



ComActivate

Enabling community action for energy sufficiency

SUSTAINABILITY, BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT PLANS FOR THE OPERATION OF LOCAL RESOURCE CENTRES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Summary Report

Covering Resource Centres in:

Józsefváros, Budapest, Hungary (D2.3)

Burgas, Bulgaria (D2.4)

Kaišiadorys & Elektrėnai, Lithuania (D2.5)



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D2.3 Sustainability and Business and Investment Plans for the Operation of the Local Resource Centre in Józsefváros, Budapest (Hungary)

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D2.4 Sustainability and Business and Investment Plans for the Operation of the Local Resource Centre in Burgas (Bulgaria)

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D2.5 Sustainability and Business and Investment Plans for the Operation of the Local Resource Centres in Kaišiadorys and Elektrėnai (Lithuania)

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1. Introduction

A fundamental question for the coming years will be the capacity of individual households and building communities to carry out necessary adjustments essential to reaching the EU's ambitious energy and climate targets. These targets include a binding 42.5% share of renewable energy in the final energy mix by 2030, a binding mandate to reduce final energy consumption by at least 11.7% relative to 2020 projections, and a 16% decrease in primary energy consumption in residential buildings as required by the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD). These measures form part of the overarching commitment to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% compared to 1990 levels.

A key instrument in achieving these goals is the one-stop shop (OSS) model for building renovation, made compulsory under the recast EPBD. These centres will act as intermediaries between residents or owners and public authorities, offering advice on available subsidies and supporting people in engaging appropriate contractors and professionals to renovate their buildings.

The ComActivate project – Enabling Community Action for Energy Sufficiency – has made a direct contribution to this system by establishing and/or supporting the operation of OSS (which are referred to as resource centres (RCs) in the ComActivate project) in pilot cities across Central and Eastern Europe: Burgas (Bulgaria), Budapest-Józsefváros (Hungary), and Elektrėnai and Kaišiadorys (Lithuania). All RCs are operated by public entities and provide free services to a mixed audience, including both vulnerable households and those with stable incomes.

This summary report brings together the findings of the three individual Sustainability and Business and Investment Plans produced under Work Package 2 of the ComActivate project (Deliverables D2.3, D2.4 and D2.5, all dated April 2026). For each location, the plans address the local context and building stock, subsidy landscape, institutional framework, current RC operation, and the pathway to sustainability towards 2030. Taken together, they illustrate both the shared challenges facing publicly operated RCs in Central and Eastern Europe and the distinct local conditions that shape their development strategies.

2. EU policy and project context

The sustainability of the RCs examined in this report is inextricably linked to the broader EU legislative and funding landscape. The recast EPBD requires Member States to make OSS a compulsory feature of national building renovation frameworks, with geographically distributed coverage to ensure universal access. In many countries, this creates an opportunity for existing centres – including those established under ComActivate – to evolve into formally mandated OSS over time.

The RCs examined in this report share a common challenge: their long-term financial sustainability depends heavily on the availability of national and EU subsidy programmes for the renovation of buildings. During periods of active funding calls, demand for RC services peaks sharply; in periods without accessible funding, interest drops and centres risk underutilisation. All three Sustainability and Business and Investment Plans recognise that the Social Climate Fund, the National Building Renovation Action Plans, and cohesion funding represent critical future levers that could both expand the RCs' client base and provide resources to sustain their operations.

A further cross-cutting theme is the imperative to reach energy-poor and socially vulnerable households. While all three RCs serve a mixed audience, they each identify energy-poor residents as a priority group aligned with the Social Climate Fund's focus and the EPBD's social equity provisions.

3. Resource centre in Józsefváros, Budapest (Hungary)

Deliverable D2.3

Lead Beneficiary: Metropolitan Research Institute

Authors: Dzsénifer Borsfai, Anna Kerékgyártó, Ida Fruzsina Vanger

3.1 Local context

Józsefváros, the 8th district of Budapest, is one of the most socially disadvantaged districts in the Hungarian capital. It is characterised by exceptionally high urban density, an ageing pre-1950 building stock, and a high proportion of vulnerable residents, making it among the areas in Budapest which are most exposed to energy poverty. Nearly three-quarters of the district's buildings date from before 1950; they are predominantly two to four storey terraced courtyard structures with ornate street façades that severely constrain external insulation options. The Pilot Area – comprising parts of the Losonci, Magdolna and Orczy quarters – hosts approximately 15,000 dwellings, of which around 17% are municipally owned.

The district's social profile illustrates compounding vulnerabilities: the lowest average net income per capita in Budapest, the lowest life expectancy at birth, and below-average educational attainment. According to 2022 census data, 41% of municipal tenants in Józsefváros have only primary-level education or below. Individual gas heating – typically with outdated appliances – operates in a majority of flats in the Magdolna and Orczy quarters, while approximately 10% of residents use only electricity for heating, resulting in extremely high monthly utility costs.



Figure 1: Illustration of the urban character of the district – the coloured border indicates the Pilot Area (source: MapHub)



Photo 1: Typical pre-1950 buildings in the Orczy quarter of Józsefváros

Subsidy landscape

The current subsidy landscape in Hungary is highly constrained for multi-family apartment buildings (MFABs). No national or EU grants are available for MFABs, and the sole interest-rate subsidy scheme offers too little support to finance substantial renovation. The most significant recent development is the 2026 Budapest Green Panel Programme, targeting energy-efficient refurbishment of prefabricated buildings built between 1946 and 1995. There are around 50 eligible condominium buildings in Józsefváros, but it is likely that only one or two will be awarded any funding. District-level programmes provide limited emergency structural support, while a condominium renovation grant of up to HUF 2 million (approx. €5,100) per building finances only small-scale works. Since 2022, Hungary has had no access to cohesion fund allocations, severely limiting large-scale investment programmes.

