



Energy

National Research Programmes 70 and 71

Card

Co-benefits often more convincing than environmental arguments

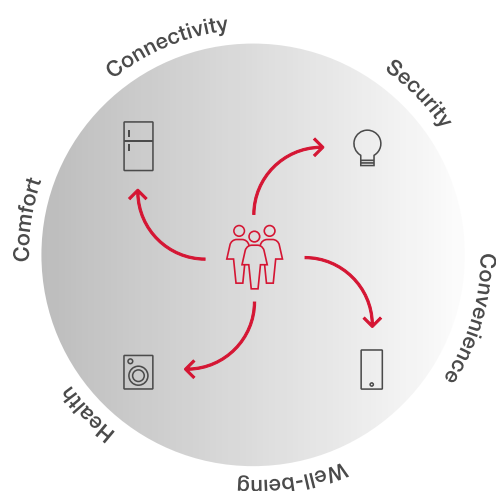


Co-benefits often more convincing than environmental arguments

Standard of living

Costs / benefits

Co-benefits often more convincing than environmental arguments



Topics with relevance for household energy consumption *Source: Sahakian/Bertho 2018.¹*

While energy and environmental issues are an important concern for many Swiss citizens, they are in most cases not their top priority. Instead, emphasis is placed on issues that are related to personal quality of life, such as health, well-being, convenience, connectivity, comfort and security.² Regular washing, for example, is linked to subjective requirements concerning hygiene. Lighting not only allows us to see better, but also provides a feeling of security. For many people, connectivity is a condition for social participation.

These relationships need to be taken into account for activities aimed at reducing the energy consumption of households and, where possible, used in a targeted manner. The more energy-conscious behaviour is linked to an additional benefit with respect to personal quality of life, the greater the effect of the campaign. Instead of saving, which tends to be perceived as a restriction, an aspect with positive associations is placed in the spotlight. As an argument for shorter washing cycles, for example, time saving can be highlighted, while health effects can be pointed to as a motivation for cycling and the creation of a pleasant and comfortable atmosphere can be referenced as a benefit of reducing lighting intensities. And as a motive for the installation of a photovoltaic system, the argument that this will allow individuals to become independent of their energy provider is often far more convincing than the associated benefits for the environment.



Notes and References

- 1 Sahakian, M & Bertho, B 2018, *L'électricité au quotidien: le rôle des normes sociales pour la transition énergétique suisse*, Genève, https://www.unige.ch/sciences-societe/socio/files/9415/3502/7352/Brochure_PNR71_DEF.pdf.
- 2 Project "Understanding household energy consumption".