



ComActivate

Enabling community action for energy sufficiency

D4.3 BEST PRACTICES FROM RESOURCE CENTERS

October 31, 2025

Habitat for Humanity International



Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or CINEA. Neither the European Union nor CINEA can be held responsible for them.

Project Acronym	ComActivate
Project Name	Enabling community action for energy sufficiency
Project Coordinator	Habitat for Humanity International
Project Duration	36 months
Website	https://www.bpie.eu/comactivate-enabling-community-action-for-energy-sufficiency/

Deliverable No.	D4.3
Dissemination Level	PU - Public
Work Package	WP4
Lead beneficiary	Habitat for Humanity International
Author(s)	Zuzana Matusova (HFHI), Ludmila Sadlonova (HFHI), Klaudia Plesova (HFHI), Ivaylo Trendafilov (Burgas), Teodora Stanisheva (EnEffect), Ida Vanger (Jozsefvaros), Dzszenifer Borsfai (Jozsefvaros), Evelina Gruzdiene (LCA), Kristina Didjurge (Kaisiadorys)
Reviewed by	IWO
Date	October 31, 2025
File Name	D4.3 Best practices from Resource Centers

Contents

CONTENTS	2
1. BEST PRACTICES OF RESOURCE CENTRES – INTRODUCTION	3
2. CURRENT OPERATION OF RESOURCE CENTERS.....	3
3. BEST PRACTICES	6
1.1 ACCESSIBILITY AND VISIBILITY	6
1.2 SERVICE OFFERINGS AND TAILORED SUPPORT	6
1.3 CAPACITY BUILDING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	8
1.4 PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION	10
1.5 INNOVATIVE COMMUNICATION APPROACHES.....	11
1.6 OPERATIONAL AND STAFFING PRACTICES.....	12
1.7 FINANCIAL MODELS AND SUSTAINABILITY	13
1.8 POLICY AND ADVOCACY ROLE.....	14
4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW RESOURCE CENTERS.....	16
5. WHAT COMES NEXT?.....	18

1. Best Practices of Resource Centres – Introduction

Resource Centres (RCs) are emerging as key instruments for supporting communities in energy renovation and sustainable housing. They serve as accessible information and support hubs where residents, homeowners' associations (HOAs), and other stakeholders can receive guidance on technical, financial, and administrative aspects of building renovation.

The primary aim of the RC is to make renovation processes easier and more transparent: they explain where to start, how to access funding, which technical solutions are available, and how to connect with reliable professionals. By combining information services, training, and community engagement, RCs help overcome barriers such as lack of knowledge, limited access to expertise, or uncertainty about financial options.

The ComActivate project has already achieved significant progress with two RCs — in Burgas (Bulgaria) and Budapest (Hungary) — which are now fully operational and actively serving their communities. The remaining two planned RCs are in the final stages of preparation, with Kaišiadorys (Lithuania) scheduled to open in October 2025 and Elektrėnai (Lithuania) following shortly thereafter. Even before their official launch, expert staff based in municipalities are already providing advisory and communication services, ensuring that several RC functions are already active and tested both online and through local engagement. The brief delay in physical openings is mainly linked to administrative and procedural factors beyond the control of the project and local partners, including the timing of municipal decision-making, procurement processes, and coordination with national funding schemes. Nevertheless, these preparatory activities have generated valuable insights, partnerships, and communication strategies that will directly inform full-scale operation.

This report presents both practical experience from existing RCs and forward-looking approaches from those being finalized, capturing the full spectrum of development across participating countries. Overall, the temporary postponements should be viewed not as setbacks but as part of a careful and adaptive development process, enabling each RC to launch under stable conditions, with well-defined operational models and stronger local ownership.

2. Current Operation of Resource Centers

Bulgaria

City: Burgas

Venue: NHK Cultural Center

Open since: 2023

Target groups: Citizens, HOAs, building managers in Burgas

Services provided:

- Information and administrative support for financing programs: The RC helps citizens and HOAs understand available funding schemes for energy efficiency measures, photovoltaic (PV) installations, and renovation programs. Staff guide applicants through the program requirements, provide clarifications and support preparation of necessary documents
- Trainings and info days: Organized in the RC and related to programs providing support for implementation of energy efficiency (EE) measures and PV installations. Training on these two topics are also organised in the RC

Opening hours: Monday–Friday, full day

Communication: In-person, by phone and e-mail

Number of staff: 1 full-time employee (general information, documentation support) + 1 part time employee since April 2024.

Monthly costs: ~1500 EUR (salaries 1200 EUR, utilities 200 EUR, other costs such as events/trainings 100 EUR)

Website: <https://energy-office.bg>

Hungary

City: Budapest

Venue: LakóTér, Kálvária Square 21.

