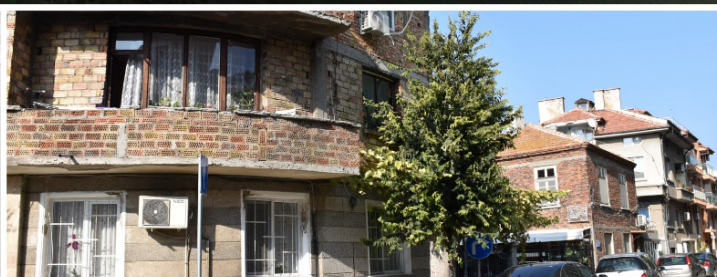
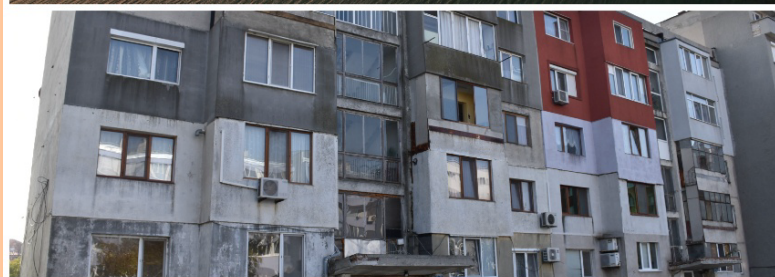


EmPowerIngUs

a

Innovative Transfer Network Investment Plan for the City of Pomorie



URBACT



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Table of Contents

1.INTRODUCTION	3
2.THE POLICY CONTEXT	3
2.1. NEEDS ANALYSIS IN THE TERRITORIAL CONTEXT	3
2.2. THE POLICY RESPONSE	5
3. THE INVESTMENT PROPOSAL	7
3.1. BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSAL	7
3.2. OUR STARTING POINT	8
3.2.1. MAIN MUNICIPAL CHARACTERISTICS AND DATA AVAILABLE	8
3.2.2. URBACT LOCAL GROUP	9
3.2.3. RAISING AWARENESS	10
3.3. THE ADAPTED VERSION OF THE INNOVATIVE PRACTICE	10
3.3.1. ACHIEVED OBJECTIVES	13
3.3.2. TESTING ACTIONS	14
3.4. THE INTEGRATED APPROACH AND THE PARTICIPATIVE PROCESS	16
4. THE ADAPTED INNOVATION PROJECT.....	16
4.1.THE VALUE PROPOSITION AND THE WORKPLAN.....	16
INVESTMENT 6. ESTABLISHMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF A ONE-STOP-SHOP (OSS)	19
4.2. GOVERNANCE AND DELIVERY MODEL.....	19
4.2.1. GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES	20
4.2.2. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE.....	20
4.2.3. OPERATIONAL COORDINATION	20
4.2.4. KEY MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENTS.....	21
4.2.5. PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	21
4.2.6. EXTERNAL PARTNERS AND DELIVERY ACTORS.....	21
4.2.7. DELIVERY MODEL AND IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	22
4.2.8. MONITORING, REPORTING, AND LEARNING	22
4.2.9. RISK MANAGEMENT	22
4.2.10. CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR HIGH PRIVATE OWNERSHIP INERTIA.....	23
4.2.11. LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY	24
4.3. OVERALL PROJECT SCHEDULE	25
5. BUDGET	26
5.1. PROJECT COSTS.....	26
5.2.INVESTMENT SOURCES.....	27
6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION.....	28
6.1 MONITORING AND EVALUATION APPROACH.....	28
6.2. MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK	29
7. HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES	31
8. CONCLUSION.....	34

1.INTRODUCTION

Pomorie Municipality is participating as a project partner in the implementation of the URBACT IV Innovation Transfer Network EmPowerIngUs. This Investment plan is a key strategic document for Pomorie Municipality in relation to its participation in the EmPowerIngUs Innovation Transfer Network. It is based on data and knowledge gathered from the Lead Partner – EMSV Getafe, all EmPowerIngUs project partners - Municipality of Maia, Municipality of Etterbeek and e-Trikala S.A. Municipal Development Agency, from the URBACT Lead Expert Klemen Strmšnik, the Ad-Hoc Expert Donal O’Herlihy, from members of the URBACT Local Group in Pomorie and from other relevant local stakeholders.

The Investment plan is prepared by Georgi Petkov – ULG Coordinator in close collaboration with the Pomorie team members – Sofia Todorova (Project coordinator), Vanya Vandova-Petkova (Communication expert), Desislava Boneva (Financial expert) and members of the URBACT Local Group in Pomorie.

2.THE POLICY CONTEXT

2.1. Needs analysis in the territorial context

National and local level

Bulgaria is committed to achieving the objectives of the European Green Deal, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 and achieving climate neutrality by 2050. This transition implies profound transformations in energy, transport, production and consumption, posing economic, territorial and social challenges to the country.

In the Energy Efficiency strand, Bulgaria’s top priority is to achieve energy savings in final energy consumption by improving the energy performance of buildings and promoting the implementation of energy efficiency measures in energy production, transmission and distribution. In this regard, national targets have been set to achieve a 11.6% reduction in primary energy consumption and a 10.7% reduction in final energy consumption by 2030 compared to the reference scenario 2020. In implementation of Directive (EU) 2018/844 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2010/31/EU, a Long-term national strategy to support the renovation of the national stock of residential and non-residential buildings by 2050 has been developed as a supporting document to the INECs.

Analyses of the National statistical institute of Bulgaria show that over 35% of households in the country are in a state of **energy vulnerability**. Many Bulgarian households face high energy vulnerability due to a combination of low average incomes, inefficient housing, and heavy reliance on electricity, wood, or coal for heating. Older apartment blocks and houses are often poorly insulated, which means homes lose heat quickly and require more energy to stay warm. As a result, even moderate increases in electricity or fuel prices can significantly strain household budgets.

In Bulgaria over 56% of the population lives in conditions of **transport vulnerability**, as measured by lack of access to public services, low connectivity or lack of alternative to a private car. Rural and remote areas, as well as low-income, elderly and disabled people are particularly affected. Additionally, thousands of micro-enterprises are at risk due to a lack of capacity to invest in low-carbon technologies or to transform their business models in the short term. Businesses that cannot reduce costs or meet sustainability standards may lose clients — especially larger buyers increasingly demanding greener supply chains — or face challenges competing with greener competitors. Energy costs, carbon-related pricing passed through suppliers, and compliance costs may rise over time, squeezing margins of companies that don’t improve efficiency or switch

to cleaner inputs. EU funding, loans, and guarantee instruments increasingly favor green investments. Companies that remain high-carbon may find fewer financing opportunities.

Definitions of vulnerable groups within the project:

'Household in energy poverty':

'Household in energy poverty' within the meaning of the Bulgarian Energy Act is a household with a disposable average monthly income per member of the household for the previous year that is less than or equal to the official poverty line after it has been reduced by its expenditure for the type of energy consumption determined in relation to the energy performance of the dwelling

According to NSI data from the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) and the Sustainable Energy Development Agency (SEDA), there were 1 832 881 people in energy poverty in Bulgaria as of 2024 and 897 281 households in energy poverty. In Pomorie there is still no data regarding the number of citizens or households in energy poverty.

'Vulnerable transport users':

'Individuals and households who have difficulty accessing or meeting the costs of private or public transport necessary to travel to essential socio-economic activities and services due to one of the following circumstances:

- there is no public transport available;
- have income for the previous year equal to or less than the poverty line for each member of the household;
- have incomes that are higher than the poverty line for each household member but lower than the median income of a household member according to NSI data on an annual basis, are significantly affected by the price impact of the inclusion of greenhouse gas emissions from road transport into the scope of Directive 2003/87/EC and lack the means to purchase zero- and low-emission vehicles or to switch to alternative sustainable modes of transport, including public transport.

The definitions of 'vulnerable households' and 'vulnerable transport users' are aligned with the relevant definitions of Regulation (EU) 2023/955 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 establishing a Social Climate Fund and amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.

The data from the SILC 2024 add-on module was used to identify vulnerable transport users. In Bulgaria data show that 920 408 people (or 14.34% of the population aged 16 and over) did not use public transport due to its lack or insufficient accessibility.

Pomorie Municipality

According to data from the National Register of Energy Performance of Buildings (NERB), energy certificates for a limited number of residential buildings, mainly multi-family buildings, have been registered in the municipality of Pomorie. The analysis of these data shows that approximately 79% of the residential buildings surveyed are of low energy efficiency, falling into energy classes E, F or G (pre-measure assessment).

