

# EmPowerIngUs

## Innovative Transfer Network Quarterly Network Journal no. 3



URBACT



Co-funded by  
the European Union  
Interreg

# Index

This document represents the Quarterly Network Journal no. 3 for the EmPowerIngUs ITN project partnership. It was developed by the Lead Expert Klemen Strmšnik with city-level inputs from all ULG Coordinators – Alejandro Lopez Parejo (Getafe, ES), Yasin Tatou and Fabio Barbero (Etterbeek, BE), Fernando Gomes and Liliana Fernandes (Maia, PT), Georgi Petkov (Pomorie, BG), Konstantinos Karampourniotis and Laoura Vavaliou (Trikala, GR) – with the support of their project teams and ULG members. It aims to present the EmPowerIngUs project partnership and communicate our transfer progress to interested cities across Europe.

<b>1. ABOUT THE EmPowerIngUs PROJECT AND OUR CITIES .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. ABOUT THE PROGRESS MADE IN URBACT LOCAL GROUPS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. OUR IMPRESSIONS FROM THE 3<sup>rd</sup> TRANSNATIONAL NETWORK MEETING IN POMORIE (BULGARIA).....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>4. OUR KEY TRANSFER PROCESS MOMENTS FROM THIS QUARTER .....</b>	<b>15</b>

## 1. ABOUT THE EmPowerIngUs PROJECT AND OUR CITIES

The success of the Energy Poverty Intelligence Unit (EPIU) and its recognition as a Good Practice by the URBACT Programme have positioned Getafe (ES) as one of the most active and innovative cities in the fight against energy poverty.

To fully grasp the logic behind the EPIU project and its good practice, one must first understand its underlying philosophy, which can be summarized in the following statement:

***"A home is much more than just a building.  
It encompasses the entire built environment,  
including the people who live within it."***



EPIU's integrated and participatory approach operates across three scales (Home, Building, and Neighbourhood), utilizing three key tools (Intelligence Unit, One-Stop Shop, and Tailor-Made Solutions) to drive action through three stages (Understand, Support, and Act).

This enabled Getafe to compose a transnational partnership and develop the EmPowerIngUs Innovative Transfer Network – a project aiming to reflect on the key achievements and lessons learned from the EPIU Good Practice while transferring its methodologies and approaches to four other cities: [Etterbeek \(Belgium\)](#),

[Maia \(Portugal\)](#), [Pomorie \(Bulgaria\)](#), and [Trikala \(Greece\)](#).

Rather than being a static model, EPIU was designed as an evolving process – one that is continuously refined to better serve the citizens of Getafe and beyond. This commitment to innovation is why Getafe is leveraging the EmPowerIngUs project to further enhance and improve the EPIU Good Practice.



For more information about the EPIU Good Practice please visit the [EPIU project website](#), the [EPIU UIA profile](#), or the [EPIU Portico profile](#). You can follow the progress of the EmPowerIngUs project on [our URBACT website](#), as well as [EMSV's website](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#) channel.

## 2. ABOUT THE PROGRESS MADE IN URBACT LOCAL GROUPS

### 2.1 Progress made by the ULG of our Lead Partner city – Getafe (ES)

The URBACT Local Group (ULG) of Getafe continues to play a key role within the EmPowerIngUs project, in which Getafe leads the European knowledge transfer network. The group is structured around three main thematic areas —social, urban, and technological— working in coordination to adapt and apply EmPowerIngUs methodologies within the framework of the Getafe Rehabilita strategy.

#### 1. Social Group (cluster 1)

The Social Group has continued and strengthened its collaboration with the Spanish Red Cross, extending the existing cooperation agreement until 2026 to ensure continuity in actions addressing energy poverty and social vulnerability.

New institutional synergies have been created with the Municipal Health Department, which has joined the group as a collaborating area. As a result, the integration of cold and heat wave response plans into ULG activities is planned for upcoming meetings scheduled in January, aligned with the Municipal Health Coordination Table.

The group has also maintained active collaboration with third-sector organisations and foundations. A key milestone is the agreement for a new photovoltaic installation at Lilas Street 1, in the Margaritas neighbourhood, promoted by Fundación Naturgy, contributing to local energy transition and social impact.

Progress has continued with the Getafe Potencia Energy Community, including the organisation of the end-of-year community event on 17 December at the Sector III Civic Centre, attended by energy community partners and the Mayor of Getafe, reinforcing political commitment and citizen engagement.

In parallel, several rehabilitated buildings and households have been visited to showcase and give visibility to the actions implemented under Getafe Rehabilita. In this context, on Friday 19, [Getafe received the visit of Marcos Ros, Member of the European Parliament](#), who expressed interest in the city's rehabilitation policies and European engagement. During the visit, the municipality highlighted its participation in networks such as URBACT, its leadership in the EmPowerIngUs project, and the collaborative work developed through the ULG.



#### 2. Urban Action Group (cluster 2)

Within the Urban Action Group, progress during the reporting period has focused on strengthening internal coordination between key municipal departments, particularly Urban Planning, Social Services, and Maintenance. This collaboration has reinforced a cross-sectoral approach to urban regeneration and supported the practical application of the EPIU methodology within the municipality.

The Urban Planning and Maintenance Departments continue to integrate EPIU tools into the Getafe Rehabilita strategy, ensuring a participatory, data-driven and multi-departmental approach to urban transformation. The involvement of Social Services has further strengthened the social dimension of interventions, helping align physical rehabilitation works with social support and inclusion objectives.



Looking ahead, the municipality expects to make tangible progress in forthcoming public works interventions in the Juan de la Cierva neighbourhood. These actions are envisaged as a concrete application of the EPIU neighbourhood-scale approach, combining improvements to the built environment with social and energy-related measures. The planned interventions will be developed in collaboration with the local energy community and neighbourhood social actors, reinforcing place-based regeneration and community engagement at district level.

### 3. Technological Group (cluster 3)

The Technological Group continues to focus on strengthening the digital and technological foundations supporting the Getafe Rehabilita Strategy and the implementation of the EmPoweringUs framework. During this period, specific collaboration has been initiated with Universidad Carlos III de Madrid through the EITEL project, aimed at the sensorisation of dwellings to improve data collection, monitoring, and evidence-based decision-making in the context of energy efficiency and healthy housing.

In parallel, the municipality is collaborating with the research group led by Professor Agapito for the development and implementation of the “Healthy Homes” (Hogares Saludables) data structuring tool, which is expected to be operational in early 2026. This tool will support the systematic organisation, analysis, and visualisation of household-level data, reinforcing the social and health dimensions of urban rehabilitation policies.

Despite these advances at the academic and project level, progress remains dependent on strengthening internal coordination. The municipality is currently pending the scheduling of an internal meeting with the Municipal IT Department of the City of Getafe, which is considered a key step to ensure interoperability, internal alignment, and the long-term integration of these technological developments within municipal systems.

#### National and International Collaboration

Getafe’s participation in the EmPoweringUs project continues to strengthen its national and European positioning in the fields of sustainable urban development, energy transition, and social inclusion.

Since October 2025, the ULG has consolidated its strategic engagement and visibility at both local and European levels. In October 2025, the Mayor of Getafe, Sara Hernández, presented the city’s innovative model of urban regeneration, energy efficiency and poverty-energy reduction at the European Parliament in Brussels, highlighting the role of Hogares Saludables in shaping local policy and advancing integrated approaches to climate resilience and social inclusion.



In parallel, the municipality is currently finalising its incorporation into key European networks, notably Climate Alliance and Energy Cities, reinforcing its long-term commitment to climate action, energy transition, and knowledge exchange at European level.

