



# ComActivate

Enabling community action for energy sufficiency

## **BASELINE REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE ART OF RESOURCE CENTRES IN THE DEMONSTRATION SITES**

**D2.2**

**April, 2024**

Metropolitan Research Institute



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# 1. Introduction

The ultimate aim of this deliverable is to create a sound basis for the development of Resource Centres that assist the energy efficient renovation of the privately owned multi-apartment residential buildings in Burgas (Bulgaria), Józsefváros (Hungary, Budapest), and Kaišiadorys and Elektrėnai (Lithuania). The paper provides a short assessment of the renovation challenges experienced in the four pilot locations and the role Resource Centres may play in tackling these challenges. Based on the statements of this baseline report a two year's development process starts, which should lead to sustainable Resource Centres by the end of the ComActivate project.

The building stock in the ComActivate countries is significantly old: in Bulgaria it consists mainly of buildings built between 1960 and 1989. The major part (67.5%) the residential dwellings of Lithuania were built from 1946 to 1990, 10.2% – before the 1945. The housing stock in Józsefváros is even older then these consisting of buildings that are predominantly more than 100 years old. With time, old buildings start causing many problems to their owners. They not only look poor, cause safety challenges due to deteriorated constructions but also use inefficiently energy, which nowadays leads to significant financial losses. For example, Bulgaria continues to be the country with the highest percentage of energy-poor households in the European Union and the European Economic Area - 27.5%, according to the latest Eurostat data. This is more than 3.5 times the EU average - 8%.

Over 90% of the buildings in Bulgaria need renovation, according to the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works. Only 5-6% of the multi-family residential buildings in Bulgaria have been renovated since 2008. If this rate is maintained, it will take 200 years to renovate all buildings in the country. The situation in Lithuania is only slightly better. Multi-Apartment Building Renovation Programme running in Lithuania for almost 20 years, but at the end of 2025 only 15,2 % multi-apartment building stock was renovated<sup>1</sup>. Following expert estimations, at such rates, the renovation in Lithuania will take over 100 years. In the Hungarian pilot case, the complex need for structural interventions of the old building stock creates further impediments.

All three Comactivate pilot countries (Bulgaria, Hungary and Lithuania) are facing the main problem holding back renovation - lack of finance. But renovation is a complex phenomenon and its speed depends on many factors - from the effectiveness of financing schemes to the community's own commitment to energy efficiency, to the legal framework or the dissemination of adequate information and even to the activity of those in charge of renovation.

The investment costs of renovation are huge, the payback periods are extremely long, it is therefore very important that residents feel the real benefits of renovation, can consult trusted experts who can provide qualified information, help finding the right solutions, perhaps fill in the documents even supervise the renovation process. These are the functions of Resource Centres (RC).

This study examines the impact of an important instrument, the Resource Centre, on the promotion of renovation. In two municipalities, Burgas and Józsefváros, such centres are already in operation and the study assesses their results and challenges, while in the Lithuanian municipalities of Kaišiadorys and Elektrėnai, the RCs are only planned to be set up, and the possibilities and preconditions for their establishment are examined.

Of course, it has to be taken into account that the mentality of the population, the standard of living, the financial possibilities, the subsidies provided by the state, and perhaps also the activity of the community are slightly different from one country to the other, but that's what makes this project interesting and useful.

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<sup>1</sup> Map of the renovation in Lithuania <https://renomap.apva.lt/>

## 2. Baseline report for Burgas (Bulgaria)

### Framework conditions

#### Main characteristics of the district

Burgas is the second largest city on the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast and the fourth-largest city in Bulgaria after Sofia, Plovdiv, and Varna. It is the capital of Burgas Province and an important industrial, transport, cultural and tourist centre.

#### **Demographic characteristics (Burgas)<sup>2</sup>**

Population - total	198 593
Population - men	93 792
Population - women	104 801
Population age 0-4	9 574
Population age 5-14	22 180
Population age 15-19	9 470
Population age 20-24	8 115
Population age 25-54	86 294
Population age 55-64	25 180
Population age 65-74	23 316
Population age 75 and above	14 464
Economically active population - total	87 689
Economically active population - men	45 542
Economically active population - women	42 146
Unemployed - total	2 082
Unemployed - men	1 129
Unemployed - women	953
Students - total	6 088
Students - men	2 352
Students - women	3 736
Population aged 25-64 with primary or lower education	7 248

<sup>2</sup> National Statistical Institute Republic of Bulgaria, <https://www.nsi.bg/en/statistical-data/46/193/>

Population aged 25-64 with secondary education	47 918
Population aged 25-64 with higher education	40 361

Vazrazhdane is a neighbourhood in Burgas, right next to the city centre. The district is bordered by major roads, near transport hubs (bus lines, railway), making it very well connected. Vazrazhdane residential district is characterized by predominantly low- and medium-rise buildings. There are many old buildings dating back to the city's founding, most of which are cultural monuments. In the last 20 years, many apartment buildings (5-6 stories) were built which has significantly densified the urban area and resulted in a high population density and not enough green spaces.

The built environment is mixed: older panel and brick buildings and newer residential complexes. It has good infrastructure: schools, kindergartens, shops, restaurants, proximity to cultural institutions (opera, theatre, youth centre etc.) However, it is heavily urbanized, and there is a lack of parking spaces and green areas.

Property prices are high compared to more peripheral areas. The neighborhood is desirable for people who want to be near central Burgas but still in a quieter, residential environment.

### ***Physical description of the housing stock<sup>3</sup>***

Type	Age of construction	Number of buildings	Type of construction	Number of apartments
Multifamily building	1950	21	Bricks	161
Multifamily building	1960	69	Bricks – 65. From panels (prefabricated elements) – 4.	559
Multifamily building	1974	8	From panels (prefabricated elements).	64
Multifamily building	1975	58	From panels (prefabricated elements).	3364
Multifamily building	1980	297	Bricks – 10 buildings. From panels (prefabricated elements) – 22 505.	22605
Multifamily building	1981	62	From panels (prefabricated elements).	3844
Multifamily building	1983	100	From panels (prefabricated elements).	3625
Multifamily building	1987	192	From panels (prefabricated elements).	20737

<sup>3</sup> National Statistical Institute Republic of Bulgaria (<https://www.nsi.bg/>). The data is not available publicly, only sent upon specific request for a specific fee.

Multifamily building	1988	114	Reinforced concrete (reinforced concrete structure with slab and columns) – 30. From panels (prefabricated elements) – 84.	7560
Multifamily building	1989	124	From panels (prefabricated elements).	8765
Multifamily building	1990	170	From panels (prefabricated elements).	8330
Multifamily building	1991	72	Reinforced concrete (reinforced concrete structure with slab and columns).	5184
Multifamily building	1992	120	Reinforced concrete (reinforced concrete structure with slab and columns) – 40. From panels (prefabricated elements) – 80.	1600
Multifamily building	1993	67	Reinforced concrete (reinforced concrete structure with slab and columns).	4489
Multifamily building	1996	13	Reinforced concrete (reinforced concrete structure with slab and columns).	169
Multifamily building	2000	20	Reinforced concrete (reinforced concrete structure with slab and columns).	202

The building stock in Bulgaria consists mainly of buildings built between 1960 and 1989 (52% of the inhabited residential buildings).

The building stock in the district consists of about 1500 buildings, with 91258 apartments. 80% of them are built before 1990, when the main part of the panel and reinforced concrete buildings were built. These buildings have poor energy performance (energy classes E, F and G) and face challenges related to:

- physical ageing of some elements of buildings (connections at balcony railings, roof boards, etc.) because of lack of systematic technical maintenance through the years;
- poor condition of buildings' elements – roofs, damaged waterproofing and water drainage, destroyed facades, old window frames and glasses, etc.

There is a direct link between general poverty and energy poverty. The country has high levels of inequality, poverty and limited budgetary opportunities. On average, Bulgarian households spend over 75% of their income on food and energy<sup>4</sup>. This percentage is below 45% on average for countries in the European Union. This predetermines the lack of investments for professional maintenance of the building, implementation of integrated and complete EE measures on the building, replacing heating and cooling systems at home.

Another reason for low energy efficiency is the lack of knowledge about energy consumption, a lack of funds to carry out the necessary repairs and to purchase efficient heating appliances, but also the reluctance to do so – there is still present the thinking among the people the state should do all the work.

## Availability of public subsidies

At present, the following programs for financing EE measures and PV installation for multifamily buildings and households are available.

### 1. Renovation of multifamily buildings

Since 2016, the state in cooperation with the municipalities and HOAs invested about EUR 5 billion leva for renovation of multifamily buildings. Grants are 100% and cover the implementation of energy-efficiency measures for the whole building, including facade insulation, windows replacement, forr repair and insulations, replacement of lightning in common parts. With the implementation of these measures, multifamily buildings reach energy class B and A. Burgas is leader in the country with more than 300 completely renovated private multifamily buildings.

### 2. Replacement of coal/wood heating stoves with energy efficient heat pumps/ pellet stoves.

Since 2022, Burgas Municipality through several EU projects has been replacing old heating devices of families with new energy efficient air conditioners or pallet stoves. Up- to- now about 2800 old heating devices are being replaced, and another 4250 households will have their devices replaced by the end of 2028.

3. In 2024, a program for installation of PVs for households, financed by Bulgaria National Recovery and Resilience Plan was opened<sup>5</sup>.

4. There is a social program provided by the state and managed by the municipality. For a period of five months – from November 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024 socially vulnerable families receive 110, 00 leva (55 euros) to cover their energy bills.

5. In the second half of 2026, it is expected the start of Bulgaria Social Climate Fund. It will have a budget of 2, 28 billion euros as 1 billion euros will be available for implementation of EE measures, with emphasis on energy poor households<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> National Statistical Institute Republic of Bulgaria <https://www.nsi.bg/en/press-release/household-income-expenditure-and-consumption-8759/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://build-up.ec.europa.eu/en/news-and-events/news/eur-123-million-make-bulgarian-homes-more-energy-efficient/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.rescoop.eu/policy/financing-tracker/social-climate-fund/bulgaria-socialclimatefund/>

## Main issues in the operation of MFABs

Main issues are related to management and maintenance of the buildings and achieving mutual agreement for applying for financing to state/ EU programmes.

On average in a multifamily building live more than 50 households with different social, economic and educational status. Besides that, many of the flats are empty as the owners are not living in the city or the country and respectively hard to reach.

For this reason, it is hard to gather money from households for any significant repairs of the building, as well as reach 100 % agreement, to apply to available programmes.

In recent years because of the many problems related to the condominium management, professional managers are hired.

## Overview of the operation of the RC

Burgas Municipality opened its Energy office in the beginning of 2023. It is a part of the administrative structure of the municipality. The office is located in the very centre of the city in a building owned and managed by Burgas Municipality. It is easily reachable by public transport, walking and cycling.

Main target group are citizens, energy poor households and homeowners' associations in Burgas.

Services provided by the office are related to information about financing programmes for energy efficiency and photovoltaic installations. Support the preparation of documentation to apply for financing. Organise training and info days on the topics of energy efficiency, energy saving, improving the living environment in building flats. houses. RC is opened all day from Monday to Friday from 08:30 – 17:15 and provides services in person, by phone and e-mail. It has 1 employee who is working full time.

Since April 2024 in partnership with Centre for energy efficiency EnEffect and a private company, a small show room for insulation materials and windows is set up in the Resource centre. 2nd employee who works 4 hours per day is appointed, responsible for consultations related to physical renovation of buildings, selection of insulation materials, requirements for achieving different energy classes for buildings.

The operation of the Resource centre is directly linked to Burgas Strategy for Sustainable Energy and Climate 2021 – 2030 (SECAP):

Priority 1: Decarbonisation of municipal building infrastructure and municipal facilities

Measure: Conducting campaigns to change the behaviour of citizens with a focus on energy-efficient heating / cooling with energy efficient heating appliances and use of RES.

Measure: Develop municipal mechanism to support energy poor households.

