



## PRIORITIES 2019

### **Solar Heat Europe**

### *Re-energizing solar heat*

## Overview of Priorities

- **Strengthening the sector's reputation**
  - Build up trust in the sector's potential, consolidating a positive message approach
  - Develop concerted communication efforts & initiatives
- **Enhancing industry's competitiveness**
  - Implement a tailored approach to the different solar heat segments
  - Promote storage solutions and smart thermal grids as central to the future energy system
  - Exploit and disseminate data on best practices, including investment data
- **Promoting an adequate policy framework**
  - Cooperate with members in addressing the Clean Energy Package implementation at national level
  - Explore opportunities for improved financing mechanisms addressing solar heat at European and national level
- **Improving SHE's capacities**
  - Recruit new members
  - Increase Solar Heat Europe's notoriety within sector
  - Enhance member's engagement in SHE's work, while providing quality and innovative services to members

## SUMMARY

**Re-energizing solar heat**, as a motto for 2019, focuses on pointing out our sector's strengths and achievements, both internally and externally. It is clear that in our sector we do believe in the merits of our technology and we believe it has a huge untapped potential. As such, we need to be more assertive, more energetic in bringing up the achievements of our technology so far and how much more we can still contribute to the decarbonisation of heating and cooling.

Investment in renewable energy in Europe has peaked in 2011 and has been reducing since. Our sector needs to learn from the approaches of other sectors and have a more positive and constructive messaging. This shall contribute to solidify our position as an essential technology, **building trust** in its capability to contribute in different dimensions and as a no-regrets solution. Players from the sector need to be the best defenders of our technology and the main contributors to **strengthening the sector's reputation**. Solar Heat Europe will take this challenge heads-on and mobilise the sector towards the need for more **positive messaging** from our sector.

Reputation is only one side of the coin. The solar heating and cooling sector must increase further its **competitiveness**. This is obviously a task involving everyone in the sector. Solar Heat Europe can contribute by continuing to work on addressing the specific needs of the three main **market segments**. Furthermore, solar heat will have more opportunities if **storage solutions and smart thermal grids** become central to the future energy system. We can further contribute to the sector's reputation and competitiveness by creating conditions for trust in the technology based on **data from existing projects**, including **best practice examples**, and enabling stakeholders to better assess the risk of different solutions.

Even taking into account its benefits and potential, the sector needs a level playing field between all solutions in the market, including other RES-based options. This requires an adequate **policy framework** in place, both at national and European level. The **Clean Energy Package**, approved at the end of 2018, opened new opportunities for renewable heating and cooling, namely implementing proposed measures at national level. The combination of this process with the Multi-Financial Framework negotiation, including a new set of European funds, will open opportunities for **improved financing mechanisms** addressing climate change, including renewable heating and cooling, investment at **regional and local level**.

Finally, Solar Heat Europe must improve its capacities. **Growing the membership base** is important to increase of financial resources and in order to increase the representativeness of the organisation and increase the expertise base. Increasing the **interaction with members** is part of the same process, keeping members informed of essential issues but also being able to collect inputs. Better **servicing** will contribute to increase the value members attribute to Solar Heat Europe membership, helping to retain members but also to become more attractive to other entities. This includes also improving SHE's **image and notoriety**, within and outside the sector.

## Strengthening the sector's reputation

Investment in renewable energy in Europe has peaked in 2011 and has been reducing since, contrary to what is observed in the rest of the world. Focus in Europe has moved from concerns over climate change to security matters, migration, EU stability and the need for stronger economic growth. This context has affected all renewable energy technologies. Solar heating and cooling has also been affected, due to different circumstances. Our industry has had to adapt as and suffered, as others, the effects of the reduction on demand, increased competition from fossil fuels and other RES, leading to consolidation of production capacity, reduced margins, among other effects. While adapting, we are innovating in our sector, building up also in new market segments and adapting our solutions to new challenges, be it sector coupling or digitalisation.

This means that our sector can overcome this challenging period, building on its strengths. For this we need to solidify our position as an essential technology, building trust in its capability to contribute in different dimensions; be it CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction, energy savings, job creation, circularity of our economy or other. We are indeed a no-regrets solution and need to be the best defenders of our technology and the main contributors to strengthening the sector's reputation. Solar Heat Europe will take this challenge head-on and mobilise the sector towards the need for more positive messaging from our sector.

As such, the following axes are essential to **strengthen the sector's reputation**:

- **Build up trust in the sector's potential, consolidating a positive message approach**
- **Develop concerted communication efforts & initiatives**

This work will require a **strategic approach to communication** from Solar Heat Europe and other major stakeholders. This shall focus on the achievements in the sector, as well as in its untapped potential. As such, it will be necessary to work with members and experts in order to **develop a joint positive narrative**.