Getafe has also actively contributed to European Urban Initiative (UIA/EUI)–related fora, including participation in several events held in Fuenlabrada, where experiences and lessons learned on integrated urban development and innovation were shared with other European cities.

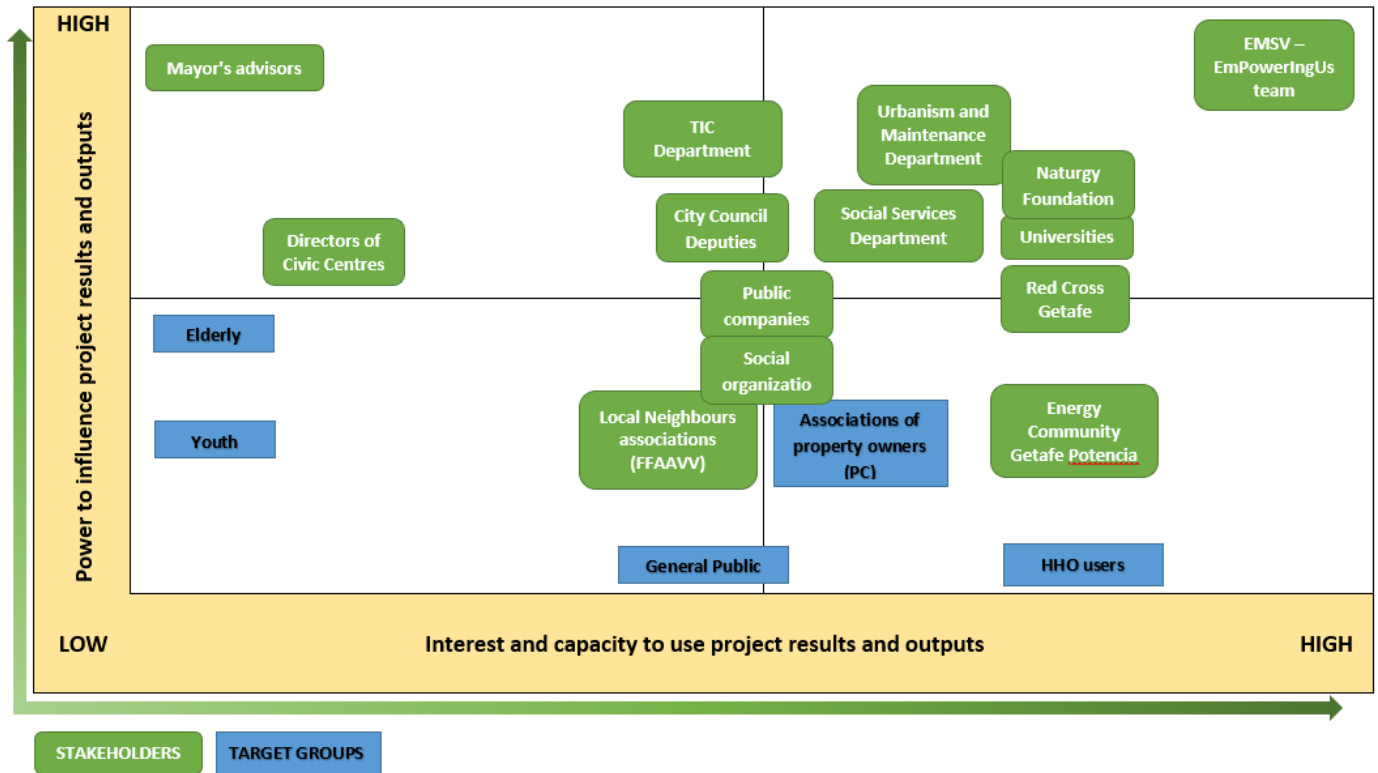


At the request of the European Energy Poverty Advisory Hub (EPAH) of the European Commission, Getafe hosted and contributed to the Covenant of Mayors and EPAH event on energy poverty and data, held in Getafe on 19 November. This event strengthened the city’s role as a reference municipality in addressing energy poverty through data-driven and integrated approaches.

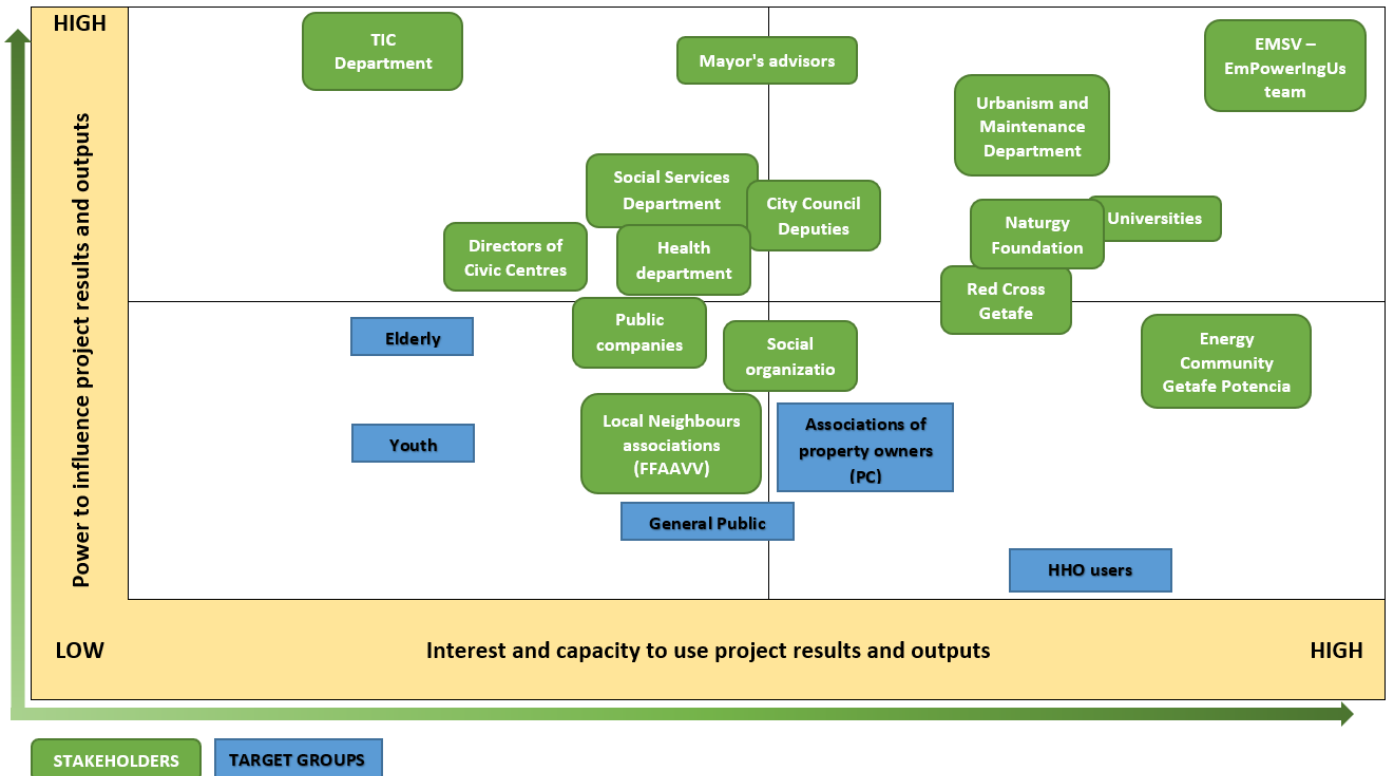
At national level, Getafe has been invited to share its experience and strategy in multiple high-level forums. The municipality was invited to participate in the CONAMA Local Conference in Viladecans, contributing to discussions on sustainable urban policies. In addition, Getafe took part in the National Conference of AVS – Public Housing Managers, held in Vitoria on 12 December, where it presented the Getafe rehabilitation and urban regeneration strategy alongside leading national references in the field of housing, rehabilitation, and urban regeneration.