3.2 Vision and scenarios

The municipality's vision is anchored in its Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP), which sets a 2030 target of refurbishing 40% of MFABs (approximately 13,000 flats) with a 35% energy saving. Given the current acute uncertainty surrounding national policy, the Sustainability and Business Plan outlines three scenarios:

- **No subsidies:** RC (LakóTér) continues community organisation activities and information provision within its current scope, focusing on municipal tenants and improving trust in public institutions.
- **Subsidies for individual homeowners:** Expansion of energy advisory services and application support for individual households, potentially building on the RenoPont model.
- **Subsidies for MFABs:** Creation of a dedicated, separate OSS-type office to manage complex condominium renovation processes, alongside the continued operation of the existing RC (LakóTér) for municipal tenants.

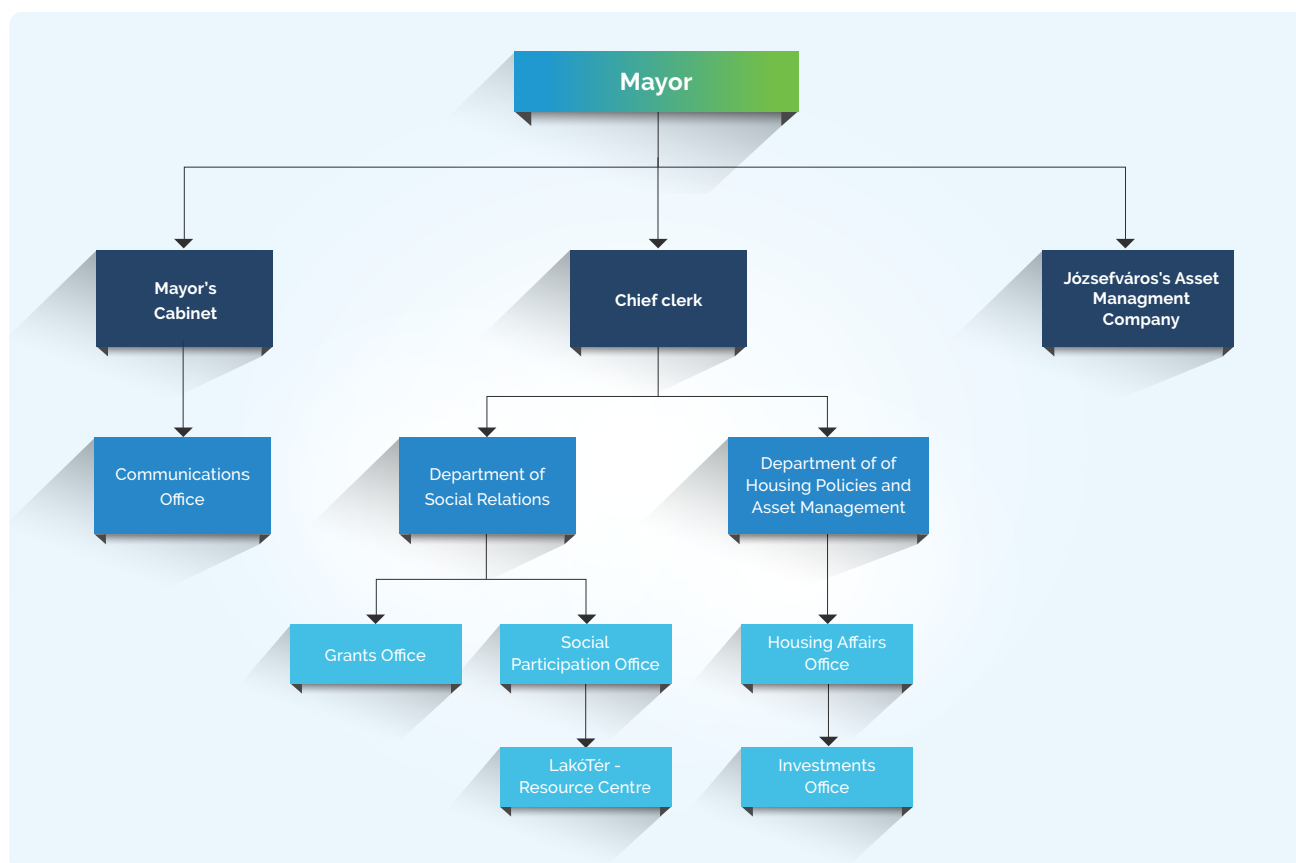


Figure 2: Excerpt from Józsefváros Municipality's organogram with departments working on or supporting housing affairs and/or subsidies

3.3 Current resource centre operation

The Józsefváros RC operates as the LakóTér Community Space, established in Autumn 2025 within the Mayor's Office structure under the Social Participation Office. It is staffed by four full-time community organisers and a part-time assistant, and opens three days per week. The RC is embedded within a broader institutional network encompassing the Grants Office, the Communications Office, the Housing Policy and Asset Management Department, and the municipal asset management company.

Key services include community organisation in municipal tenement buildings (currently active in six buildings in the Pilot Area); cooperation with the social service provider and asset management company for case management; free in-home energy advisory consultations delivered by a contracted energy expert (started November 2025, ten clients in the first three months); quarterly forums for condominium managers on subsidy opportunities; and multi-channel communications including newsletters (437 subscribers), flyers, and community events.

