



CORDIS Results Pack on **local clean energy transition**

A thematic collection of innovative EU-funded research results

April 2024

**Local authorities
as drivers for a
decarbonised Europe**

Research and
Innovation

**NEW
EDITION**

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Editorial

Local and regional authorities have a key role in achieving the EU Green Deal objectives and contribute to the reduction of climate emissions by at least 55 % by 2030. Sustainable energy actions at local level are decisive to implement the ambitious European energy and climate policies.

To achieve further energy savings, the European Commission has revised the [Energy Efficiency Directive](#), recognising the leading and exemplary role of public bodies and introducing an annual energy consumption reduction target of 1.9 % for the public sector as a whole. The amended [Renewable Energy Directive](#) has increased the EU's binding renewable target for 2030 to a minimum of 42.5 %, up from the previous 32 % target. In addition, the updated [Energy Performance of Buildings Directive](#) will boost efforts to decarbonise buildings across the EU.

As the level of governance that is closest to citizens, local and regional authorities play a pivotal role in the clean energy transition. For the move to a carbon-neutral society to be sustainable and inclusive, local actors are key agents of change and must have the knowledge and resources to reduce emissions and implement sustainable energy solutions.

Support for local and regional authorities

Several initiatives and funding opportunities exist at the European level to help local and regional authorities achieve their clean energy transition goals and provide more sustainable services for their citizens.

The [LIFE Clean Energy Transition programme](#) (2021-2027) provides funding for a wide range of activities leading towards an energy-efficient, renewable energy-based, climate-neutral and resilient economy.

The [Smart Cities Marketplace](#) aims to speed up the green transition of cities in Europe by improving citizens' quality of life, increasing their competitiveness and ensuring partnership with other European initiatives focused on the urban level.

The [Cities Mission](#) selected 112 cities to co-create Climate City Contracts with local stakeholders and citizens, which include an overall plan for climate neutrality across all sectors such as energy, buildings, waste management and transport, together with related investment plans.

These initiatives and many others involve working on long-term energy planning, deep capacity-building, support to the [EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy](#) (CoM), mobilising investment, alleviating energy poverty, changing markets and regulations, and much more.

The 13 projects in this Results Pack highlight activities that support shorter-term implementation as well as long-term goals and ambitions for the clean energy transition. Their aim is to build capacity of cities and regions on planning and implementation, accelerate the uptake of energy efficiency measures and deployment of clean energy solutions, and overall scale up the reduction of CO₂ emissions at the local level.

Heating decarbonisation: plans with effective actions

Tailored support, informed by successful cases, aids local authorities in crafting sustainable heating and cooling plans.

Heating accounts for about half of Europe's energy demand. Almost 75 % of this is still covered by burning fossil fuels. Decarbonising heating will be essential to achieving the EU's emissions reduction target of at least 55 % by 2030, highlighting the crucial role of municipalities in this effort.

A barrier to achieving this target is the fact that the 'boiler room' is often the sovereign domain of building owners. Past policies have prioritised compliance with emission limits and efficiency over increasing renewable shares. However, this is changing rapidly. Heating and cooling planning is now seen as central to the EU's targets, also supported by the revised [Energy Efficiency Directive](#) (Article 25, paragraph 6). This recent shift is new for municipalities, and the EU-funded [ActionHeat](#) project was initiated to support municipalities to develop and implement heating and cooling planning throughout Europe.

Success factors that turn plans into actions

ActionHeat evaluated existing plans to identify [success factors](#) that enable plans to be turned into concrete actions. About 350 stakeholders took part in a survey, and 15 in individual interviews.

Not surprisingly, good data and easy-to-use tools improve plans and results. The project leveraged two existing tools, developed by previous H2020 projects, to support local energy planning regarding heating and cooling. [Hotmaps](#), a freely accessible mapping tool, can quickly determine the heating demand of municipalities and the potential of renewable energies and waste heat. [Thermos](#) and its visualisation options for individual buildings can support detailed planning of district heating projects.





Organisation and communication are key elements of effective heating and cooling planning. National and local stakeholders must coordinate and communicate with each other. Furthermore, creating commitment, goals and vision within the community is essential.

Project coordinator Ali Aydemir of the [Fraunhofer Society for the Advancement of Applied Research](#) adds: "Organisation and communication are key elements of effective heating and cooling planning. National and local stakeholders must coordinate and communicate with each other. Furthermore, creating commitment, goals and vision within the community is essential."

Overall, they expect to reach about 120 to 200 municipalities directly or indirectly.

"We originally focused on local authorities. However, based on the survey, we found that municipalities are facing numerous challenges including lack of personnel, data and a common goal. This was confirmed by our Support Facility projects. Participating municipalities had to make considerable contributions including learning how to use technical tools. Many municipalities simply do not have the resources to make this happen. We have adapted, focusing our services more on intermediaries, such as energy agencies that reach many municipalities," notes Aydemir.

Strategy development, feasibility assessment and financing options

ActionHeat implemented the [ActionHeat Support Facility](#) to help local and regional governments, energy agencies and utilities, as well as city planners, to accelerate the establishment of heating and cooling planning throughout Europe. Three modules were included: heating and cooling transition strategy development, project feasibility assessment and financial studies.

The project team worked directly with individual municipalities and with intermediaries who support multiple municipalities, amplifying the project's reach. For example, ActionHeat supported the towns of Zelzate, Belgium, and Neuried, Germany in planning district heating networks. It also provided advice to the State Energy Agency of Hessen and the Senate of Berlin, located in federal states where mandatory heat planning was introduced. In addition, the team is working with Le Syndicat de l'Ouest Lyonnais in France and the Energy Institute Vorarlberg in Austria, both of which support many municipalities in heating planning.

The heating and cooling transition requires multilevel, multiplayer commitment with an essential contribution at the local level. ActionHeat's outcomes – identifying barriers and opportunities and delivering practical tailored support – will support the local energy transition via improved planning.

PROJECT

ActionHeat - From heating and cooling strategies to action: how public authorities can strategically plan the decarbonisation of the heating and cooling sector and initiate impactful projects

COORDINATED BY

Fraunhofer Society for the Advancement of Applied Research in Germany

FUNDED UNDER

HORIZON 2020 - ENERGY

CORDIS FACTSHEET

cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101033706

PROJECT WEBSITE

actionheat.eu/



District-level planning for Dutch housing renovation

Based on an innovative financial model, a district level approach to building renovation propels the Netherlands towards a natural gas-free future.