Priority 4: Support for changing energy behaviour

Measure: Organise and implement info campaigns.

On average costs per month for running the Resource centre are following:

- salary of full-time employee 1200 euros,
- utility bills (electricity, phone, cleaning) – 400 euros,
- others (organisation of events, trainings etc.) – 200 euros.
- Total – 1800 euros.

## Evaluation of the operation of the RC

From its opening more than 5000 people visited the Resource centre. 70% of them were interested in renovation of their buildings, 20 % in replacing old wood stoves with air conditioners and 10 % in PV installations.

Resource centres are very valuable when there is available financing for implementation of energy efficient measures, PV installations, etc. Usually, people and homeowners' associations find it difficult to understand the guidelines and prepare necessary documents, application forms, budgets etc. and here is the role of the RC to support them in this process.

The centre of Burgas is well recognised also at national level and has been selected several times by different ministries for organising info days for programmes supporting EE.

One of the main challenges that we faced was finding people to work in the office, even though the salary is slightly higher than the average. We have replaced 3 employees in the office, who despite their good CVs could not meet our expectations. It is very important the employees in the office should be people who are willing to take the initiative, constantly seeking to persuade the citizens, seeking what they need, propose training and events to respond to their needs etc.

## Basic concept for the coming years

### Potential new target groups

SMEs

As the financing for SMEs related to energy efficiency and RES is constantly growing, the resource centre of Burgas could start providing information and support to SMEs for applying for financing.

### Involving new stakeholders

We are very much looking forward to involving the business to cooperation, because they have the necessary expertise and practical experience and could give of great value when advising citizens and HOAs.

### Developing new services

New planned services include:

- Become coordination and info point in Burgas for Bulgaria Climate Social Fund
- Set up small showroom with insulation materials, window frames, ventilation systems to better inform visitors in the RC;

- Implement energy audits.

### Finding additional financial sources/partners

- Bulgaria Climate Social Fund;
- Burgas Municipality;
- EU projects;
- To provide certain paid services (e.g. energy audits) paid.

## 3. Baseline report for Józsefváros (Hungary)

### Framework conditions

#### Main characteristics of the district

District 8 of Budapest (Józsefváros) includes a wide variety of areas, which are very diverse both in terms of their urban and social character. The position of the district is determined by the fact that it is located on the outskirts of Budapest's city centre, in the middle of the most developed region of Hungary (Budapest). The district is an integral part of the capital's economy and due to its central position, is also the seat of many important institutions, with good transport connections.

The district borders only other districts of the capital, and most of its boundaries do not constitute a functional boundary, so that, although the separating effect of the busy main roads is significant, the same buildings and functions generally appear on the other side of the district boundaries. This does not mean, however, that the district itself is homogeneous: Józsefváros is home to residential areas of widely differing status, institutional and green spaces of national importance, and industrial areas.

Despite its favourable endowments, Józsefváros faces a number of problems, many of which are linked to the district's unfavourable social situation.

It had a population of around 70 000 in 2022<sup>7</sup>: the most populous of the inner Pest districts and compared to the Budapest average, the population is over-represented in the working age population, however Józsefváros has the lowest average per capita net domestic income in Budapest. The population of District 8 is less educated than the average in Budapest, and even less educated than in other inner Pest districts. The number of unemployed in Józsefváros has been steadily declining in recent years, in line with the national trend. However, the unemployment rate is still relatively high, about twice the Budapest average (4.5% against the 2.4% in Budapest at the end of 2023). District 8 had 446 taxpayers per 1,000 inhabitants in 2019, the 7<sup>th</sup> lowest among the districts.

The average quality of the housing stock is below the Budapest average, with a high proportion of low-quality housing<sup>8</sup>. In addition, the low average floor area and the high number of single person households are striking. It is important to underline that all these social and infrastructural characteristics are far from evenly distributed in the district: the 11 neighbourhoods of Józsefváros sometimes represent markedly extreme differences in both the social situation of their inhabitants and the characteristics of their housing stock. The most disadvantaged neighbourhoods are the Magdolna negyed, Orczy negyed and the Ganz negyed, which has the only residential block, while the best-off neighbourhoods are the suburban character of the Tisztviselőtelep and Százados negyed and, to a lesser extent, the Palotanegyed, which is most closely linked to the city centre. In addition, Józsefváros, and especially the central areas of the district (such as Corvin, Csarnok), has experienced a very

<sup>7</sup> According to the dataset of Central Statistical Office (source: <https://nepszamlalas2022.ksh.hu/adatbazis/>)

<sup>8</sup> [Józsefváros's Annual Plan of Housing Management \(2022-23\)](#).

dynamic investment activity since the mid-2000s, which has contributed to the increase in housing prices in the district, which in inner-Józsefváros has meant an influx of higher income, higher status groups (gentrification).

The municipality has strategic documents dealing with housing and building development plans:

- [The integrated urban development strategy of Józsefváros](#) calls for area-based urban development to combat marginalisation and the relatively high crime rate.
- Also, a [medium- and long-term property management plan for Józsefváros \(2022-2029\)](#) has been elaborated, which presents the state of the district's rental apartment buildings and rental apartment development programme, one of the main objectives of which is to improve the living conditions of people living in municipal rental housing and to reverse the decades of dilapidation of the building stock.

Approximately 5.5% of the housing units in District 8 are municipally owned rental apartments<sup>9</sup>. The number of 100% municipally-owned residential buildings in the district in the category of non-demolition according to the property management plan: 101 buildings, with a total of 2309 apartments, the vast majority of which were built at least 100 years ago and present serious problems stemming from decades-long insufficient financing, are on average in the second worst category in terms of energy efficiency, while their inhabitants are often affected by energy poverty. The municipality's housing stock is characterised by a high proportion of small dwellings, with waterlogging being a typical problem. Around 50% of the buildings not to be demolished also require structural renovation.

A technical evaluation of 93 municipally owned multi-family buildings (MFABs) was carried out in the framework of a European City Facility project. For the buildings analysed, the calculation was based on the need to achieve the highest possible level of energy efficiency through insulation, replacement of windows and upgrading of the heating system, possibly by replacing gas heating partially or completely, and by switching to central heating based on heat pumps and solar panels. It was considered which buildings would be affected by which measures, so not all types of renovation could be carried out in all buildings. The majority of the buildings are 2-4 storey, "street-front building-interior courtyard-circular courtyard corridor", L, U or O shaped. Generally speaking, the majority of the buildings, with the exception of a few, are in poor or very poor technical condition and have not been renovated in the last 100 years significantly. All 93 buildings have natural gas heating, 88 buildings have individual and 5 buildings have central heating. The heat demand of the buildings is based on the calculation principles of the Hungarian regulation.

Lessons learned were:

- to identify and prioritise the right renovation project elements, all residential buildings need to be thoroughly assessed;
- most of the buildings are not in a structural condition to be considered for energy renovation;
- the investment costs of renovation are huge, the payback periods are extremely long (especially given the current artificially low energy prices), hence the municipality cannot finance these investments without external funding.

Since the characteristics and technical condition of the condominiums in the area are in many respects similar to those of the municipal building stock, it is assumed that the private homeowners and their associations also have similar problems.

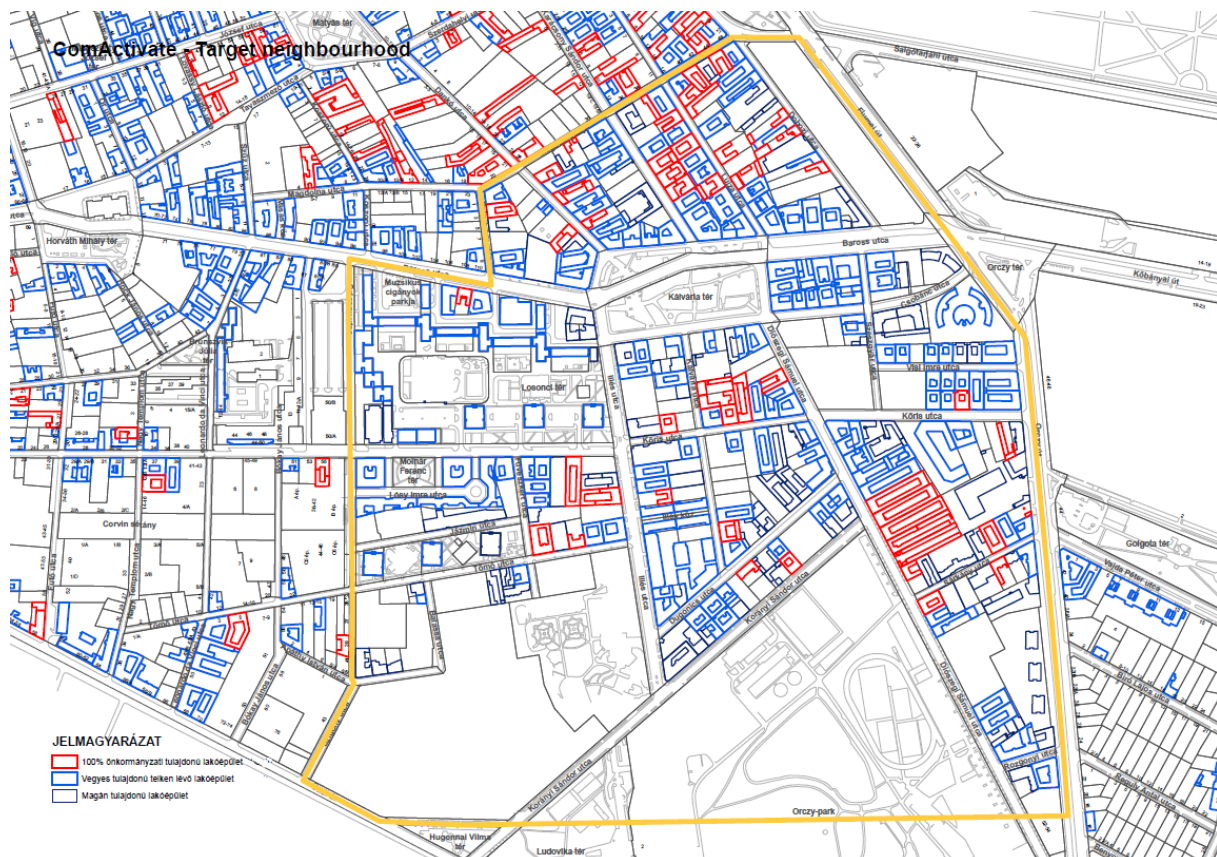
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<sup>9</sup> Central Statistical Office, 2022.

## Main characteristics of the targeted neighbourhood

The focus area was selected on the basis of the above mentioned strategies and documents. It has a varied and mosaic building portfolio and image - it includes 1 segregated area<sup>10</sup> and 6 additional areas at risk of segregation<sup>11</sup>. It has 53 municipally owned buildings and properties and 285 privately owned residential buildings.

Figure 1: the delineation of the target area



The targeted area of the project covers parts of 3 officially delineated neighbourhoods of the municipal strategic plans and is bounded by the following streets: Magdolna St.– Fiúmei Rd. – Orczy Square – Orczy Rd. – Üllői Rd. – Szigony St. – Boross St. – Szigetváry St.

### **1. The part of the Magdolna negyed bounded by Szigony St., Magdolna St., Fiume Rd. and Boross St.**

This area includes the 4 central blocks of the Magdolna negyed adjacent to Kálvária Square. The neighbourhood has a high proportion of low-quality and one-room flats, which, after significant improvements, still exceeds 50%. In 2011, it had the highest unemployment rate of all Józsefváros

<sup>10</sup> The Central Statistical Office defined the district's segregated areas at block level on the basis of a combined indicator from the census data: where the proportion of people of working age with no more than primary education and no regular income from work exceeds 20%, the area is considered to be a segregated area.

<sup>11</sup> Where the indicator is between 15 and 20%, the area is considered to be at risk of segregation.

districts and the highest quarter-level segregation rate, which exceeded the 15% at-risk threshold. The negative social situation is compounded by mixed housing: in addition to the taller apartment buildings that almost dominate along the main roads, there are many smaller houses on side streets, up to 150 years old, as well as workshops and a large number of vacant lots.