This result does not represent a share of all dwellings in the municipality, but refers only to buildings for which an energy audit has been officially carried out and a certificate has been issued. However, it gives a reliable indicator of the condition of the older housing stock, since energy audits are most often carried out for buildings with a real need for renovation.

According to the Plan for Integrated Development of Pomorie Municipality 2021-2027 Pomorie's key energy poverty challenges are linked to poor energy efficiency of the existing building stock and low household incomes resulting in difficulty to pay energy bills and preventing citizens from striving towards planned energy efficiency. To implement all stated plans and address exposed issues, Pomorie is already implementing energy efficiency measures, linked to energy efficiency refurbishments of the existing housing stock, which contribute to a higher level of energy efficiency, reduced energy costs and improve the performance of buildings.

The picture for Pomorie is in line with national trends. At the Bulgarian level, according to Eurostat data, around 22-23% of the population in 2022 declared that they could not keep their home adequately warm, the highest share among the Member States of the European Union. This is widely used as an indicator of energy poverty and indirectly reflects the poor energy status of a significant part of the housing stock.

By comparison, the European Union average for the same indicator is approximately 9-10%, highlighting Bulgaria's significant gap with European standards for energy efficiency and housing comfort.

2.2. The policy response

So far Pomorie Municipality has developed some strategic documents, addressing energy efficiency as follows:

Long-term energy efficiency programme 2021-2030

Municipality Pomorie has elaborated Long-term energy efficiency programme 2021-2030, which is an important strategic document. Its main goal is to support the energy savings and reduction of energy costs across the municipal territory. That document includes a few intervention areas, as well as the municipal buildings and street lighting. Our Long-term energy efficiency programme 2021-2030 assumes that Municipality Pomorie as an institution has three main roles – consumer, regulator and motivator.

The main strategy goal is improvement and comfort increase in municipal buildings, as well as attainment and maintenance of legislatively set parameters for heating and lighting, through Implementation of energy efficiency measures.

Long-term programme promoting the use of renewable energy sources and biofuels of Pomorie Municipality 2025-2034;

Long-term programme promoting the use of renewable energy sources and biofuels of Pomorie Municipality 2025-2034 has been developed in compliance with the requirements of the Renewable Energy Law in accordance with the Integrated Energy and Climate Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria. The program is adopted and approved by the Municipal Council - Pomorie, upon the proposal of the Mayor of the municipality and covers a ten-year period of action and implementation.

The priorities of the Municipality of Pomorie include:

- Reducing harmful gas emissions and energy consumption;
- Stimulating the introduction of RES technologies in both the public sector and business;
- Implementing projects in the field of renewable energy;
- Developing an energy-efficient economy with low carbon emissions to create sustainable economic growth;

- Reducing negative effects on the environment.

Sustainable Energy and Climate Strategy and Action Plan 2024

In the Sustainable Energy and Climate Strategy and Action Plan 2024 of Pomorie the **following priorities** for sustainable energy development, climate change mitigation and adaptation have been defined:

- Implementation of an integrated package of measures to improve the energy efficiency of the municipal building stock, by increasing the energy efficiency of buildings and savings from energy use; energy-saving lighting;
- Development of low-emission urban mobility systems; Decarbonization of public transport; Stimulation of alternative modes of transport and a new culture of urban mobility; Ensuring higher safety for the citizens of the municipality of Pomorie; Increasing the use of energy instead of fuel;
- Increasing energy efficiency in local industry;
- Support for energy behaviour change; Raising public awareness and building a culture of energy efficient behaviour in everyday life and business; Creating and promoting a “green” identity of the Pomorie municipality;
- Introducing energy management on the territory of the municipality.

Integrated Development Plan of Pomorie Municipality (2021-2027).

Extreme climate change puts a significant challenge to energy security not only due to the direct impact on infrastructure and energy distribution, but also due to the subsequent impact on other sectors and areas, including food security and health.

Municipality Pomorie has a targeted policy for the promotion and sustainable use of local resources from renewable energy sources, including the efficient use of mineral water, which are an important tool for implementing the national policy and strategy for the development of the energy sector, for implementing the commitments undertaken by our country in the field of environmental protection and for implementing local sustainable development.

Energy efficiency projects accomplished

From 2011 until 2025 Municipality Pomorie has a large list of energy efficiency projects accomplished:

- ✓ 22 refurbished multi-family residential buildings
- ✓ 14 refurbished public administration buildings
- ✓ 4884 energy effective lighting devices in 16 settlements
- ✓ 7 refurbished (or constructed) cultural sites

3. THE INVESTMENT PROPOSAL

3.1. Background to the proposal

The EPIU-Energy Poverty Intelligence Unit UIA project, executed in Getafe's Las Margaritas and La Alhóndiga-Fátima, primarily aimed to tackle hidden energy poverty affecting low-income families, the elderly, migrants, and other vulnerable groups. Focused on areas with high unemployment and where nearly half of the households lack proper heating systems, EPIU represents a significant stride in urban innovation and social inclusion. EPIU's approach included a detailed socio-demographic analysis and technical fieldwork, facilitating the identification and support of HEP among residents using specific indicators. It emphasized cross-disciplinary collaboration within the city administration, lacking previously, and addressed the fiscal burden on residents participating in public retrofit schemes. The project's methodologies and outcomes link closely with the EU's focus on sustainable urban development, climate neutrality, and social inclusivity, highlighting its relevance and potential replicability in different urban contexts across Europe.

Its innovation stems from the development and interrelation of **three main components**, aligning with the European urban policy context for 2021-2027:

1. Data Analytics System (DAS): EPIU's innovative approach began with developing a robust DAS, using machine learning and AI to uncover the real extent of energy poverty. This system not only helped in identifying affected households but also in understanding their specific needs at various levels—household, building, and neighbourhood.

2. Healthy Households Office (HHO): As a one-stop solution, HHO engaged directly with residents, offering advice and collecting crucial data on socio-economic and housing conditions. This initiative played a vital role in reaching out to those who are often overlooked, such as unregistered migrants, ensuring inclusivity in service provision.

3. Tailor-Made Solutions (TMS): The project emphasised personalised interventions, ranging from simple measures to complex building renovations, catering to the specific needs of different groups.

The EPIU project was developed around **three main pillars** which are easy to understand and logical in order, as a result of a comprehensive proposal to facilitate the transferability of 3 key components.

1. The first pillar, UNDERSTAND, involves a comprehensive analysis of previously collected data to diagnose and understand hidden energy poverty and its associated vulnerabilities. This phase is essential to identify where energy poverty is located and what factors contribute to its persistence in a given area.

2. The second pillar, SUPPORT/OUTREACH, focuses on active community participation and accompaniment. It recognises the crucial importance of involving residents in the process of defining strategies and actions to tackle energy poverty. Collaboration and public awareness are key elements in generating commitment and involvement in the implementation of effective solutions.

3. The third pillar, ACT, involves the identification and implementation of responses and solutions tailored to the specific needs of each environment. This stage focuses on the coordinated and integrated implementation of concrete measures to address energy poverty at different levels.

EPIU's alignment with the 2021-2027 European urban policy context is evident through its direct contribution to Cohesion Policy Objectives 1 (Smarter Europe) and 2 (Greener Europe). By implementing smart, data-driven strategies, the project supported sustainable urban development and energy efficiency, echoing the goals of a Smarter and Greener Europe. Its focus on vulnerable communities also resonates with Policy Objective 4 (More Social Europe), addressing urban poverty and promoting social inclusion.

The EPIU project also demonstrates a strong link to the European Green Deal’s ambition of transforming the EU into a resource-efficient, competitive economy that leaves no person or place behind. By focusing on energy efficiency and sustainable practices, EPIU not only contributed to mitigating climate change but also addressed social and economic disparities, embodying the holistic approach envisioned in the Green Deal.

3.2. Our starting point

3.2.1. Main municipal characteristics and data available

As of 2024, the city of Pomorie has a population of 15,230 inhabitants, making it the third largest urban settlement on Bulgaria’s Black Sea coast, after Varna and Burgas. The city enjoys a strategic location with excellent transport connectivity. Burgas Airport is situated only 8 km away, while the proximity of Sunny Beach and the regional centre of Burgas provide residents and visitors with diverse opportunities for leisure, business, and entertainment. Pomorie’s economy is shaped by a combination of traditional industries and modern tourism development. Key sectors include: Viticulture and winemaking; Salt production; Fishing and Tourism and related services.

Pomorie’s economy is strongly seasonal. Tourism peaks in the summer months, creating demand for short-term workers in hotels, restaurants, cleaning, retail, and services. At the same time, agriculture—especially viticulture and grape harvesting in the surrounding area—relies on seasonal labour during specific periods of the year. These sectors typically attract workers who come for a few months rather than settling permanently.