Accounting for approximately 40 % of total energy consumption, the building sector has a critical role to play in the energy transition needed to realise the [Green Deal](#). However, only 1 % of building stock is retrofitted annually with energy efficiency measures. The EU-funded [DistrictEES](#) project aims to accelerate the rate of energy efficiency renovation in multiple districts in the Netherlands.

Building on energy efficiency subscriptions

Clever financing and enlisting in-demand construction companies are essential to increasing the pace of renovation. Energy performance financing is a market-based instrument that can achieve results. Initially, DistrictEES modelled the project's concept on a successful small-scale housing subscription. The intention was for the [Van Wijnen Group](#) to provide district-level renovation plans targeting private owners, housing associations, public buildings and commercial buildings.

Scaling up renovation to this degree has many attractive features. A sufficient aggregation of projects attracts investment and the interest of the construction companies needed to carry out the work. It also raises the awareness of property owners, leading to a higher level of buy-in within the targeted district. Aggregating projects lowers the cost of renovation and yields greater total energy and financial savings for the consumer.

While attractive on many levels, DistrictEES determined that the energy efficiency subscription model was not feasible at the district level because assembling the necessary financial and building resources all at once was not possible. Therefore, the project adjusted its approach. According to project coordinator Tristan Dekker: "By being flexible with the original plan, a new equivalent approach that aligns with existing financing methods

and works with a phased district approach has been developed. This means a district is made sustainable in steps rather than all at once."

The district-level approach

The modified approach breaks down each district into subdivisions. Once these sub-districts have been determined, Dekker says: "The homes belonging to the sub-district housing association and those of private homeowners are simultaneously offered options based on sustainability plans. The public and commercial real estate in the same sub-area are offered options based on the renovation plans of the respective owners." This process is repeated from one sub-district to the next until the entire area has been served.

With the district-level approach, the project continues to build up capacity and is currently active in six districts. DistrictEES has achieved notable renovation levels in the districts of Overstegen and Oranjewijk. So far, the project has made 450 homes more energy efficient, with savings of at least 736 278 Kg-CO₂ per year.

The overall aim of the project is to develop a business model that will accelerate the transition of the Netherlands to a natural gas-free built environment. This goal derives not only from climate mitigation efforts, but from growing concern over earthquakes caused in the north of the country by natural gas extraction.

The project's investment of over EUR 19 million in the northeastern provinces spurred on the pace of building renovation and led to a total energy savings of 2 725 MWh per year. The district-level approach is coming at the right time, as more citizens and policymakers strive to safeguard the environment.



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The phased approach implemented by DistrictEES is bringing the Netherlands closer to its goal of a natural gas-free future.

PROJECT

**DistrictEES - ENERGY EFFICIENCY
SUBSCRIPTIONS ON DISTRICT LEVEL FOR THE
BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

COORDINATED BY

Van Wijnen Group in the Netherlands

FUNDED UNDER

HORIZON 2020 - ENERGY

CORDIS FACTSHEET

cordis.europa.eu/project/id/890184

PROJECT WEBSITE

metwdw.nl/

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Advanced learning programme catalyses energy transition in municipalities

An EU-funded initiative launched a peer-to-peer learning programme to facilitate the exchange of methods for the collection, monitoring and dissemination of climate and energy data at local and regional levels.

When it comes to planning and funding sustainable energy solutions, public authorities often face a range of challenges

due to differing knowledge levels and skills. This was highlighted in a 2017 study by the European Covenant of Mayors, which

revealed that local and regional authorities need support with data collection, monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) for their climate and energy plans.


Policies for monitoring and verification are often formed on a national scale, leaving cities struggling to set up proper systems and accurately track the impacts of their actions.

Echoing these findings, the EU-funded [ENERGee Watch](#) project also found that local authorities were particularly vocal about their need for effective energy data collection methods, while energy agencies and regional authorities expressed a strong need for indicators and strategies to adapt to climate change.

These needs stem from a disconnect between national- and city-level policies. “Practices for monitoring and verification are often formed on a national scale, leaving cities struggling to set up proper systems to accurately track the impacts of their actions,” notes project coordinator Mara Oprea.

A dive into the innovative learning programme

Addressing these challenges, ENERGee Watch launched a peer-to-peer learning programme aiming to empower regional and local authorities as well as energy agencies to accurately define, monitor and verify their sustainable actions. ENERGee Watch’s efforts were directed towards these as they are responsible for collecting and overseeing the monitoring of mitigation and

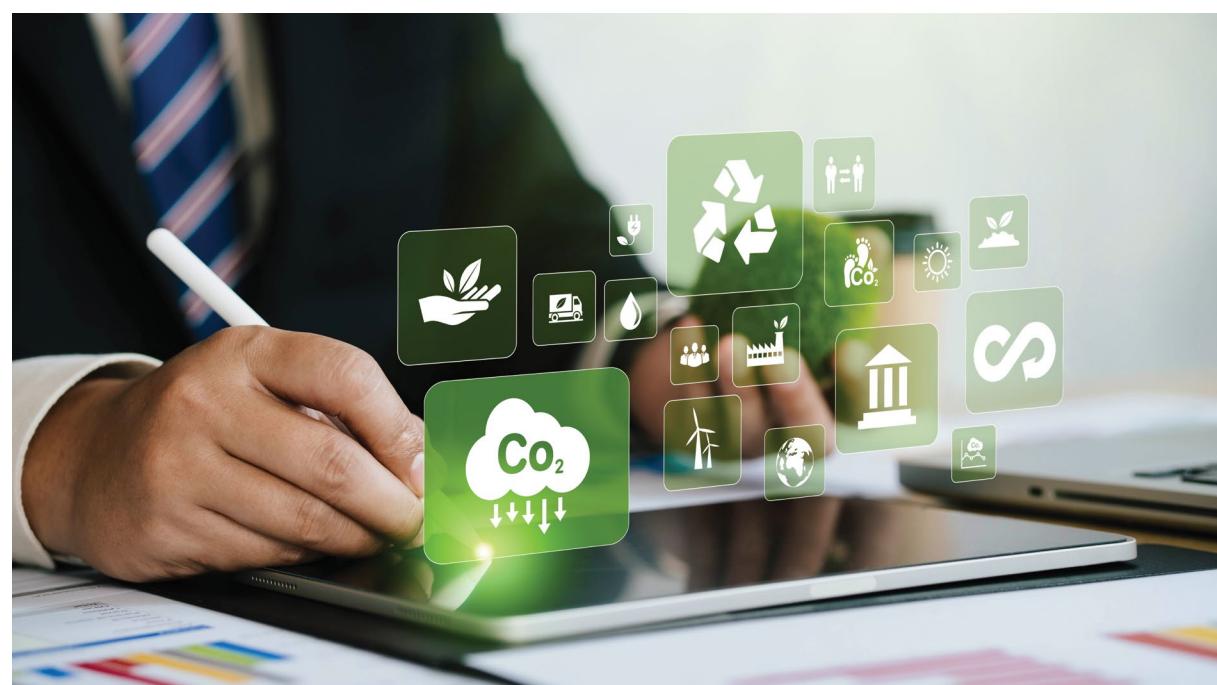
adaptation measure indicators. The project also sought to boost collaboration and engagement among these entities.