An integrated social urban renewal programme (Magdolna negyed Program) launched in 2005, aimed at catching up the extremely disadvantaged social, infrastructural and social situation of Magdolna negyed. Between 2005 and 2015, the programme has renovated 28 municipal buildings and 13 condominiums.

## **2. The entire neighbourhood of Orczy negyed**

Orczy negyed is the most peripheral part of central-Józsefváros, the second most critical crisis area of the district, next to the Magdolna negyed. The area has a varied and mosaic character. Since the 2000s, new condominiums have been built in many parts of the area. At the same time, the area around the middle section of Diószegi Samuel Street is still the most segregated, ghettoised and crime-infested area of the district. Drug use and trafficking is a particularly significant problem in this neighbourhood. The 2011 Census identified a segregated area of 728 people and 436 dwellings, and a larger five-block segregation risk area of 4,317 people and 2,367 dwellings in the whole neighbourhood. The very outdated housing stock in the traditional developments is largely municipally owned and of low comfort. Significant new housing stock is more modern but overcrowded in places; there is a high proportion of small, one-bedroom dwellings. A unified development concept for the Diószegi block (buildings 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 and 12/B Sárkány utca) was prepared in 2023, which is in line with the above-mentioned integrated urban development strategy of Józsefváros.

Between 2018 and 2023, urban regeneration took place in the area under the Magdolna-Orczy (MOrczy) Programme. In the action area designated by the MOrczy Programme (Dankó Street - Magdolna Street - Baross Street - Kálvária Square - Diószegi Sámuel Street - Dugonics Street - Illés Street - Kálvária Square), seven blocks bounded by the action area were used for housing, employment, public safety and public space projects. The integrated approach included both renewing the neighbourhood's building stock, creating a liveable living environment, tackling crime problems and significantly improving the skills and cooperation of the population.

## **3. Losonci district, from the eastern side of Szigony Street**

The neighbourhood is characterised by the presence of prefabricated concrete block of flats and district heating, which dominate the neighbourhood as a whole, as a result of the major urban regeneration projects of the 1970s and 1980s.

The strength of the area is its central location, which also encourages regeneration. The age composition of the population and the unemployment rate are average at district level, the segregation rate is above average, and the blocks along the Orczy district are considered to be at risk of segregation.

In this area, the main objective is to typify the development plans and the advice on improving the energy efficiency of prefabricated buildings.

## **Availability of public subsidies**

Currently there are no national or EU grants available to finance energy efficiency upgrades for MFABs in Budapest. An interest rate subsidy exists since 1988, but it results in a low subsidy content to finance major renovations.

In April 2024, the government announced a new home renovation and energy modernisation programme starting from June 2024, to support the energy efficient renovation of single-family homes, funded by an EU RePower programme. Although Budapest residents are also expected to be eligible to apply, the programme will only be available for single family dwellings built before 1990. There are

very few of these in Józsefváros. No information is yet available on which modernisation programmes the Hungarian state will implement besides this one in the coming years.

After 2023, in 2024 the Municipality of Józsefváros has announced a call for proposals again to provide support to condominiums for the renovation of parts of buildings in undivided common ownership to carry out renovation work on common property. The call does not limit the nature of the renovation, so it could also be used for energy efficiency investments, but the level of support available is not sufficient to encourage energy efficiency renovation. In fact, a maximum of HUF 2,000,000 per condominium is available (about EUR 5,100). Out of 144 applications in last year's call, only 3 were for major energy renovation (replacement of central gas boiler or insulation), in which case HUF 15-20 million of own contribution was required (EUR 38,500-51,300). The current Call for Proposals requires as a condition that the homeowner association manager of the applicant condominiums attends a RenoPont advisory office to get an insight into potential energy efficient interventions, even if the original plan to be submitted to the municipality does not contain such elements. At the end of the counselling session, the RenoPont office issues a certificate to be attached as part of the application documentation.

The municipality has been running a home renovation programme for several years to help tenants of municipally owned flats to renovate their flats. A minimum of HUF 50,000 (EUR 130) gross and a maximum of HUF 500,000 (EUR 1,300) gross per application can be charged to the grant. There is no restriction on the type of renovation. As in the condominium application, tenants in the municipality were required to participate in RenoPont's energy consultancy as a condition of application.

Since the abolition of state support for Housing Savings Banks, bank loans are the only meaningful source of financing for condominiums, as EU and state funds are not available. Condominium or housing cooperative loans are a regular feature in the portfolios of various commercial banks, and the ways in which they are used are similar. In general, the following activities, relevant from an energy efficiency point of view, can be carried out with condominium/ housing cooperative loans for jointly owned and cooperatively owned parts of buildings:

- Renovation of roof, external facade or staircase;
- Chimney renovation, lining;
- Construction or installation of central heating;
- Renovation or replacement of various piping systems (water, electricity, gas, waste water);
- Replacement or renovation of windows and doors;
- Renovation of public utilities;
- Replacement of individual heating installations in the community.

## **Main issues in the operation of MFABs**

There is a high proportion of dilapidated apartment buildings where owners are unable to finance renovations that have not been carried out for decades. The resulting further deterioration has a number of negative effects: the deterioration of the technical condition can create a life-threatening situation and can affect the use of the apartments and the safety of housing. The condition of the properties has a negative impact on property values and on the regeneration of neighbourhoods. As of now, there is a lack of knowledge with regards to the most efficient and effective way of renovating such buildings in an integrated fashion.

Investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy in condominiums cannot be implemented without the agreement of the homeowner association and the individual homeowners as the facades, risers and roofs of condominiums are in most cases owned by an undivided community, and the 50%+1 agreement of the properties (based on the floor area) is required to implement the project. Under the

most important element of the amendment, which is valid until the expiry of [Act VI of 2022](#) on the prevention of the consequences of armed conflict or humanitarian disasters in Hungary in a neighbouring country, the installation and operation of solar collectors and solar systems on jointly owned parts of buildings can be decided by the general assembly with the affirmative vote of the owners representing at least 75% of the of the total floor area. The investments of this scale usually comes hand in hand with a significant increase in common costs, which, because of differences of opinion and interest, can lead to problems that, if not properly moderated, can result in the idea of renovation being abandoned.

Before installing solar panels on the roof, it is also necessary to assess whether the roof structure has sufficient load-bearing capacity and whether the residential building's feed-in wiring and the building's internal network are suitable for connecting the solar panels.

The legislation on energy communities is still incomplete in Hungary. Until it changes, it is possible to implement solar systems only up to the level of the common energy consumption of condominiums (lighting, heat pumps, lift, etc.) and the power limit for small household power plants (50 kW), leaving the possibility for future expansion.

## Overview of the operation of the RC

RenoPont Energy Home Renovation Centre, the first and so far the only one-stop-shop consultancy office network, opened in December 2021 in District 8 of Budapest. Currently, there are 4 RenoPont offices in Budapest, including one in Józsefváros, which is also the head office of RenoPonts.

RenoPont was established as part of the RenoHUB project. The RenoHUB project was implemented by a consortium of five Hungarian professional organisations between November 2019 and May 2023 with funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 innovation programme, with the aim of boosting the energy modernisation of Hungarian homes by developing an integrated business model capable of making energy renovation people-centred. This is achieved by developing a one-stop-shop system that provides technical, financial and legal-administrative advice on energy upgrades and covers the full spectrum of services related to renovations. Since May 2023, the RenoPont Energy Home Renovation Centre in Józsefváros continued its operation by the Hungarian Energy Efficiency Institute, the main professional member of the former consortium, without EU funding.

The stated mission of RenoPont Energy Home Renovation Centre is to:

- provide all the necessary technical, legal-administrative and financial information to those interested in energy efficiency renovation (e.g. insulation, heating modernisation, replacement of windows and doors),
- provide tailored advice and assistance to those planning to modernise, so that they can maximise the savings potential of their property when investing in energy efficiency,
- provide the professionals who can help to ensure that energy-efficient home renovation can be carried out professionally.

RenoPont focuses on residential property, targeting homeowners, as well as condominium co-owners and housing associations. The first advisory session is free of charge.

## Clients

Between December 2021 and May 2023, RenoPont had 151 clients, of which 46 residents came to obtain a certificate for the above mentioned municipal home renovation tender. 14% of clients came between December 2021 and 20 July 2022 (the government announced the partial abolition of the utility cost cuts then), and 86% afterwards up till May 2023. During this period apart from the residents who

came to fulfil the application condition, the Józsefváros office was mainly visited by single-family detached homeowners coming from different districts of Budapest (70-75%). Around 20-25% of clients were flat-owners and a few HOA managers came occasionally.

After 15 May 2023 (the project closure) about 100-150 new clients visited the RenoPont office in Józsefváros, about one-third of them were representatives of condominiums due to the obligatory visit in case they applied for municipal funding.

Residents who were obliged to attend the counselling session as a condition for applying for a municipal tender came for the first time in November 2022, since then they have come periodically depending on the call for applications. Since the opening of the Józsefváros condominium tender in March 2024, RenoPont has been visited mostly by HOA managers.

The Municipality received a few feedback from HOA managers and municipal tenants who had to attend the consultation due to municipal tender application requirements. Most said that they had received useful information, and that it will be a great help if some funding source opens up in the future. But there were also some - mostly HOA managers - who said that they already had this technical knowledge, even had an energy assessment of their building, but they could not embark on an energy renovation without financial support.

Most customers come to RenoPont with technical questions. Financing options are less frequently discussed. Customers are interested in subsidies, but there are currently no public subsidies to finance energy efficiency upgrades for MFABs. In the experience of RenoPont staff, most people do not want to finance renovations with a loan.

People who want to renovate come to the consultancy office with different backgrounds. More than half of the clients are prepared in advance, having read the dissemination material available on the website. They often bring previous energy certificates, architectural design documentation, and are aware of their energy consumption and overheads. They usually have specific questions about the implementation. Often they ask for help on how to convert their existing wasteful heating system, or what is more cost-effective, insulation or modernisation of the heating system.

The other group of customers come in less aware. Sometimes they are about to buy a property. They need comprehensive guidance on the steps of energy renovation, their correct sequencing, the expected energy and household cost saving potential.

The need for independence from gas emerged after the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Many homeowners are interested in alternative heating solutions. The consultants are trying to dissuade customers from electric heating (electric heating panels) and, for those who have the possibility, they recommend heat pump heating solutions, with the addition that before switching to heat pump heating, it is recommended to insulate properties with a very poor thermal envelope and to clarify the compatibility of existing heat emitters with new heat generators. It should also be noted that in inner city areas, the siting of the outdoor unit of the heat pump is often a major problem from an urban/monument conservation point of view.

Many clients come for a consultation specifically to gain access to RenoPont's database of technical experts. The database is only available after a consultation. As energy upgrades require a large investment, it is particularly important for clients to find a reliable and value-for-money contractor.

RenoPont is a brand and technology independent and does not aim to promote any manufacturer's products or services, nor does it rank the technologies, but recommends the most appropriate technology for the situation of the person seeking advice.

## Services provided

The two pillars of the service are the website and the consultancy offices.

## I. RenoPont website

The primary objective of the [website](#) is to create demand for energy renovation, to inform customers who are planning to upgrade and to channel them to RenoPont offices. The main services and content available through the website:

- benefits of deep renovation
- good examples of renovation (text and video)
- online calculator that provides information on the energy savings that different renovation steps can bring to the renovator's property,
- technical information on the renovation process, e.g. product selection guide (available insulation materials, windows and heating systems), the desirable sequence of renovation steps, the importance of planning
- a collection of downloadable template documents (e.g. template requests for tenders, contracts),
- information on financing e.g. state subsidies, municipal tenders, bank financing, innovative options (e.g. Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme - EES)
- database of professionals with pre-qualified contractors, designers; interface for sharing experiences and evaluating professionals
- energy saving tips: from changing consumer habits to deep renovation
- glossary, misconceptions, frequently asked questions
- apply for a personalised consultation

Since December 2021 till October 2023 75,550 new clients visited the website from all around the country. The most frequently visited pages in the website were about advice on upgrading the individual heating systems.

