



Young people from all over Europe are working with broadcasters to create films about improving their environment.

What are the small things they can do to make a big change? How can they all do something to make their planet more sustainable? Simple. They each need to do a little bit. That's the idea of Energy Bits.

Energy Bits involves 13 partners from nine countries in Europe and beyond, and is supported by the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme. Its ambition is to bring about changes in behaviour and promote innovative practices on energy efficiency and the use of renewables in the everyday lives of young people.

It's a project that goes beyond the standard communication methods, instead using combined distribution platforms such as TV broadcasts on national TV channels and dedicated niche satellite channels as well as gaming platforms.

Energy Bits engages with young people by encouraging them to create their own content to reinforce sustainable energy messages – and the really exciting bit for them is that this content will be shown across Europe via these national broadcast and web channels.

The project has already produced 24 documentaries, an interactive web documentary and a game. Three of the documentaries, made in the UK with school students, are being shown on the Guardian's own science channel, Newton.

The first of these films, *The Recycled Games* ([view it here](#)), follows a group of students as they find out for themselves if the London 2012 Olympic Stadium was as green as everyone claimed. They also learn from the Games how to make their own lives more sustainable, even creating their own recycled product to add to the Olympic Park.

In addition to all of that, young people in schools around Europe now have a chance to share their views and ideas on the future of the planet by taking part in another part of the project, "Have Your Say".

This does what it says on the tin. It allows young people to have their say in an international video competition for secondary schools. Its aim is to raise awareness and increase understanding on energy saving, renewable and sustainable issues among European young people, all through their own filmmaking skills.

Any young student under 18 is invited to send E-bits his or her ideas about a more sustainable future by creating and uploading a short video message – no longer than three minutes – explaining what should be done from their point of view.

The topics which may be considered are renewable energy, energy saving in final uses, sustainable transport, recycling and/or reuse.

The contest is mainly open to nine European countries: Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, the UK, Greece, Italy, Slovenia and Spain. However any student from any part of the world can upload her/his video and participate in the competition. All videos will be posted on the Energy Bits YouTube channel.

The competition has three award categories:

- Best original idea

- Best scientific description and content
- Audience success

The winning video for each category will be broadcast by all the European broadcasters and television companies participating in the project. The filmmakers will be invited to Brussels for a special tour to visit the European Commission and meet all the partners of the project.

Students and youngsters can upload their video independently or work with their schools and teachers. There's advice on the Energy Bits video website on how to make a good video, and if any further help is needed they can draw on the experience of the media and scientific partners in the Energy Bits consortium. These people are all available, through the Energy Bits platform/blog, to support students during their video production.

Before starting their own production they could take a look at the Energy Bits documentaries, shot all around Europe, on different energy issues. Some of them are funny, others a bit more serious, and some are totally crazy!

If they want to go deeper into the issues around energy use they can play the Energy2020 Serious Game. There they will find themselves in different energy-related situations with the chance to save the world ... Will they ever be able to repair all the damages done by the adults?

So, Energy Bits is an opportunity for all youngsters to improve their knowledge about energy and sustainability issues. But, more than that, it's an opportunity for the entire European adult community to listen and capture young people's suggestions in order to make real environmental improvements in everyday life.