This comprehensive learning programme for regional authorities offered courses on data collection, MRV, climate change adaptation strategies and indicators, as well as data display, dissemination and validation. Throughout the project course, three learning cycles were held, totalling 88 participants. This included 70 mentees from 60 regional European organisations, along with 18 observers. Each participant pledged to disseminate their knowledge with at least five peers within their organisations.

The 70 trained experts influenced around 630 sustainable policies and strategic documents. Furthermore, an [observatory platform](#) for greenhouse gas emissions was developed, six energy observatories were expanded, and prospects for five new energy agencies emerged. To further support learning, a [public e-learning platform](#) and a [repository of 55 best practices](#) were released.

Boosting knowledge exchange and energy savings

The ENERGee Watch learning programme facilitated a knowledge exchange between mentors and mentees, enabling them to review their region’s data sharing procedures and identify key energy data providers. This peer-to-peer approach enabled mentors and mentees, belonging to the same societal group, to learn from each other’s challenges and share gained knowledge across Europe. “Mentors provided continuous support to mentees, following up regularly on their progress and offering advice on new issues.



Mentees were encouraged to share crash courses on the four MRV topics, made available through the e-learning platform, thereby promoting the replication of the gained knowledge," outlines Oprea.

Alongside the learning programme activities, ENERGee Watch outcomes should significantly contribute to shaping and further advancing materials and guidelines supporting European Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans.

The project impact was strengthened by the accumulation of salient, legitimate and credible MRV knowledge, collected through multiple rounds of exchange and feedback with experts and participants in the programme. This valuable knowledge can be used by policymakers to make more informed decisions regarding energy and climate actions.

PROJECT

ENERGee Watch - Peer to peer learning in for regional and local authorities to timely and accurately define, monitor and verify their sustainable actions

COORDINATED BY

The Institute for European Energy and Climate Policy Stichting in the Netherlands

FUNDED UNDER

HORIZON 2020 - ENERGY

CORDIS FACTSHEET

cordis.europa.eu/project/id/892089

PROJECT WEBSITE

energee-watch.eu/



Putting cities at the heart of energy transition

Preparing cities and communities for a climate-neutral economy by 2050 necessitates a strategic redirection and mobilisation of investment towards sustainable energy projects.

Endeavouring to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, Europe has set ambitious targets as outlined in the European Green Deal, which aims to mobilise at least EUR 1 trillion for sustainable investment over the next decade. Complementary initiatives such as NextGenerationEU also contribute to fostering environmentally friendly technologies. However, public funds alone will not suffice to propel Europe entirely towards an energy transition, necessitating the mobilisation of private sources.

Placing energy transition in local hands

Anke Möllers, coordinator of the EU-funded [EUCF](#) project, highlighted the challenges faced – particularly by smaller municipalities – in accessing funding for energy efficiency projects due to lack of capacity and the knowledge on financing opportunities. The EUCF initiative steps in to address this gap by empowering local leaders to develop investment concepts that



translate project ideas into financial language, facilitating the mobilisation of public and private finance. Since its beginning in August 2019, the EUCF has supported more than 280 municipalities in identifying sustainable energy projects and preparing their roadmap towards finance and implementation.

The ongoing and forthcoming calls for applications under the EUCF provide further opportunities for local authorities to benefit from financial and technical support. The extension of the initiative until 2027 reflects its significance in aiding municipalities in mobilising investment starting from their energy and climate plans. By the end of the initiative, at least 422 local authorities across eligible countries will have received support from the EUCF.

Energy efficiency measures in public and residential buildings, along with building-integrated renewables, constitute the primary

sectors supported by the EUCF projects – representing over 50 % of the financed investment concepts. Additionally, sectors such as district heating, innovative energy infrastructure and sustainable urban mobility also receive attention.


The importance of the EUCF is evident in its role as a catalyst for municipalities, enabling them to initiate studies, identify investment potentials and prioritise respective measures for sustainable energy investments.

The road ahead

"The importance of the EUCF is evident in its role as a catalyst for municipalities, enabling them to initiate studies, identify investment potentials and prioritise respective measures for sustainable energy investments. The activities funded by the EUCF grant foster the development of credible and scalable investment projects that attract both public and private investment," says Möllers.

The collaboration between the EUCF and other EU initiatives, such as Covenant of Mayors, NetZeroCities, Smart Cities Marketplace and ManagEnergy underscores the collective effort toward city transformation and sustainable development. By bridging the gap between local energy and climate plans and their implementation, the EUCF accelerates investments and jump-starts sustainable energy projects, contributing to the EU's broader climate objectives.

The EUCF initiative, which continues under the EU-funded [LIFE Clean Energy Transition sub-programme](#), plays a pivotal role in facilitating the transition to a climate-neutral economy for municipalities. Through its comprehensive approach to financing and technical assistance, the EUCF empowers local authorities to drive impactful change and contribute to Europe's journey toward a greener future.

PROJECT

EUCF - European City Facility

COORDINATED BY

ENERGY CITIES/ENERGIE-CITES ASSOCIATION
in France

FUNDED UNDER

HORIZON 2020 - ENERGY

CORDIS FACTSHEET

cordis.europa.eu/project/id/864212

PROJECT WEBSITE

eucityfacility.eu/home.html

Tailored services promote energy efficiency renovation

Information about energy efficiency subscriptions available through one-stop shops supports deep renovation in residential buildings.

Recognition that the building sector in Europe represents 40 % of total energy consumption has led to a [wave of renovation](#). The EU-funded [EUROPA](#) project facilitates the renovation process by defining technical specifications, procedures and standards for energy efficiency subscriptions (EESs). The project coordinates information and services through one-stop shops (OSSs) and provides training through a mentoring programme.