## II. RenoPont consultancy office

After finding information on the website, clients can receive personalised advice from RenoPont staff at RenoPont advisory offices or through an online consultation. About 5% of the persons who used the advisory service because of the home renovation tender of the Municipality of Józsefváros requested an online consultation. While for those who did not come because of the tender, this percentage is about 35%.

During the consultation, the consultants first map the condition of the property concerned, based on the client's questionnaire and the documents provided, and then outline the proposed actions after listening to the client's needs. If required, the client is also informed about financing options. In most cases, the consultation ends with a recommendation for a specialist: in more complex cases, the advisers recommend the involvement of an energy specialist, in simpler cases a (specialist) contractor.

## Infrastructure setup and human resources

The office was initially open four days a week. After finishing the RenoHUB project this was reduced to one day a week, but online consultations are still available four days a week.

The running costs of RenoPont consist of the rent for the office (380 EUR/month), charges (75 EUR/month) and the salary costs of two MEHI staff (roughly 510 EUR gross/month) who currently work 8 and 2 hours per week respectively to run RenoPont.

## Evaluation of the operation of the RC

### Difficulties due to unpredictable public subsidies

Over the last 10-12 years, there have been public funds available for energy efficiency upgrades in residential buildings, but rarely, with low budgets and in an unpredictable way (either by building type, measure or expectation). The Home Renovation Subsidy scheme, that was focusing on family houses and apartments of MFABs expired in December 2022 and no new energy efficiency grant for MFABs has been launched since then. However, people are expecting that subsidies will come in the future, so they are afraid to embark on a renovation on their own. However, when public funding for energy modernisation is available, both the price of building materials and the cost of labour increase, and it is very difficult to find a reliable contractor.

This unpredictability makes the work of RenoPont very difficult, because when there is no public funding, interest is also reduced and mainly covers general renovation issues. In such cases, most people do not start renovating, so RenoPont cannot test and provide the paid services it has planned (energy surveys, tendering, etc.).

### Difficulties in motivating people

Until August 2022, homeowners had less incentive to embark on energy upgrades to their homes because artificially low energy prices significantly extended the payback period for energy renovations. Interest for RenoPont was very low, with an average of 2-3 clients per week visiting the office in Józsefváros.

Since August 2022, households are only eligible for reduced tariffs below a certain consumption limit. It is mostly family house owners who face high energy consumption, while apartment owners can mostly stay below the reduced consumption limit. Thus rather family-house owners visited RenoPont for a short period of time, until it became clear that the somewhat higher prices are also manageable.

In addition to the moderate energy prices, the significant increase in the price of building materials in recent years and the relatively high interest rate environment also provides counter-incentives for home owners to implement energy efficient interventions, thus their interest for RenoPont services is also limited.

How to reach people planning to renovate has been an issue throughout the project. In the course of the RenoHub project tens of thousands of Euros were spent for marketing and community events, where practically no owners showed up. Without external support after the project, funding for marketing activities was also problematic/unavailable.

### Difficulties in setting up a specialist database

The expert database is open to professionals who have undergone and passed the Nyugodt Építkezés Információs Iroda's certification process. Due to the huge construction labour shortage, professionals did not feel motivated to join the database as they had a lot of orders. This seems to have changed somewhat recently, when construction activities decreased due to the lack of inflow of EU funds. The database currently includes 52 professionals working in the field of energy (insulation, windows and doors, building services, solar systems). Most of them are mainly working in Budapest and Pest county, but recently, as a result of a conscious effort, the number of the partners in the countryside has also increased.

### Lack of closer contact with professionals

Office consultants would like to know the professionals they recommend personally and to be able to verify the quality of their work. Unfortunately, this has not yet been possible due to the workload of good professionals.

### **Lack of follow-up**

After the consultancy, there is usually no contact with the client, no feedback either from the client or from the recommended professionals as to whether they have embarked on any upgrading. Presumably, as there is currently no state support available for energy efficiency upgrades (except for single family homes), many people only get as far as requesting a quote. For this reason, despite the possibility to evaluate the professionals RenoPont recommends on its website, no feedback has been received so far.

### **CRM system weakness**

RenoPont consultants should record in the admin interface of the RenoPont website the basic data of the consultants' clients, the main information about their property (with maximum compliance with GDPR rules), so that if the client returns, it is easier to help them with the next steps of the renovation. Unfortunately, the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system used by advisers is very slow and difficult to use, but would require a significant financial investment to fix, for which there are currently no resources.

### **Limitation of knowledge of consultants**

RenoPont in Józsefváros currently works with two part time consultants. Neither of them are energy specialist by profession, however they obtained significant skills in the last years and they also have close contacts to professionals whenever a more complex issue is raised by the clients. Nevertheless, the best solution would be to employ civil engineers at the offices, but the RenoPont can hardly compete with the open market, which lacks energy experts in general.

## **Basic concept for the coming years**

As the previous chapter highlighted, the major limitation of the optimal operation of the Resource Centre is the lack of major subsidies for the renovation of the multi-family building stock (that take up nearly exclusively the housing stock in District 8 of Budapest). Acknowledging this fact we have developed a short term (concentrating on the duration of the ComAct project) and a long-term concept on the possible development of the current RC mechanism.

## **Short term concept**

### **Family houses as a target group**

There might be about 30-50 family houses in Józsefváros, all of them are out of the focus neighbourhood. As the only state subsidy scheme for the energy efficient renovation of the residential stock about to open up this June will concentrate exclusively on single family homes, the municipality can only inform the owners about this possibility through its channels and the owners of these buildings can either go to the RenoPont office for further guidance or visit those intermediaries, that may be compulsory to visit in order to be eligible for the application submission. (The details of the subsidy including the obligatory intermediaries are still not published yet).

## Municipal tenants and owners with the most pressing housing problems as a target group

According to the current experiences the poorest households, either being municipal tenants or private flat owners, do not plan to implement energy efficient interventions, it is simply not in their mind-map in the everyday fight for financial survival. Thus, we cannot expect that these residents will enter to RenoPont no matter how intensively we advertise the opportunity, consequently the services have to be taken closer to them as much as possible.

Józsefváros introduced a new housing allowance scheme in 2023, which provides much higher amounts of allowance for a much wider eligible group than before. Thus people with the most pressing housing needs are channelled to the municipal social welfare offices and client centres in order to apply for the allowance. Even if energy issues may not be the primary aims of the visit, it might provide a good opportunity to inform the owners/tenants about low-cost energy saving measures that might be applied easily. In case a more complex issue arises, the client can directly be guided to RenoPont. In order that the social service providers obtain the knowledge to inform the clients, trainings are needed (the sooner the better). The trainings can be implemented in the course of the ComActivate project.

Another point of information on low-cost interventions might be the client centres of the municipal property management company (JGK), to which municipal tenants and owners of municipally managed buildings attend. The employees of JGK need internal trainings on energy efficient interventions as well as the employees of the social services departments.

## MFAB communities as a target group

As we already emphasized, there is no substantial subsidy scheme for the energy efficient renovation of multi-family buildings in Hungary. For condominiums and cooperatives in Józsefváros two major financial source of intervention is available: 1) the state-run interest rate subsidy for the renovation of common spaces (70% interest rate subsidy in the first 5 years, while 35% interest rate subsidy in the second), 2) municipal subsidy each year for which MFABs have to apply. These subsidies are useful in case fundamental, maintenance like interventions are taken, but not enough for large scale energy efficient interventions. In addition, most of the MFABs are built with traditional building technologies in the District (thus not with industrialised technologies), that cannot be externally insulated and, as not district heated, cannot be upgraded in a coordinated way from a heating point of view. Taken all this into account we cannot expect that MFABs will be queuing to acquire information on energy efficiency (as the low client numbers of the past proves). In spite of all these difficulties the expert group in Józsefváros drafted some potential activities in the framework of the ComActivate project on the short run:

- Property managers of MFABs, in case they intend to apply for municipal subsidies, have to visit the RenoPont office according to the recent legislation. It is planned that this practice will continue on in the upcoming application rounds as well, as through these compulsory visits the property managers get a deeper insight into the renovation possibilities and may consider energy efficient components of renovations as well (as currently rather basic interventions are in the focus due to the lack of funds).
- Property managers should be informed on the most up-to-date technical interventions in the field of energy efficiency and also about the upcoming and recent legislations (e.g. derived from EPBD). For this, training sessions are planned to be organised in the framework of the ComActivate project. It might be part of the half-annual regular meetings of the property managers in the District (only with short messages due to time limitations of such meetings) and also should be organised as stand-alone training sessions.
- 4-5 renovation roadmaps are planned to be created for and with MFAB communities (similar to the ComAct project practices) in the framework of the ComActivate project. Through this, the communities could at least be more prepared for a potential future subsidy, the experts of both RenoPont and the municipality can learn much more about the process in order that they can assist additional communities in the future. In addition, the lessons learnt from these renovation roadmaps can be presented to property managers and interested condominium owners in the course of the

training programmes. These roadmaps may also be foundations for developing renovation packages, that may be inserted into the webpage of RenoPont. The process of selecting the buildings and the contractors for the renovation roadmaps (through tenders) is planned to be made after the workshop on individual renovations roadmaps is completed (in the framework of WP3 of ComActivate, in the autumn of 2024).

- There are already MFABs that are at least partially renovated in the District, thus field trips to these buildings by interested property managers and MFAB owners are planned in the course of the ComActivate project.

## Long term concept

The activities that were drafted in the short-term concept may dramatically change as soon as a substantial state subsidy for the benefit of the energy efficient renovation of MFABs appear. This case the local municipality is willing to occupy a more active role in assisting the MFABs in planning and implementing the renovation actions. In the long run the aim is to move the service towards the coordination model, if the clients request so. The RC operating in this way will no longer only provide information to property owners planning a renovation but will also follow the renovation process, assist in decision-making, provide additional services (e.g. downloadable templates), help them to find financial options and apply for funding. Under this scheme, the client has fewer tasks to perform, with the RC taking over a large part of the organisation. However, the client contracts the various service providers itself, and the RC is not responsible for the outcome of the renovation.

In case the municipality will even be more devoted to energy poor communities, an even more integrated, all-inclusive model is planned to be implemented: here the RC takes on a full implementation. Once the needs and possibilities have been agreed, the RC signs a contract with the renovator and then independently manage the turnkey renovation process, from the energy assessment to the contracting of the contractors and quality control.

If this scenario turns to be reality, the District municipality may have to reduce its current renovation subsidy funds and divert a certain amount to assisting MFABs in obtaining state funds. It may also contain financial contribution to finance the own share of subsidy programmes.

## Organisational development

Under these circumstances, in which no substantial state subsidy is available for MFABs, the local municipality is not considering building internalised organisation for a Resource Centre function. It rather cooperates with the already existing RenoPont, which is located in the centre part of the District. It naturally means, that the funds dedicated to Józsefváros in the ComActivate project should be shared according to the tasks. There is a fear however, that in case RenoPont cannot get funding from other resources (e.g. market-based funding by collecting service fees, being part of energy efficiency obligation schemes, or having intermediary functions in state programmes), then it has to be closed, and this case the municipality must be willing to internalise the activities planned for the short run.

A further fear is that in future public renovation grants, the state may not allow independent OSS (also) to give advice on tenders, but only Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme (EEOS) obligated parties will be allowed to prepare applications. In this case, the Municipality of Józsefváros should cooperate with these EEOS obligated parties in order to be able to help its residents to obtain renovation subsidies.

In case a substantial state subsidy is available in the future, and the municipality intends to take a more active approach, there might be several organisational options to provide the needed services, like having a performance-based contract with the RenoPont, or create an organisation inside the municipality. These issues will be further investigated in the process of elaborating on D2.3 (Sustainability and business and investment plan for the operation of the local RC).

