



# The Corkman



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## Macroom in line for EU energy award

By Catherine Ketch

MACROOM is one of two towns in Ireland to participate in a pilot scheme for the European Energy Award.

Macroom and Nenagh in Co Tipperary are the only two projects currently in Ireland and Macroom, due for audit in November, is in line to become the first Irish town to achieve the award.

The programme, successfully implemented in several communities in Switzerland, Austria and Germany since 2002, is currently being extended to include Ireland, the Basque region/Spain, Liguria/Italy, Lithuania and Slovakia.

Under the project, which works through the local authorities, assesses how each town uses energy in order to improve energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable fuels.

The programme allows municipalities to identify strengths, weaknesses and potential for improvement and, above all, implement effectively energy efficient measures. The success of a municipality's efforts is made visible by an award, namely the European Energy Award.

A standardised assessment allows for a benchmarking between different communities and allows members to share their experiences and expertise.



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The European Energy Award consists of four main elements: a management system for communal energy-related services and activities, certification and award for energy-related achievements as well as regular audits, assistance for municipal staff in planning and implementing measures and a network within the community with increased co-operation and communication.

A subcommittee made up of Cllr Pat O'Connell, Town Clerk Kevin Curran, Town Engineer John Horgan and independent consultant Andrew Sheppard have been working with the project for a number of months.

Cllr Pat O'Connell said it was putting the conservation of energy and waste management into practice and once the town reaches a certain standard in November's audit it will receive certification of the energy award, which will be good for industry and tourism.

The town was the first in Ireland to have an environmental industry park, the first in Cork to have a civic amenity site and the town also has the Eco-Label project.

Kevin Curran, town clerk, said the town council was delighted to be participating in the project. Macrooom will benefit from having its energy use policies monitored using tools that are tested across Europe, he said.

Cork spends €1 million euro a day on energy, almost all of which is made up of fossil fuels.

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