Meeting the challenges of energy efficiency renovation



In general, there are high entry

barriers to the renovation process.

Often, individuals trying to motivate their fellow owners face resistance, which is usually based on misinformation,

concerns about the financial viability of renovations and procedural insecurities.

The need for rapid, wide-spread building renovation throughout Europe is paramount, but the process faces numerous challenges. Consumer confidence, availability of quality contractors and the variety of needs across different countries and regions all play a part. According to project coordinator Silvio De Nigris: "In general, there are high entry barriers to the renovation process. Often, individuals trying to motivate their fellow owners face resistance, which is usually based on misinformation, concerns about the financial viability of renovations and procedural insecurities." EESs and OSSs are essential to solving these challenges.

To ensure that renovations provide the energy and financial savings promised, the project determined common rules, approaches and methods to guide EESs. These guidelines promote consumer confidence and help

stakeholders such as condominium managers, construction companies and professional groups to navigate and promote major renovation projects.

OSSs are crucial to coordinating the information and the multiple parties involved in renovations. Importantly, OSSs are able to tailor services in specific regions. Due to market maturity, legal frameworks, financial incentives and specific climate conditions, different areas have differing needs. EUROPA set up OSSs in five locations, triggering investment of more than EUR 35 million.

Tailored OSSs

Project partners set up OSSs in Germany, France, Italy, Latvia and Portugal. Needs were different in each area. For instance, De Nigris says: "In Italy and France, the most significant challenge was to engage the market operators in the regional network,



since they were already overworked due to high demand thanks to the numerous incentives available for building renovation."

In Germany, the focus of the OSS was on providing information to building owners and encouraging people to take the next step in the renovation process. In Latvia the OSS needed to address an environment with unfavourable legislation and poor incentives for renovation. Portuguese partner [Arena Tejo](#) collaborated with seven municipalities and enabled the energy assessment of 209 buildings.

EUROPA mentoring programme

Training stakeholders and sharing information about the EUROPA approach are important goals of the project. Coming from 8 EU countries, 22 mentees successfully completed the [programme](#). In addition to using self-guided learning materials, mentees met online and in-person in small groups facilitated by project partners.

Training and information dissemination are key to ensuring that the achievements of the project continue into the future. For instance, the mentees in the Italian Piedmont region agreed to continue collaboration in the future. Evaluations in all mentorship

groups show a high degree of satisfaction with the programme, with 92 % of participants stating they would recommend the programme to others.

A wave of renovation is taking shape in Europe. The work of the EUROPA project helps ensure that building owners, as well as society in general, will benefit from the transformation that is coming.

PROJECT

**EUROPA – ENERGY EFFICIENCY SUBSCRIPTION
FOR DEEP RENOVATION WITH PERFORMANCE
GUARANTEE**

COORDINATED BY

The Piedmont Region in Italy

FUNDED UNDER

HORIZON 2020 - ENERGY

CORDIS FACTSHEET

cordis.europa.eu/project/id/956649

PROJECT WEBSITE

europaonestop.eu/

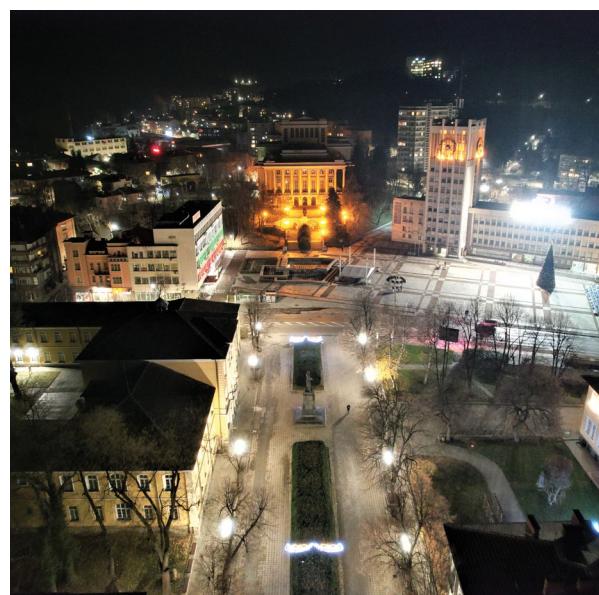


Expanding European Energy Award certification in central and eastern Europe

Tailored strategic energy management services and local engagement strategies have supported 26 municipalities in the successful application of the European Energy Award tools.

Accelerating climate change mitigation and the clean energy transition will require multinational and multilevel effort. Municipalities can face challenges developing tailored energy and climate programmes – and sourcing funding for their implementation.

The [European Energy Award](#) (eea), an action-oriented management instrument, supports local governments in doing just this. The EU-funded [EXCITE](#) project targeted expansion of



eea implementation in 26 municipalities in Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, North Macedonia and Ukraine.

Multilingual e-learning platform and citizen engagement

EXCITE piloted an innovative capacity-building platform for local authorities with e-learning materials in English, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Romanian, Slovenian and Ukrainian. "Topics included the EU Green Deal, the EU mission on 100 [climate-neutral and smart cities](#) by 2030, local energy cooperatives and investment in renewable energy solutions. Tailored certification courses increased the capacity of municipal staff, eea consultants and eea auditors towards meeting 2030 and 2050 energy and CO₂ reduction goals," explains project coordinator Dragomir Tzanev of the [Center for Energy Efficiency EnEffect](#).

The pilot municipalities also developed and implemented novel engagement strategies including participatory budgeting, crowdfunding for renovation of public buildings, and a citizens' engagement mobile app. A digital communications system was co-created with citizens in Ukraine, and municipal officials' increased capacity and motivation led to the establishment of the first public-private energy cooperative in Gabrovo, Bulgaria.

"Engagement of local communities with local energy and climate policies has been of utmost importance, creating trust and

motivation and helping policy implementation and business innovation. Overall, each locality witnessed the successful execution of at least one large-scale pilot activity," adds Tzanev.

Attracting private investment and stimulating entrepreneurship

EXCITE's inventory of available energy planning, management, regulatory and financing mechanisms in the pilot countries enabled local authorities to find the appropriate resources for implementing their energy and climate policies. The project's work also revealed the biggest challenge to the acceleration and scaling up of local energy actions in most central and eastern European countries – financing. Political instability threatens the strong dependence on state grants in these countries.

EXCITE stimulated innovative financing schemes which leveraged coherent energy management processes, demonstrating that processes like eea are crucial for attracting private investment and exploiting the full potential of local energy and climate actions.