These national and international engagements reinforce Getafe’s visibility, consolidate strategic alliances, and support the scaling and transferability of the Getafe Rehabilita model within European and national policy frameworks.

WHO WAS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE IN GETAFE DURING THE PREVIOUS QUARTER



WHO IS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE IN GETAFE - STAKEHOLDERS POWER/INTEREST MATRIX TODAY



Note:

- Due to the invitation to Getafe to the Covenant of Mayors event as speaker the appreciation, support and contact with the mayor's advisors has been strengthened given the success of the visit to the European Parliament.
- Coordination with the IT department has become increasingly complicated due to operational issues and IT workload. Several urgent matters are currently pending resolution through sectoral meetings.
- The coordination with Urbanism has been reinforced by the development of and participation in procedures and processes within urban-scale actions. Weekly progress continues to be made with Urbanism in the development of joint actions and criteria.

- *The coordination with Maintenance has been reinforced by the development of and participation in procedures and processes within urban-scale actions. Weekly progress continues to be made with Maintenance in the development of joint actions and criteria.*
- *A collaboration agreement has been signed between EMSV and UC3M for the development of clustering activities and data analysis using the structuring tool. In addition, a print and digital publication of the studies and work carried out during 2025 is being finalised with URJC.*
- *An agreement has been reached with the municipal health department to advance procedures and processes for dealing with cold and heat waves, as well as to include EMSV in the municipal health committee.*

### 2.2 Progress made by the ULG of our Transfer city – Etterbeek (BE)



Etterbeek's ULG consists of a core group (Level 1) with a stable composition, and a broader group (Level 2) whose membership is more flexible, adapting to the themes addressed and the expertise required. Etterbeek's ULG activities in this period were focused on:

1. The preparation, execution, and follow-up of the transnational city meeting in Pomorie (September 2025) with feedback from the Etterbeek delegation and sharing of the lessons learned with the ULG. We also actively worked on financial reporting in the Synergie portal: collecting the required data and financial evidence, and submitting them in the system. Furthermore, we held a brainstorming session to collect feedback from ULG participants to

feed the MTR survey and appointed Benjamin Sornin de Leysat in to the position of the Etterbeek's Communications Officer for the project. A lot of our attention was devoted to development of first draft of Etterbeek's investment plan (submitted in November 2025).

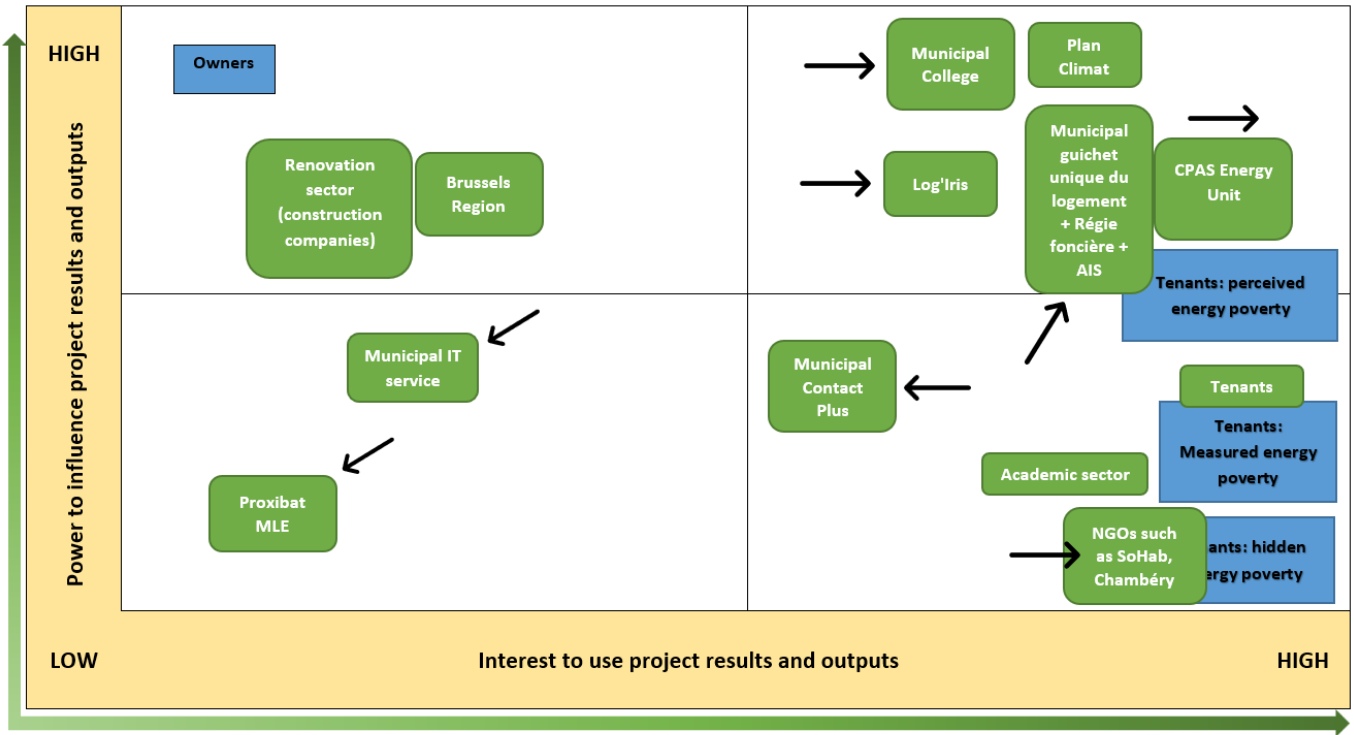
#### 2. Testing activities:

- Etterbeek's main testing activity ("energy cadastre" of the Régie Foncière housing stock) is ongoing. The EPB certificates have been collected during the reporting period and the consulting firm selected is currently busy to provide an overall analysis. The first results are expected in April 2026.
- Awareness-raising workshops on the rational use of energy and the proper use of heating techniques addressed to the tenants of the Municipal Property Management Agency (Régie Foncière):
  - Meetings with NGOs specialising in energy animations to ensure the feasibility of our technical requirements, planning, and workshop structure.
  - Finalisation of the content of the public procurement procedure (attached for information, in French). The public procurement is expected to be approved by the municipal authorities in early 2026. Due to administrative reasons and the necessity to realise these activities in winter, the workshops themselves will take place in autumn-winter 2026.
  - «NRClick scan » (monitoring of the energy consumption at the building-level for the Régie Foncière's buildings). The manager of the Régie Foncière department is in contact with the distribution network operator for electricity and natural gas in Brussels (Sibelga) to implement a pilot to monitor the energy consumption of selected buildings of the Régie Foncière's building stock. At the moment, the establishment of the "NRClick scan" tool is ongoing. This activity is ongoing, but delayed due to lack of human resources.
- Workshops on the rational use of heating and the understanding of the energy market were dedicated to precarious/fragile groups (single mothers, see photos attached). Four workshops took place in October and November in the Town hall. Benjamin Sornin de Leysat, the energy advisor, animated the sessions. On average 5 women took part in these workshops which dealt with energy precarity in its broader context and focused more specifically on security, safety, humidity and insulation challenges.
- An aerial thermography campaign will be carried out in winter-spring 2026 to assess heat loss from rooftops across Etterbeek. This activity will also be leveraged by the ULG to raise awareness among citizens about the links between insulation, energy poverty, and greenhouse gas emissions.