The RC was established through the Budapest Capital Solidarity Fund, with a contractual five-year maintenance commitment (which runs through to May 2031) providing a degree of financial security. Funds from ongoing EU projects including LIFE and the European Urban Initiative (EUI) are also being sought as supplementary income streams.

3.4 Sustainability pathway to 2030

The sustainability of the Józsefváros RC has been assessed against three distinct scenarios, reflecting the high degree of uncertainty surrounding the trajectory of Hungary's national energy policy in the coming years. These scenarios are not mutually exclusive over time – the municipality's ambition is to move progressively through them as the funding environment evolves.

Scenario A – No change (baseline)

In the absence of new national or EU subsidy schemes targeting the MFAB stock, the municipality will sustain the RC (LakóTér) through its own budget, with the five-year maintenance commitment secured through the Budapest Capital Solidarity Fund providing a firm financial foundation until at least 2031. Under this scenario, the RC's primary focus remains municipal tenants – the group most directly within the municipality's sphere of influence and responsibility.

Community organisation activities will continue in municipal rental buildings, with the goal of deepening trust, strengthening resident participation, and creating the social foundation for future energy investments. The energy advisory service (free in-home consultations with a contracted expert) will be maintained and expanded to reach a greater share of residents experiencing difficulties with utility costs, including those identified through the social service provider's arrears management programme.

Condominium manager forums will continue every three to six months, and the municipality's communication channels – including the monthly Condominium Newsletter (437 subscribers) and district-wide flyers – will keep residents informed about any available district-level funding.

Without accessible subsidy schemes to address the structural energy inefficiency of the building stock, the municipality's scope of action is limited to raising awareness, driving behavioural change, and mitigating the financial burden of energy poverty rather than tackling its root causes. No additional staff are planned under this scenario.

Scenario B – Subsidies for individual homeowners

Should support schemes become available for individual flat owners – enabling single-unit renovations rather than whole-building interventions – the municipality would expand the RC's advisory services to cover the application process, technical guidance on renovation sequencing, and connections to contractors. An additional contracted expert with competencies in energy performance, grant administration, and the relevant regulatory framework would be engaged, transitioning to a permanent in-house role if demand warranted it.

4 For a more detailed overview of the EU provisions on ComActivate key topics, please see [D5.1 EU and national level. Policy analysis and monitoring](#).

The energy advisory service would be broadened to prepare interested homeowners for applying to available schemes, offering tailored recommendations based on dwelling characteristics (window replacement, heating system modernisation, insulation options, and their recommended sequencing). Online booking and a dedicated website subpage would be added to improve accessibility.

This scenario represents a modest but meaningful expansion, allowing the RC to serve private homeowners alongside its existing focus on municipal tenants.

Scenario C – Subsidies for multi-family apartment buildings

If comprehensive subsidy schemes for condominiums and cooperative buildings are introduced – the scenario with the greatest potential to advance the district's 2030 SECAP targets of refurbishing 40% of MFABs with a 35% energy saving – the municipality envisages a significant institutional response.

A dedicated, expanded office would be created separately from the existing LakóTér RC, which would continue its community-focused work with municipal tenants in parallel. This new office would provide end-to-end process support aligned with subsidy cycles: pre-launch awareness campaigns targeting eligible buildings; individual consultations for condominium representatives; assistance with application documentation and general assembly consensus-building; facilitation of the decision-preparatory study (DPS) process; procurement support for design services and contractors; and post-renovation follow-up including verification of works and compliance. The office would require a manager with project management and building energy performance expertise, alongside colleagues experienced in facilitation and process management. Staffing levels would be calibrated against the first funding cycle before being scaled for the longer term. Separate premises from the current RC would be provided, given the different character of the work.

The long-term financial model would require a combination of municipal budget, EU direct funding (LIFE, EUI and similar programmes), and potentially a public-private partnership strategy – though the municipality acknowledges that developing such a strategy in the current environment of policy uncertainty would be premature.

Across all three scenarios, the municipality's commitment to the RC is anchored not only in its financial guarantee but in the alignment of RC activities with multiple district-wide strategic frameworks: the Long-Term Asset Management Plan, the Environmental Protection Programme, the Local Programme for Equal Opportunities, and the Budapest Urban Development Strategy. Being embedded in multiple strategies is considered the most durable foundation for the RC's long-term sustainability, regardless of how the national subsidy landscape evolves.

4. Resource centre in Burgas (Bulgaria)

Deliverable D2.4

Lead Beneficiary: Metropolitan Research Institute

Authors: Ivaylo Trendafilov (Burgas), Teodora Stanisheva (Eneffect)

4.1 Local context

The Vazrazhdane neighbourhood, which constitutes the Burgas Pilot Area (see Figure 3), is located close to the city centre and is well connected by major roads, bus and rail. The area features a mix of older panel and brick buildings alongside newer residential complexes, with high property prices relative to peripheral areas. The building stock consists of approximately 1,500 buildings with 91,258 apartments, of which 80% were built before 1990. These older buildings predominantly fall into energy classes E, F and G and face challenges related to physical ageing, deteriorating façades, roof damage, and poor window performance.