Catapulting municipal energy planning into the mainstream

The communication campaign to raise awareness of the eea process was an indisputable highlight. In addition to international events, workshops and social media, the project leveraged mass media with extraordinary success. "With over 130 publications, interviews and appearances on national and local TV and radio stations, EXCITE transformed once-marginalised municipal energy planning and management into a prominent topic in mainstream media discourse," says Tzanev.

Furthermore, EXCITE garnered European-level recognition. The project was the topic of the final, centre-stage event at the European Sustainable Energy Week 2023 conference. The workshop focused on the role of multilevel governance in economic recovery and growth after the COVID-19 and Ukraine crises, and specifically the recovery of Ukrainian cities. Mayors and deputy mayors of EXCITE pilot cities Lviv, Gabrovo and Celje joined representatives of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Energy, eea and the Covenant of Mayors. Notably, the agreement for further cooperation and coordinated reporting between these two methodologies was officially announced at this event.

Most EXCITE pilot municipalities received eea certification by the project's end, while the remainder are in the audit process. Europe's municipalities are actively and effectively addressing energy and climate goals with knowledge, tools, enthusiasm – and eea certification – enabled in no small part by EXCITE.

PROJECT

EXCITE - Award Excellence, Invest in Trust: Tailored Energy Management Services for East European Local Authorities

COORDINATED BY

Center for Energy Efficiency EnEffect in Bulgaria

FUNDED UNDER

HORIZON 2020 - ENERGY

CORDIS FACTSHEET

cordis.europa.eu/project/id/892034

PROJECT WEBSITE

excite-project.eu/



Making home retrofitting accessible, affordable and simple for everyone

An EU-funded project is simplifying the financing, planning and execution of ideal home renovation packages using a digital, straightforward approach that makes renovations a hassle-free experience. This unique model requires no financial investment from homeowners.

The current rate of retrofitting buildings in the EU is alarmingly slow – around 1 % annually. At this pace, it would take a century to retrofit the entire building stock. However, the potential benefits are significant. Successful retrofitting could lower the EU's total energy consumption by 5-6 % and decrease CO₂ emissions by 5 %.

Given these benefits, there is a need for new retrofitting approaches, which present solid business cases, facilitate emission reductions, minimise risks for homeowners and municipalities and effectively leverage private capital.

The EU-funded [FITHOME](#) project is developing such a solution: by integrating a unique local tax instrument with a digitised, end-to-end approach, it will unlock considerable capital for retrofitting. The homeowner is at the heart of this transformative approach.

"We have developed an innovative one-stop shop solution that allows homeowners to retrofit their homes without their own financial investment," notes project coordinator Melissa Wolf-Baas. "We also support municipalities in their directorial role for migrating districts from gas to green energy. Our municipal sustainability scheme (GVR) enables municipalities to fully alleviate homeowners' retrofitting burdens. Using this approach, which is executed by [De Woonpas](#), municipalities gain control over district-based energy transitions, without any significant impacts on their organisation or hefty investments."

The retrofitting process

The process begins with an inspection of the participant's home to determine potential retrofitting measures. After the inspection, the homeowner receives a detailed proposal outlining potential energy savings and the recommended retrofitting measures. Importantly, the homeowner does not need to make any financial investment.

"In exchange for retrofitting the home, the homeowner pays a local tax for as long as he or she owns the house, up to a maximum of 30 years. However, in most cases, the savings on energy bills outweigh the local tax payments. Over time, the savings increase while the tax stays the same, as long as the scheme is in effect on the property," outlines Wolf-Baas.

A unique aspect of the GVR is its simplicity and full accessibility for homeowners. No credit check is required to participate, and if the homeowner sells the house before the payment period ends, the local tax is transferred to the new owner.

A promising future

"As GVR is a pioneering concept with no existing parallels, we had to develop various components to ensure its functionality," states Wolf-Baas.

The project coordinator highlights that a key component of GVR is a calculation tool that estimates the heat demand before and after retrofitting. This data helps predict potential savings



**So far,
our efforts
have seen
the successful
retrofitting of
approximately
100 homes
throughout various
municipalities,
resulting in a high
satisfaction rating
of 9.1 out of 10
from our satisfied
homeowners.**

and combined with tax amounts, enables users to assess whether there is a positive business case for homeowners.

"By the end of 2024, we anticipate being fully operational across 12 Dutch municipalities, making the GVR accessible to all private homeowners in these areas," states Wolf-Baas. "So far, our efforts have seen the successful retrofitting of approximately 100 homes throughout various municipalities, resulting in a high satisfaction rating of 9.1 out of 10 from our satisfied homeowners."

"We are broadening our horizons and currently developing a version of the GVR for housing corporations with the support of the European Commission. This expansion

will allow even those in rental properties to enjoy the benefits of home retrofitting with GVR," concludes Wolf-Baas.

PROJECT

**FITHOME - AN END-TO-END SOLUTION
ACCELERATING COST-NEUTRAL RETROFITTING
FOR ENERGY-EFFICIENT FAMILY HOMES**

COORDINATED BY

De Woonpas in the Netherlands

FUNDED UNDER

HORIZON 2020 - ENERGY

CORDIS FACTSHEET

cordis.europa.eu/project/id/892214

PROJECT WEBSITE

fithomeproject.com/



Community-centred regeneration in the Basque Country

Building renovations delivered by the EU-funded HIROSS4all project helped reduce energy bills and improve the quality of life for vulnerable communities, aided by their active participation.

Building renovations to improve energy efficiency, building integrity and aesthetics are costly.

The EU-funded [HIROSS4all](#) project set up a one-stop shop home renovation service in Spain's Basque Country, coordinated by regional government.

With HIROSS4all's unique Social Support Mechanism for Financing, local authorities guaranteed portions of loans to help vulnerable communities.

Local hubs called Opengelas ('open living rooms') were established to support communities throughout the renovations. Starting with two pilot programmes in neighbourhoods in Eibar and Bilbao, there are now Opengela offices in 25 communities.


We learned a lot about supporting vulnerable neighbourhoods. If we can get it right in these areas, it will work anywhere.

Tapping people power

To start, an 'urban vulnerability inventory' identified housing stock needing renovation.

This included 65 indicators related to socio-economic and socio-demographic conditions, building stability, building and equipment accessibility, habitability and energy efficiency.

"To avoid breeding mistrust by imposing solutions, citizen involvement is critical," adds de la Puerta. "The Opengela offices offer a range of technical, legal, financial, administrative and social support and guidance."

