



# Local energy poverty policies in the Netherlands

biannual monitor of municipal  
design and implementation

(November 2025)

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## Introduction

- Since an energy crisis started to unfold in 2021, energy poverty has been high on the political agenda in the Netherlands.
  - Research by the Dutch Institute for Applied Scientific Research (TNO) and the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) shows that in 2022 over 600.000 households (6.4% of total) were confronted with energy poverty, some 90.000 more than in 2020. These are households have high energy costs, low income, and poorly insulated homes.
  - The Dutch government responded swiftly by offering direct support in the form of monetary compensation and a (temporary) energy price ceiling.
  - In addition to this direct support, the national government has made 500 mln euro available to municipalities through three rounds of so-called “SPUK” funding (earmarked and one-off). Municipalities were given the flexibility to spend these SPUK funds on reducing energy poverty in a “locally appropriate manner”.
  - In the past few years, local authorities – governors and policy makers in large and small municipalities – have played an important role in designing and implementing policies to address energy poverty. Their toolkits include energy coaches and energy fixers, vouchers and campaigns for energy efficient appliances and small home improvements, and targeted contributions to existing programmes for home insulation.
  - As part of the National Energy Poverty Research Programme, TNO has established a bi-annual (i.e. every six months) survey and dialogue to assess the state of play around local energy poverty policies.
  - We ask local authorities and policy makers what their experiences are with designing and implementing their local energy poverty approaches, what determines success, and where bottlenecks occur.
- This slide deck offers an English-language overview of the first six editions of the monitor (all in Dutch)**

# State of play

## Biannual monitoring of local energy poverty policies in the Netherlands

### Format:

- **Contacts:** We rely on direct input from municipalities and approach our contacts at the municipalities directly. We also receive assistance from the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG).
- **Multiple choice questions:** From “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”, with a core part that remains the same each time so that we can monitor developments over time.
- **Themes and open questions:** Each edition has a theme and open questions that tie in with it. This results in a highly valuable collection of responses that provide a good picture of daily practice and challenges.
- **Additional information:** including an overview of information sources and relevant parliamentary documents.

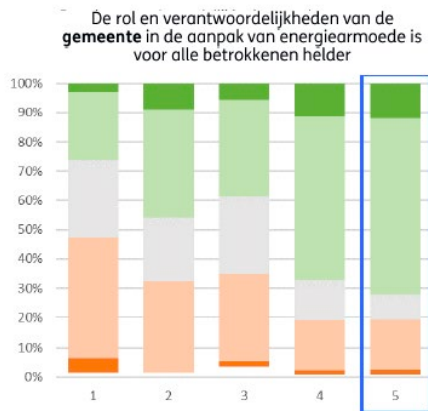




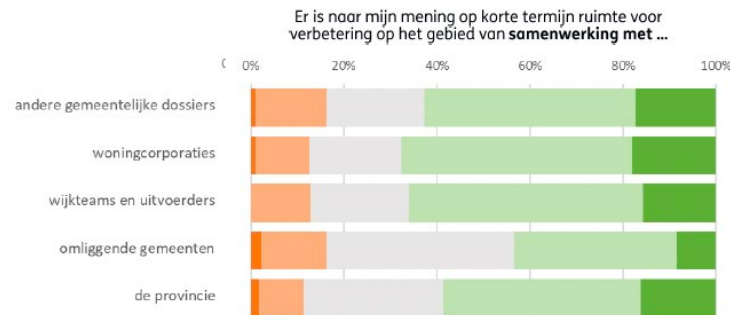
# State of play

## Biannual monitoring of local energy poverty policies in the Netherlands

*Illustrative: The role and responsibilities of the municipality in addressing energy poverty is clear for all stakeholders involved*



*Illustrative: In my view, short term improvement is possible when collaborating with: {other dossiers, housing associations, neighbourhood teams and implementers, neighbouring municipalities, provincial level government}*



"[We] zijn tevreden [over] hoe de gemeente het doet."

"Elke gemeente geeft op eigen manier invulling aan besteding van rijks gelden en vindt op eigen manier het wiel uit. Meer afstemming onderling zou helpen."

"Waar huurders [wat] betreft isolatie vaak worden vergeten zijn de woningen die een C of D label hebben. Dit zijn precies de woningen waar de gemeente niet naartoe wil met een [energie]fixer, terwijl deze huurders tot 2029 geen aandacht van ons krijgen."

"Kansen in het beter opleiden van bestuurders en wethouders [...] geen idee hoe het is om in de kou te zitten, rekeningen niet [te] kunnen betalen, of naar je werk te gaan zonder ontbijt."