3. A ULG sub-group has met regularly to explore how other cities in Belgium have tackled the challenges of collective renovation, and notably how to create, maintain and nurture a group of engaged citizens willing to start renovation works in their properties. A specific attention is given to: i) the social/human component and the role of the municipality in fostering trust; ii) the impact of heating behaviour; ii) the obstacles to renovation. Energy renovation and citizens' participation is a political priority in Etterbeek. The topic of energy poverty will be explored as much as possible in every citizens' meetings, activity, etc. organised in 2026.

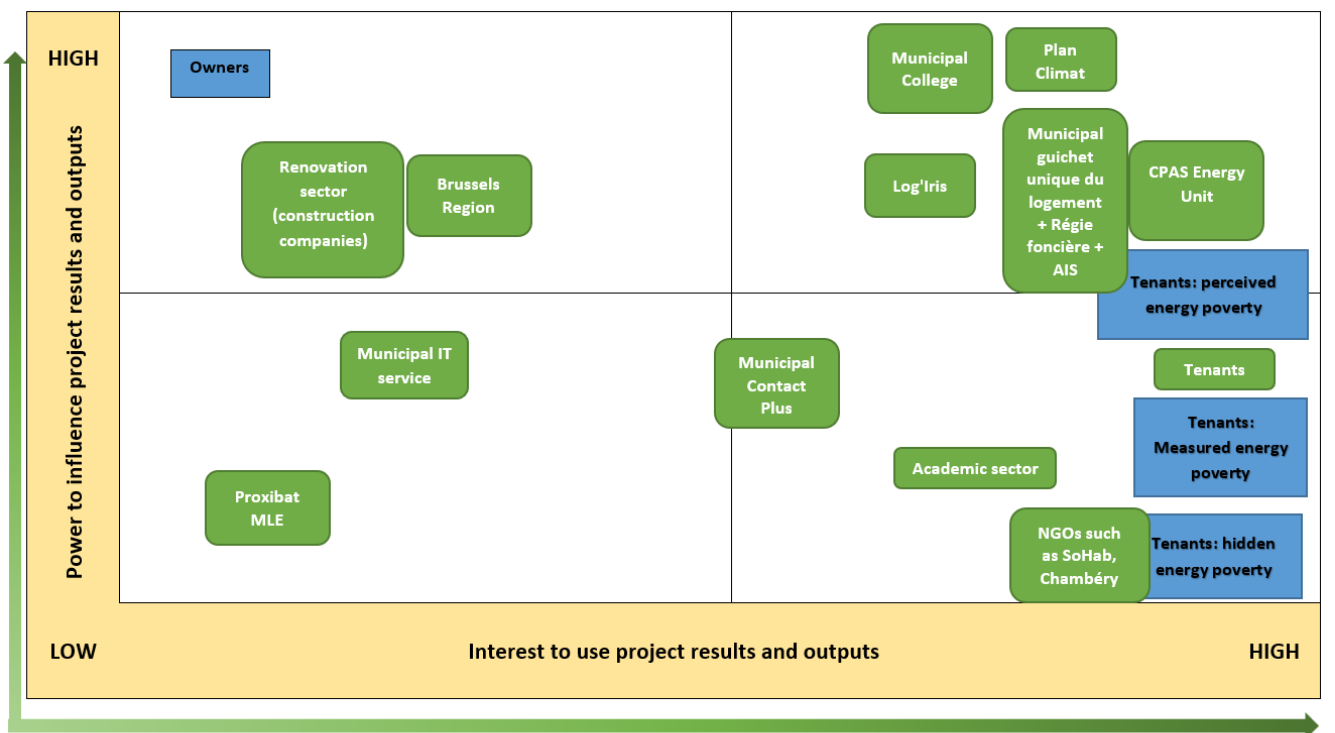
**WHO WAS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE IN ETTERBEEK DURING THE PREVIOUS QUARTER**



Arrows show the change of position (back of the arrow = previous position)

STAKEHOLDERS TARGET GROUPS

**WHO IS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE IN ETTERBEEK - STAKEHOLDERS POWER/INTEREST MATRIX TODAY**



STAKEHOLDERS TARGET GROUPS

### 2.3 Progress made by the ULG of our Transfer city – MAIA (PT)

Maia’s ULG has been following a dual philosophy – working with Maia’s Municipality internal Ecosystem and Maia’s External Ecosystem. As one can expect, **Maia’s Municipality Ecosystem** is a more “restrict” format allowing fluid and effective discussions among internal units, always targeting agile decision-making processes. Some examples of topics we focused on in the last period are:

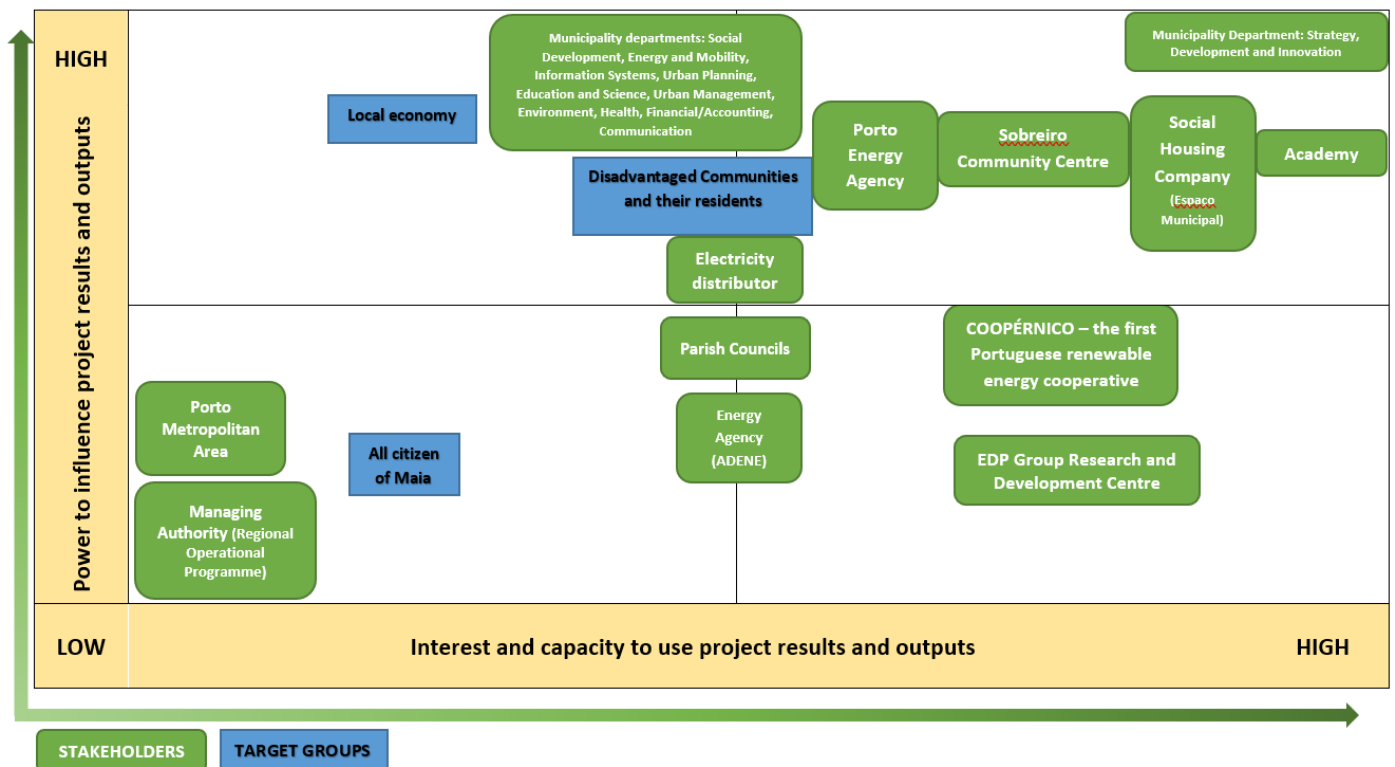
- Energy and Mobility;
- Data;
- Social Development;
- “Espaço Municipal” – Social Housing;
- Maia University.