A transient workforce is more vulnerable to energy poverty for several reasons. Seasonal workers often have temporary or informal contracts, lower and unstable incomes, and limited access to social protection or municipal support schemes. Housing for these workers is frequently short-term, overcrowded, or of poor quality, with weak insulation and inefficient heating or cooling systems. Because energy costs are high relative to income, even short stays can involve disproportionate energy burdens. In addition, transient workers may not meet residency or documentation requirements needed to access energy subsidies or social assistance.

In a town like Pomorie—where tourism also drives seasonal spikes in energy demand (cooling in summer, hot water for hospitality services)—these pressures are amplified. While businesses pass energy costs into prices or absorb them as operating expenses, low-paid seasonal workers often bear high out-of-pocket energy costs in inadequate accommodation. Given Bulgaria’s already high baseline levels of energy poverty and inefficient housing stock, the presence of a seasonal workforce increases the likelihood that energy poverty is more prevalent, though less visible, during peak tourism and harvest seasons.

In 2019, Pomorie had a total of 8,452 residential buildings, the majority of which were constructed between 1960 and 1990. In recent years, substantial new investments have been made, improving the quality and diversity of the housing stock.

The town of Pomorie consists of several distinct districts, each with its own character and function: The Old Town; St. George District; Small Salt Lake District; Svoboda District and North District.

The districts in focus within the project are as follows: Svoboda district – large multi-family residential buildings; North district – houses, concentrated Roma population.

Pomorie is widely recognized as a popular summer tourist destination, which is a defining feature of the city's character. During the summer season, more than 100,000 visitors are drawn to Pomorie, causing the city's population to increase several times over.

Pomorie's role as a major summer tourist destination introduces pronounced seasonal variability in energy demand, which has direct implications for energy poverty among permanent residents. During the summer months, the city experiences a temporary population increase exceeding 100,000 visitors, leading to sharp peaks in electricity consumption driven by air conditioning, hospitality services, and short-term accommodation. Local energy infrastructure and tariff structures are consequently dimensioned to accommodate peak loads rather than year-round residential needs.

Climate change is becoming an increasingly significant concern, particularly during the summer months when heatwaves make life especially difficult for vulnerable groups who lack adequate cooling systems or cannot afford the high cost of electricity for cooling. The EPIU model captures households that might experience energy poverty through being vulnerable to heat effects.

Taking into account the above-mentioned facts, in the beginning of the project Pomorie was facing the lack of energy poverty relevant data and mechanisms to collect them, lack of existing municipal services to identify and fight against energy poverty, as well as poor collaboration culture. This is why Pomorie decided to join the project with the ambition to benefit from Getafe's knowledge in order to fight these challenges.

3.2.2. URBACT Local group

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.

LAG stands for Local Action Group. It is a public-private, non-profit partnership that works on community-led local development (CLLD) strategies to support local economic, social, and environmental projects in a defined territory, financed by the EU and based on the LEADER method for rural development, a bottom-up strategy using Local Action Groups (LAGs) for community-led growth.

FLAG stands for Fisheries Local Action Group — a special type of Local Action Group focused on fisheries and coastal/marine communities. Like LAGs, FLAGs are community-led partnerships of public and private stakeholders, but with a sector focus on fisheries and maritime activities.

LAG Pomorie works to promote sustainable local development in Pomorie Municipality by building local capacity, supporting projects, and managing funding under European development programs such as the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and others. Members of the LAG's board include representatives from:

- Pomorie Municipality (local government)
- Local NGOs and civil society organizations
- Local agricultural producers and business actors

FLAG Pomorie is a community-driven organization that strengthens the economic, social, and environmental resilience of Pomorie's coastal and fisheries-dependent communities through strategic projects and European support. Members of the FLAG's board include representatives from:

- Local government
- Representatives from local civil organisations, fishermen's associations, and community groups actively involved in fisheries and coastal development issues.
- Local business representatives connected to the fisheries and maritime economy.

Based on the described good practice implemented through the LEADER method, representatives of both LAG Pomorie and FLAG Pomorie decided also to become members of the URBACT Local Group (ULG) within the EmPowerIngUs project.

During the project's implementation the Pomorie team organised ULG meetings on monthly basis in order to collect inputs and visions for the investment plan and to better link the strategic challenges marked as priorities by the Municipality.

3.2.3. Raising awareness

The Pomorie team promoted the project during several different events in the summer of 2025 and 2026. The team has grabbed the chance to raise awareness during the traditional summer festivals. People were curious to understand what is energy poverty and do they fall into the group of vulnerable people. They were also interested in our partners experience and how other nations fight and manage to tackle with that problem.

3.3. The adapted version of the innovative practice

The EPIU approach offers significant transfer potential as well as possibility to upscale the original proposal. The EPIU project is quite versatile which also increases the potential for transfer because the three pillars of intervention mentioned above were applied on three different scales: HOUSING, BUILDING and NEIGHBOURHOOD. Each scale represents a level of intervention where specific measures can be implemented to improve energy efficiency, ensure access to affordable energy services and promote energy resilience at the community level.

Based on the gathered knowledge from Getafe and the insights from the EmPowerIngUs, Pomorie has decided to adapt the innovative practice according to the local conditions.

Based on the main objective of the EmPowerIngUs project - Improving the living situation of vulnerable households in energy poverty Pomorie decided to adapt all scales, implanted in Getafe, and to add a new scale: TRANSPORT, which addresses another target group, identified in Pomorie - 'vulnerable transport users'.

In addition to energy poverty, transport vulnerability represents a significant and structurally linked challenge in Pomorie. Due to the municipality's territorial structure, seasonal economy, and socio-economic characteristics, access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable transport remains uneven across population groups.

Pomorie includes not only an urban centre but also smaller settlements and peripheral areas, where public transport is limited in frequency, coverage, and flexibility. As a result, many residents depend heavily on private vehicles to access essential services such as employment, healthcare, education, and administrative support. For low-income households, this dependency translates into a substantial and often unsustainable financial burden.

Pomorie's seasonal economy adds another layer of complexity. During the summer months, the population increases significantly due to tourism, leading to higher transport demand, congestion, and pressure on the infrastructure. At the same time, many seasonal workers—who are often among the most vulnerable groups—face difficulties accessing affordable and reliable mobility. They frequently live in temporary or peripheral accommodations and must commute daily to workplaces, increasing both their transport costs and vulnerability.

Several specific groups are particularly affected by transport vulnerability in Pomorie (they are the same target groups, facing energy poverty in general):

- Elderly people, who depend on accessible and regular transport services;
- People with disabilities, for whom transport accessibility remains limited;
- Roma communities and low-income households, who often lack access to private vehicles;
- Residents of smaller settlements, where transport services are insufficient or unavailable;
- Seasonal workers, who face unstable incomes and high mobility needs.

Limited access to transport directly affects access to essential services and opportunities, including employment, healthcare, and education. This can lead to social isolation, reduced labour market participation, and lower quality of life. In this context, transport becomes not only a mobility issue but also a key factor for social inclusion and economic development.

Transport and energy poverty are closely interconnected. Households struggling with high energy costs are frequently the same households facing difficulties in covering transport expenses such as fuel, tickets, or vehicle maintenance. Rising fuel prices and overall energy costs further intensify this pressure, increasing the risk of social exclusion. Transport poverty is not simply "general poverty" because fuel and electricity are fundamentally linked forms of energy. For low-income households in Pomorie's peripheral areas, an increase in fuel or public transit costs leaves fewer resources to pay for heating or cooling, directly triggering or exacerbating domestic energy poverty. They are two sides of the same coin. Because public transit coverage and frequency are limited outside Pomorie's urban center, residents are legally and practically "forced" to own private vehicles to reach healthcare, education, and employment. They cannot escape high-priced liquid fossil fuels, locking them into an energy-dependent financial strain.

Transport poverty is energy poverty because the cost that traps people is the cost of fossil fuel energy — and unlike general poverty, it can be directly addressed through clean energy infrastructure rather than income transfers.

Furthermore, improving transport accessibility contributes to territorial cohesion, strengthening connections between Pomorie and surrounding settlements and reducing disparities between urban and rural areas.

Inclusion of transport vulnerability as a new scale in the Investment Plan

The inclusion of transport vulnerability in the Investment Plan is also fully aligned with key European policy frameworks, including the European Green Deal, the Social Climate Fund, and the principles of a just transition. These frameworks emphasize that the shift toward low-carbon mobility must be fair and inclusive, ensuring that vulnerable groups are not disproportionately affected by rising costs or excluded from new mobility systems.