For the sake of obtaining an inspiring view on the set up and operation of one-stop-shops run by municipal entities, a study tour to Vienna is considered.

## Relevance of the neighbourhood in focus

Both in the short run and in the long run the services of both RenoPont and the municipality are planned to be provided for the whole District (Józsefváros). On the other hand, the neighbourhood, that was specified for the ComActivate project provides a fertile ground for concentrating the pilot actions, as it concentrates the potentially most energy poor households, while has a variety of technical problems though the variety of the building stock (both prefabricated and traditional buildings are in the area). While some of the short-term activities will most probably have a District scope (like the activities of RenoPont and the trainings for property managers and interested owners), some others may be more focused on the specific neighbourhood (like the elaboration of renovation roadmaps, or field trips).

There is a plan to set up a general community centre in Sándor Karácsony street, which is in the focus neighbourhood, financed by the municipality of Budapest. This centre may contain energy advice service as well, but the fellows working in this location have to be trained for this activity. (The decision on the finance of the centre by the municipality of Budapest is not made yet.)

## 4. Baseline report for Elektrėnai and Kaišiadorys (Lithuania)

### Elektrėnai

#### Framework conditions

##### Main characteristics of the district

Elektrėnai is a city located in a favourable strategic-geographical position that preconditions the development of various businesses. It is one of the youngest cities in Lithuania, whose construction started only in 1962. The city was called Elektrėnai to commemorate the largest at that time power plant in Lithuania, which was surrounded by the growing city. Currently, Elektrėnai municipality consists of 2 cities: Elektrėnai and Vievis, 1 town – Semeliškės, 275 villages, and 28 homesteads (single-seated villages)<sup>12</sup>.

Based on the data of the State Enterprise Centre of Registers<sup>13</sup>, in Elektrėnai municipality, 577 enterprises employed 7,853 8,241 people at the beginning of 2024. Elektrėnai municipality is dominated by very small companies (84,75%) and small companies (9,88%). Medium and large companies make up only 5,37 %; however, they employ 74,78 % of all employees.

Based on the data of the State Data Agency<sup>14</sup>, at the beginning of 2024, Elektrėnai municipality had 24 731 permanent residents: 67,36 % residents were living in the urban area and 32.64% residents in the rural territory. Working-age people made up 64,87 % (16 044 persons) of the permanent residents of the municipality; the region has 17.3% of persons over 65, including 6% of males and 11.3% of females.

<sup>12</sup> Elektrėnai Municipality, <https://www.elektrenai.lt/index.php?2856449878/>

<sup>13</sup> Centre of Registers, report on Elektrėnai Municipality (2024).  
<https://www.registrucentras.lt/ntr/vertinimas/masinis/masvert.php?src=1&sav=1191&ver=59>

<sup>14</sup> State Data Agency <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/>

In Elektrėnai municipality, the number of registered unemployed persons in 2023 was 1.073 thousand, which made up 6,7 %<sup>15</sup>. The highest labour force participation rate (about 90%) is reached in the 25-54 years age group.

In 2021, the structure of education of the population above 10 years in Elektrėnai municipality was as follows: about 20% of the population had higher education, about 17% - vocational education, and 35% - secondary education. Every second resident with a higher education was 25–44 years old. Among those with vocational or special secondary education, 84.3% of persons were 50+ years old. The level of education of 70+ population was lower than that of the population of other age groups<sup>16</sup>.

Like all over Lithuania, a reduction in the average household is observed; currently, it is 2.2 persons. One person lives in over one-third of households (35.2%)<sup>17</sup>.

## Description of the housing stock

Based on the data of the Centre of Registers, in Elektrėnai municipality on the 1 of January 2024 was 5 189 registered residential buildings. The biggest part of them is family house ( 4,758), 76 – two-apartment buildings, 334 – multi-apartment buildings and 21 - other residential buildings<sup>18</sup>.

As in the rest of Lithuania, the biggest part of the housing consists of private property.

Based on the data of Elektrėnai Municipality<sup>19</sup>, 109 social housing rental agreements were made with residents of the municipality and 7 agreements were made for market-rate municipal housing rental in 2023.

There is no statistical data on the share of housing used by owners themselves, rented, as well as on the share of housing that is unused or abandoned.

According the Elektrėnai Municipality Action Plan for the Development of Renewable Energy Sources

by 2030, prepared by Lithuanian Energy Agency<sup>20</sup>, almost all multi-apartment buildings of Elektrėnai municipality were built before the year 1993 when construction of brick and large-panel typical multi-apartment buildings was prevalent. Following the data of the Register Centre, multi-apartment buildings of Elektrėnai municipality are divided as follows: before 1940, 20 houses were built (total area of 4351 sq. m); from 1941 to 1960, 10 multi-apartment houses were built (the area of 2,883 sq. m); from 1961 to 1990, 274 houses were built (the area of 398,633 sq. m); and after 1991, 18 multi-apartment houses were built (the area of 31,280 sq. m).

Therefore, the biggest number of multi-apartment houses were built from 1961 to 1990: this group makes up 64.5% of the total area of all residential houses or 66.6% of multi-apartment residential houses of Elektrėnai municipality. It can be noticed that the thermal resistance properties of the external envelope of such buildings are poor; walls, roofs, and other structures of the buildings have deteriorated, and their poor condition causes high thermal energy losses. Their normative thermal energy consumption is twice as high as that of the multi-apartment houses built after the year 1993. Moreover, in the blocks of the multi-apartment houses, there is a high need to renovate a deteriorated engineering-social infrastructure and green spaces. In some blocks, lighting networks are aged and deteriorated.

In the non-renovated multi-apartment houses, F; G energy performance class is prevalent; while in the renovated ones, B; C energy performance class is prevalent.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/>

<sup>16</sup> State Data Agency report „Census of residents and dwellings” <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/gyventoju-ir-bustu-surasyimai1/>

<sup>17</sup> State Data Agency report „Composition of Lithuanian households” <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/lietuvos-gyventoju-pajamos-ir-gyvenimo-salygos-2022/namu-ukiai/namu-ukiu-sudetis>

<sup>18</sup> Centre of Registers, report on Elektrėnai Municipality (2024).

<https://www.registrucentras.lt/ntr/vertinimas/masinis/masvert.php?src=1&sav=1191&ver=59/>

<sup>19</sup> Elektrėnai Municipality <https://elektrenai.lt/go.php/Bustas8245?lang=lt/>

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.ena.lt/uploads/sav-aie-vp/08\\_ElektrenuS.pdf/](https://www.ena.lt/uploads/sav-aie-vp/08_ElektrenuS.pdf/)

Based on the data of the study performed by Elektrėnai Municipality<sup>21</sup>, after analysing materials of the residential houses, it has been determined that bricks and blocks prevail as a construction material of walls in the residential houses of Elektrėnai municipality (in 38.8% of the total area of the residential houses). The major part of multi-apartment houses was built with the use of reinforced concrete slabs for their walls. The basic material of walls in the 1-2 apartment residential houses is timber. Distribution according to the used materials for the construction of walls of multi-apartment houses is as follows: reinforced concrete slabs – in 149 houses; bricks and blocks – in 145 houses; monolithic slabs - in 4 houses; timber – in 22 houses; other materials – in 2 houses. It is noticed that houses built from the reinforced concrete slabs are considerably larger: although their number does not much differ from the houses built from the bricks and blocks (just by 4 houses), the total area of the houses built from reinforced concrete slabs is almost as twice as bigger (294,318 sq. m vs 132,824 sq. m).

The major part of multi-apartment houses (73.4%) of Elektrėnai municipality (the heated area of the municipal multi-apartment houses connected to the district heating network comprises 320,930 sq. m, t), about 4.7% of the public sector buildings, about 6.5% of the industrial buildings are supplied with heat from the district heating network; however, all individual houses, residential houses for various social groups and the major part of the public sector buildings, as well as manufacturing, industrial, warehouse, transport and garage buildings (industrial companies) supply heat individually.

Boiler houses of UAB “Elektrėnų komunalinis ūkis“ (Elektrėnai Municipal Farm), which provide heat supply services to the multi-apartment buildings, use biofuel, gas and biogas. The major part of the consumed fuel consists of biofuel and natural gas. There are no records of the heating appliances used in households and the energy they produce; therefore, there is no reliable data at the municipal level on the energy consumption of households not connected to the district heating network. In households, to produce heat energy, wood fuels, coal, natural gas, other fuels, and electricity are most often used<sup>22</sup>.

Following the data of the Environmental Projects Management Agency,<sup>23</sup> at the end of 2025, 75 buildings were renovated in Elektrėnai municipality which makes 23,1 % (on the beginning of the 2024 it was only 13 % of all buildings)<sup>24</sup>, and 3 houses are under renovation. Based on the data of the Housing Energy Efficiency Agency, it is estimated that the need for heating energy in renovated houses is 58,3% lower than that in non-renovated buildings.

## Aspects holding back renovation

Probably the biggest problem is the income of the apartment owners, which is too low to carry out reconstruction changes to increase energy efficiency, however, too high to be eligible for support. The renovation is free of charge for the disadvantaged individuals eligible for state support for heating; however, this group often consists of older people who do not understand the benefit of renovation and there are no stakeholders to explain it.

The residents are held back since, before making a decision, they don't know exactly how much the renovation will cost them. It happens often that, due to the construction costs and increasing prices of materials, the final amount almost doubles. Such stories are described by media and they have negative effects.

Also, more stable funding and higher transparency and clarity are needed. Currently, grant funding is disbursed cyclically - calls are launched, however, if an application is not submitted for the reasons of insufficient time, it is unclear when the next call will be.

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<sup>21</sup> Action Plan for the Development of Renewable Energy in the Elektrėnai Municipality until 2030 <https://elektrenai.lt/go.php/Atsinaujinantys%20i%C5%A1tekliai389/>

<sup>22</sup> „Elektrėnų komunalinis ūkis“ <https://www.eku.lt/silumos-tiekimas/523/>

<sup>23</sup> Environmental Projects Management Agency <https://renomap.apva.lt/map/>

<sup>24</sup> It is slightly higher than the Lithuanian average of 12.4% at the beginning of 2024.

## Availability of public subsidies

The Multi-apartment Building Renovation (Modernization) Programme is administered in Lithuania by the Environmental Projects Management Agency (EPMA) under the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania and the support is provided according to the terms and conditions of the call of the Minister of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania. Multi-apartment buildings participating in the programme have to be built according to the technical construction regulations in effect by 1993<sup>25</sup>.

The foreseen state subsidy covers the following: costs for the arrangement of the project or its part, including project supervision and expert examination of the renovation project, if it is mandatory under the Law on Construction – in 100%; costs for administration of the project implementation and technical supervision of construction work – in 100%; investment for energy efficiency measures set by the government – in 30%; additional state support, when a separate heating point is equipped or an existing non-automated heating point is modernized, the heating system is rearranged or replaced in the multi-apartment building by equipping individual heat metering devices or a divider system in the apartments or other premises in the framework of the renovation project – in 10%. The residents are provided with a preferential loan whose annual interest exceeding 3 percent is covered for five years from the day of disbursement of the first part of the loan. It is important to note that owners of apartments eligible for compensation for heating costs are granted 100% support.

Also, calls are launched where municipalities and building administrators participate. For example, considerable attention was given to the comprehensive neighbourhood renovation programmes that were started by municipalities in 2016. During the implementation of these programmes, along with buildings, their surroundings (yards, streets, lighting of public spaces, relaxation zones) are being renewed. Separate calls are launched, and partial costs are covered by EU funding.

On the October, 2024 expired a call for applications to renovate old multi-apartment buildings with the use of panels. 200 million EUR was allocated for it; the funding is purposed to finance construction contract work. It is expected that the panel renovation will not only increase the energy efficiency of the building but also accelerate the renovation process by at least 3 times. These projects benefit from the usual subsidies plus additional compensation (10%) for the renovation of the heating and hot water systems of a multi-apartment building.