Figure 3: Overview of the Pilot Area and its surroundings, with selected buildings highlighted in beige, orange and red

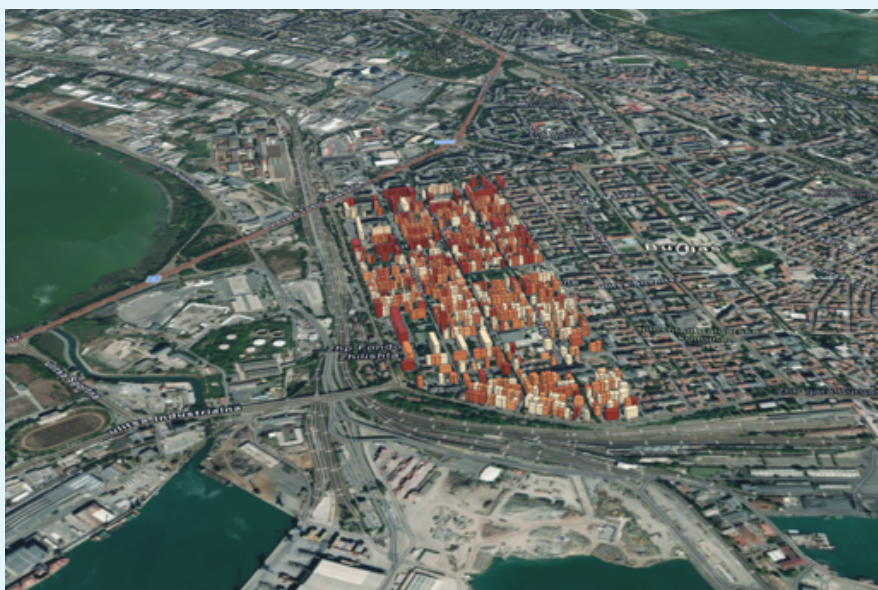


Figure 4: Overview of the Pilot Area and its surroundings, with selected buildings highlighted in beige, orange and red



Photo 2: A typical MFAB in Burgas

Subsidy landscape

Bulgaria has one of the most active national renovation subsidy programmes in Central and Eastern Europe. Since 2016, approximately €5 billion has been invested in the renovation of MFABs, with 100% grant coverage, and Burgas has been the national leader with more than 300 completely renovated private MFABs. A 2022 pilot with 80/20 co-financing attracted little interest, prompting the state to restore full coverage of the residents' 20% share in 2024. A National Energy Efficiency Building Renovation Programme with a budget of approximately €1.3 billion is expected in the second half of 2026, targeting the renovation of around 2,000 buildings by 2029. The Social Climate Plan – with a total budget of €2.28 billion, including €1 billion for energy efficiency measures focused on energy-poor households – is expected to launch in 2027. Additionally, since 2022 the municipality has replaced approximately 2,800 old heating devices with energy-efficient alternatives, with a further 4,250 replacements planned by 2028.

4.2 Vision

The Burgas Energy Office – Burgas' RC – has a vision which is grounded in two strategic municipal documents: the Long-Term Energy Efficiency Programme 2021–2030, which targets the renovation of at least 33% of the municipal building stock (non-residential) to class A or A+ by 2030; and the Long-Term Programme to Promote Renewable Energy Sources 2021–2030, which aims to increase the renewable energy share to 32% by 2030. Achieving these goals requires not only financing but also high levels of citizen engagement, technical guidance and administrative support – functions the RC is uniquely positioned to deliver.

The RC aims to evolve from an information office into a key implementation mechanism for EU and national policies at the local level. It can directly support renovation rates by helping homeowners' associations (HOAs) navigate complex application procedures, facilitating access to funding, and addressing coordination challenges among the 50+ households typical of Burgas' MFABs. The RC is also well positioned to support the Social Climate Fund by identifying energy-poor households and facilitating their access to targeted support.

4.3 Current resource centre operation

The Burgas RC opened in December 2022 and is located centrally, accessible by public transport, foot and bicycle. It is currently staffed by one full-time employee, with active collaboration from two municipal directorates: the Directorate for Strategic Planning (responsible for EU and national programme project development, 20 staff) and the Directorate for Construction and Urban Planning (responsible for the technical implementation of energy efficiency measures).

Since its opening, approximately 6,000 people have visited the RC, an average of 2,000 per year. Of these, 70% have been interested in building renovation programmes, 20% in heating device replacement, and 10% in photovoltaic system installation. Monthly running costs are approximately €1,800, covered by the municipal budget and EU project funding (no rent is paid as the premises are municipally owned).

A showroom for insulation materials and windows was established by a private company in April 2024 but has not achieved its intended purpose due to the lack of qualified staff, serving as a cautionary example for future private sector partnerships within the RC.

4.4 Sustainability pathway to 2030

Unlike Józsefváros, where the sustainability outlook is heavily contingent on uncertain future subsidy schemes, Burgas operates in a considerably more favourable and active national funding environment. The RC's pathway to 2030 is therefore less a question of whether subsidies will materialise and more a question of how the centre can evolve its services, staffing and financial model to meet growing and diversifying demand – including during the inevitable troughs between active funding calls.

Clients

The RC will continue to prioritise HOAs in MFABs, which represent the largest energy-saving potential in the city and constitute the core of its established client base. Burgas has already demonstrated national leadership in building renovation, with more than 300 completely renovated private MFABs, and the forthcoming National Energy Efficiency Building Renovation Programme (expected in the second half of 2026 with a budget of approximately €1.3 billion) and the Social Climate Plan (expected in 2027 with €1 billion allocated for energy efficiency measures) are likely to sustain and intensify this demand significantly.