In addition, the transition toward sustainable and low-emission transport—such as electric mobility—requires targeted support, as initial investment costs may otherwise create new inequalities. Addressing transport vulnerability ensures that decarbonisation efforts are socially balanced and widely accessible.

Finally, through the EmPowerIngUs project, Pomorie identified not only a lack of data and mechanisms related to energy poverty, but also gaps in understanding transport vulnerability. Including this dimension enables the Municipality to develop a more comprehensive, data-driven, and integrated policy response.

For all these reasons, transport vulnerability has been explicitly included in the Investment Plan as a complementary dimension to energy poverty. Addressing both challenges together allows Pomorie to adopt a **holistic, people-centered approach**, ensuring improved accessibility, reduced costs for vulnerable populations, enhanced social inclusion, and a more sustainable urban development pathway.

Based on this information Pomorie Municipality has included the following scales in the Investment plan:

A horizontal scale

- **One-stop-shop**- a service provided by the Municipality of Pomorie to attend to and understand the citizens of Pomorie in terms of supplies and rehabilitation, advice and support in everything related to their homes and energy such as: Understanding their energy bills; Reducing energy expenditure; Improving consumer habits, etc.

Scale 1 – Household

- **Socio-energy audits - Auditing as a measure.** Bridge between soft and hard measures; Allows for customisation and optimisation or correction of decision making; Report with economic value and usefulness for the user; **Auditing as a data generator (systematic and reliable).**
- **Energy kits/ energy efficient home appliances**- digital thermo-hydrometer, insolation for windows, LED bulbs or lamps, energy efficient refrigerators, washing machines, etc.

Scale 2 – Buildings

- **House visits**- The objective of the house visits is to evaluate in person, by means of a visit, the specific needs of the household in terms of the use of the home and the current state of the building in relation to habitability.
- **Buildings refurbishment**- Façade and roof envelope, finishes and aids, project drafting, LED lighting, presence detectors, thermal exterior painting, exterior image improvement, etc.

Scale 3- Neighbourhood

- **Energy communities-** The ULG is dedicated to pioneering a community-led energy model by formalizing a legal entity for renewable energy. This structure empowers citizens and the municipality to transition from passive consumers to active energy partners. Through the shared ownership of solar assets, the community can achieve greater energy independence, ensuring that the financial and environmental benefits of local solar generation are distributed directly back to the residents
- **Heat mapping-Cadastral Data-** address; type of building; year of construction, socio-demographic data if available; **Energy Data** - heating Demand; CO2 emission certificate; energy source; geolocation of implemented measures in the future

Scale 4 – Transport

- Solidarity mobility for energy poor citizens without access to personal transport.
- Sustainable transport with electric vehicles.

3.3.1. Achieved objectives

During the transfer process **Pomorie has already achieved the following objectives:**

- Improvement of the interdepartmental cooperation within the city administration;
- Collection of available relevant data on energy poverty in Pomorie;
- Collection of small data from citizens and creation of energy poverty linked database;
- Testing the one-stop-shop mechanism in real life conditions in Pomorie;
- Gathered knowledge about the household, building and neighbourhood level intervention solutions and how they can be used to improve already on-going projects in Pomorie;
- Improvement of the collaborative culture with external stakeholders, reduce the city-citizen gap;
- Gained knowledge from the EmPowerIngUs transfer process and all its partners, aiming to deliver a full transfer of the EPIU GP.

The Pomorie team focused on the following target groups within the project:

- Roma population;
- Elderly people over 65 years of age;
- People with permanently reduced working capacity or disability; People who have received targeted heating aid during the last year;
- Seasonal workers, who face unstable incomes and high mobility needs.
- Vulnerable transport users lacking access to private or reliable public transit

The districts in focus within the project are as follows:

- Svoboda district – large multi-family residential buildings;
- North district – houses, concentrated Roma population.

3.3.2. Testing actions

a) A table, 2 chairs, paper and pen - one-stop shop testing

The Pomorie team conducted a testing action to explore how an energy poverty advisory service could function locally, inspired by the EPIU approach. The testing took place in the Pomorie Municipality building, involving ULG members and local citizens from the Svoboda district, particularly vulnerable groups.

The activity simulated a one-stop-shop advisory session through role plays, addressing general inquiries about energy efficiency, healthy consumption, and optimizing energy use. No budget was required, only team participation.

Results showed that the approach effectively introduced the concept of energy poverty to the community and helped the team understand potential challenges of implementing such a service. The team was satisfied with the results and plans to expand future testing to cover topics like renovation aid, subsidies, and bill optimization.

b) Small-scale energy poverty data collection

The Pomorie team conducted a small-scale testing action aimed at collecting data on energy poverty to improve local advisory services. The main challenge addressed was the lack of sufficient data to understand and support vulnerable citizens. The team collaborated with local social services, placing an energy poverty manager near their offices to meet and advise citizens while collecting data using a modified EPIU questionnaire.

The test required no budget—only cooperation from social services. Three citizens were redirected and assisted. The team found the action successful, as it provided practical experience in supporting vulnerable groups and insights into the challenges of running a one-stop-shop for energy poverty services.

c) Negotiations with the local energy supplier regarding data

Aiming to provide a data flow to our data lake, the Pomorie team held a few meetings with the local energy supplier and started correspondence with the Bulgarian GDPR agency. The desired outcome of that communication is to prepare tables with valuable content – information about every household, as follows:

1. Data about the energy consumption of each household in Pomorie on a quarterly and annual basis for internal use by the Municipality of Pomorie for the purposes of the project. These data should be collected and categorised by an external IT company that has the capacity to carry out this type of activity, as employees of the Municipality of Pomorie do not have the ability and capacity to process such a large volume of data;
2. Data about the energy consumption of the population in Pomorie at building and neighbourhood level to create a heat mapping of the city. These general data will be publicly displayed on a dedicated online platform that could allow spatial representation of electricity consumption data in each building in the city. Combining energy consumption data with other datasets may allow identifying the neighbourhoods that would benefit most from implementing energy efficiency measures that, on the one hand, reduce carbon emissions and reduce heating costs for energy-vulnerable households in the town of Pomorie.

The Pomorie team held several meetings with the above-mentioned IT company with the assignment to prepare an interactive heatmap of Pomorie. That is an ambitious aim, because firstly Pomorie Municipality needs permission from the GDPR agency and secondly needs more information from the local energy supplier.

During the project's implementation Pomorie has not received a permission from the GDPR agency, but the negotiations keep going. It is a matter of time to receive access to energy data from the energy supplier. Meanwhile we are gathering data on household, building and neighbourhood level using other channels and approaches. Representatives of the municipality / social services perform regularly social audits (gathering social-demographic data), but after the start of the project they began making energy-audits too, i.e. when visiting people's homes, they record small data on the household energy consumption, on the condition of the dwelling, electricity bills, etc.

d) Gathering data from a platform of Habitat for Humanity Bulgaria

Representatives of the Pomorie team took part in the specialized webinar "Challenges and solutions for investigating energy poverty in Bulgaria", organized by WWF Bulgaria and Habitat Bulgaria, dedicated to the challenges and solutions in the investigation of energy poverty in the country.

The experts from the Municipality were introduced to a new online statistical tool and a handbook for the development of municipal energy transition plans. The results of pilot projects in Lukovit and Berkovitsa, which could serve as a model for future initiatives on the territory of Pomorie to support vulnerable households, were examined.

On the website of Habitat for Humanity in Bulgaria, the Pomorite team received access to data about energy poverty in Bulgaria, which we started using for our data lake:

The platform provided Pomorie Municipality with specific data regarding:

- Number of energy-poor households and individuals.
- Housing types and insulation status.
- Demographic data (age structure, households below the poverty line).
- Heating assistance recipients and climate data, etc.

e) Using building energy audits for data collection

Energy audits calculate the thermal performance of buildings (energy classes A to G). When the municipality maps this data against geographic areas, they can pinpoint neighbourhoods where inefficient housing stock is forcing residents into energy poverty, regardless of their income level.

Infrastructure Priority Mapping: Audit data allows the municipality to rank public and residential buildings by their "thermal vulnerability." Buildings with high heat loss, lack of insulation, or outdated heating systems are prioritized for renovation projects funded by EU or national programs.

Cross-Referencing Social & Technical Data: By overlaying socioeconomic data (household income, demographic profiles) with the technical audit results of the buildings those families live in, the municipality builds a **vulnerability profile**. This helps distinguish between:

- **Income-poor households:** Who needs direct financial support (subsidies).
- **Structurally-trapped households:** Who needs infrastructure upgrades to permanently lower their energy demand.