This shall be followed by the development of **concerted communication efforts** and other related initiatives. Solar Heat Europe shall coordinate this messaging on the sector with national associations and other relevant stakeholders and interact with specialized media on content creation and **common initiatives**.

## Enhancing the industry's competitiveness

Working on the sector's reputation also contributes to its recognition as a competitive technology. Still is only one side of the coin. The solar heating and cooling sector needs to keep enhancing its **competitiveness**. This is obviously a task involving the thousands of people working on our sector.

Focusing on what Solar Heat Europe can bring into this equation, it shall continue to work on addressing more specifically the needs of the three main market segments. Furthermore, solar heat will have more opportunities if storage solutions and smart thermal grids become central to the future energy system. We can further contribute to the sector's reputation and competitiveness by creating conditions for trust in the technology based on data from existing projects, including best practice examples, and enabling stakeholders to better assess the risk of different solutions.

The conditions to promote the **industry competitiveness** will be a goal transversal to Solar Heat Europe's work. However, some actions need to be more directly focused on this purpose. It is sense, that the following focus is proposed:

- **Implement a tailored approach to the different solar heat segments**
- **Promote storage solutions and smart thermal grids as central to the future energy system**
- **Exploit and disseminate data on best practices, including investment data**

After starting specific work on the segments in the previous year, it is important now to follow-up the work done insofar in the **task-forces on market segments**, implementing the **identified priority actions**.

The role of solar heat in the future energy mix is closely connected to **thermal storage** and to the integration of solar thermal solutions into **smart thermal grids**. As such, SHE needs to continue to advocate in relevant fora about these enablers, in many cases to do awareness raising about the solution. IT shall also support actions with similar goals, namely at public relations level, interacting with technical experts in order to develop stronger arguments on the technology and provide relevant data on costs, performance and deployment.

One of the challenges in terms of promoting solar heat, as well as renewable heating and cooling, is the difficulty in assessing relevant information about solar heat applications. For instance, information on economic and financial aspects of solar heat projects can be used to promote the technology towards different stakeholders, including in the financial sector. Therefore, report with **information on solar heat projects and financing mechanisms** will be finalised in 2019. This report shall be strongly disseminated and used in related spin-off actions to increase awareness among potential funders, investors or policy makers on such solutions.

## Promoting an adequate policy framework

Even taking into account its benefits and potential, the sector needs a level playing field between all solutions in the market, including other RES-based options. This requires an adequate **policy framework** in place, both at national and European level, so that the competition between diverse solutions is effectively addressing negative and positive externalities of the different solutions.

The **Clean Energy Package**, approved at the end of 2018, will open new opportunities for renewable heating and cooling, namely implementing proposed measures at national level. The combination of this process, including the development of the National Energy and Climate Plans (NECP), with the negotiation of the European Regional and Development Funds and Cohesion Funds, require swift action at national level. These will open opportunities for **improved financing mechanisms** addressing climate change, including renewable heating and cooling, investment at **regional and local level**.

Therefore, the key axes of Solar Heat Europe policy activity during 2019 will be to:

- ***Cooperate with the members in addressing the Clean Energy Package implementation at national level***
- ***Explore opportunities for improved financing mechanisms addressing solar heat at European and national level***

To support the work at national level, a **'CEP focused' solar heat policy package** shall be developed, with the involvement of SHE in cooperation with national associations, making also use of the **exchange of experience** between solar trade associations (STAs), that shall be facilitated by SHE.

During 2019, Member States shall prepare their National Energy and Climate Plans (NECP), (to be delivered to the EC at the end of 2019 and, in a parallel process, negotiate with the European Commission their national programmes under the framework of the European Regional and Development Funds and Cohesion Funds. These shall allocate substantial resources to climate change mitigation, including investment at regional and local level on renewable heating and cooling. Therefore, SHE will cooperate with STAs to identify synergies between ERDF/CF negotiations and the development of the NECPs.

## Improving SHE's capacities

Finally, Solar Heat Europe must improve its capacities, growing its membership base, increasing the interaction with members and improving its services.

**Growing the membership base** is important at different levels. One obvious one is the increase of financial resources and providing increased capacity in the secretariat to pursue the work needed by the sector. But it is also important in order to increase the representativeness of the organisation and increase the expertise base in which discussions are grounded. Increasing the **interaction with members** is part of the same process, keeping members informed of essential issues but also being able to collect inputs.

The idea of **better servicing** stems from the need to increase the value members attribute to Solar Heat Europe membership, helping to retain members but also to become more attractive to other entities. This includes also improving SHE's **image and notoriety**, within and outside the sector.

Taking this into account, the following priorities shall be addressed, namely to:

- ***Recruit new members***
- ***Increase Solar Heat Europe's notoriety within sector***
- ***Enhance member's engagement in SHE's work, while providing quality and innovative services to members***

Three important aspects are intertwined: **servicing to members, members' engagement and notoriety**. The development of services that facilitate member's engagement will be one of the main focus. By promoting best practices by members, it is possible to give notoriety to Members and SHE, while also serving the purpose of promoting a positive message around the sector.