This setup supports Maia’s External Ecosystem – a decentralized approach has also been adopted, with ULG sessions being held across strategic locations in the territory, the ten (10) parishes). This format aims to foster closer engagement with local communities and directly involve key territorial actors and citizens. We’ve already targeted 2: “Cidade da Maia” and “Castêlo da Maia”. Next stop in January 2026: Milheirós. Until now, we’ve already organized 7 ULG meetings. We plan to have our next 8th ULG meeting early 2026, and we hope to be able to robust the role of our parishes regarding OSS. As you can see below, in this period there has been no significant movement within our ULG.

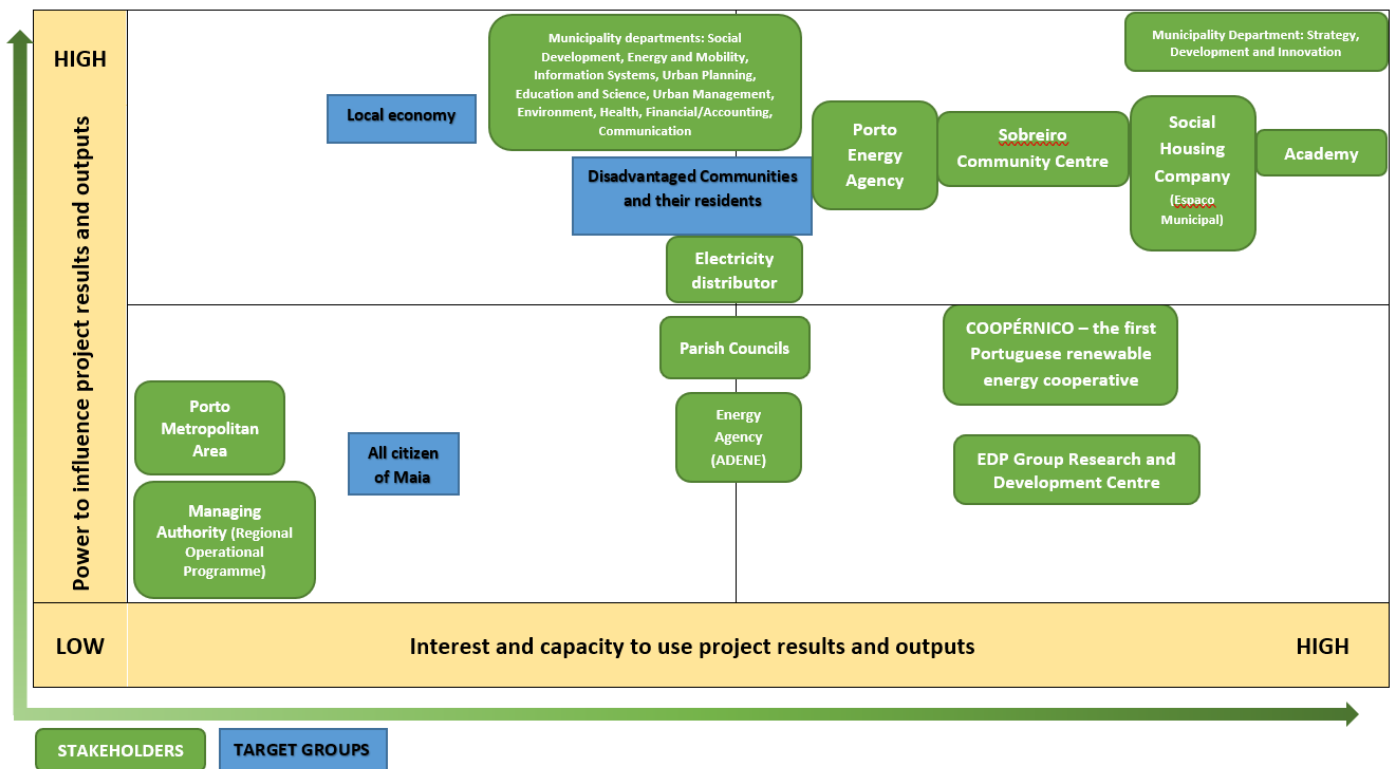
In this period, we also experienced a few “shake-ups” – due to local elections in Portugal and some unexpected departures of our colleagues we decided to shift our work towards developing two ideas that are being discussed within our ULG:

- Project Enfield: as already stated in our Key Transfer Process Moments, due to the participation of EDP New in our ULG Group, we were challenged to participate on a EU Project Innovation Scheme designated “ENFIELD project: Early Signs of Energy Poverty”, who will help us to develop an IA Model for “detecting” signs of energy poverty. We are currently waiting for clearance from our Data Protection Officer (DPO);
- Driving Urban Transitions (DUT) Initiative: We and our Social Housing Company “Espaço Municipal” were challenged by NTNU: Norwegian University of Science and Technology, to apply a proposal on Fighting Energy Poverty. We’ll have more news in January.

#### WHO WAS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE IN MAIA DURING THE PREVIOUS PERIOD



WHO IS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE IN MAIA - STAKEHOLDERS POWER/INTEREST MATRIX TODAY



2.4 Progress made by the ULG of our Transfer city – POMORIE (BG)

The URBACT Local Group of Pomorie is built on the existing Local Action Groups (LAGs) with representatives of diverse local stakeholders. In Pomorie Municipality are functioning two LAGs: Fisheries Local Action Group Pomorie and Local Action Group Pomorie. They are established in such a way that they encompass representatives of all relevant and diverse stakeholders, including: local public authority, NGOs, business, citizens and others – all of them relevant to the among which:

- Private sector: construction companies, innovation start-up company, etc.
- Non-profit sector: associations of owners of multi-family residential buildings; Prosveta Community centre, Community support centre, Municipal Social Service Enterprise, representatives of vulnerable groups, Fishing Association, etc.
- Public sector – representatives of Pomorie Municipality - engineer, lawyer.

In the period from September to November at a local level Pomorie team organized a few key activities:

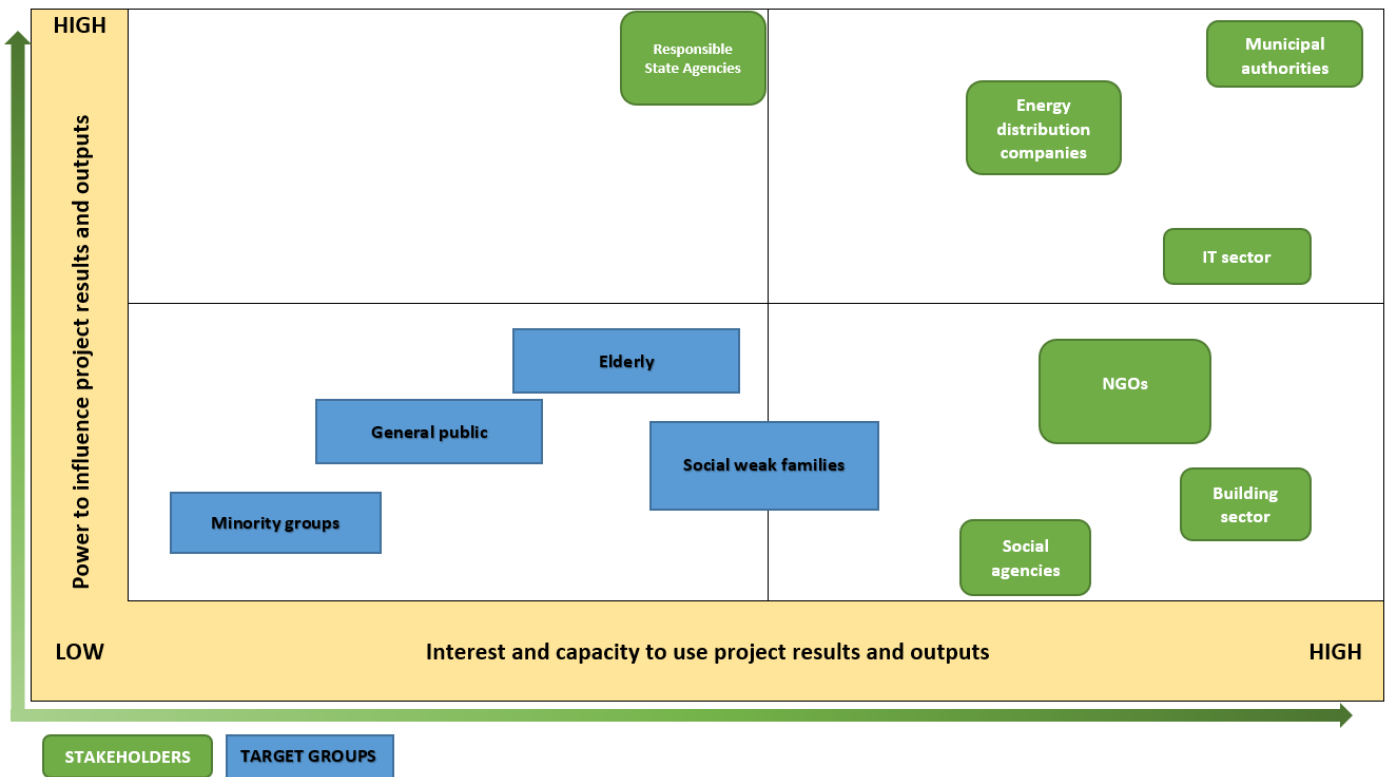
- Awareness raising event on 6<sup>th</sup> September – meeting with citizens within the Crafts festival;
- ULG meeting on 12<sup>nd</sup> September – discussion about: the progress of the project, potential data sources, preparation for the upcoming transnational meeting;
- Transnational meeting in Pomorie 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> September – we hosted an international meeting under the project. The Pomorie team presented the progress of various projects related to energy efficiency - renovation of residential buildings, implementation of energy-efficient measures in public buildings, restoration of old buildings, as well as replacement of street lighting in all constituent settlements. The leading partner Getafe presented examples and appropriate technical solutions for improvement of the built-up area, based on the company’s experience. Various methods of bill optimisation were shared. The delegation visited buildings in different districts of the city, including the renovation works at residential building 25 in Svoboda district, Pomorie.
- Operational meeting within the team, tasks dissemination and writing of the draft Investment plan.
- Online meeting with all project partners on 12<sup>th</sup> November.



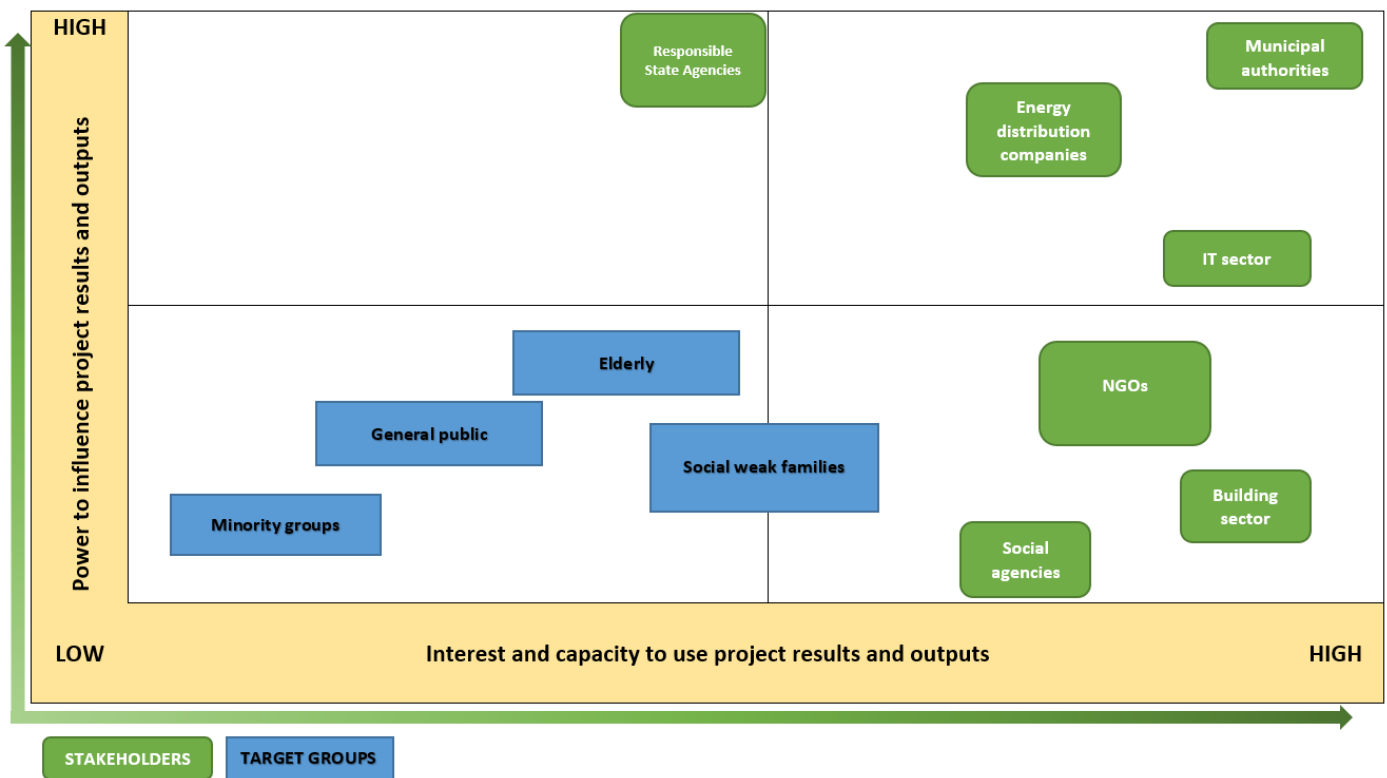
- ULG meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November – we met the new director of Municipal enterprise for social services Mrs Tanya Naneva. The team introduced and involved her in the project. We discussed some budget and data issues, related to the future trips and to the local GDPR agency.

As you can see below, in this period there has been no significant movement within our ULG.

**WHO WAS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE IN POMORIE DURING THE PREVIOUS PERIOD**



**WHO IS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE IN POMORIE - STAKEHOLDERS POWER/INTEREST MATRIX TODAY**



## 2.5 Progress made by the ULG of our Transfer city – TRIKALA (GR)

Our ULG is composed out of two groups. The core group (Municipality, Municipal Development Agency e-Trikala, Urban Development, Municipal Social Services, Municipal Community Centre), holds primary responsibility for the project’s best practices and knowledge transfer and implementation on local level. The wider group (public companies, utilities, interested individuals) offers support on specific issues and activities, ensuring broad engagement and expertise.