The Energy manager of the project Georgi Petkov also leads negotiations with IT companies to start preparing home scale decision trees using the gathered small data so far, in order to help the Municipality to make a categorisation of a vulnerable household. This will contribute for the decision making during the implementation of the investments.

3.4. The integrated approach and the participative process

The Pomorie Investment plan has been developed in a participatory way, with it being driven by the members of our ULG, main stakeholders, many of whom will be integral to its delivery.

The ULG members contributed to the investment plan and identified investment ideas with expertise and policy demands that relate to the strategic vision and the benefits expected. During the implementation of the EmPowerIngUs project, meetings were held with the ULG to collect inputs and visions for the investment plan and to better link the strategic challenges marked as priorities by the Municipality. These approaches were based on participative work methodologies, allowing all stakeholders to present their perspectives and experiences and, also, whenever possible, to promote the knowledge of good national and international experiences, contributing to the capacity building of all stakeholders.

This Investment Plan seeks to think about policy across the territorial spheres of economic, social and environmental, it seeks to create long- lasting and effective local partnerships, it seeks to engage different levels of governance, and it seeks to promote both 'hard' and 'soft' investments.

4. THE ADAPTED INNOVATION PROJECT

4.1. The Value Proposition and the workplan

The Value Proposition

Main objective: Improvement of the living situation of vulnerable households and vulnerable transport users in Pomorie through identification and reduction of energy and transport poverty.

The workplan

Investment 1. Implementation of energy efficiency measures in multi-family buildings.

Specific objective: To evaluate and improve the energy performance of buildings

Key Actions: Thermal insulation of building envelopes, replacement of old window frames, and the installation of smart metering systems.

Local Impact: This reduces "energy poverty" in Pomorie by lowering monthly utility bills for residents while increasing the structural lifespan and market value of the buildings.

Investment 2. Support for energy efficient home appliances/Energy kits

Specific objective: To catalyse immediate reductions in household energy intensity through the deployment of "Energy kits" and localized digital climate monitoring.

Technical Scope: Distribution of curated energy-saving assemblies designed for rapid deployment. These kits include:

- **Digital Thermo-Hygrometers:** To provide residents with real-time data on ambient temperature and humidity—critical for managing Pomorie's coastal microclimate and preventing mold.
- **Solid-State Lighting (SSL):** Transitioning households to high-lumen-per-watt LED systems and smart-sensor lamps.
- **Smart Power Strips:** To eliminate high energy loads from standby electronics.
- A+++ refrigerators, washing machines, etc.

Local Impact: This initiative provides a high "Return on Investment" (ROI) by targeting the "low-hanging fruit" of energy waste. By equipping residents with digital diagnostic tools (thermo-hygrometers), the program fosters **energy literacy**, allowing families to make data-driven decisions about their heating and cooling habits. This serves as a vital first step for vulnerable households, providing instant relief from high utility costs.

Investment 3. Support for the establishment of energy communities.

Specific objective: To foster energy resilience and data-driven planning at the community level

Key Actions: Legal and administrative assistance for residents to form **Renewable Energy Communities**, funding for shared rooftop solar PV arrays, and establishing a communal battery storage system

Local Impact: This fosters social cohesion and keeps financial benefits within the Pomorie community rather than sending profits to external energy giants

Investment 4. Implementation of energy efficient transportation system.

Specific objective:

To ensure an equitable transition where the benefits of energy efficiency and sustainable transport are accessible to all residents, with a targeted mandate to eliminate energy poverty and increase social mobility for the most vulnerable.

Technical Scope & Operational Assets:

- **Fleet Decarbonization:** Procurement of zero-emission vehicles (electro buses) to establish new, sustainable transport routes. Households identified as energy-poor or transport-vulnerable will receive reduced-cost or zero-cost access to the new electric bus network through an integrated ticketing scheme. This directly reduces household expenditure, freeing up income for other essential needs such as food and heating.
- **Personal mobility:** Purchase of electric bicycles for the personal mobility of 'transport-vulnerable' residents of the Municipality. The distribution of electric bicycles to transport-vulnerable residents offers a low-cost, zero-emission alternative for short trips that cannot be served by bus routes. For

individuals who cannot afford private vehicles and live in areas with infrequent public transport, e-bikes provide a practical, energy-efficient solution that significantly expands their mobility radius.

- **Renewable Energy Charging Infrastructure:** Deployment of strategic charging points supported by a network of mobile charging units and dedicated renewable energy installations (solar) to ensure 100% operational autonomy.
- **Smart Infrastructure:** Construction of energy-efficient bus shelters equipped with Renewable Energy Sources (RES) to enhance passenger comfort and safety. By powering the transport system from renewable energy sources, the municipality decouples the operational costs of public transport from fossil fuel price volatility — one of the primary drivers of both energy and transport poverty. Long-term tariff stability and lower operational costs allow for sustained affordable fares.
- **Intelligent Transit Ecosystem:** Implementation of a centralized management and monitoring centre utilizing real-time tracking software and dynamic route planning to optimize the "last mile" connection to regional rail networks.
- The new electric bus routes will be specifically designed to connect peripheral and underserved settlements — including the North District and surrounding villages — to key employment centres, healthcare facilities, schools, and public services. This directly tackles geographic and social exclusion, which are root causes of transport poverty. The network can also introduce designated peak-summer routes connecting peripheral accommodations directly to hospitality/tourism hubs, lowering transport costs for seasonal workers.

Local impact:

Affordability & Inclusion: Implementation of an integrated ticketing system providing reduced or free public transport for vulnerable citizens, mitigating the social consequences of the expanded carbon pricing.

Regional Connectivity: Ensuring maximum transport coverage across 17 regional settlements—including Pomorie, Kableschkovo, Aheloy, and surrounding villages like Kozichino and Medovo—to bridge the rural-urban divide.

Investment 5. Organisation and implementation of awareness raising and promotional events, exhibitions, lectures, etc.

Specific objective: To give residents the knowledge and confidence they need to switch to greener habits and support the city's transition to clean energy

Technical Scope: We will launch a town-wide information campaign using a variety of tools, including:

- Community Workshops
- School Programs
- Digital Tools
- Promotional events, etc.

Local Impact: This is the "people-first" part of the plan. It ensures that the other 4 investments in are actually used and welcomed by the community. By involving the public early on, we build trust and transparency.

A part of Investment 5 will be: **The "Save Water, Enjoy Pomorie" campaign.** It mitigates energy vulnerability by addressing the water-energy nexus. During peak tourist seasons, high water consumption forces increased energy use for pumping, heating, and treatment.

Key Strategic Impacts:

- **Reducing Load:** Lowering water use directly decreases the energy required for hot water and infrastructure, reducing strain during peak demand.
- **Building Resilience:** Adopting water-saving habits helps the municipality adapt to climate-driven droughts and energy price volatility.
- **Incentivizing Efficiency:** The campaign promotes "Water-Smart" tourism and business practices, such as installing low-flow devices and creating sustainability labels, to drive long-term energy and cost reductions.

Investment 6. Establishment and management of a One-Stop-Shop (OSS)

Specific Objective: To establish a permanent, integrated frontline municipal service that bridges the gap between city policy and citizens, providing comprehensive support to identify, advise, and shield vulnerable households and transport users.

Technical Scope & Operational Assets:

- **Frontline Advisory Service:** A physical and digital hub within the Pomorie Municipality building staffed by an Energy Manager and cross-departmental coordinators. It serves as a single point of contact where citizens can receive guidance on understanding energy bills, reducing energy expenditure, and improving day-to-day consumption habits.
 - **Subsidy & Renovation Guidance:** The OSS will act as a fully delegated "turnkey" manager for building upgrades. It will actively assist residents with navigating bureaucracy, filing paperwork, securing technical audits, and unlocking funding opportunities, loans, or grant schemes (such as the Social Climate Fund).
 - **Targeted Support for Seasonal Workers:** Creation of a specialized, multilingual "Seasonal Worker Energy Guide". This initiative targets the high influx of transient summer laborers who are highly vulnerable to localized, peak-season spikes in cooling and hot water demands.
 - **Integrated Intake & Vulnerability Mapping:** Utilizing modified socio-energy questionnaires, the OSS will systematically collect household-level small data (utility costs, housing conditions, demographics). This data feeds directly into the municipal Data Analytics System to build local vulnerability profiles and fuel the city's interactive heat-mapping platform.
- **Local Impact:**
 - **Accessibility & Trust:** By reducing the city-citizen gap, the OSS eliminates administrative paralysis for cash-poor or elderly residents who are intimidated by complex renovation schemes.
 - **Structural Relief:** It transitions the municipality from passive outreach to active, personalized intervention—ensuring that transport and energy solutions reach the most underserved neighborhoods, like the Svoboda and North districts.