## Complementary subsidies

According Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Monetary Social Assistance to Needy Residents<sup>26</sup> in Lithuania, low-income residents receive the following compensation for heating of their housing: a part of heating costs exceeding 10 percent of the difference between their income and 2 state-supported income (SSI) amounts (in 2025, 1 SSI was 221 EUR) for each family member or 3 state-supported income amounts for a single person is compensated. The housing heating costs are compensated irrespective of the heating method, i.e. whether the district heating or other type of fuel (wood, gas, electricity, etc.) is used. When calculating the average income, a child benefit (children's allowance) and a part of employment-related income and unemployment social insurance benefits (depending on the family composition and the number of children, 20 to 40 percent) are not included. To calculate the housing heating compensation, the standard useful floor space is used: 50 square meters if a person lives alone, 38 square meters for the first family member, 12 square meters for the second family member, and 10 square meters for the third and every next family member.

Also, families are eligible for compensation for drinking water costs when these exceed 2 percent of an individual's or family's income, and compensation for hot water costs when the costs for hot water and its preparation exceed 5 percent of the individual's or family's income.

<sup>25</sup> Multi-apartment Building Renovation Programme <https://modernizuok.apva.lt/veiklos-sritys/administruojamos-programos/daugiabuciu-namu-atnaujinimo-modernizavimo-programa/102/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/it/legalAct/TAR.3EEE59417F13/ygHgGIDfVa>

Residents must apply for compensation to a municipality of their living place.

It is important to mention that, with the aim of compensation for the housing heating and water costs and/or social benefits, property owned by residents is assessed.

Subsidies are also available for renovation of family houses (the last call ended in October 2025, but new calls are planned). The renovation/modernisation must achieve an energy performance class of at least B. The maximum compensation for one home is up to EUR 14,500<sup>27</sup>. Subsidies for the installation of solar power plants are also available to individuals.

## Main issues in the operation of MFABs

The main factor limiting the renovation is finance. Residents do not rush to make decisions regarding the renovation of multi-apartment buildings, and the most often mentioned financial arguments are those that the renovation is expensive and its biggest part must be paid by the apartment owners. Various grants and incentives are purposed for renovation, however, different calls may have different requirements. For example, there is currently a programme that requires to achieve at least A energy efficiency class and a reduction in energy consumption of at least 40%, but this is too expensive.

It is important to mention that the renovation of multi-apartment buildings is performed via programmes to be implemented by the Environmental Projects Management Agency with the use of the European Union's funding. However, participation in these programmes is difficult, procedures take a lot of time during which costs of work and materials change and modernization prices for residents increase. Because of procedural matters, not all contractors or builders can participate in them, thus a lack of contractors is faced, and, therefore, such condition also increases the price. Any negative experience is broadcast publicly by the media, and, as a result, the population does not trust both renovation ideas and work quality and doubts in proper ratio of the obtained benefits and costs.

Due to legal aspects, the number of renovation funders is limited, and private funding has few opportunities to enter the market (currently, only the bank AB Šiaulių bankas and AB "Investicijų ir verslo garantijos" (INVEGA), state-founded finance institution that implements and administers financial and other-nature business funding measures, provides preferential loans for funding a renovation (modernization) of the multi-apartment buildings.

Residents need a renovation manager who would supervise the process, communicate face-to-face, and could explain an entire situation as well as discuss each step of how to achieve not only a nicer appearance of the building but also a real benefit and more efficient use of energy and save environment. It is also important to ensure the quality and price ratio – the course of renovation must be supervised.

One more important aspect is the real and clear liability of the companies carrying out the renovation and a functioning supervision mechanism. There are cases in Lithuania when the work is performed at low quality but the contractor company goes bankrupt and it is unclear who is liable for defects; residents are unsatisfied with the result, they do not obtain what was expected and still have to pay big amounts of money for several years. Such stories reduce the motivation of other residents of multi-apartment buildings. Stricter legal regulation and a functioning system should be needed in this field.

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<sup>27</sup> Information about the conditions of the call [https://apvis.apva.lt/paskelbti\\_kvietimai/fiziniu-asmenu-vieno-ar-dvieju-butu-gyvenamuju-namu-atnaujijimas-modernizavimas-2025-08](https://apvis.apva.lt/paskelbti_kvietimai/fiziniu-asmenu-vieno-ar-dvieju-butu-gyvenamuju-namu-atnaujijimas-modernizavimas-2025-08)

## The perspectives of setting up the Resource Centre (RC)

On November 27, the renovation information center "Renkuosi renovacija" (I Choose Renovation) was opened in Elektrėnai.

Residents of the Elektrėnai municipality can contact the experts at the "Renkuosi renovacija" center via the center's Facebook account [www.renkuosi.lt](http://www.renkuosi.lt); by email [renovacija@gmail.com](mailto:renovacija@gmail.com) or by registering in advance for a meeting. The center operates on the premises of Elektrėnai Municipal Services at Elektrinės 8, Elektrėnai.

It was planned that at the beginning of its operation, the center would be open to visitors face to face consultations once a week (on Fridays). Once work began, it became clear that it was most convenient for residents if the center's employees not only received visitors on site, but also came to meetings with groups of residents at their premises. Therefore, the center is open on Fridays from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., and employees also attend meetings with residents, which are arranged individually and last about two hours. The center employs two staff members who advise residents within their areas of expertise (technical issues, legal matters, renovation procedures, document preparation, and other issues). However, to ensure the provision of guidance on key topics, such as renovation financing options, selection of appropriate materials, legal issues, etc., external consultants will be engaged on a non-recurring, as needed basis.

### Target group of RC services

The most important target group is all community, including multi-family and family house owners, as well as professionals working on renovation issues at municipal level: municipal staff, administration companies, contractors, etc. An important function of the Centre should be to disseminate information and raise awareness, so we plan to attract local media, social media, and perhaps involve local opinion-makers.

### Possible services of RC

- The most important service is the **single-window information**, in other words, the possibility of receiving necessary initial information about renovation in one place. Residents would be explained where to start if their house is planning to carry out renovation, whom to apply for funding, where to submit an application, and what to expect. Residents should be consulted in a convenient way (a face-to-face meeting, phone conversation, or presentation of information online).
- Also, **general dissemination of information** is important. The Resource Centre should care on the municipal level of the information that would increase awareness of the population about the benefit of renovation. For instance, the majority of the population is assured that renovation of multi-apartment buildings is primarily necessary for a more beautiful appearance of the building, although it is a secondary subject: the most important point is to prolong the service life of the building, to make it safer, to use energy efficiently thus saving money of its residents, etc. It is important to share the best practices by justifying the information with specific facts, including how the price of the renovated housing increases, and how the changed microclimate of the apartment (i.e. adjusted humidity level, etc.) impacts the resident's health.
- **Responding to specific situations** in this field. For instance, recently information has appeared in the media that a procedure not to require A class in the renovation of multi-apartment buildings is under consideration; therefore, renovation costs (and the amount to be paid by residents) can decrease. Some residents get to believe in such news and decide to wait. It is important to respond to such notifications and to explain to the population at the regional level what to expect.

- **Fostering community's cohesion.** The Resource Centre could engage in fostering the meetings of the building communities as well as initiate community's events with the participation of both administrators and experts of the building and the community. During such events, they could communicate informally and discuss common aspirations and desires and how to achieve them by mutual agreement.
- **Organization of training and discussions.** It would be appropriate to organize topical meetings for residents of buildings with the participation of experts, and training for representatives of administrators, contractors, and other stakeholders.
- **Recommendations for decision-makers** at both regional and state levels. Employees of the Resource Centre communicating face-to-face with both residents and stakeholders are the first to spot arising problems. Thus they can prepare recommendations on how to solve these problems to make the renovation processes smoother.

### Direct activities of RC staff

- To deliver initial consultations to residents. Individuals could orient easier where to start and what to expect as well as get answers to their questions in one place.
- To prepare topical information packages for the population.
- To perform dissemination of information (to start with general information and to end with expert comments, opinions, and discussions).
- To arrange training and discussions for the population. An opportunity would be made to meet experts in specific fields, who are not related to the building renovation. Such information seems more reliable for residents than that provided by contractors or administrators.
- To initiate and carry out training for stakeholders.

It would be best to combine various methods: i.e. consultations can be delivered during face-to-face meetings or by phone; information can also be provided online. Information is disseminated during RC events; however, it would be beneficial to use other events as well.

It is planned to prepare information materials adapted to different target audiences. For example, young families and socially vulnerable groups, who have different opportunities to obtain grants and support to participate in renovation processes. Information brochures will be distributed at the center itself and directly to target audiences (through social support centers, housing communities). The center's services will also be advertised through promotional events and communication campaigns.

The plan is to involve communities in dialogue by organizing community celebrations. For example, by organizing a competition for residents of individual houses, where they can win a neighborhood celebration with dialogue about renovation. People will be able to chat calmly with each other and talk to experts.

### Potential stakeholders for the RC

The main parties participating directly in the renovation processes of multi-apartment buildings, they are Elektrēnai municipality, UAB "Elektrēņu komunālais ūkis", and communities of multi-apartment buildings. Indirect stakeholders are contractor companies, specialists of technical supervision, and real estate agencies.

The RC is planned to be established with the active cooperation of Elektrėnai municipality and UAB “Elektrėnų komunalinis ūkis”.

When informing the community about the services of the Resource Centre, communication with local media is very important. The municipality has the following two media tools: a newspaper “Elektrėnų kronika” (“Elektrėnai Cronicle”) that has a weekly circulation of 1300 units and is distributed in Elektrėnai and Trakai. The online version can be found on the website [www.kronika.lt](http://www.kronika.lt); FB account <https://www.facebook.com/elektrenukronika.savaitrastis.9/> with 4500 followers; “Elektrėnų žinios” that has a weekly circulation of 1100 units, the online version can be found on [www.elektrenuzinios.lt/](http://www.elektrenuzinios.lt/) FB account <https://www.facebook.com/LaikrastisElektrenuZinios>, with 3200 followers; it is also planned to disseminate the information via websites and social networks of stakeholders: FB account of Elektrėnai municipality <https://www.facebook.com/ElektrenuSavivaldybe/> with 7400 followers, , FB account of UAB “Elektrėnų komunalinis ūkis” <https://www.facebook.com/elektrenukomunalinisukis/> with over 2000 followers.

Elektrėnai municipality has 35 municipal communities that are united by the council of the municipal community organizations of Elektrėnai. The communities foster more active engagement of the population in the community actualities and citizenship. It would be appropriate to involve at least a part of such communities in the Comactivate activities: perhaps to provide them with information measures, and organize a discussion of their representatives on how to better involve communities in the housing modernization and energy-saving processes.

Sustainability based on cooperation between EKU and the municipality

The idea of establishing a resource center in Elektrėnai to promote the modernization of apartment buildings was raised in this project. There had been no such entity before, and some of the work was done by EKU, the municipality, or non-governmental organizations implementing projects in this area. However, such activities were not continuous, structured, or effective, so we hope that the resource center will change this situation.

Now RC Elektrėnai is coordinated by EKU and will be located at the EKU premises. In order to maintain the RC after the project ends, cooperation among the EKU and Elektrėnai municipality is planned. It is very important for the municipality to promote renovation using various measures, so if the resource center proves successful, it will provide sustainable services to residents in cooperation with EKU and the municipality.

The Resource center of Elektrėnai is not a policy maker, but through its daily work with residents and stakeholders, its staff are well aware of the problems associated with the modernization of apartment buildings and may be able to offer solutions. Therefore, such ideas will be raised in cooperation with the municipality. The dialogue between stakeholders that took place in this project showed how important it is to bring all interested parties together around one table and talk directly about the problems. Such formats also give rise to proposals for policymakers, who can improve the legal framework and actually encourage the growth of renovation in Lithuania.