A gradual shift is also planned towards explicitly energy-poor and vulnerable households, in line with the Social Climate Fund's priorities. Approximately 25,220 energy-poor households – around 29% of the municipal population – inhabit the municipality's worst-performing buildings, and the RC is well positioned to serve as the local access point for targeted support schemes directed at this group. Individual households in single-family homes are expected to become an increasingly relevant client group as upcoming national programmes extend eligibility beyond MFABs. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), given the growing availability of energy efficiency and renewable energy financing for businesses, are also identified as a future target audience. Financial institutions and intermediaries are a further emerging client category, particularly relevant in scenarios where subsidy intensity decreases and loan-based financing plays a greater role.

Services

The RC's service offer will broaden from its current primary function – information provision and application support for national funding programmes – towards a more integrated energy service hub. Core services will be maintained and expanded: detailed guidance on subsidy programmes and financial instruments, document preparation assistance for HOA applications, and training sessions and information days for residents and the building sector. To these will be added expanded technical advisory services, including guidance on insulation materials, window systems, heating technologies and energy performance classifications, building on the lessons of the underperforming private showroom and ensuring that any future technical advice is delivered by appropriately qualified staff.

Energy audits and technical assessments, offered as paid services, represent a strategically important addition to the portfolio. These would allow the RC to generate revenue during periods without active grant funding, maintaining staff activity and institutional visibility year-round. Renovation roadmaps – tailored assessments of a building's current condition, optimal intervention sequence, and expected savings – are a natural complement. Advisory services for SMEs and support for households in accessing financial institutions will further diversify the RC's value proposition.



The RC will maintain its hybrid delivery model, combining in-office consultations, telephone and email support, training events, and an increasingly active field presence. On-site visits to buildings, local information events in neighbourhoods, and follow-up visits to previously renovated buildings will gradually increase, addressing the persistent challenge of reaching more vulnerable households and residents in areas further from the central office. The RC's central location – in a municipally owned building in the heart of Burgas, accessible by public transport, foot and bicycle – remains a key asset and will be retained as the primary base of operations.

Human resources and financing

The RC's most pressing operational challenge is staffing. With one full-time employee currently, the centre has demonstrated that it cannot adequately serve demand during active funding cycles: the 2022 renovation call required three RC staff, ten staff from the Directorates for Construction and for Urban Planning for energy and technical audits, and ten staff from the Directorate for Strategic Planning for project preparation and submission. This combined capacity enabled Burgas to submit the most projects nationally (220). Future funding cycles of similar or greater scale will require at minimum a return to this level of support capacity.

The target staffing model for the RC itself is a minimum of three full-time employees, with the ability to draw on the broader municipal directorates as during past calls. Technical experts will be the priority addition, either as in-house staff or through a structured arrangement with external consultants and partner organisations such as the Centre for Energy Efficiency EnEffect and Energy Community Burgas-Slaveykov. A mixed model – keeping core coordination, advisory and citizen interface functions in-house while outsourcing specialised services such as audits and technical studies – is considered the most operationally flexible and financially sustainable approach.

The RC's current monthly operating costs of approximately €1,800 (covering salary, utilities and events, with no rent payable on the municipally-owned premises) provide a lean but functional baseline. Diversifying the financial base is a strategic priority. EU-funded projects will remain an important source, as will national programme funding including the Social Climate Fund. Revenue from paid services (e.g. energy audits, technical assessments and SME advisory) is expected to grow as a share of total income, providing a degree of counter-cyclical stability that pure grant dependency cannot. The RC will also continue to leverage its membership of the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Municipal Network for Energy Efficiency EcoEnergy to channel local experience into national policy discussions and access emerging funding opportunities at an early stage.

5. Resource centres in Kaišiadorys and Elektrėnai (Lithuania)

Deliverable D2.5

Lead Beneficiary: Metropolitan Research Institute

Authors: Kristina Didjūrgė (Kaišiadorys District Municipality), Evelina Gruzdiene (LCA), Laura Rudžianskaite, Vilija Leleivienė (EKŪ)

The Lithuanian sustainability plan is a joint document covering two separate municipalities and RCs: Kaišiadorys (a newly established RC) and Elektrėnai (which opened in December 2025). Both operate within the national Lithuanian framework, which is described below before their individual plans are presented.

5.1 National context: Lithuania

Lithuania manages the renovation of MFABs through national programmes funded by the EU and administered by the Environmental Projects Management Agency (APVA). The current state subsidy covers 100% of project preparation and administration costs, and 30–40% of energy efficiency investment costs, with a fixed annual loan interest rate of 3% for up to 20 years provided by the National Development Bank (UAB ILTE). Low-income residents eligible for heating compensation receive 100% coverage of all renovation costs including loan interest and principal. An ongoing call under the Modernisation Fund has allocated €165 million to support renovation to at least energy class B with a minimum 40% reduction in heating costs. A separate €200 million call for prefabricated panel renovation was also launched, offering construction cost financing with an additional 10% subsidy for heating system renovation.

Lithuania's legal framework requires all apartment buildings to be managed by an administrator, an HOA, or a joint venture. Buildings are required to accumulate mandatory repair funds. From July 2026, these contributions will increase significantly for buildings in poor condition or without long-term plans. Commercial bank lending for HOAs remains difficult due to income uncertainty and regulatory barriers.

5.2 Kaišiadorys resource centre

Local context

Kaišiadorys is a small district municipality strategically located between Vilnius and Kaunas, covering 1,087 km² with just over 28,500 residents. The local economy centres on SMEs, agriculture and wood processing, with an average gross monthly salary of €1,676 placing it in the middle tier of Lithuanian municipalities. The district has an ageing population, with 23% of its residents over 65.