The vision stretched beyond renovation or energy improvement, towards urban regeneration that brings wider social benefits. HIROSS4all engaged the Departments of Employment and Inclusion and the Department of Health, leading to 17 neighbourhood residents taking part in training courses and 30 in energy management work.

A digital tool is also now under development to analyse possible links between health conditions and the urban environment.

Implementing renovation solutions

HIROSS4all's inclusive approach sought approval for the proposed action plans by governance bodies called Communities of Owners. Actions to increase energy efficiency included minimising energy demand with passive measures, for example by adding external insulation. This was followed by active clean energy measures such as adding solar panels to roofs, or upgrading existing equipment.

Having upgraded 425 homes, it was found that passive measures reduced energy consumption by around 60 % on



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average; when accompanied by active measures, savings exceeded 90 %. Monitoring of indoor air conditions confirmed other positive side effects: temperatures were raised by over 2 °C, while relative humidity was reduced by at least 40 % and CO₂ levels by over 20 %.

From buildings to neighbourhoods

HIROSS4all's Opengela model contributes to a range of EU initiatives, including the [New Leipzig Charter](#), [Renovation Wave](#), [New European Bauhaus](#), [Energy Efficiency Directive](#) and [Energy Performance of Buildings Directive](#).

Adherence to the programme was over 80 % among inhabitants with lowest incomes, demonstrating an appetite for this model of urban renewal, which continues as the Opengela programme under the successor [BIR TU OSS](#) project.

"Our model is now recognised as a reference, regionally, nationally and Europe-wide. But to decarbonise most of the

building stock by 2050, we must scale up from the level of buildings to neighbourhoods, incorporating elements such as community energy production and nature-based solutions. This is BIR TU OSS's focus," says de la Puerta.

PROJECT

HIROSS4all - HOME INTEGRATED RENOVATION ONE-STOP-SHOP FOR VULNERABLE DISTRICTS

COORDINATED BY

Department of Territorial Planning, Housing and Transportation. Basque Government in Spain

FUNDED UNDER

HORIZON 2020 - ENERGY

CORDIS FACTSHEET

cordis.europa.eu/project/id/846707

PROJECT WEBSITE

opengela.eus/en-2

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One-stop shop offers professional, trustworthy advice on successful house remodels

A one-stop shop in Toulouse Metropole seeks to streamline home renovations and share successful strategies with national and European stakeholders. This service caters to all income levels and housing types.

The EU-funded [I-HEROS](#) project is simplifying the complex processes associated with home renovation, particularly focusing on reducing housing emissions and improving comfort. To this end, it has

established a one-stop shop in Toulouse Metropole for homeowners seeking to renovate their homes. The initiative provides a single

point of access for administrative support, technical tasks and professional contact. Advice is neutral and free for residents.

"Our service seeks to provide guidance and coordination, allowing individuals to walk in without an appointment and discuss all available options with a single knowledgeable representative," comments François Chollet, Vice-president of Toulouse Métropole in charge of the Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy Transition. "The goal is to streamline the process, making it easier for homeowners to understand where to start and how to proceed with their renovations."

Instilling confidence in home renovation

The building sector in Europe accounts for approximately 40 % of energy consumption and 36 % of greenhouse gas emissions, making renovation a critical aspect of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

Despite its importance, the renovation rate remains at around 1 % across different European countries. I-HEROS offers a comprehensive range of solutions to make the renovation journey easier for homeowners. This includes a charter of commitment from professionals and a directory of trustworthy professionals to mitigate the prevalent problem of fraud and lack of trust in the renovation sector.

"I-HEROS has formed a charter to set out reciprocal commitments between professionals and Toulouse Métropole, who also serve on its advisory board, to collectively address the home renovation sector's objectives. This charter is open for all enterprises to sign, allowing them to demonstrate their commitment to high-quality building renovations. The signatories are included in the one-stop-shop's directory, providing a pledge of trust for residents," explains Chollet.

Setting a new standard across European cities



Our unique neighbourhood-targeting strategy evolved as a novel method to further our project aims, setting a new precedent for cities across Europe.

One-stop shops offer homeowners all the information and services they need to implement renovation projects. Essentially, they should provide administrative, technical and financial assistance, supporting citizens in the project set-up and development.

"Our innovative strategy targets entire neighbourhoods, offering them comprehensive solutions for renovation. Despite being a relatively new approach on the European scale, it has shown promise in improving



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existing approaches assisting people with renovations," notes Jean-Claude Dardelet, Vice-president of Toulouse Métropole in charge of Attractiveness, European and International Relations and Tourism. "Our unique neighbourhood-targeting strategy evolved as a novel method to further our project aims, setting a new precedent for cities across Europe," highlights Dardelet.

This one-stop shop in Toulouse Metropole, launched in February 2022, started with six full-time advisors and has since grown to 14. "Securing these full-time positions – as opposed to temporary ones – is a true achievement for us, allowing us to enrich our resources," states François Chollet.

Future plans for the service involve strengthening it further by doubling its operating hours and the number of condominium hotlines as well as providing dedicated appointments for condominiums.

By conducting in-depth analyses of local needs and effectively communicating to homeowners about these services, I-HEROS aspires to stimulate the demand on the territory. Furthermore, drawing from the experiences of similar emerging services across Europe, I-HEROS anticipates refining the economic model of the one-stop shop structure. The goal is to reduce the need for subsidies, while maintaining neutral and free advice for homeowners.

PROJECT

I-HEROS - Integrated Home Energy RenOvation Service

COORDINATED BY

Toulouse Métropole in France

FUNDED UNDER

HORIZON 2020 - ENERGY

CORDIS FACTSHEET

cordis.europa.eu/project/id/890598

PROJECT WEBSITE

i-heros.eu/

ManagEnergy: a foundation for the pillars of the energy transition

The European Commission's ManagEnergy initiative is supporting local and regional energy agencies with in-depth capacity building including expert visits, training classes and an invited speakers' series.



Accelerating the energy transition and mitigating climate change require action at all levels. The revised [Energy Efficiency Directive](#) highlights the essential role of local and regional energy agencies in this effort.

The EU-funded [ManagEnergy](#) initiative, launched in 2002, is actively supporting local and regional energy agencies to be leaders in the energy transition and accelerate sustainable energy investments in regions and cities.