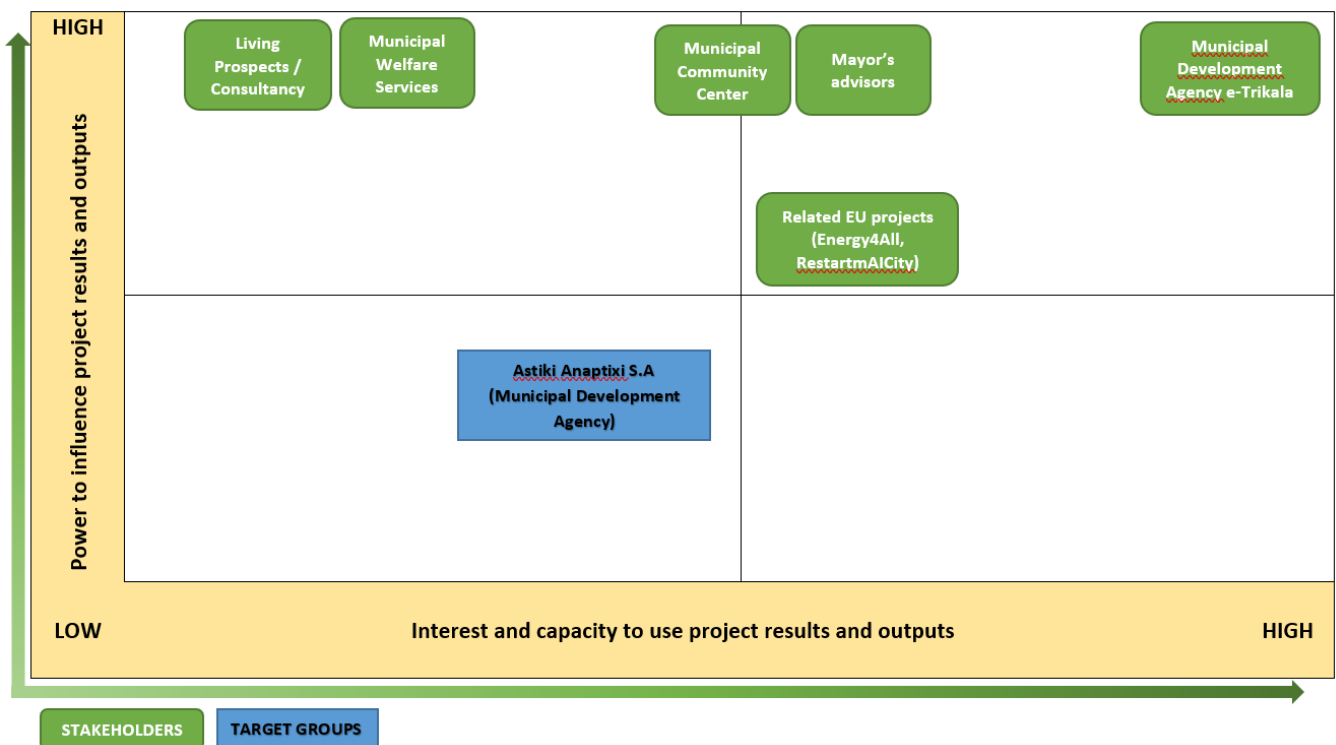
The fourth ULG meeting was held on November 19, 2025, focusing on transferring the knowledge gained during the TNM Meeting in Pomorie, Bulgaria, and planning Trikala’s Testing Activity. Key local activities included the identification and engagement of vulnerable households, the alignment of data sources within GDPR constraints, and the planning of the awareness-raising event. Additionally, it was agreed that future ULG meetings will also serve as dissemination or workshop-style events, targeting different stakeholder groups to increase practical impact and participation. Special emphasis was placed on collaboration with the Community Center, which has direct contact with households experiencing severe energy poverty and rising energy debts.



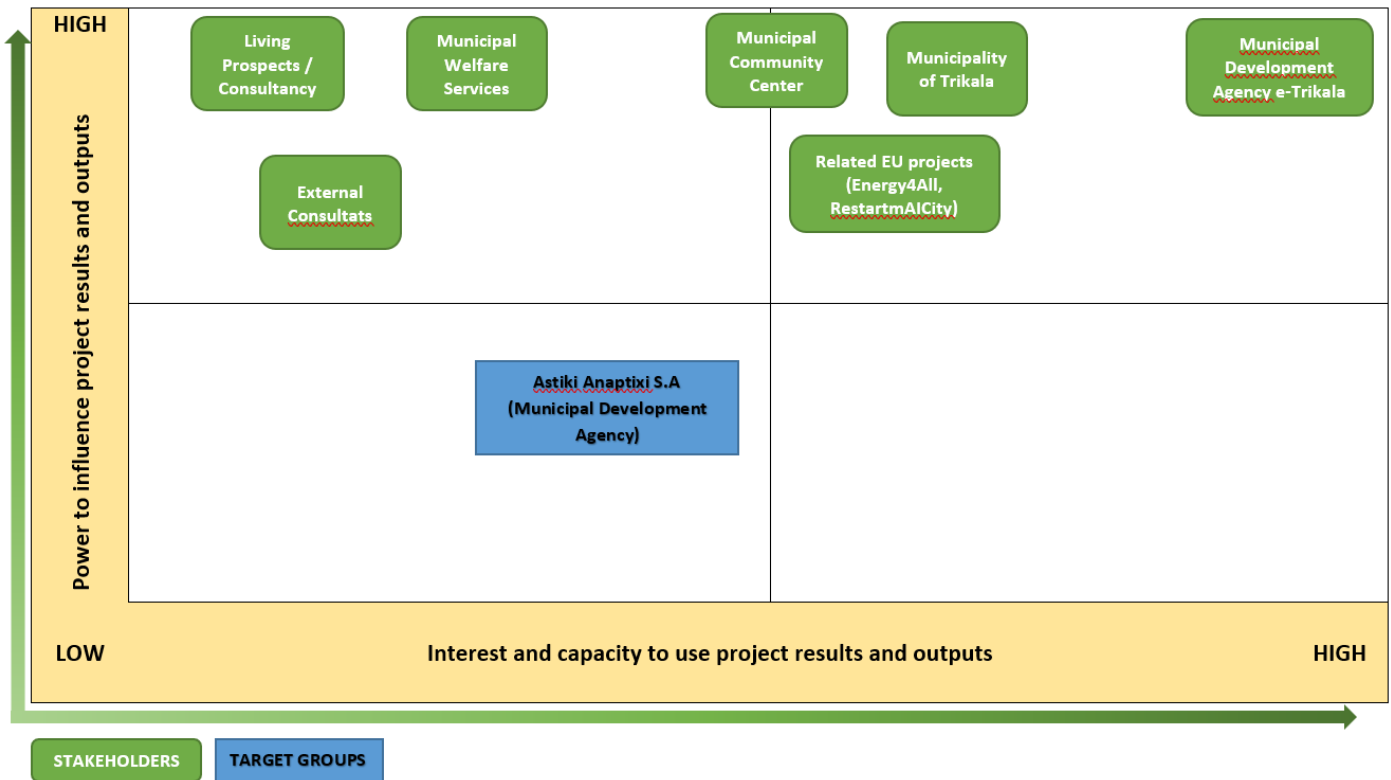
Regarding the establishment of the Energy Office, its opening and operation have faced significant delays. These are mainly due to the ongoing renovation of the City Hall building where the office will be hosted. Furthermore, administrative procedures for staffing have contributed to the postponement, as the call for personnel recruitment closed in late November 2025. Although staff are expected to begin work after training in January 2026, there is concern that further building renovations could introduce additional delays, which is considered an undesirable scenario for the project’s timeline.