## Good practice examples

The Environmental Projects Management Agency (EPMA<sup>28</sup>) has a competence department, some tasks of which are similar to those of RC, i.e. to ensure smooth renovation processes by carrying out competence development, dissemination of information, and training, by providing methodical and consulting support; to collect examples of best practice, etc. Individuals can apply for consultation by filling in an electronic form on the website <https://modernizuok.apva.lt/del-renovacijos-teiraukites/448/> or by calling the information line phone. Also, the information can be found on the website where examples of the best practices, training, and methodical materials are provided, and training on relevant topics is arranged. In our opinion, it contains quite much of suitable information, but lacks direct communication with residents, to whom such presentation is too complicated and who need a person to explain how to use these materials and where to start.

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<sup>28</sup> Information in English on the website of the organization <https://modernizuok.apva.lt/en/>

Some Lithuanian municipalities have separate departments (centres of excellence) dedicated to renovation issues and are achieving good results by applying different strategies and engaging with their communities. It is planned to meet with such centres and learn from their good practices.

## Kaišiadorys

### Framework conditions

#### Main characteristics of the district

Kaišiadorys district municipality is located between the two largest cities of Lithuania, the capital city Vilnius and Kaunas. The municipality consists of 11 elderships and covers an area of 108,700 ha. Kaišiadorys district is crossed by the country's main motorways and railways. The railway network plays a very important role in cargo and passenger transportation<sup>29</sup>.

Based on the data of the Kaišiadorys Tourism and Business Information Center<sup>30</sup>, at the beginning of 2025, there were 712 small and medium-sized businesses operating in Kaišiadorys District Municipality (680 at the beginning of 2024, 548 at the beginning of 2023) and 2 large businesses: ŽŪB "Nematekas" (374 employees) and AB Kaišiadorių paukštynas (258 employees). The level of entrepreneurship is also growing: the number of small and medium-sized businesses per 1,000 inhabitants in 2016 was 13.66, and in 2024 – 23.40. The district has several poultry farms and over 50 businesses operating in the woodworking and furniture manufacturing sector. Kaišiadorys Tourism and Business Information Centre has been operating for 23 years, assisting young entrepreneurs and existing businesses with consultations, seminars, document preparation, and publicity.

Based on the data of the State Data Agency<sup>31</sup>, in 2022, investments in tangible fixed assets per 1 resident made up EUR 946, foreign direct investment (FDI) - EUR 524.

Based on the data of the State Data Agency, at the beginning of 2025, 28,554 residents lived in Kaišiadorys district, of which 11,355 lived in the city and 17,199 in the countryside (at the beginning of 2023 – 29,817) and it made up 1% of the population of the country (2,857,279).

There are more males than females living in the municipality: 1,000 males vs 994 females. Nevertheless, the employment level of females is higher: in the 15-64 years age group, the employment of females was up to 71% while that of males was 62%. At the beginning of 2025, the working-age population made up 64,68 % of the total population of the municipality.

According to the data of the Lithuanian Employment Service<sup>32</sup>, in 2024 the average unemployment rate in Kaišiadorys district municipality was 7.9 percent of the working-age population (in 2023 – 7.5 percent, in 2020 – 11.6). For comparison – in Lithuania – 8.7 percent.

Based on the data of the Statistics Department<sup>33</sup>, at the end of 2023, the average wage in Kaišiadorys municipality was EUR 1,676 (gross) and ranked 33rd among 60 Lithuanian municipalities. The number of social beneficiaries in the municipality is 22 persons per 1000 residents (that is not a big number; e.g. in the border towns (Lazdijai), this number is 75 persons).

<sup>29</sup> Information about the municipality of Kaišiadorys on the municipality's website <https://kaisiadorys.lt/apie-savivaldybe/5> (available in English).

<sup>30</sup> Kaišiadorys Tourism and Business Information Center <https://kaisiadorysinfo.lt/verslas/investuotojams/>

<sup>31</sup> Website of the State Data Agency

<https://osp.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=6d9d454ba648478db264093035ceb59d/>

<sup>32</sup> Kaišiadorys Tourism and Business Information Center <https://kaisiadorysinfo.lt/verslas/investuotojams/>

<sup>33</sup> Statistics Department <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/informaciniai-pranesimai?articleId=11942065/>

## Description of the housing stock

Based on the data of the Centre of Registers<sup>34</sup>, 9,690 residential buildings were registered in Kaišiadorys municipality on 1 of January, 2023. The majority were individual houses (9 184), 132 two-apartment buildings, 347 multi-apartment (with three or more apartments) buildings, and 27 other-purpose residential buildings.

The majority (92.6%) of the buildings are owned by natural persons. Kaišiadorys municipality rents 69 apartments at commercial rates, and 112 apartments are rented as social housing.

In 2022, the useful floor area per resident in Kaišiadorys district municipality was 40.7 sq. m/resident. From 2018 through 2022, the growth rate of the useful floor area per resident was 6% and exceeded the national rate<sup>35</sup>.

The majority of buildings consist of up to five floors; the houses built of brick, masonry, and large-panel construction dominate. Most of the multi-apartment buildings were built from 1970 through 1980. Like the majority of other buildings constructed in that period in Lithuania, they were built following low energy efficiency standards and, over time, have been deteriorating due to lack of maintenance. The average area of the apartment is about 50 sq. m. One household consumes about 160 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> heat energy a year, although, in certain houses, it varies from 71 to 195 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> a year (more than the average heat energy consumption in Lithuania)<sup>36</sup>.

Blockhouses have deteriorated joint infills between the blocks; in some houses, the joints have been repaired. Most of the windows, that were installed in the apartments at the beginning of the building operation, have been replaced with lower thermal conductivity windows. Replacement of windows, as well as glazing of balconies, was implemented in most cases at the initiative of owners of the apartments, not having either any necessary projects or permits. Windows of staircases of the multi-apartment buildings have been replaced with lower thermal conductivity windows not in all houses, as well as exterior doors of staircases or vestibules. The buildings have insufficient ventilation since a natural ventilation system was equipped in them, and a majority of windows in the apartments have been replaced with sealed windows. Heat points of the buildings are not upgraded or partially upgraded, or automated heat points have been equipped. In most cases, a one-pipe heating system is equipped in the buildings. The electrical networks in the buildings up to the entrances to the apartments are not renovated. The remaining utility systems of the buildings are deteriorated. Due to the listed reasons, multi-apartment buildings feature high energy consumption; in some cases, the buildings do not meet hygiene norms and elementary comfort standards applicable to the constructions. Utility systems have increased accident rates. Certain constructions of the buildings, e.g. exterior stairs, are not safe to use<sup>37</sup>.

In the non-renovated multi-apartment houses, energy efficiency classes F and G are prevalent; in the renovated ones, energy efficiency classes B and C prevail.

Following the data of the Environmental Projects Management Agency, at the end of 2025, 21 houses were renovated, 10 houses are currently under renovation, and financial approval is still pending for 10 multi-apartment buildings of Kaišiadorys district municipality<sup>38</sup>.

Based on the data of the Housing Energy Efficiency Agency, the energy demand in the renovated houses is 59 % lower than that in the non-renovated buildings.

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<sup>34</sup> Centre of Registers <https://www.registrucentras.lt/ntr/vertinimas/masinis/masvert.php?src=1&sav=53&ver=60>

<sup>35</sup> State Data Agency <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/>

<sup>36</sup> Kaišiadorys District Municipality's program for increasing energy efficiency in apartment buildings, <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/dc0b1860b59311f092fda1fd0c194cc5/>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/dc0b1860b59311f092fda1fd0c194cc5/>

<sup>38</sup> <https://renomap.apva.lt/Kaisiadoriu-rajono-13>

## Aspects holding back renovation

### Too low income

The income of some residents, in particular that of seniors, is too low to perform reconstruction changes to increase energy efficiency.

### Negative experience

Experts estimate that in almost one-third part of renovated houses, the savings foreseen in the investment plan are not achieved. Often, the construction work is carried out in poor quality due to insufficient supervision. On the one hand, such service is costly, nevertheless, it is important since, otherwise, the post-renovation results do not meet expectations due to various reasons, such as the use of worse quality materials and irresponsible work of construction workers. Also, in the course of the work, some unforeseen situations may arise which must be dealt with on site.

### Attitudes of population

For older people who lived in the Soviet system, it is still difficult to understand the balancing of public and private interests, to get involved in civic initiatives - in this case, in the improvement of the well-being of the whole building; they lack complex approach to looking after own property.

An approach remains to pass the responsibility to authorities, not to take the initiative by themselves (since this leads to liability for outcomes that are not always good). A certain part of the society considers that the state energy policy is not based on the principle of social justice.

It is required from an older part of the society, which is unprepared and quite passive and which consists of a majority of owners of the multi-apartment buildings, the initiative and autonomy: they need to unite into associations, make decisions regarding the renovation course and procedures, collect a certain amount of private funds (or to negotiate regarding loans), arrange applications for financial support, initiate the renovation process and control it. For that, the residents are in great need of qualified and reliable assistance.

## Availability of public subsidies

Following the Multi-apartment Building Renovation Programme<sup>39</sup>, the state provides the following support:

- 100% of costs for the arrangement of the project or its part, including the supervision of the renovation project and the expert examination of the renovation project.
- 100% of costs for administration of the project implementation and technical supervision of construction work.
- 30% of investments in energy efficiency measures set by the government.
- 10% as additional state support, when a separate heating point is equipped or an existing non-automated heating point is upgraded, the balancing valves are installed on risers, the heating system is rearranged or replaced in the building; individual heat metering devices, a divider system, or thermostatic valves are equipped in the apartments and other premises.

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<sup>39</sup> Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on the Approval of the Multi-Apartment Building Renovation (Modernization) Program <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/TAR.AE67B6739526/asr>

- 100% of costs for the arrangement of the renovation project, administration of its implementation, supervision of construction, credit insurance premiums, and monthly loan and interest payments for financially disadvantaged residents.
- The residents are provided with preferential loans whose part of annual interest exceeding 3 percent is covered for five years from the day of disbursement of the first part of the loan.

In Lithuania, the state supports the following measures for renovation of the multi-apartment building<sup>40</sup>:

1. **Energy efficiency improvement measures:** upgrading of heating and hot water systems or installation of a heat point and/or hot water production facilities; rearrangement or renewal of hot water system; replacement and isolation of piping; installation of equipment for energy generation from renewable sources; fixing the ventilation system; thermal insulation of the roof or attic overlapping and external walls; glazing of balconies or loggia; replacement of windows and doors in the general-purpose premises; repair of the entrance staircase and its adaptation to the needs of people with disabilities; replacement of windows and balcony doors with the ones with lower thermal conductivity; thermal insulation of the basement overlapping; renewal of the general-purpose electric utility system and lighting system.
2. **Other renovation measures of the house** (the same subsidies as for measures in group 1): renewal of constructions that are not related to the energy efficiency improvement measures, simple repair of the general-purpose staircases; and installation of charging infrastructure for electric cars in the building's car parking facilities.

The renovation of the multi-apartment building may be initiated by both the enterprise administering the house and the owners of apartments and other premises of that building. The decision to renovate the multi-apartment house requires the agreement of at least 55% of its residents. If the agreement for renovation is obtained from 55% of owners, the remaining 45% have also to pay the renovation loans, irrespective of their agreement or disagreement with it.

Renovation costs for financially disadvantaged residents who obtain compensation for housing heating will be covered by the state, however, if such a person has voted "against" renovation and his decision has impacted on failure of the renovation, the compensation for the costs of the first heating season will be reduced to that person even by 50%, and for the next two heating seasons, it will not be provided at all.

Following the Law on Cash Social Assistance for Poor Residents<sup>41</sup>, the support for socially disadvantaged persons is calculated from the municipal budget. It can be a social benefit or compensation for housing heating costs, drinking water costs, and hot water costs. Following Article 7 of the referred law, the right to compensation may be exercised by the persons whose property does not exceed a certain value, and heating costs of the housing exceed 10%, drinking water costs exceed 2%, and hot water costs exceed 5% of the income of cohabiting persons. Also, the useful floor area and costs for energy or types of fuel to heat the housing must not exceed the set norms.