4.2. Governance and delivery model

The governance and delivery model of the Pomorie Investment Plan is designed to ensure effective coordination, transparency, accountability, and long-term sustainability of all interventions implemented between 2028 and 2032. It builds on the collaborative framework established through the URBACT IV EmPowerIngUs Network and strengthens it through a structured multi-level governance approach.

The model integrates strategic leadership, operational coordination, stakeholder participation, and data-driven decision-making, ensuring that all investments are implemented in an efficient, inclusive, and coherent manner.

4.2.1. Governance Principles

The implementation of the Investment Plan is guided by the following core principles:

- Integrated approach: coordination across sectors (energy, transport, social services, environment, spatial planning);
- Participatory governance: active involvement of stakeholders and citizens through the URBACT Local Group;
- Transparency and accountability: clear roles, reporting mechanisms, and public communication;
- Data-driven decision-making: use of data (including socio-energy data and transport indicators) to guide policies;
- Flexibility and adaptability: ability to adjust measures based on monitoring results and emerging needs.

4.2.2. Governance Structure

Lead Authority

Pomorie Municipality is the main responsible body for the overall coordination, implementation, and monitoring of the Investment Plan. It ensures alignment with local, national, and EU strategic frameworks.

Political Oversight

- Municipal Council and Mayor of Pomorie: Provide strategic direction, approve key decisions, and ensure political commitment and institutional support.

4.2.3. Operational Coordination

One-Stop-Shop (OSS)

A One-Stop-Shop will be established as a frontline service for citizens, providing integrated support on:

- Energy poverty;
- Energy efficiency measures;
- Access to funding and subsidies;
- Transport solutions for vulnerable users.

The One-Stop-Shop can create a specialized multilingual "Seasonal Worker Energy Guide" to help transient workers prevent high out-of-pocket utility bills in short-term rentals. Transient workers are crucial because their summer presence coincides with extreme seasonal spikes in cooling and hot water electricity demands. This distorts Pomorie's energy infrastructure and tariff structures, which are subsequently dimensioned to peak loads rather than stable year-round needs, driving up baseline energy costs for permanent residents.

The OSS plays a key role in bridging the gap between policy and citizens, ensuring accessibility and inclusion.

4.2.4. Key Municipal Departments

The implementation relies on strong interdepartmental cooperation, involving:

- Department “Construction”
- Directorate “Humanitarian Activities”
- Department “Municipal Property, Transport and Project Management”
- Social Services
- Department “Spatial Planning and Environmental Protection”
- Directorate “Public Procurement and Project Management”

Each department contributes sector-specific expertise while working under the coordination of the OSS.

4.2.5. Participatory Governance and Stakeholder Engagement

URBACT Local Group (ULG) Pomorie

The ULG will continue to function as a permanent advisory and participatory body, ensuring stakeholder involvement throughout implementation.

Composition:

- Municipal representatives;
- Social services;
- NGOs and civil society organisations;
- Local businesses;
- Energy and transport stakeholders;
- Citizen representatives.
- Role:
- Co-creation and validation of solutions;
- Providing feedback on implementation;
- Supporting communication and outreach;
- Strengthening local ownership and trust.

This ensures that the Investment Plan remains people-centered and responsive to local needs.

4.2.6. External Partners and Delivery Actors

The implementation will involve a range of external actors, including:

- Energy and mobility experts;
- IT and data management companies (for data systems and heat mapping);
- Construction and engineering companies;
- Transport operators;
- Financial institutions and funding bodies.

Public-private partnerships will be encouraged to enhance efficiency, innovation, and access to investment.

4.2.7. Delivery Model and Implementation Mechanisms

The Investment Plan will be delivered through a combination of:

- Public procurement procedures for infrastructure and services;
- Public-private partnerships (PPPs) for large-scale investments;
- Grant schemes and financial incentives for households and communities;
- Community-led initiatives, particularly for energy communities;
- Pilot actions and scaling-up approaches based on tested solutions.

This mixed delivery model ensures flexibility and scalability.

4.2.8. Monitoring, Reporting, and Learning

A structured monitoring system will be implemented to ensure continuous evaluation and improvement.

Key elements:

- Regular progress reporting (technical and financial);
- Monitoring of key performance indicators (KPIs);
- Feedback loops from the ULG and stakeholders;
- Periodic evaluation and adjustment of measures;
- Integration of lessons learned into future policies.

This approach ensures that the Investment Plan remains adaptive, efficient, and results-oriented.

4.2.9. Risk Management

- Potential risks (administrative, financial, technical, social) for the implementation of the Investment plan could be:
- Unstable policy framework
- Lack of enough funding opportunities
- Unstable energy prices
- Delays in construction works
- Insufficient administrative capacity
- Not enough engagement of target groups/low participation
- Untimely establishment
- Procurement delays
- Legal/administrative barriers
- High investment costs
- Regulatory barriers

These risks will be proactively managed through:

- Early risk identification and mitigation planning;
- Strong coordination mechanisms;
- Capacity building within the municipality;
- Continuous stakeholder engagement;
- Flexibility to adjust implementation strategies.

4.2.10. Contingency Plans for High Private Ownership Inertia

Roughly 90% of the residential property stock in Pomorie consists of privately-owned, owner-occupied homes rather than institutional or speculative commercial rentals. When low-income, vulnerable families own their sub-standard or poorly insulated homes privately, they are often asset-rich but cash-poor. They might be desperately stuck in energy poverty not out of malice or profit-seeking, but because they completely lack the capital to co-invest, or they are terrified of bureaucracy, debt, and construction disruption.

1. Financial Contingency

- **The Problem:** Even with high EU subsidies (e.g., 70–80% funding for deep renovations), a private, low-income owner-occupier often cannot afford the remaining 20% co-payment, causing them to reject the program entirely.
- **The Solution:** The plan must establish a municipal "bridge fund" or partner with green micro-finance institutions. This allows the remaining private co-investment portion to be paid back gradually only through the actual energy savings generated after the renovation.

2. The URBACT Local Group (ULG) Social Trust Network

- **The Problem:** Vulnerable private homeowners (particularly the elderly or isolated communities) are often deeply sceptical of government programs, fearing hidden costs, administrative traps, or that they might lose their property.
- **The Solution:** Instead of relying on passive municipal notices, the **URBACT Local Group (ULG)**, Local Action Groups (LAGs), and community leaders can conduct peer-to-peer outreach. They can create "Energy Ambassadors"—trusted local neighbours who have already gone through a municipal energy renovation—to physically show their lower utility bills to their neighbours. Trust in a 90% private market is built horizontally (neighbour-to-neighbour), not vertically (municipality-to-citizen).

3. Collective Aggregation & "Turnkey" Municipal Management

- **The Problem:** Organizing building renovations requires finding architects, securing technical audits, filing paperwork, and managing construction workers. For a vulnerable private owner, this administrative burden causes total paralysis.
- **The Solution:** The **One-Stop-Shop** must act as a fully delegated "turnkey" manager. The municipality assumes full legal and operational responsibility for managing the renovation project from start to finish. The private owner simply signs a single master authorization form allowing the One-Stop-Shop to handle the paperwork, engineering, and contractors on their behalf.

4. The "Carrot" of the Decentralized Energy Community

- **The Problem:** Structural physical renovations (like adding thick exterior insulation) can be too invasive, or the architectural layout of some older private homes might not allow for it.

- **The Solution: Energy Communities.** If a private homeowner cannot or will not renovate their physical house structure, the One-Stop-Shop can incentivize them to join a municipal-led renewable energy community. By allowing them to buy into or receive a designated share of solar power generated on municipal roofs, they transition from passive, vulnerable consumers into active partners. This lowers their energy bills through off-site generation, bypassing the need to alter their private physical property.

4.2.11. Long-Term Sustainability

The governance model is designed not only for project implementation but also for long-term institutional strengthening.

1) Institutional Sustainability – Who ensures it?

Institutional sustainability is fundamentally driven and secured by **Pomorie Municipality** as the primary lead authority. Strategic oversight and political commitment are guaranteed by the **Mayor of Pomorie** and the **Municipal Council**, who legally ratify decisions, approve multi-annual strategies, and integrate these initiatives into the city's official local planning frameworks (such as the Plan for Integrated Development and municipal energy strategies).