From oil to renewables and climate change mitigation

According to Seamus Hoyne of the [Technological University of the Shannon](#) (a 2021 merger of the Limerick Institute of Technology and the Athlone Institute of Technology) and ManagEnergy trainer and coordinator: "The first local and regional energy agencies were established in the 1970s and 1980s in

response to the oil crises, to support municipalities and regions in managing their energy supply and demand." A record number of new agencies was added in the 1990s and 2000s with the EU's dedicated financial support for their establishment in the context of its ambitious energy and climate targets.

ManagEnergy: enabling the enablers

 *The recast of the Energy Efficiency Directive is a game-changer for all local and regional energy agencies across the EU. For the first time, they are recognised as key organisations for supporting public authorities in the roll-out of energy efficiency measures.*

Energy agencies provide information, raise awareness, build capacity and facilitate sustainable energy markets. They work with public authorities, energy companies, SMEs and industry, and even engage with citizens. "The revised Energy Efficiency Directive is a game-changer for all local and regional energy agencies across the EU. For the first time, they are recognised as key organisations for supporting public authorities in the roll-out of energy efficiency measures," underscores Hoyne. ManagEnergy is now supporting an estimated 350 local and regional energy agencies representing a workforce of over 3 800 people.

ManagEnergy has organised 26 'Expert Missions' in which experts visited selected energy agencies to provide tailor-made support for the agencies and their stakeholders. To date, over 200 people have participated in [Master Classes](#) – intensive training programmes on specific topics including market facilitation and financing. In addition, the unique [ManagEnergy Talks](#) explore transformative actions led by charismatic climate and energy leaders to inspire others to spearhead the energy transition.

Success stories inspire involvement

Among the many accomplishments of the teamwork between ManagEnergy and motivated agencies and organisations, Hoyne notes: "I travelled to Estonia in September 2023 as part of a ManagEnergy Expert Mission to advise several islands' municipalities on the creation of a new energy agency. A few months later, the agency was established and has ambitious plans to lead the climate neutrality agenda in the region," Hoyne explains. Actions include decarbonising ferries and transport through clean hydrogen, retrofitting buildings and engaging with SMEs.

"More and more organisations and companies want to take an active role in the energy transition but don't know how. We invite people to have a look at our [interactive map of local and regional energy agencies](#) and to get in touch with energy agencies close to them," says Hoyne. They can also engage with the ManagEnergy initiative and participate in its activities or with [FEDARENE](#), the European Federation of Agencies and Regions for Energy and Environment, for advice and examples of how energy agencies have been established. Support is available, action is needed. The time is now.

PROJECT

ManagEnergy – ManagEnergy

COORDINATED BY

Technological University of the Shannon in Ireland

FUNDED UNDER

European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)

PROJECT WEBSITE

managenergy.ec.europa.eu/managenergy-about_en



Municipalities learn from each other to accelerate decarbonisation

The first five ‘learning municipality networks’ in Greece, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal have shown how cross-regional coordination and cooperation among local authorities can accelerate the energy transition.

The public dialogue around energy efficiency and low-carbon practices is being amplified by consumers, governments, industry and even companies. In fact, companies in Europe got on the bandwagon relatively early.

In the 1990s, Switzerland developed the concept of learning [energy efficiency networks](#) among companies in different sectors, a concept that has evolved and expanded significantly since then. In these networks, about 10 to 15 companies get together regularly to share their energy efficiency experiences and set new targets.

Inspired by this well-established approach, the EU-funded [PATH2LC](#) project adapted and applied it to municipalities, creating learning municipality networks in which public authorities work together to achieve low-carbon municipalities.

Municipalities working together on energy and climate

“The overarching objective of PATH2LC was to support local policymakers and public authorities to transition towards a low-carbon society through peer-to-peer learning, sharing of cross-country experiences, and increased engagement,” says project coordinator Catrice Christ of [IREES – Institute for Resource Efficiency and Energy Strategies](#).

The learning municipality network methodology was an excellent way to accomplish these objectives by facilitating meetings, supporting target setting and commitment, and fostering mutual motivation. In addition, PATH2LC supported municipalities in

obtaining the competencies and skills needed to implement energy-saving or climate protection measures. Capacity building focused on topics including heating and cooling planning, energy in buildings, renewable energy, stakeholder engagement and financing.

A plethora of new measures with tangible results

“PATH2LC supported the introduction of 115 new measures during the project’s lifetime, an average of more than four in each municipality. About 70 % of them were part of a sustainable energy action plan (SEAP) or a sustainable energy and climate action plan (SECAP). A key advantage of our approach is that the municipalities are supported both in implementing measures of their existing SE(C)APs and in drafting long-term energy transition roadmaps,” explains Christ.

In the three years of the project, the measures saved around 109 gigawatt hours (GWh) of energy, equivalent to the annual energy consumption of about 4 500 German households. A total of EUR 20.9 million was invested in sustainable energy.

Christ adds: “The results also suggest there is untapped potential for further savings. The heating and cooling sector accounts for the largest share of energy consumption in Europe. Implementing energy-efficient technologies, optimising heating and cooling systems, and exploring renewable energy alternatives are promising solutions.”



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Learning municipality networks: teaching us how to succeed

The most exciting facet of our project was the tremendous engagement and the formation of an enthusiastic community of like-minded people.

There was an immense driving force and dynamism that fuelled us. We realised that coordination and cooperation – synchronising the efforts of different teams in pursuit of common goals – are often just as important, if not more important, than purely technical solutions.

The learning municipality networks proved to be a successful way to accelerate the energy transition. Participating municipalities profited from exchanging experiences, as most are facing similar challenges, and they gained support in implementing parts of their SE(C)APs. Beyond this, Christ notes that “the most exciting facet of our project was the tremendous engagement and the formation of an enthusiastic community of like-minded people. There was an immense driving force and dynamism that fuelled us. We realised that coordination and cooperation – synchronising the efforts of different teams in pursuit of common goals – are often just as important, if not more important, than purely technical solutions.”

This momentum propelled a participating network in France to create a ‘biennale’ of events presenting local success stories to encourage behavioural change and stimulate the concrete implementation of SE(C)APs measures. The first five learning municipality networks in Europe have taught us all an important way in which municipalities within a country can work together for a sustainable future.

PROJECT

PATH2LC – Public Authorities together with a holistic network approach on the way to low-carbon municipalities

COORDINATED BY

IREES – Institute for Resource Efficiency and Energy Strategies in Germany

FUNDED UNDER

HORIZON 2020 - ENERGY

CORDIS FACTSHEET

cordis.europa.eu/project/id/892560

PROJECT WEBSITE

path2lc.eu/



Analysing energy efficiency fuels climate-neutral policies

Measuring the impacts of energy efficiency with an easy-to-use tool gives decision-makers much needed information at national, local and business levels.