Figure 5: Areas of MFABs and family houses (inside blue borders) in Kaišiadorys



Photo 3: Typical apartment buildings in Kaišiadorys

The RC's most pressing operational challenge is staffing. With one full-time employee currently, the RC's housing stock includes 128 apartment buildings in Kaišiadorys city, predominantly concrete panel and brick structures of up to five storeys built between 1970 and 1980. No new apartment buildings were constructed between 1994 and 2025. Unrenovated buildings typically fall into energy classes E, F or G, with an average heating consumption of 292.7 kWh/m²/year; after renovation, this drops to approximately 116.4 kWh/m²/year, representing a 59% reduction. By the end of 2025, 21 of the 128 apartment buildings (around 15%) had been renovated, with 7 further buildings under renovation.

Energy poverty is one of the primary challenges facing the district, particularly for its most vulnerable citizens. Currently, 22 households per 1,000 residents receive heating cost compensation.

Residents eligible for heating cost compensation (where expenses exceed 10% of the income threshold) receive 100% state funding for all renovation costs, including loan interest and principal payments. However, despite substantial financial backing, many low-income residents, particularly seniors, remain hesitant. This resistance is often rooted in a lack of trust in construction quality, a fear of financial commitment, and a general passivity inherited from previous social systems.

Furthermore, media reports of rising construction costs and contractor bankruptcies have contributed to a culture of uncertainty, making the role of a trusted informational hub like the RC essential for project initiation.

Vision

Kaišiadorys has set ambitious renovation targets aligned with the national trajectory: it aims for 5–10 MFABs to be renovated annually between 2026 and 2030, reaching 50 renovated buildings by 2030 (approximately 39% of the stock of 128 buildings), exceeding the national target of 25–30%. The RC intends to act as a comprehensive OSS providing all necessary information, technical guidance and financial advice for MFAB renovation from a single source. Its role as an intermediary between homeowners, building administrators and the municipality is central, translating complex technical, legal and financial information into accessible guidance for residents.

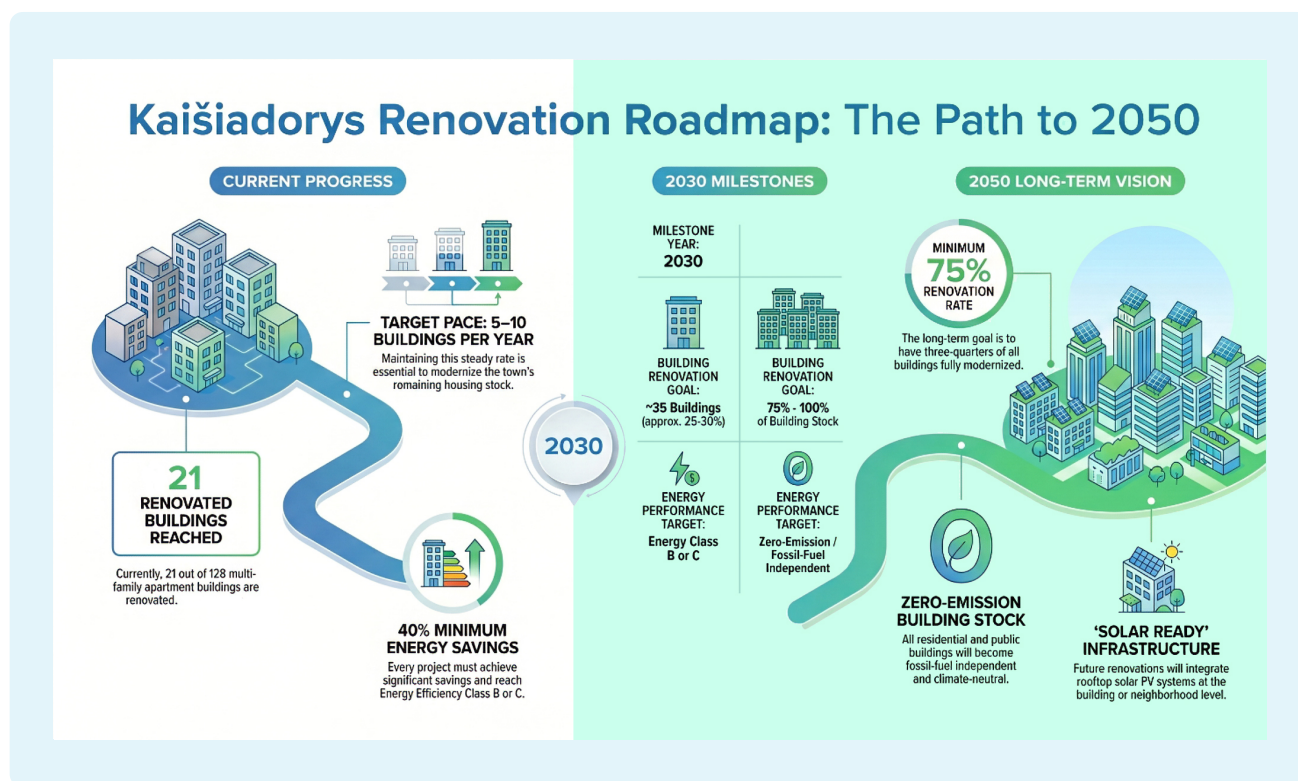


Figure 6: Kaišiadorys renovation roadmap



Figure 7: Renovation map of Kaišiadorys city

Sustainability pathway to 2030

The RC's primary target audience is apartment building owners and HOA representatives, with a developing focus on individual homeowners and socially vulnerable groups. Planned services include individual and group consultations, educational training, community outreach near residential buildings, standardised preliminary building assessments, energy performance certification support, and financial planning assistance. Measurable targets include 3,000+ residents reached through annual awareness campaigns, 450–500 RC consultation visits per year, 12–15 neighbourhood meetings, and 120 participants in quarterly stakeholder training.