To move past temporary, project-based interventions, the municipality transitions the **One-Stop-Shop (OSS)** into a permanent administrative unit within the municipal structure. Furthermore, long-term governance is structurally safeguarded by the **URBACT Local Group (ULG) Pomorie**, which continues to function as a permanent, institutionalized advisory and participatory body. Comprising municipal experts, local businesses, civil society organizations, and citizen representatives, the ULG maintains public trust, ensures transparency, and prevents policy drift across changing political administrations.

2) Financial Sustainability – Who pays for all activities?

Financial sustainability is built on a diversified, multi-stream funding model that covers both initial capital investments and ongoing, long-term operational costs:

- **Capital Investments:** The large-scale initial infrastructure, building renovations, transport fleet overhauls, and equipment procurement are heavily supported by external EU and national financing instruments. Main funding sources include the *Social Climate Fund (SCF)*, *Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI)* via the National and Regional Partnership Plan, the *European Social Fund (ESF)*, and specialized programs like *HORIZON Europe* and *LIFE*.
- **On-going Operational Costs:** To sustain everyday services (such as the One-Stop-Shop) Pomorie Municipality partly allocates dedicated funds from its **own municipal budget**. Operational costs are also offset by a co-financing approach, including public-private partnerships and grant matching schemes (e.g., 50% grants for residents forming energy communities).
- **Self-Sustaining Mechanisms:** Decentralized interventions, such as **Renewable Energy Communities**, generate long-term financial autonomy. By utilizing municipal roofs for solar arrays and shared storage, the energy generated reduces municipal utility bills and creates a circular economic model where a portion of energy savings can be reinvested into maintaining the infrastructure.

3) Operational Sustainability – Who does the work and what resources are needed?

Operational sustainability ensures that the technical, analytical, and community-level work continues seamlessly across the 2026–2032 timeline and beyond.

- **Who does the work?** The core daily operations are managed by the cross-departmental staff of the **One-Stop-Shop (OSS)**, led by the Municipal Energy Manager and supported by dedicated coordinators from the municipal departments of social services, transport, environment, and urban planning. Long-term field execution—such as conducting socio-energy audits, technical home visits, and transport fleet maintenance—is carried out by a network of **external delivery actors**, including licensed energy/mobility experts, local transport operators, and local civil organizations.
- **Required Resources:**
 - **Knowledge & Expertise:** Continuous capacity building and training for municipal staff are maintained using the methodologies transferred from the Lead Partner (EMSV Getafe) and URBACT experts. Staff require training in energy literacy, socio-economic profiling, and specialized legal frameworks for setting up energy communities.
 - **Tools & Infrastructure:** Operational teams require hardware and technical field equipment, including "Energy Kits" (digital thermo-hygrometers, smart metering devices) and physical infrastructure like electric buses, charging networks, and a localized energy management center.
 - **Data Systems:** The municipality relies on an advanced, automated **Data Analytics System**. Operational continuity requires maintaining this data platform to cross-reference technical building audits with socioeconomic records, track dynamic transit routes, and continuously update the local vulnerability profiles.

Key outcomes:

- Improved administrative capacity of Pomorie Municipality;
- Established mechanisms for integrated urban governance;
- Sustainable operation of services such as the One-Stop-Shop;
- Stronger partnerships between public, private, and community actors.

4.3. Overall project schedule

The overall project schedule for the Investment plan is 2026-2032, structured in three implementation phases:

1. Preparation and Setup (2026-2027): governance establishment, partner agreements, baseline data collection.
2. Implementation (2028–2030): execution of investments, monitoring, and stakeholder engagement.
3. Evaluation and Scaling (2030–2032): assessment, adjustments, and integration into long-term municipal planning.

5. BUDGET

5.1. Project costs

No.	Investment Title	Calculation Logic	Estimated time of achievement	Estimated Budget (€)
1	Implementation of energy efficiency measures in multi-family buildings	20 buildings (1 large multifamily residential building x 1 500 000; 2 residential buildings x 1 000 000; 17 smaller residential buildings x 500 000) - infrastructure and construction works, staff costs; external expertise and services; subcontracting, equipment and consumables	2028-2032	12 000 000
2	Support for the establishment of energy communities	6 energy communities at an average cost of 100 000/energy community setup - energy infrastructure, energy storage, software and monitoring; staff costs; equipment and consumables (smart meters), etc. Participation of municipality, residents, companies, NGOs - 50 % grant for residents	2028-2032	600 000
3	Support for energy efficient home appliances/energy kits	Staff costs; software; equipment and consumables: digital thermo hydrometer, LED lightning, smart power strips, A+++ refrigerators, washing machines, etc.	2028-2032	704000
4	Implementation of energy efficient transportation system	Purchase of electric vehicles – electric buses ~5040000 Purchase of electric bicycles for the personal transport of "vulnerable" residents of the municipality ~ 300000 Construction of accompanying charging infrastructure ~3660000 Organization of transport services ~ 1080000	2028-2032	10 080 000

5	Organisation and implementation of awareness raising and promotional events	5 campaigns at an average cost of 50 000/campaign-community workshops, school programs, digital tools, promotional events, printed materials, organisation, etc.	2028-2032	250 000
6	Establishment and management of an One-Stop-Shop (OSS)	Staff & Personnel Costs; Office & Administrative Expenses; External Expertise & Technical Support; Travel & Accommodation	2028-2032	350 000
				23984000

5.2. Investment sources

Regarding the potential to fund/implement the investment plan, notably through cohesion policy funds and national programmes, indicative appropriate are following:

No.	Investment Title	Calculation Logic	Estimated time of achievement	Estimated Budget (€)	Funding opportunity
1	Implementation of energy efficiency measures in multi-family buildings	20 buildings (1 large multifamily residential building x 1 500 000; 2 residential buildings x 1 000 000; 17 smaller residential buildings x 500 000) - infrastructure and construction works, staff costs; external expertise and services; subcontracting, equipment and consumables	2028-2032	12 000 000	Social Climate Fund; National and Regional Partnership Plan (Integrated Territorial Investments)
2	Support for the establishment of energy communities	6 energy communities at an average cost of 100 000/energy community setup - energy infrastructure, energy storage, software and monitoring; staff costs; equipment and consumables (smart meters), etc. Participation of municipality, residents, companies - 50 % grant for residents	2028-2032	600 000	HORIZON Europe; Social Climate Fund; LIFE Programme
3	Support for energy efficient home appliances/energy kits	Staff costs; software; equipment and consumables: digital thermo hydrometer, LED lightning, smart power strips, A+++ refrigerators, washing machines, etc.	2028-2032	704000	Social Climate Fund; European Social Fund

4	Implementation of energy efficient transportation system	Purchase of electric vehicles – electric buses ~5040000 Purchase of electric bicycles for the personal transport of "vulnerable" residents of the municipality ~ 300000 Construction of accompanying charging infrastructure ~3660000 Organization of transport services ~ 1080000	2028-2032	10 080 000	Social Climate Fund; National and Regional Partnership Plan
5	Organisation and implementation of awareness raising and promotional events	5 campaigns at an average cost of 50 000/campaign-community workshops, school programs, digital tools, promotional events, printed materials, organisation, etc.	2028-2032	250 000	Interreg; LIFE Programme; CLLD (Community-Led Local Development) Public-Private Partnership
6	Establishment and management of an One-Stop-Shop (OSS)	Staff & Personnel Costs; Office & Administrative Expenses; External Expertise & Technical Support; Travel & Accommodation, etc.	2028-2032	350 000	LIFE Programme; National and Regional Partnership Plan; Municipal budget) Public-Private Partnership
				23984000	

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

6.1 Monitoring and evaluation approach

The monitoring and evaluation approach consists of:

- Periodical review of the progress
- Consideration of intermediate report's results
- Measures implementation analysis
- Evaluation of realized targets degree
- Suggestions for measures' adjustments
- Evaluation of results resilience

6.2. Monitoring and evaluation framework

The Monitoring and Evaluation framework of the Pomorie Investment Plan is designed to ensure that all implemented actions lead to measurable, transparent, and sustainable results in reducing energy and transport poverty, while strengthening institutional capacity and social inclusion.

The approach is based on a results-oriented and data-driven framework, combining quantitative indicators with qualitative feedback from stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The main objectives of the M&E system are to:

- Track progress in the implementation of planned activities and investments;
- Measure outputs, outcomes, and long-term impacts;
- Support evidence-based decision-making;
- Identify challenges and enable timely corrective actions;
- Ensure accountability toward citizens, stakeholders, and funding institutions;
- Capture lessons learned and support policy improvement and scaling.

Monitoring and evaluation will be carried out continuously throughout the implementation period (2026–2032), with regular reporting cycles and structured review mechanisms.