Energy efficiency means getting the same result for less expenditure of energy. To reach the goal of climate neutrality by 2050, Europe must improve energy efficiency in buildings, transport and industry. For that to happen, policymakers need to understand the range of impacts caused by energy efficiency measures. The EU-funded [REFEREE](#) project has designed tools for use at national and local levels to meet this need.

Energy efficiency and its impact

Energy efficiency includes a wide range of applications. Upgrades to insulation, smart thermostats, [energy-labelled products](#) and LED lighting are some examples. Renewable energy is also part of the energy efficiency portfolio, and it impacts all sectors of human activity.



The positive effects of energy efficiency are wide-ranging. For consumers, results include reduced energy bills, improved health and increased property value. Societally, benefits lead to reduced greenhouse gas emissions, job growth and reduced poverty levels.

To make the best policy decisions and further accelerate adoption of energy efficiency strategies, it is necessary to quantify environmental, financial and social benefits. According to project coordinator Stefano Faberi: "The project has produced two tools which can be used to assess impacts first at national and second at local level."



Simulations and impact quantifications are achieved through background calculations – conducted using models created outside of the REFEREE project – plus a modelling engine built within the project which further processes and calibrates the outcomes.

project – plus a modelling engine built within the project which further processes and calibrates the outcomes."

The integration of multiple modelling sources presented several challenges. Faberi says: "The main way in which these have been addressed is through strong collaborative working across the REFEREE consortium. Different partners have carried out extensive scenario testing within the European model, which has proven to be a rapid way to identify problems."

The project's tools are currently being tested in four case studies. Studies in Germany and Spain are testing the performance of the localities tool in discrete municipalities. In Bulgaria and Italy, studies are testing the REFEREE tools at both national and municipal levels.

Training end users

In addition to the challenge of designing a tool that integrates multiple analytic engines, a further challenge is ensuring correct application of the tools by non-expert users. In particular, correct parameterisation and accurate interpretation of associated results is important. The case studies continue to provide valuable feedback concerning user guidance.

REFEREE has created powerful analytic engines to guide community decision making at multiple levels. Testing is underway, and when completed it will be followed by a communication campaign to make the target audience aware of the tools available. With training in how to use these tools, European nations and municipalities have the potential to turn the 'hidden fuel' that is energy efficiency into the 'first fuel' driving prosperity and well-being.

PROJECT

REFEREE - Real ValuE oF EneRgy EfficiEncy

COORDINATED BY

ISINNOVA Institute of Studies for the Integration of Systems - Cooperative Society in Italy

FUNDED UNDER

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CORDIS FACTSHEET

cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101000136

PROJECT WEBSITE

referreetool.eu



Support hubs boost building renovation in Hungary

An online platform coupled with in-person offices provides comprehensive tools that enable Hungarian homeowners to renovate their properties.

Much of Europe's building stock is in need of renovation. In Hungary, where roughly two-thirds of residential buildings are energy inefficient and the median energy expenditure of the housing sector is above the EU average, the need for widespread renovation is critical. The EU-funded [RenoHUB](#) project removes many of the barriers to the renovation process by providing access to information, expertise and tools.


Recent nationwide surveys indicate that about 24 % of Hungarian homeowners are planning to implement energy-saving renovations within the next 5 years.

Barriers to energy efficiency investment

Recent nationwide surveys indicate that about 24 % of Hungarian homeowners are planning to implement energy-saving renovations within the next 5 years. There are many barriers to making this wave of building refurbishment flow as effectively as possible.

Home renovation is complex, and the needs of single-family and multiple-family housing units require different resources to support the process. Accessing information about a major project with legal, financial and technical aspects is off-putting for many consumers and can lead to distrust of installers. Investment in renovation is costly, and consumers need access to information about loans, grants and other incentives for home renovation.

RenoPont platform and information hotspots

RenoHUB bridges the challenges to home renovation by applying the concept of the one-stop shop. The goal is to support consumers along the entire value chain of retrofitting,

from communication and behavioural change through financial support and decision making. It also takes in assessment of cost and energy savings after renovation. An additional benefit of RenoHUB is that it can assist homeowners on the path to becoming prosumers – with home-based renewable energy sources, households can not only save energy, but they can produce it too.

The RenoPont network is a dual-pronged system designed to reach consumers with different needs. The online RenoPoint [RenoPont](#) platform is intended for consumers who are comfortable accessing information through the internet and using digital resources. For citizens who lack access to or familiarity with such tools, RenoHUB implements physical advisory hotspots.

The project's in-person sites exceeded expectations. According to project coordinator Gergely Schum: "Instead of the originally planned two offices, we were able to open eight advisory offices, and there was great interest from municipalities and private companies as well for opening more offices."

Comprehensive services at the one-stop shop

The materials and services available through the RenoPont network address everything that might impede a person from embarking on their home renovation journey. The online platform includes a product selection guide, a list of funding possibilities, a database of recommended professionals and a variety of downloadable template documents. At RenoPont, information hotspot providers offer much of the same information as well as a free initial consultation and an energy audit and renovation plan.



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Financial obstacles are one of the greatest challenges to implementing widespread residential renovation. About the financial options available through the network, Schum says: "We have collated all the bank loans and state-subsidised loans and grants available in Hungary that can be used for renovation purposes. We can also provide clients with personalised advice on these and help them choose the right product for them."

A dramatic increase in residential building renovation is needed for Europe to reach its climate mitigation goals. By providing a comprehensive and accessible repository for resources, RenoHUb is facilitating this task in Hungary.

PROJECT

RenoHUb - Integrated Services to Boost Energy Renovation in Hungarian Homes

COORDINATED BY

Energiaklub in Hungary

FUNDED UNDER

HORIZON 2020 - ENERGY

CORDIS FACTSHEET

cordis.europa.eu/project/id/845652

PROJECT WEBSITE

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RESULTS PACK ON INCLUSIVE ENERGY TRANSITION

Energy is an essential service that every EU citizen is entitled to, since adequate warmth, cooling, lighting, hot water, and energy for cooking and powering appliances are all necessary for a decent standard of living. This new CORDIS Results Pack presents 15 EU-funded research projects helping to empower all European citizens in the clean energy transition.



Check out the Pack here:
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