

The following suggestions will give the SOLPOOL partners the opportunity of carry out key activities with the potential of reaching more actors.

Reaching more stakeholders

-Increase the target audiences for dissemination, including private users, hotel operators and owners, clubs, community associations.

-Prepare regional campaigns engaging the municipalities and the chambers of commerce, as it has been shown that local/regional initiatives have stronger impact than national strategies.

-Engage the regional and local associations in the SOLPOOL strategy, as it has been shown their impact at local level.

-Encourage architects, planners, builders, construction companies and suppliers to switch to solar energy when designing and planning a new swimming pool.

-Promote within the Energy Agencies the generation of databases of swimming pools heated with solar energy, which currently are not available in none of the participating countries and regions.

Workshops and participation in conferences

-Present the official poster in conferences, exhibitions and fairs related to solar and renewable energies to wider the up-take of solar energy systems in public and private swimming pools.

-Continue participating in swimming pool conferences.

Legislative and political advocacy

-Influence politics by actively participating in the discussions of the municipal councils to include in the political agenda the need of enforcing the use of renewable energies in swimming pools.

-Bring the message and key information to town council level, which could influence not only the public swimming pool managers but also the private owners and hotel operators.

-Advocate the municipalities and local decision-makers in the wide-spreading of the outputs of SOLPOOL, by engaging them in the further printing and distribution of flyers and brochures.

Dissemination tools

-Stimulate and reinforce the use of the Impact Advisor by continuously contacting the stakeholders of the swimming pool owners and hotel associations.

- Use SOLPOOL best practice examples to convince the decision-makers to develop new financial programs in order to enhance the deployment of solar thermal technologies applied to swimming pool heating.

-Keep promoting the on-line information exchange by identifying web sites related to SOLPOOL and relevant target audiences where there could be a link to the project web page.

-Try to apply for a yearly financing line for the future dissemination activities, in order to keep on printing flyers, posters, brochures and other developed materials.

-Study the possibilities of public-private-partnerships financing models, to engage the private sector which will benefit.

-Include funding schemes for new installations of solar heating systems as one of the main dissemination tools.

-Whenever possible, offer counselling on implementation projects to interested parties.