Intervention Logic	Indicators	Baseline (2026)	Target (2032)	Means of Verification	Assumptions / Risks
OVERALL OBJECTIVE Improve the living conditions of vulnerable households and transport users in Pomorie through reduction of energy and transport poverty	% reduction of households in energy poverty % reduction of vulnerable transport users Reduction of CO ₂ emissions (buildings & transport)	Limited local data available High share of vulnerable groups	Measurable decrease (to be defined after baseline) Improved emission levels	Municipal statistics National statistics Energy & climate reports	Stable policy framework Continued access to EU funding
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES 1. Reduce household energy costs and improve efficiency 2. Improve access to sustainable	Average reduction in household energy costs (€) % of buildings upgraded in energy class Increased use of	High energy costs Low building efficiency Limited transport accessibility	Reduced energy bills Improved building performance Increased transport accessibility	Energy bills Energy certificates Transport data Surveys	Citizen willingness to participate Energy prices remain stable

Intervention Logic	Indicators	Baseline (2026)	Target (2032)	Means of Verification	Assumptions / Risks
and affordable transport	public/sustainable transport				
RESULTS (OUTCOMES)					
Improved energy efficiency of residential buildings	Number of buildings renovated Energy class improvement	Large share of inefficient buildings (E, F, G)	10 Renovated buildings	Technical reports Energy certificates	Delays in construction works
Increased access to energy services and support	Number of households supported Number of energy audits conducted	No structured service	Fully operational system	One-stop-shop records Audit reports	Administrative capacity
Improved sustainable mobility and accessibility	Number of users of sustainable transport Coverage of transport services	Limited transport options	Expanded and accessible system	Transport operator data Surveys	Adoption by citizens
Increased awareness and behavioural change	% of citizens aware of energy efficiency practices	Low awareness	Increased awareness levels	Surveys Event reports	Engagement of target groups
OUTPUTS					
One-stop-shop established and operational	Number of operational OSS units	0	1 fully operational	Administrative records	Timely establishment
Socio-energy audits implemented	Number of audits conducted	0	Defined target (e.g. 500+)	Audit database	Access to households
Residential buildings refurbished	Number of buildings renovated	Existing baseline	Target defined (e.g. 20+)	Project reports	Procurement delays
Energy communities established	Number of communities created	0	Defined target (e.g. 2–5)	Registration documents	Legal/administrative barriers
Sustainable transport	Number of electric vehicles	Limited infrastructure	Expanded system	Procurement records	High investment costs

Intervention Logic	Indicators	Baseline (2026)	Target (2032)	Means of Verification	Assumptions / Risks
solutions deployed	Number of charging points				
Awareness activities implemented	Number of events Number of participants	Limited activities	Increased outreach	Event reports	Low participation
ACTIVITIES					
Establish one-stop-shop services	OSS created and staffed	Not existing	Fully operational	Administrative records	Staffing capacity
Conduct socio-energy audits	Audits completed	0	Target achieved	Audit reports	Citizen participation
Implement building renovations	Renovation projects completed	Ongoing limited projects	Scaled implementation	Technical documentation	Construction delays
Support energy communities	Legal and financial support provided	Not existing	Functioning communities	Project records	Regulatory barriers
Develop sustainable transport system	Vehicles procured, routes created	Limited system	Operational network	Procurement & transport data	Funding availability
Organize awareness campaigns	Events, trainings, campaigns	Limited	Regular campaigns	Reports, materials	Public engagement
Develop data systems (heat mapping, etc.)	Data platform established	Not existing	Functional system	IT system reports	GDPR compliance

7. HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

The Pomorie Investment Plan integrates the key horizontal principles promoted by the URBACT programme, ensuring that all planned actions contribute not only to economic and environmental objectives, but also to social fairness, inclusiveness, and good governance. These principles are embedded across all phases of planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Gender Equality

The Investment Plan actively promotes gender equality by ensuring equal access to all measures, services, and opportunities for women and men. Special attention is given to the fact that energy poverty and transport vulnerability may affect genders differently, particularly in vulnerable groups such as elderly women, single mothers, and low-income households.

Gender-sensitive approaches will be integrated through:

- Equal participation of women and men in the URBACT Local Group and decision-making processes;
- Collection of gender-disaggregated data where possible;
- Ensuring equal access to support services such as the one-stop-shop, energy audits, and mobility solutions;
- Awareness-raising activities addressing different energy consumption patterns and needs.

Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunities

The Investment Plan fully respects the principles of non-discrimination as outlined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. All actions are designed to ensure equal access regardless of gender, age, ethnic origin, disability, religion, or socio-economic status.

Particular focus is placed on vulnerable groups identified in Pomorie, including:

- Roma communities;
- Elderly people;
- People with disabilities;
- Low-income households;
- Vulnerable transport users.

Measures to ensure equality include:

- Targeted outreach and communication strategies;
- Inclusive eligibility criteria for support schemes;
- Collaboration with social services and community organizations;
- Continuous monitoring to prevent exclusion or unequal access.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a core pillar of the Investment Plan, ensuring that all interventions contribute to a low-carbon, resource-efficient, and climate-resilient future.

All investments are aligned with:

- The European Green Deal objectives;
- National energy and climate policies;
- The “Do No Significant Harm” (DNSH) principle.

This is achieved through:

- Energy-efficient renovation of buildings;
- Promotion of renewable energy and energy communities;
- Deployment of zero-emission transport solutions;
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions;
- Integration of climate adaptation measures (e.g., addressing heatwaves and cooling needs).

Environmental sustainability is systematically considered in project design, procurement, and implementation.

Accessibility and Inclusion

Ensuring accessibility and inclusion is fundamental to the success of the Investment Plan. All services, infrastructure, and communication activities are designed to be accessible to all citizens, including people with disabilities and those facing social or economic barriers.

Key actions include:

- Designing inclusive one-stop-shop services for energy and transport support;
- Ensuring physical accessibility of public infrastructure (e.g., transport, buildings, public spaces);
- Providing clear, understandable, and multilingual information where necessary;
- Supporting digital inclusion through user-friendly tools and assistance.

The plan aims to reduce inequalities and ensure that no group is left behind in the transition toward sustainable energy and mobility.

Co-creation, Integrated and Participatory Approach

Co-creation is a foundational principle of the Investment Plan for the city of Pomorie, particularly through its reliance on an active URBACT Local Group (ULG). The plan emphasizes that its development was driven by ULG members and main stakeholders, many of whom are expected to be integral to its future delivery.

Key elements of this co-creation and participative process include:

- **Integrated Partnership:** The ULG was built upon existing Local Action Groups (LAGs), specifically the Fisheries Local Action Group Pomorie and the Local Action Group Pomorie, creating a public-private, non-profit partnership model.
- **Active Engagement:** During the EmPowerIngUs project, the Pomorie team organized monthly ULG meetings to collect inputs, visions for the investment plan, and to better align the plan with the strategic challenges prioritized by the Municipality.
- **Participative Methodologies:** The process utilized participative work methodologies, which allowed stakeholders to share their perspectives and experiences. These meetings also served to promote knowledge of good national and international practices, contributing to the capacity building of all involved stakeholders.
- **Broad Stakeholder Involvement:** The EmPowerIngUs project ensures that local government, NGOs, civil society organizations, agricultural producers, business actors, and community groups are involved in the strategic development and implementation of the plan.

In line with URBACT's methodology, the Investment Plan is built on a strong integrated and participatory approach. This ensures coordination across sectors (energy, transport, social services, environment) and active involvement of local stakeholders.

This principle is implemented through:

- Continuous engagement of the URBACT Local Group (ULG);
- Co-creation of solutions with citizens and stakeholders;
- Cross-departmental cooperation within the municipality;
- Combination of “hard” (infrastructure) and “soft” (capacity building, awareness) measures.

This approach strengthens local ownership, improves policy effectiveness, and ensures long-term sustainability of results.

8. CONCLUSION

The implementation of this Investment Plan represents a transformative milestone for the Municipality of Pomorie. By integrating the advanced data-driven methodologies of the EPIU-Getafe model with our local strategic priorities, we are moving beyond traditional infrastructure projects toward a holistic, citizen-centered energy transition.

This plan is not merely a technical roadmap but a social commitment to our most vulnerable residents. Through the combined power of deep thermal renovations, the establishment of decentralized energy communities, and the deployment of a modern electro bus network, Pomorie will directly combat the interconnected challenges of energy and transport poverty.

By fostering a culture of transparency, innovation, and active participation through our URBACT Local Group, Pomorie is positioning itself as a national leader in sustainable coastal development. We invite all local stakeholders, regional partners, and citizens to join us in this journey toward a climate-neutral, socially just, and resilient future for all.