The RC has only recently opened and is in the process of establishing its methodology and client base. Currently, one staff member is supported entirely by ComActivate project funding. Post-project, the municipality is preparing a transition strategy to secure the RC's long-term viability, involving two potential pathways:

- **Continued EU funding:** the municipality intends to apply for other EU projects to secure ongoing external support for the RC's specialised activities.
- **Municipal budget integration:** if project-based funding is unavailable, the municipality plans to support the RC's operations directly through the municipal budget.

By securing a stable financial source, the municipality aims to establish the RC as a permanent facilitator to residential building refurbishment. This role acts as a strategic link to help residents navigate the complexities of building renovation, while ensuring that the municipality remains on track to meet its 2030 energy efficiency goals.

5.3 Elektrėnai resource centre

Local context

Elektrėnai is a young city in central Lithuania, founded in 1962 alongside the country's largest power plant. According to the latest Lithuanian census data (2021), the municipality has 23,376 residents, of which 17.3% are aged 65 or over. There are 5,189 residential buildings registered in the municipality, of which 334 are MFABs, accounting for 47.1% of total residential floor space.

Almost all apartment buildings in Elektrėnai were built before 1993 using brick and large-panel construction. Heat energy consumption in unrenovated buildings averages 286 kWh/m², dropping to approximately 116.9 kWh/m² after renovation (a 58% reduction). By the end of 2025, 75 buildings had been renovated (22.4% of the total MFAB stock), with 3 further buildings under renovation – a significant increase from the 13% renovation rate at the start of 2024, partly attributed to the project's activities.

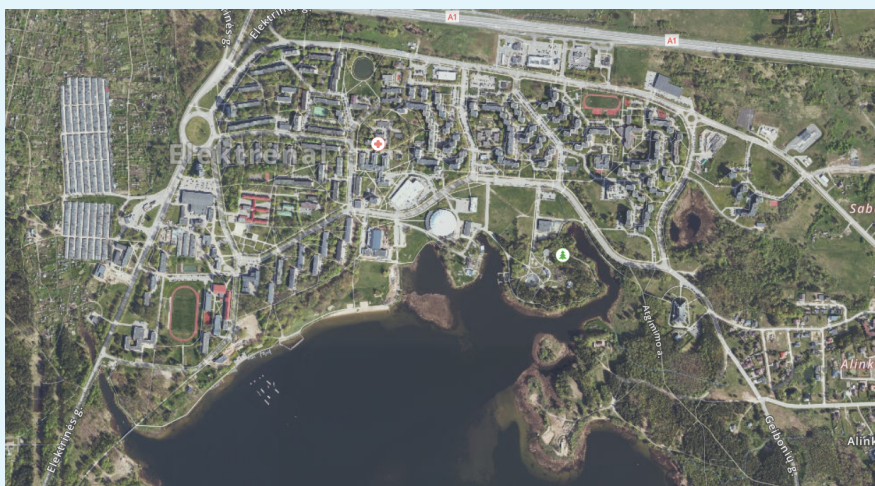


Figure 8: Elektrėnai from above. Apartment buildings are concentrated in the central part of the city.



Photo 4: Example of unrenovated buildings: a five-storey MFAB in Pergales 35, Elektrėnai

Vision

The municipality aims to reduce energy consumption by 15–20% by 2030 through apartment building renovations. Renovated buildings should achieve at least energy efficiency class B, with rooftop solar photovoltaic systems integrated at building or neighbourhood level. The RC's primary mission is to raise awareness, conduct educational activities, and engage directly with target audiences. Achieving or initiating the renovation of at least 50 further buildings by 2030 is set as a major milestone.

Current resource centre operation

The Elektrėnai RC opened in December 2025 and is staffed by two part-time experts (totalling 20 hours per week) who operate in person, online, and through community meetings near residential buildings. The RC welcomes all residents, with the current client base primarily consisting of apartment building owners. In February 2026 alone, 46 people visited the centre. Residents predominantly seek information on how to start the renovation process, potential energy savings, costs, and available measures. The RC has noted a strong preference for in-person consultations and on-site group meetings over online interaction.

Sustainability pathway to 2030

The RC plans to reach residents of at least 100 buildings by 2030, with particular attention to socially vulnerable individuals, seniors (65+), people on low incomes, and young families. It will maintain its focus on apartment building renovation, with possible future expansion to single-family home consultations. The centre plans continued participation in EU projects under the National Building Renovation Action Plan and Social Climate Fund frameworks. Funding is currently being actively sought; in a worst-case scenario, activities would be scaled down to a basic information and referral function. Beyond the core consulting experts, the long-term staffing model will require a public relations specialist and a dedicated budget for training, events and outreach.