Other innovative options are considered in order to make the member's engagement more appealing and more rewarding for them, making it easier to justify the time invested in such actions. These shall also help members and potential members to monetise the value of their membership fee.

## Other areas: ongoing activities and support areas

In parallel to the work the priorities, previous commitments and ongoing activities will be assured. The main ones are Solar Keymark Network, RHC-Platform / ESTTP and European projects.

In broader terms, the support areas, essential for Solar Heat Europe operations and in achieving the priorities, include policy & advocacy; media & communication; projects & events; market intelligence; standards & certification; research and innovation and administrative & financial management.

**Solar Keymark Network:** SHE will continue the administrative support to SKN and the Solar Certification Fund. It will promote better external communication of SKN, supported by the activities of the Marketing Working Group. In 2019 there will be also the launch of the new SK database and SHE shall also exploit options, to be proposed to SKN, in order to include package label tools under SKN.

**RHC-Platform & ESTTP:** the work of Solar Heat Europe regarding research & innovation is done in strong coordination with the RHC-Platform & ESTTP. It shall continue supporting the focus on **R&I policy** and lobby for better support for solar heating and cooling relevant topics, which shall also include thermal storage. Ensure strong participation from ESTTP experts in RHC-ETIP **Horizontal Working Groups.**

**Policy & advocacy:** This area is cross-cutting to most of Solar Heat Europe activities. It shall support in particular the main action area “Policy Framework”. As such, it will engage with members, in consultations or via the “**Policy Working Group**”. This WG will have a particular focus on the implementation of the Clean Energy Package and shall complement more direct work with national solar trade associations. It shall also deal with policy meetings and representation, as well as the involvement of Solar Heat Europe in several partnerships, namely the cooperation between RES associations, RES-H&C, DecarbHeat, DecarbEurope and CoolingEU.

**Projects:** Co-financed projects by EC or other entities are an essential part of SHE’s work. They allow to have additional resources on topics that are of relevance for the work of our organization. In 2019, we shall finish the work regarding the European **tender and research & innovation** on heating and cooling, start the new SecRHCI project and ‘Our solar Town’. SHE shall also interact with existing projects, relevant for solar heating and cooling topics, while considering opportunities for cooperation and exploring funding opportunities for projects relevant for Solar Heat Europe’s members and activities.

**Events:** Organise internal events, such as **webinars**. Support the organisation of the workshops and the General Assembly. Support the organisation of events in cooperation with other



organisations. For 2019 some of the activities being considered include experts meetings with industrial sectors, national events promoting segments, such as SDH, an exhibition on solar heating & cooling, webinars on several topics (eg: EC ErP product database). It is also considered to have a day with several workshops, similar to the one before the GA but earlier in the year.

**Media & Communication:** the work in this area includes mainly the support to the priorities, i.e., the internal and external communication dimension of the three main priorities. For instance, in membership, creating new messages and channelling them adequately, on policy, complementing our political positions with good political communication or in competitiveness, by developing materials that will promote best practices in the sector. One important part of the work will be related to maintain and improve the website, while maintaining the communication tools used, such as the Members Briefing Service, Business Opportunities section and press - clippings of Solar Heat Europe and its members in the media. It shall also manage Solar Heat Europe presence in social media.

**Market intelligence:** this support area deals with the monitoring of the situation in the European market. It shall provide more regular updates to the members on the market situation, through the newsletter. It shall also interact with the policy area, regarding the monitoring of measures aimed at 2020. It shall increase the interaction with the member's, setting up a **"Market Working Group"**.

**Standards & certification:** The work in this area is connected to the work related to Labelling activities, the Solar Keymark and standardisation activities. It shall support directly the activities of **ESTESC**, the European Solar Thermal Energy Standards and Certification working group. ESTESC is jointly managed by ESTIF and EHI (the European Heating Industry Association) in cooperation with the German AK-norm. Solar Heat Europe is responsible for the coordination of the ESTESC **subgroup on Certification**. Considering the challenges related to the limited industry involvement on standardisation activities, it shall also coordinate the **subgroup on Standardisation**. It also includes the cooperation with TC312 and the promotion of stronger industry involvement.

It should be also stressed that, as for the different priorities, some of the **support actions** are **interdisciplinary**, usually involving different areas, such as policy, market intelligence and communication. This includes the work on the segments, like the dedicated **task forces on Solar Heat for Industrial Processes** and **Solar District Heating** and **Solar Heat in Buildings**. In addition, it can also include the preparation of inputs to EC consultations or to external reports. Some of these reports are done every year, such as the World Energy Outlook from IEA or the Global Status Report of REN21. Though there is also a relevant number of studies and reports that require also similar contributions.