If the housing is rented, the rent agreement must be registered in the public register.

Subsidies are also available for renovation of family houses (the maximum compensation for one home is up to EUR 14,500<sup>42</sup>). Subsidies for the installation of solar power plants are also available to individuals.

<sup>40</sup> More information about the Multi-apartment Building Renovation Programme <https://modernizuok.apva.lt/veiklos-sritys/administruojamos-programos/daugiabuociu-namu-atnaujinimo-modernizavimo-programa/102/>

<sup>41</sup> The latest version of the law can be found in the Lithuanian database of legal acts at <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.215633/asr/>

<sup>42</sup> Information about the conditions of the call [https://apvis.apva.lt/paskelbti\\_kvietimai/fiziniu-asmenu-vieno-ar-dvieju-butu-gyvenamuju-namu-atnaujinimas-modernizavimas-2025-08](https://apvis.apva.lt/paskelbti_kvietimai/fiziniu-asmenu-vieno-ar-dvieju-butu-gyvenamuju-namu-atnaujinimas-modernizavimas-2025-08)

## Main issues in the operation of MFABs

- **The population lacks information** about new energy-saving technologies and benefits from such measures. It is necessary to increase community sense, citizenship, and awareness, which will have a long-term impact on behaviour and habits of the population.
- **Unfavourable economic situation** (increased heating costs limit the financial capacity of the population) and political situation induce people to refrain from long-term obligations and investments, as well as loans for renovation are not provided to the residents with high arrears on utility bills. On the other hand, when evaluating the long-term perspective, with a proper formation of the support measure package, a renovation breakthrough can become an impulse for both the construction sector and the overall national economy.
- **Lack of attractive financial instruments.**
- **Finance.** Renovation is too financially burdensome for the state; thus, the state must share this burden with residents, for whom the cost of renovation often becomes the main obstacle. Old houses that are also energy inefficient were mostly built during the Soviet times and privatized during the transitional period (at the end of the eighth decade), and their owners are currently pensioners with limited financial resources. Meanwhile, more economically capable residents of Lithuania and a younger generation, who buy housing now, move to new-build apartments with better energy performance. Perhaps it would be appropriate to give more encouragement to small renovations - renovation projects of multi-apartment buildings that help to increase energy efficiency by investing in one or several energy efficiency measures (e.g. renewal of heating systems, thermal insulation of the roof or attic overlapping, windows, etc.)
- **Uncertain renovation costs.** In the beginning, the upgrading of multi-apartment buildings was designed by foreseeing higher state support and more flexible renovation organization conditions. However, currently, applications are submitted only according to the announced calls; their requirements differ and procedures are long and difficult, therefore, it is difficult to foresee the final renovation price, and the residents are unsatisfied that the price grows twice. Older residents calculate that the upgrading will not pay back for their lives and, thus, they don't want renovation.
- **Lack of transparency and responsibility.** Due to difficult public procurement procedures, some construction firms cannot take part in tenders, therefore, prices of services and materials exceed the market price, and residents notice it and are unsatisfied since their financial burden grows.
- **Insufficiently regulated liability of contractors.** Often, contractors go bankrupt or are taken over by another firm, which is not liable for defects and there is nobody to claim damages from.

## The perspectives of setting up the Resource Centre (RC)

The Kaišiadorys RC is scheduled to open in early 2026. The RC will operate in the Kaišiadorys Municipality Administration Building (Katedra str. 4, Kaišiadorys). This location was chosen for its easy accessibility as the building is in the center of Kaišiadorys and easily reachable on foot, by car, or by public transport (train/bus). There are many apartment buildings in the surroundings, whose residents could potentially seek advice in person in the RC. The services are provided via different channels – phone calls, e-mail online discussions and trainings. Younger audience prefers remote services, and older people prefer in person consultations during the events and meetings of the resident communities.

## Target group of RC services

Services of the Resource Centre must be provided primarily to the residents and communities of multi-apartment buildings also for the owners of family houses and homeowners associations, as well as to all stakeholders: representatives of municipalities and elderships, utility companies, who work on renovation issues, media, and construction and design businesses.

## Possible services of RC

The services should include consultation in various forms: face-to-face meetings, phone calls, online, and through information packages that can be provided to interested persons. Also, topical discussions and training.

The services could be provided both during face-to-face meetings (personal consultations) and remotely (online and by phone). The experience shows that younger audience prefers remote services, and older people trust more information provided to them face-to-face, when they see whom they communicate with, and can discuss and consult.

Dissemination of the information should be as broad as possible; therefore, all accessible methods should be used: to make information files according to different topics and to publish the information on the websites and social networks of all partners of the RC, to disseminate it during the events and meetings of the resident communities.

The long-term strategy plans also include the actual implementation of the renovation: support preparation of documentation, monitor the implementation of the renovation and provide direct assistance in solving problems. The RC organizes regular information days, practical trainings, and consultations for citizens and HOAs about energy efficiency, financing options, and renovation processes. These events help raise awareness and encourage participation, especially when local success stories are shared. A contact database is maintained to invite stakeholders to workshops, campaigns, and follow-up meetings, which helps ensure consistent communication and community engagement. Partnerships are built through regular meetings, personalized consultations, and close cooperation during project preparation and implementation. Continuous communication and trust-based relationships make it easier to address challenges quickly. This cooperation significantly improves project coordination and helps motivate more buildings to join renovation programs. To overcome hesitation, the RC provides clear information about financial support, organizes meetings in residential communities, and offers face-to-face consultations. Special attention is given to elderly residents by explaining the process in simple terms and helping with documentation and decision-making.

## Local organisations providing information/technical assistance

The website of Kaišiadorys municipality has a section “Renovation (modernization) of apartment buildings” under the menu “Areas of activity”<sup>43</sup>. It includes preliminary information on how the renovation is currently going on, what types of work are supported by the state, who provides funding for renovation projects, and where to apply. Also, there is an active link to the website of the Environmental Projects Management Agency (EPMA) which manages the state-run Multi-apartment Building Renovation (Modernization) Programme.

UAB “Kaišiadorių būtų ūkis” operating as an administrator of multi-apartment buildings (currently, it administers 157 multi-apartment buildings (4006 apartments) carries out renewal and maintenance of multi-apartment buildings, technical maintenance, and maintenance of heating and hot water preparation systems. The website of the institution provides an opportunity to get acquainted with

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<sup>43</sup> Website of Kaišiadorys municipality <https://kaisiadorys.lt/gyventojams/veiklos-sritys/daugiabuciu-namu-atnaujinimas-modernizavimas/2351/>

arranged investment plans for the modernization of the multi-apartment buildings and observe the course of submitted projects<sup>44</sup>.

These two initiatives are the preliminary provision of information; there are no exceptional services to be adapted in the activities of the Resource Centre; however, the information can be used.

## Potential stakeholders for the RC

Synergies among Kaišiadorys District Municipality, the multi-apartment building administrator UAB “Kaišiadorių būtų ūkis” and multi-apartment building communities must be the basis for the smooth functioning of RC. The RC should be set up under the responsibility of the municipality, but it will have the active involvement of a UAB “Kaišiadorių būtų ūkis” who is familiar with the practical challenges faced by residents. Responsible persons of elderships must be also involved. Kaišiadorys has an actively operating Kaišiadorys Tourism and Business Information Centre; therefore, cooperation with it as well as with a local library where the population comes for knowledge and information would be important. Some part of the population of Kaišiadorys is organised in territorial communities. Since they carry out various initiatives encouraging better communication of the communal members and common activities, it would be relevant for them to seek the well-being of their members by encouraging renovation projects that reduce environmental impact and tidy common spaces.

The RC will cooperate with the municipality, which provides strategic support, access to local data, and channels for citizen outreach. Collaboration with NGOs helps to engage community groups and promote social inclusion, while partnerships with private companies ensure access to technical expertise and innovative renovation solutions. The most successful cooperation happens when all partners combine their resources for joint awareness campaigns and pilot renovation projects.

The RC will cooperate with municipal social services, housing departments, and community organizations to reach different resident groups. Information about renovation support is shared through local community centers, senior clubs, and public events. This integrated approach helps attract more users and ensures that renovation opportunities are accessible to everyone.

Construction companies and real estate companies as foreseen secondary target audience. As well as local media. That is the printed newspaper “Kaišiadorių aidai” (Kaišiadorys echoes) which is also publicized online at [kaišiadoriuaidai.lt](http://kaišiadoriuaidai.lt), an online daily newspaper “Atspindžiai” (Reflections) at [www.atspindžiai.lt](http://www.atspindžiai.lt) and Kaišiadorys region news portal online [www.kaišiadoriečiams.lt](http://www.kaišiadoriečiams.lt) (FB account of the portal with over 3000 followers is at <https://www.facebook.com/kaišiadorieciams.lt/>).

The RC is planned to be in a municipal building mainly for financial reasons. The municipality provides a workplace for the RC employee(s) and the necessary rooms for training or events. Additional financing often comes from national or EU-funded projects focused on energy efficiency and community engagement. RC is planned to be supported by municipal or state funds in the future, depending on the state strategy, but it is expected to participate in EU-level funding.

## Good practice examples

The main channel for dissemination about renovation is the EPMA (Environmental Projects Management Agency) website <https://modernizuok.apva.lt/>. EPMA is a state institution administering the environmental sector projects financed by the European Union funds (ISPA, European Regional Development, Cohesion funds, LIFE+ programme) and the Republic of Lithuania as well as the state-run Multi-apartment Building Renovation Programme. Calls for applications for multi-apartment building renovations are announced in the special portal of EPMA <https://apvis.apva.lt/>. The website of the Agency provides detailed information about multi-apartment building renovation; however, it highlights on how to submit applications and obtain funding, and what criteria must be met by applicants.

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<sup>44</sup> Website of the organization <https://kaibu.lt/daugiabuociu-namu-renovacija/>

Examples of good practice in the municipalities are shared, however, the stories are formal, incomplete, and thus not always useful. The website provides the Lithuanian renovation map where information on the situation in all municipalities is presented. A positive aspect is that respective legislation and methodical material of training are collected in one place, and answers to the frequently asked questions are divided according to topics. Interested persons can apply for consultation by phone or by filling in an electronic form.

It is also worth examining successful examples from other municipalities, such as the public institution to support and promote the energy-efficient refurbishment of multi-family-buildings in Vilnius <https://amiestas.lt/>.

There are several other initiatives that can teach suitable ideas. For example, “Būsto modernizavimo asociacija” (Housing Modernization Association) developed a website designed for renovation<sup>45</sup>. Members and partners of the association are specialists in the fields of science, construction, manufacture, architecture and design, law, finance, marketing, public relations, etc., therefore, they were jointly developing quality content by encouraging a proper and quality housing modernization. Comprehensive topical information was provided on the website: for example, what should be focused on when choosing thermal insulation materials, heating systems were compared, and advice was what measures can be adapted by residents themselves and how effective the measures can be. Also, the experience related to the construction companies providing quality services was shared, it was possible to apply to specialists to get advice in a specific situation. Since it was a part of the project, currently the information is not updated, and the forum is inactive.

The renovation topic has a separate section in the specialized internet magazine “Statyba ir architektūra” (Construction and Architecture) providing information about construction, architecture, interior, and other relevant matters<sup>46</sup>. Articles in the magazine are interesting and professionally prepared, they discover news, but are more oriented towards groups employed in this field - architects, construction companies, etc.

The RC is expected to collect insights and recommendations based on first-hand experience with residents and HOAs. This information will be shared with local and regional authorities to help them better understand community needs, renovation barriers and policy development opportunities. In some cases, feedback will be provided to national authorities responsible for housing and energy efficiency programs. The RC will further play a key role in promoting and implementing national subsidy programs at the local level and provide step-by-step guidance throughout the renovation process.

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<sup>45</sup> The website address [www.renovacija.lt/](http://www.renovacija.lt/)

<sup>46</sup> The website address <https://sa.lt/>

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