



Fundamental decarbonisation
through sufficiency by lifestyle changes

Policy brief on the main conclusions for the micro level

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Fundamental decarbonisation through sufficiency by lifestyle changes

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5	Association négaWatt	NW	FR	 nw ASSOCIATION négaWatt
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7	International Network for Sustainable Energy-Europe	INFORSE	DK	 INFORSE-EUROPE International Network for Sustainable Energy
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Main conclusions for the micro level

The main objective of FULFILL is **to analyse lifestyle changes** within European decarbonisation pathways that align with the goals of the Paris Agreement by critically evaluating the concept of **sufficiency as a guiding principle**.

FULFILL understands the **sufficiency principle** as creating the social, infrastructural, and regulatory conditions for changing individual and collective lifestyles in a way that reduces energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions to an extent that they are within planetary boundaries, and simultaneously contributes to societal well-being.

To this end, the project has undertaken a comprehensive set of micro-level studies (see Figure), i.e. on individual and household levels, investigating the mechanisms of lifestyle changes and sufficiency-oriented lifestyles using research methods from the social sciences and humanities (SSH). FULFILL thus contributes to developing a better understanding of the potential scope and diffusion of sufficiency-oriented lifestyles.

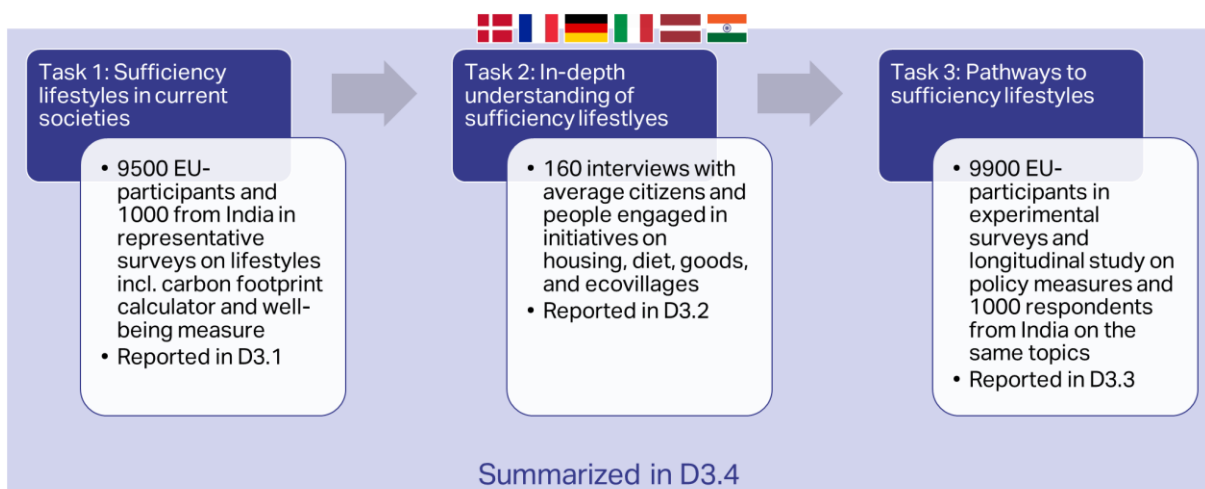


Figure. Overview of the micro-level data collection conducted in FULFILL which combines surveys and interview studies in six countries (Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, and India).

This document is a policy brief whose aim is to summarise the main insights gained from this research.

- Sufficiency-oriented lifestyles were identified by combining a low carbon footprint (lowest 25% within the respective country) with a high well-being (upper 50% within the respective country). With this definition, we find that **11-13% of the respondents** from the representative samples are categorised as living a sufficiency-oriented lifestyle in today's society.
- People living sufficiently are characterised by a higher **sufficiency orientation** (i.e. a desire for low consumption) or **environmental identity**, the **absence of social and material deprivation**, and - to some extent- being more likely to be **women** or to live in **cities**.
- Upon closer examination of individuals striving for a sufficient life, it becomes evident that such a lifestyle requires resources and capacities, in terms of money, time or competencies, which underlines the need for structural change.
- The study in India emphasises the role of these economic preconditions for sufficiency.
- By studying exemplary policy measures to achieve sufficiency-oriented lifestyles, our findings suggest that the public is ready for softer, less intrusive measures to support



sufficiency, but is likely to resist more radical measures at the moment (e.g. bans on single-family homes, higher taxes on meat).

- Currently, few people are familiar with the topics under study, and those with greater familiarity tend to view them more favourably. Furthermore, we find some evidence that even minor changes in communication can influence the perceptions of policy measures, e.g. talking about measures to 'overcome' certain choices instead of 'punishing' them.
- We identify some topics which underline that sufficiency is a gendered topic - with a higher proportion of women living sufficiently. However, we also find evidence of overlaps between sufficiency practices and the care economy, e.g. the time needed to prepare plant-based meals. This suggests that potential policy measures need to be assessed in terms of their gender impact.
- We also identify a group of respondents, constituting 12-13% per country, which exhibits low carbon emissions and low well-being, and manifests signs of social and material deprivation. This underlines the need for social impact assessment of sufficiency measures to ensure that they do not exacerbate exclusion and energy poverty, but focus on over-consumption.



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