EmPowerIngUs

Getafe, Spain
193 238 inhabitants

Challenge

Participating in European initiatives has transformed Getafe's strategy to combat energy poverty through data-driven social initiatives. Sharing these initiatives within a transnational innovation network is the best way to continue this work.

Local heroes

The involvement of various departments within the Getafe City Council and public companies, institutions such as the Getafe Red Cross, universities (UC3M and UPM), the Naturgy Foundation, social and neighbourhood associations, and energy communities has been what has truly sustained the project at the local level.





Funding

The current situation shows us that innovation cannot depend on grants and subsidies. Empowerment also means embracing blended finance, combining the vast existing resources in a way that specifically aligns with our strategies. URBACT, EUI, and LIFE CET fund knowledge, HORIZON improves municipal services and directly benefits citizens, while MUNICIPAL BUDGETS ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the tools acquired. We have moved from isolated projects to SCALABLE FUNDING STRATEGIES.

The Plan

Gearing up with new weapons to combat energy poverty

The ultimate goal is to expand the impact achieved through previous innovative initiatives—not only over time but also geographically—while refining the original activities. Sharing our practices abroad also helps us expand them within Getafe.

The improvement activities carried out by the EMSV and the Getafe City Council form a progressive roadmap, in which each action builds on or enables the next, combining technology, data management, citizen participation, and social action to reduce energy vulnerability in the municipality.



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emsv
Empresa Municipal del SUELO Y VIVIENDA de Getafe

EmPowerIngUs

Etterbeek, Belgium
49 775 inhabitants

Challenge

Etterbeek sought to address energy poverty — which affected 21.8% of Belgians in 2024 — for both socio-economic and environmental reasons. The EmPoweringUs network enabled the municipality to better identify energy poverty and improve the living conditions of its most vulnerable residents.

Local heroes

We can all, as civil servants, be local heroes when we embrace collective commitment, transparent communication, and efficient, trustful collaboration. With the support of all the municipal services, Etterbeek's housing agency will certainly accomplish great achievements that improve its tenants' living conditions.





Funding

A phased financing strategy is proposed, combining complementary tools aligned with project maturity and municipal capacity. Key levers include bank loans, regional subsidies, crowdlending, federal programmes, and European funds such as ERDF, LIFE, Interreg, and New European Bauhaus. The European Investment Bank could become a strategic long-term partner.

The Plan

When strategy becomes our lighthouse

Our project combines awareness-raising, energy renovation, and strategic planning to improve the energy performance of the municipal dwellings managed by Etterbeek's housing agency (Régie Foncière). We aim to achieve an EPC label C by 2033. This objective is both essential and ambitious, as more than 40% of the current housing stock is rated E, F, or G. To support this transition, a comprehensive energy audit is being developed to help prioritise renovation works. In addition, we will monitor energy consumption and identify situations of energy poverty through relevant data analysis. Workshops with tenants will also help raise awareness on the rational use of energy.



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Etterbeek

EmPowerIngUs

Trikala, Greece
80 000 inhabitants

Challenge

Trikala addressed the challenge of low awareness and understanding of energy poverty among citizens, including its hidden forms, its causes, its social and economic impacts, as well as available mitigation measures. Addressing this challenge is essential for strengthening local engagement, building a well-informed and engaged community.

Local heroes

The Departments of Social Welfare and Technical Services of the Trikala City Council, e-Trikala S.A., the Municipal Water Company, and the Chamber of Commerce have been the true local heroes. By aligning social policy, technological innovation, and climate goals, Trikala is creating a model for municipal action capable of addressing complex sustainability challenges in a comprehensive manner.



Funding

Three guiding principles: Efficiency in generating quantifiable social and environmental benefits. Diversification to avoid reliance on a single source of funding (municipal, regional, national, and European). Financial and environmental sustainability: the Energy Office must remain operational and maintain low carbon emissions over the long term.

The Plan

A climate-neutral, smart city that leaves no one behind.

The establishment of the Energy Office of Trikala as a stable, municipally anchored public service is the primary objective of this Investment Plan.
The Energy Office of Trikala marks a significant milestone in the city's trajectory, as a permanent municipal mechanism designed to address and reduce energy poverty, improve energy efficiency, and empower citizens to participate actively in the city's climate-neutral future.
The Plan represents a strategic roadmap for institutional innovation, by linking digital governance, social policy, and sustainable energy management.



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e-trikala

EmPowerIngUs

Pomorie, Bulgaria
15 230 inhabitants

Challenge

More than 35% of households in the country are energy vulnerable. Households face energy vulnerability due to a combination of low average incomes, inefficient housing, and a heavy reliance on electricity, firewood, or coal for heating. Older apartment buildings are poorly insulated and require more energy to stay warm.

Local heroes

Pomorie local heroes group builds on the existing Local Action Groups in the municipality, bringing together public and private stakeholders to promote community-led local development. The Fisheries Local Action Group and the Pomorie Local Action Group. Both follow a bottom-up, EU-supported approach to develop economic, social and environmental projects.



Funding

Implementation of energy efficiency measures in residential buildings and energy communities. Promotion of the purchase of energy-efficient appliances and investments in energy efficiency. Organisation and awareness-raising initiatives. These actions can be supported through a combination of regional development programmes, together with EEA and Norway Grants, the EU LIFE Programme, the Social Climate Fund, and other complementary funds aimed at promoting energy efficiency, climate action, and social inclusion.

The Plan

The Power of Small Scale

Pomorie started with simple resources but a clear vision: to bring the fight against energy poverty closer to those who need it most. Through pilot testing, citizen engagement, cooperation with social services and data-driven work, the municipality took its first steps towards turning an idea into a useful, participatory and future-oriented local service.

The power of small-scale initiatives is taking shape in the form of a nascent one-stop shop, a focus on small data over big data, and the creation of channels of communication between the municipality and the energy supplier that operates nationwide.



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ПОМОРИЕ

EmPowerIngUs

Maia, Portugal
135 306 inhabitants

Challenge

Maia faces a hidden energy poverty crisis. Additionally, 20.8% of the Portuguese population cannot properly heat their homes. Low incomes and ageing inefficient infrastructures trap vulnerable families in cold, unsafe housing conditions.

Local heroes

The URBACT Local Group (ULG) unites our municipal divisions, the public housing company, local academia, energy agencies and several other stakeholders, forming the driving force of this project in Maia. By bringing together technical departments, social services, and community representatives, we ensure that municipal plans translate into immediate, real-world relief for our citizens.





Funding

Sustainable urban transformation requires moving beyond isolated grants toward long-term strategic investment. Combining European and national funding and local resources creates a robust economic framework. This financial integration secures the continuity of local action plans and scales up our transition tools.

The Plan

Integrate data analytics into the municipality

Maia plans to upscale the impact achieved through transnational cooperation by embedding data intelligence directly into our territory. Replicating innovative models allows us to move from reactive social aid to structured, sustainable solutions. Planned improvement activities form a progressive municipal roadmap where social action merges with technological innovation. This long-term framework focuses on expanding clean energy production and creating collaborative community networks to build a more resilient and inclusive municipality.



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MAIA