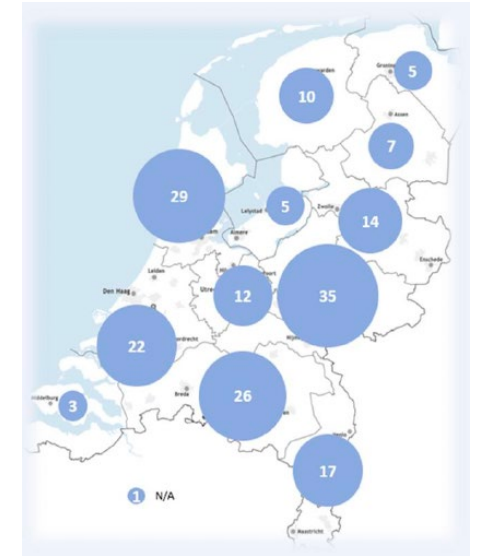
"Regie en visie op een haalbare warmtetransitie."

"Vroegtijdig plannen met elkaar communiceren [...] hopelijk naar de toekomst samen projecten oppakken."

"Veel meer de aanpak met elkaar bespreken [...] zodat de opgaven van gemeente en corporatie beter op elkaar afgestemd worden."

"De gemeente zou meer kunnen doen voor versnipperd [gespikkeld] bezit. Verder loopt de samenwerking in principe goed, al kan de planning beter met elkaar afgestemd worden."

"Wijkgerichte samenwerking bij verduurzaming."



Some excerpts from the answers to the open questions (translated from the text above):

- "We are satisfied with how the municipality is performing"
- "Each municipality has its own approach to spending government funds and reinvents the wheel in its own way. More coordination between municipalities would be beneficial."
- "When it comes to insulation, tenants with C or D label homes are often overlooked. These are precisely the homes that the municipality does not want to send an energy fixer to, even though these tenants will receive no attention until 2029."
- "Opportunities to better educate administrators and aldermen [...] no idea what it's like to sit in the cold, not be able to pay your bills, or go to work without breakfast"
- [...]

Edition 1: Nov 2022: **Energy poverty gaining momentum**

“Looking at your current situation and the next six months, what are the main bottlenecks preventing you from effectively tackling energy poverty?”.

- Staff shortages and limited resources, identification and accessibility of the target group.
- Local authorities are working hard to scale up support, but speed is hampered by practical bottlenecks.
- Many respondents face the same or similar challenges

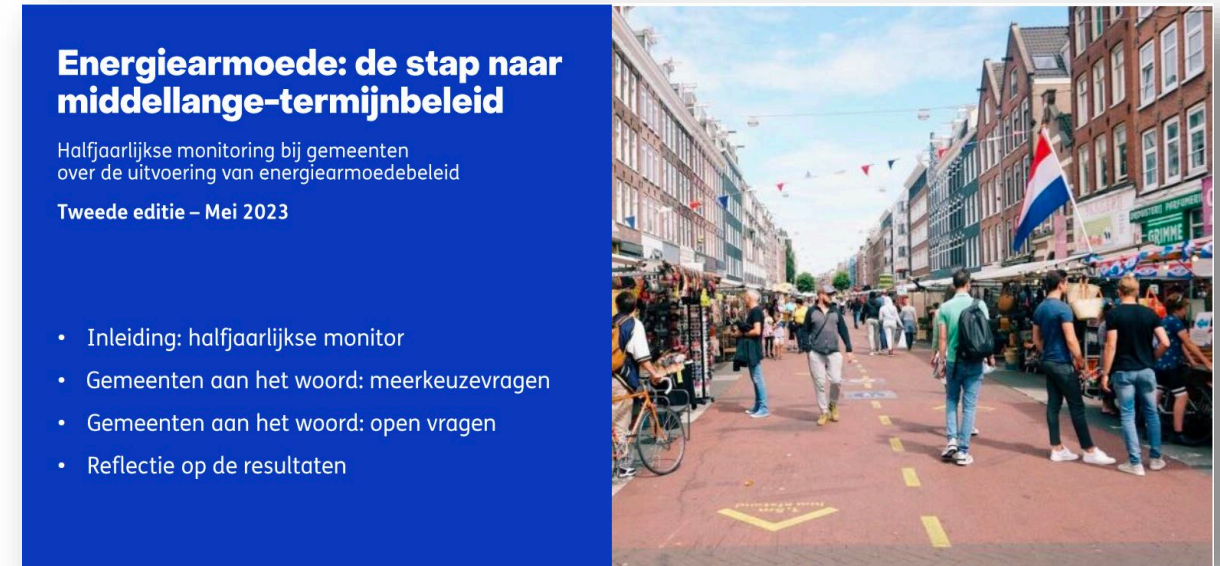


*Cover of the first edition November 2022*

Edition 2: May 2023: **Short and medium term**

“Looking ahead to the next two to five years, what are the main obstacles preventing you from effectively linking the short- and medium-term approaches to energy poverty?” and “What support in the form of government policy and/or what information does your municipality need in order to effectively link the short- and medium-term approaches to energy poverty?”