The inauguration and awareness-raising activities are affected by delays in the delivery of energy efficiency kits, which are part of the Restart mAI City project and are expected close to the project’s end (June 2026). As a result, the kits will not be available in time for the awareness campaign planned for late January. To mitigate this, it was proposed to request a limited number of kits for exhibition purposes only during events and future ULG meetings. At the same time, the testing activities of the EmPoweringUs project cannot be postponed further, making it necessary to proceed with strategic planning for kit distribution despite the delays.

WHO WAS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE IN TRIKALA DURING THE PREVIOUS PERIOD



WHO IS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE IN TRIKALA - STAKEHOLDERS POWER/INTEREST MATRIX TODAY



**Note:**

The block representing the related EU projects (Energy4All and RestartAI City) was shifted along the vertical power axis, illustrating their influence on the project. Both initiatives are experiencing delays in deliverables that are directly connected to the organisation of Trikala’s testing activities. The establishment of the Energy Office, expected to be achieved through the Energy4All project, has not yet been completed, and the energy kits intended for distribution during the awareness-raising event are still under development. These circumstances lead to the conclusion that both projects may significantly affect the progress of the EmPowerIngUs project and potentially hinder the timely completion of the Municipality of Trikala’s testing activity.

The Municipality of Trikala was moved along the horizontal interest axis, reflecting its instrumental role in the project. Trikala is among the key stakeholders in EmPowerIngUs and intends to leverage the results and data generated through the awareness-raising campaign. These insights will help illustrate the city’s energy situation and how it is perceived and experienced by its citizens.

The Municipal Development Agency, e-Trikala, remains at the forefront of both the influence and interest axes, underscoring its central role in the project’s implementation. Through its consistent involvement, the agency demonstrates a strong capacity to influence, coordinate, and maximize the project’s outcomes at both the local and transnational levels.

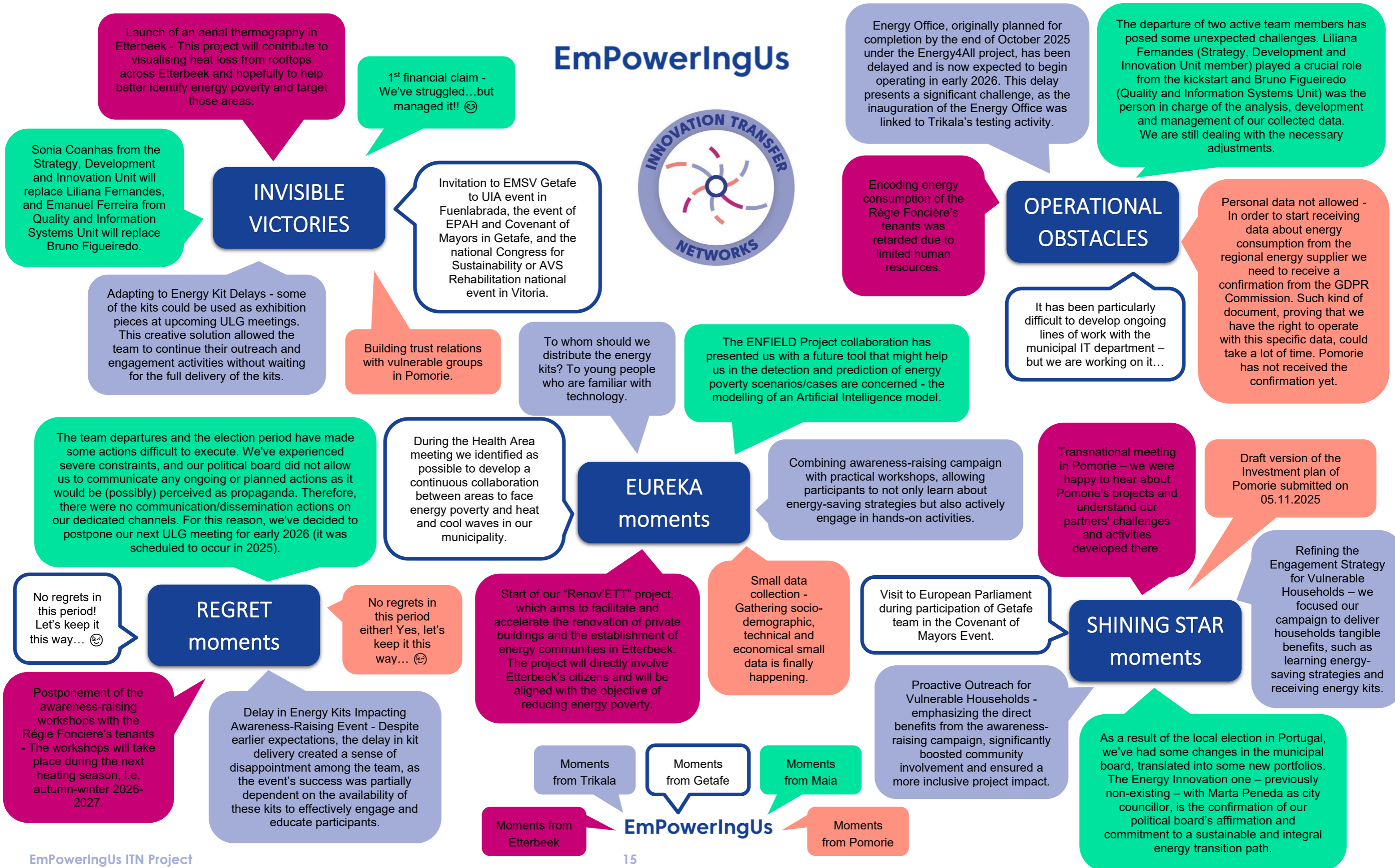
The Municipal Community Centre was repositioned along both the vertical and horizontal axes within the Stakeholders and Target Groups diagram. Its team has been strengthened with the addition of two new members, Ms. Anastasia Galanopoulou and Ms. Marianthi Papatzimopoulou. The Community Centre is a key actor in this group and will play a critical role in providing information on vulnerable households, as well as in promoting the engagement of its members in the project’s activities.

Several stakeholders who were included in the initial SH/TG mapping are not currently reflected in the updated influence/interest diagram. This is primarily because, during the early phase of the ULG’s work, the focus was placed on engaging a core group of highly relevant stakeholders to ensure continuity, ownership, and coherence in the development process. As the project progresses, particularly with the upcoming testing activities and the preparation of the Investment Plan, we expect higher participation from all ULG member and, therefore their move on the matrix diagram is projected. The engagement of a broader range of stakeholders, depending on the thematic focus and local implementation needs is also expected. This phased approach allows for more targeted engagement and efficient coordination.

Stakeholders who remained in their original positions on the influence/interest diagram continue to represent key actors in the ULG process. Their position reflects a consistent level of engagement and relevance to the project. These stakeholders have maintained their interest and/or influence throughout the initial phases, actively participating in meetings and discussions. Their steady involvement contributes to continuity and helps anchor the group’s strategic direction as the project evolves.

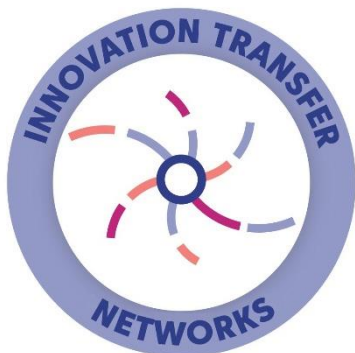


## 4. "HOT DEBRIEF" – OUR KEY TRANSFER PROCESS MOMENTS FROM THIS QUARTER





**EPIU Getafe**  
Hogares saludables



**EmPowerIngUs**