6. Cross-cutting findings and comparative analysis

6.1 Shared challenges

Across all four RCs, several common challenges emerge:

- **Financial sustainability:** All RCs depend significantly on external project funding and/or municipal budgets, with long-term sustainability less secure than would be expected for mainstream public bodies. The irregular availability of national and EU subsidy programmes creates peaks and troughs in demand that strain organisational capacity.
- **Subsidy dependency:** High grant rates (100% in Bulgaria, up to 100% for low-income residents in Lithuania) have shaped expectations among citizens, creating behavioural barriers when co-financing requirements increase. Communicating realistic future funding conditions is an emerging priority for all RCs.
- **Reaching vulnerable households:** Despite the centrality of energy poverty to each plan, more vulnerable residents – elderly people, low-income families, and those in peripheral areas – remain harder to reach through office-based engagement alone. All plans envisage targeted outreach and community engagement to address this gap.
- **Staffing and expertise:** All RCs operate with limited staff relative to demand, particularly during active funding periods. The necessary skill sets are diverse, combining technical energy knowledge, grant administration, social work competencies, facilitation, and public communication.
- **Behavioural barriers:** Scepticism among elderly residents, distrust of contractors, and the fear of long-term financial commitments are recurring obstacles, requiring sustained engagement and trust-building over time.

6.2 Comparative snapshot

	Józsefváros (HU)	Burgas (BG)	Kaišiadorys (LT)	Elektrėnai (LT)
Year opened	Autumn 2025	December 2022	May 2026	December 2025
FTE staff at RC	4 + 1 subcontracted part-time	1 (+ 20 in directorates)	1	2 (part-time)
Visitors to date	~10 energy consultant clients, hundreds of municipal tenants	~6,000	Just opened	46 (to February 2026)
Renovation share	Very low (minimal MFAB subsidies from the local municipality)	300+ buildings (leading nationally)	~15% (21/128 MFABs)	~23% (75/334 MFABs)
Key 2030 target	40% of MFABs refurbished	Expand to integrated energy hub	50 renovated MFABs (39%)	100 buildings engaged and 50 renovated
Funding model	District and Budapest municipal + EU projects	Municipal + EU projects	Municipal + EU projects	Municipal (EKŪ) + EU projects

Table 1: Comparative snapshot of the four resource centres covered in this summary report

6.3 Lessons and transferable insights

Several insights emerge from the cross-reading of the three plans that may be of relevance to RCs across the EU:

Institutional embedding is a key survival strategy

The Burgas RC's integration with two active municipal directorates effectively multiplies its operational capacity well beyond its formal staff complement. Józsefváros' embedding in a wider municipal institutional ecosystem – with coordinated roles for the Grants Office, Communications Office, and social service provider – similarly broadens impact. RCs that operate in isolation are at greater risk when external funding ends.

The 100% subsidy effect creates long-term behavioural barriers

Burgas' experience illustrates how sustained 100% grant coverage shapes citizen expectations in ways that are difficult to shift. The 2022 pilot with 80/20 co-financing attracted minimal interest. This pattern is mirrored in Lithuania, where low-income residents receiving full heating cost compensation may lack the incentive to engage with renovation. RCs must develop communication strategies that reframe renovation as an investment rather than a cost.

Small towns require different engagement models

The Elektrėnai and Kaišiadorys plans highlight that residents in smaller urban centres strongly prefer in-person, face-to-face engagement over online services. Group meetings at buildings are more effective than office consultations. This contrasts with assumptions underlying many national OSS frameworks, which default to centralised office-based models.

The showroom model requires careful partner selection

Burgas' experience with the private company showroom for insulation materials illustrates that commercial partnerships within RCs can backfire if the partner lacks qualified staff and is not invested in promoting the service. Any private sector co-location arrangement should be underpinned by clear performance requirements.

Social skills are as important as technical expertise

The Józsefváros plan explicitly notes that any future expanded office serving MFABs would require social facilitation skills alongside technical expertise. Community organisers are the foundational layer of trust-building in a context of historical scepticism regarding institutions.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

The four resource centres examined in this summary report represent a valuable and diverse portfolio of experience in publicly-operated building renovation support. They demonstrate that publicly-operated, community-oriented RCs can be effective catalysts for energy efficiency in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, provided they have appropriate institutional anchoring, sustained funding, and a nuanced understanding of local social dynamics.

Looking ahead to 2030, the key conditions for success are:

Institutional integration:

RCs should be formally embedded within municipal structures or mandated OSS frameworks to ensure long-term security, rather than remaining dependent on project funding.

Financial diversification:

RCs must develop diversified funding models combining municipal budgets, EU project funding, and – where appropriate – paid services for non-vulnerable clients.

Staffing at scale:

The demands of active subsidy periods require substantially more staff than the steady-state minimum. RCs should develop flexible staffing models that can scale up during funding cycles.

Proactive outreach:

Office-based engagement is insufficient to reach energy-poor and socially vulnerable households. RCs should expand field-based, community-level activities to address this gap.

Alignment with upcoming frameworks:

The Social Climate Fund, the National Building Renovation Action Plans and the recast EPBD's OSS mandate represent the most significant near-term opportunities to formalise and resource the RC model. RCs should actively engage with national processes to position themselves as preferred implementing partners.

The ComActivate project has demonstrated that community-oriented resource centres can make a meaningful contribution to the green transition in Central and Eastern Europe. The Sustainability, Business and Investment Plans presented in this summary reflect the ambition and commitment of the four municipalities active in the project, while honestly acknowledging the uncertainty and constraints they face. The challenge now is to translate these plans into action so that the RCs (or OSS) are established as resilient institutions capable of serving residents for the decades of sustained renovation effort ahead.



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