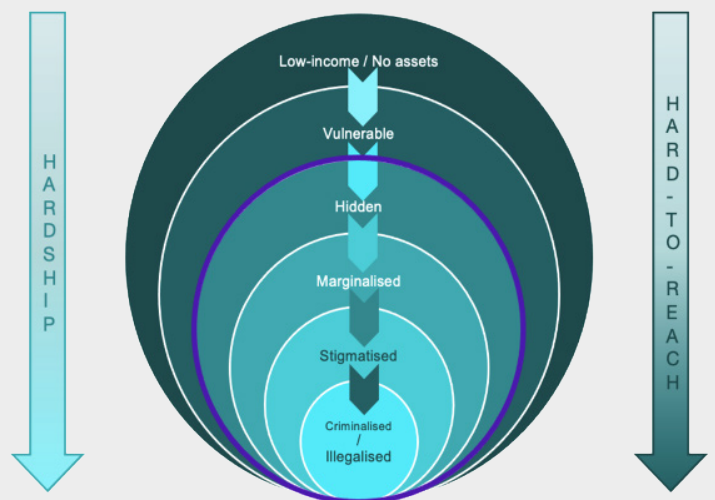


The **Hard-to-Reach Energy Users Task (HTR Task)** of the Users TCP brings together government policy makers, industry programme managers, researchers, and community navigators (a.k.a. “middle actors”) to share insights and experiences on reaching those energy users deemed too hard-to-reach.

We have purposefully co-designed a broad definition of HTR energy users to avoid missing any HTR segments and context dependencies: *“In this Task, a hard-to-reach energy user is any energy user from the residential and non-residential sectors, who uses any type of energy or fuel, and who is typically either hard-to-reach physically, underserved, or hard to engage or motivate in behaviour change, energy efficiency and demand response interventions that are intended to serve our mutual needs.”* The objective of the Task is to improve the equity of demand-side energy policies and programmes by ensuring that human behaviour is accounted for throughout the co-design process, and (building) trusted relationships with community gatekeepers who are at the frontline.

### Key recommendations from Phase 1 (concluded Oct 2023)

- Phase 1 findings underscored the value of evidence-based policy evaluation to support the design, choice, and implementation of strategies and approaches that target HTR energy users.
- We need to systematically understand and subsegment target audiences, their motivations, lifestyles, barriers and needs, and why they remain hidden from policy or programme interventions. To do so, we need to engage and learn from trusted community navigators, who are also extremely HTR, and often (rightfully, based on their past experience) distrust our intentions.
- This means acknowledging built-in biases and blindspots stemming from our position of privilege and Eurocentric perspectives. It also means building trusted relationships with humility, being comfortable to be uncomfortable, and listening rather than talking or jumping to solutions.
- Different engagement strategies and approaches are necessary to create those trusted relationships with both community gatekeepers and the hidden energy users they protect and/ or represent. Ex-ante and ex-post evaluations provide critical inputs for learning, improving, and ensuring that HTR initiatives achieve their intended objectives.
- This involves programme co-design, training and relationship-building, empowering community champions, engaging community members in programme delivery, and trusting priority audiences to better intuit what solutions are needed to achieve “transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner”, as recently decided by almost 200 countries at COP28.



A diagram of where “hidden” energy users sit (in the residential sector)

# Major achievements during 2023/24

→ The HTR Task finished its first phase with the scientific publication: **An ex-post cross-country assessment of behavioural-oriented interventions** (Mundaca et al, 2023).

→ The Task Leader presented research findings at several major conferences, including **NZ Downstream** (Wellington, March); **Energy Hardship Conference** (New Plymouth, May); **Behavior, Energy & Climate Change** (BECC) Conference (Sacramento, November); **Otago Energy Research Conference** (Dunedin, November); **BEHAVE Conference** (Maastricht, November).

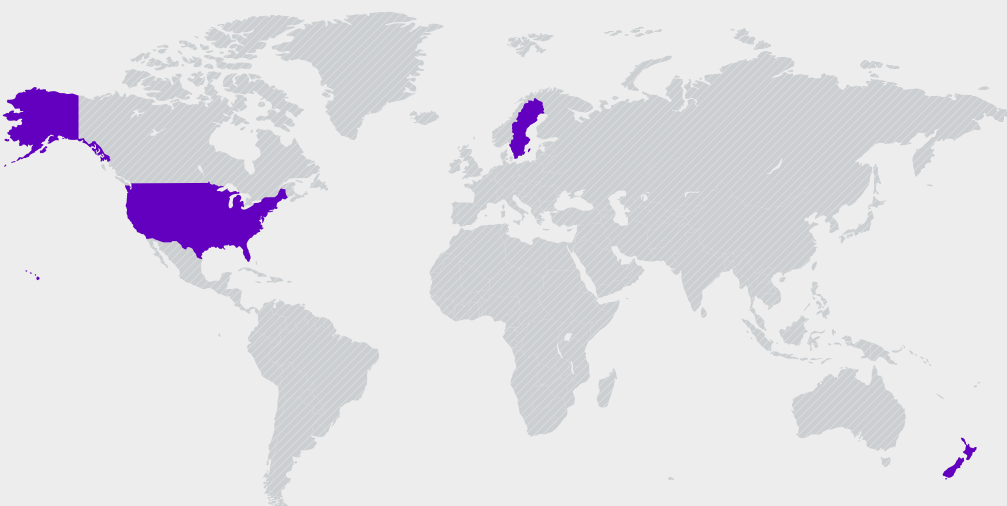
→ Two conference papers were published in the **BEHAVE Proceedings**, one on our NZ field pilot titled “Successfully reaching the HTR by improving Home Energy Assessment Toolkits with the help of community and frontline providers”, and another titled “The dangers of calling hidden and underserved energy users hard-to-reach.”

→ The **U.S. Final Country Report** summarised all deliverables, findings and recommendations, and the Swedish policy report will be turned into a published journal article in 2024.

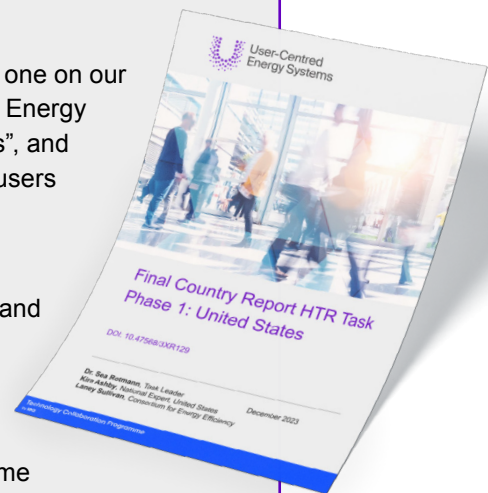
→ Several field research pilots, including on hidden energy users and Home Energy Assessment Toolkits were successfully completed and will be published in 2024.

→ Our outreach efforts to marginalised communities led to several highly-successful “hui” (workshops), including our 3rd National Expert Hui in Wellington in March. We have collaborated and co-designed interventions (including for NZ’s two largest electricity retailers) with over 80 community partners, largely Indigenous Māori and Pasifika.

→ Phase 2 kicked off at the end of 2023 with three participating countries.



**CONTACT:** Task Leader Sea Rotmann at [drsearotmann@gmail.com](mailto:drsearotmann@gmail.com)  
or visit [userstcp.org/hard-to-reach-energy-users-task/](https://userstcp.org/hard-to-reach-energy-users-task/)



**PARTICIPANTS**

New Zealand

Sweden

United States