- A broad need for national vision, goals, and direction.
- Need for “smart” replicable policy solutions for bottlenecks (privacy, state aid, nature legislation)
- Knowledge sharing



*Cover of the second edition May 2023*

### Edition 3: Nov 2023: **Priority for renovation?**

“Looking ahead to the next two to five years, what policy tools does your local authority have at its disposal to ensure that low-energy households can undergo substantial home improvements (renovations) quickly enough?” and ‘What support in the form of government policy and/or what information does your municipality need to ensure that low-energy households can undergo major home improvements (renovations) quickly enough?’

- Local authorities have little leverage to influence the order of renovation
- Still concerned, but also report good progress
- Action is expected from central government: Long-term policy for energy poverty, structural resources and predictability, and supportive coordination



*Cover of the third edition November 2023*



Edition 4: Mei 2024: **Can the focus shift to insulation?**

“Have energy poverty and vulnerability decreased in your municipality over the past two years? Is the identification of the target group improving? Is the target group more accessible? Why or why not?’ and ‘To what extent is it desirable to maintain support for smaller energy-saving measures? Would it be better for government support to focus entirely on insulation (NIP)? Why or why not?’

- There is a widespread need for municipal energy poverty policies to continue beyond 2025.
- Need for monitoring of policy impact, so that municipalities can scale up and replicate good examples and approaches
- The number of available resources is less important than their structural nature, predictability, and the freedom to spend resources in a way that is appropriate at the local level



*Cover of the fourth edition May 2024*

Edition 4: May 2024: **Use of SPUK funds**

Almost half of the municipalities are unable to say whether they will be able to spend all SPUK funds on time. Of these municipalities, the vast majority have currently spent or allocated less than 60%.

Most municipalities spend their SPUK funds on 2-5 policy instruments, with white goods schemes, energy coaches and energy fixers being used in more than half of the municipalities.

More than a quarter of respondents indicate that SPUK funds are used in their municipality to supplement the national insulation programme (NIP).



Edition 5: Nov 2024: **Collaboration with housing associations**

“How can cooperation between the local authority and housing association(s) around sustainability be improved? And what can the local authority do to help housing associations? Does it make sense to lay this down in performance agreements?

- Cooperation is good, but there are areas for improvement.
- Some bottlenecks cannot be easily removed.
- Much progress has been made, but momentum is slowing significantly due to the lack of long-term direction and guidance from the national government.
- The heat transition is a bottleneck! Municipalities must be more transparent about heat (process and direction), and the government must act quickly to provide clarity on legislation and supporting policies.



*Cover of the fifth edition November 2024*

Edition 6: Mei 2025: **Energy assistance as a transition guide**

“Does it make sense for your municipality to (continue to) use energy assistance organisations in the future? Where should the emphasis be placed in the future when tackling energy poverty? What role could energy assistance play in this?”

- Energy assistance remains important, and well-functioning ecosystems surrounding the implementation of a local social transition must be maintained and allowed to grow.
- Municipalities see four areas where energy assistance could play a role in the future:
- Transition guidance: navigating all aspects of the energy transition
- Informing, motivating and providing practical support: preferably through a personalised approach and tailor-made solutions
- Additional social signalling as an important addition to the existing social structure in the municipality.
- Protection of households, especially when energy costs rise (suddenly).



*Cover of the second edition May 2025*

## Reflections on the first six editions

### Informative results and strong evidence base...

- The combination of multiple-choice and open-ended questions provides a good picture of the practice and the variation between municipalities.
- The response rate is exceptionally good: an average of 180 participants from 164 municipalities (almost 50%), with a good spread in terms of size and province. The answers to the open-ended questions provide 20-40 A4 pages of detailed feedback!

### ...generally consistent and somewhat predictable....

- Local authorities are doing a lot, but they're running into practical issues and are worried about vulnerable households.
- Some of the target group is still hard to identify and/or reach.
- What approach works and how can it be replicated or scaled up?
- There is a need for more direction from the national government and a clear medium-term vision – clarity on how energy poverty will be embedded in the energy transition.

### ... but also offer food for thought

- Municipalities are very attached to the freedom to design their own policies, but at the same time there is frustration that the wheel must be reinvented in different places.
- Cooperation between municipalities and housing associations is going quite smoothly, especially their cooperation with energy coaches. Note that associations have little insight into which of their tenants are most vulnerable to energy costs.
- Municipalities have few tools to give vulnerable households priority in renovation and home improvement.
- Many local authorities appear to have difficulty spending SpUK funds efficiently and in a timely manner.
- Austerity measures from the “cliff year” of 2026 onwards jeopardise established structures and a supportive ecosystem, while the vulnerability of many households remains unchanged or hardly reduced.
- Maintaining energy assistance is seen as valuable, particularly as a transition guide and for additional social signalling.



# Thank you!

**For more information, please contact**

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