Open since: September 2025

Target groups: Municipal tenants and disadvantaged residents, HOAs

Services provided:

- Community building in municipal tenements: As a first step in altering attitudes about energy-saving, intensive community organizing happens during a one-and-a-half-year-period, resulting in trust towards the Municipality and its organizations, more cooperation between tenants and competence about available opportunities to report and solve issues with flats. Eventually, tenants become more willing to communicate their hardships to the competent institutions, to care about their common spaces and share their resources
- Tailored guidance for maximizing savings: Prescheduled consultation provided by an energy expert is adapted to the specific building and household context, helping residents acquire behaviour to save energy and preserve their flat's condition, avoid problems like damp and mold
- Comprehensive advice on renovation funds available in the district: Green office consultants provide technical, legal-administrative, and financial guidance to homeowners and HOAs
- Digital resources and online support: Through the [RenoPont website](#), residents can access renovation case studies, a cost-savings calculator, template documents, information on subsidies and financing opportunities, and a database of qualified contractors

Opening hours: Currently three days a week in-person; planned online consultations available

Communication: In-person, website, Facebook, Instagram, by phone and e-mail, flyers

Number of staff: 4 full-time community-organizers; a part time assistant

Monthly costs: ~965 EUR (rent 380 EUR, utilities 75 EUR, staff ~510 EUR gross)

Website: <https://reszvetel.jozsefvaros.hu/lakoter/>

Lithuania – Elektrėnai

City: Elektrėnai

Venue: Planned, not yet operational

Open since: Not yet opened

Target groups: Local community of residents of MFABs and single-family houses, municipal staff, administrators, contractors, media, local opinion-makers

Services provided (planned):

- Single-window information and guidance: Serving as a first point of contact for anyone interested in renovation, offering clear explanation of needed steps, available funding programs, and application procedures



- Awareness raising and dissemination: Information campaigns and local events highlighting the benefits of renovation, including improved safety, reduced energy bills, longer building lifespan, increased property value, and better indoor comfort and health
- Addressing misinformation and confusion: Clarifying complex technical and financial information and responding to misleading or incomplete messages circulating in the community
- Community-building activities: Meetings and events with residents, administrators, and experts to foster trust, encourage peer-to-peer learning, and create shared motivation for renovation
- Training activities: Capacity-building programs targeting residents, administrators, and contractors, to improve skills and ensure higher-quality project delivery
- Policy feedback and advocacy: Channelling local experience and feedback to national and regional decision-makers, contributing to improved renovation policies

Opening hours: Not yet determined

Communication: Planned: in-person, phone, online, local and social media

Number of staff: Not yet determined

Monthly costs: Not yet determined

Lithuania Kaišiadorys

City: Kaišiadorys

Venue: Planned, not yet operational

Open since: Not yet opened

Target groups: Residents of MFABs, HOAs, municipal and eldership staff, utility companies, contractors, media, construction and design businesses

Services provided (planned):

- Consultations and information packages: Residents, HOAs, and administrators receiving personalised advice on renovation processes, supplemented by easy-to-use printed and digital materials
- Training and thematic discussions: Hosting events and workshops for residents, contractors, and other stakeholders, fostering dialogue on technical solutions, financing opportunities, and community needs
- Broad information dissemination: Knowledge-sharing through websites, social media, and public events, ensuring that renovation news reach diverse audience in the municipality and surrounding areas
- Long-term support for renovation projects: Beyond initial consultations, assisting with documentation, monitoring progress, and helping stakeholders to resolve problems that arise during implementation

Opening hours: Not yet determined

Communication: Planned: in-person, phone, online, media channels

Number of staff: Not yet determined

Monthly costs: Not yet determined

3. Best practices

1.1 Accessibility and Visibility

Central location of the RC, Burgas (BG)

The RC, or as we call it the Energy office of Burgas, is in the very centre of the city, easily reached by foot, public transport, bicycle or car. Also, the RC can be reached via the social media, phone and e-mail.

Central location and accessibility, Józsefváros (HU)

The RC, called "Lakóter", operates on Kálvária Square. This is a central location surrounded by more disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Józsefváros as well, and it is easily accessible from the edges of the district by public transport, too. Detached from the RC, people see it more as a community space and are more willing to go in and utilize its services and participate in programs. Therefore, we can reach vulnerable target groups who are either not aware of the Municipality's services or do not have the trust towards the institution. The space is fully renovated and wheelchair accessible. It is run by four community organizers and an assistant previously working in a RC. Online platforms of the municipality are utilized for residents to advertise the RC.

Convenient and well-known location, Elektrėnai (LT)

The RC will operate at the premises of EKV (municipal company). This location is already well known to local residents as a place where they can obtain advice on various municipal and housing maintenance issues. The EKV building is in the center of Elektrėnai and is easily accessible by various means of transport and on foot. Considering the needs of different age groups, consultations are provided both online and in person, and there are plans to actively use a dedicated website for further communication and promotion of the RC. The awareness-raising campaigns about the operation of the RC are planned through local media, social networks, and local events.

Easily accessible location and variety of services, Kaišiadorys (LT)

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

Stakeholders, such as utility companies, municipalities, neighborhoods, apartment building administrators, construction companies, and creditors, receive information through training, thematic discussions, information events, newsletters, e-mails, and other means convenient for them. It is important to create cooperation between various institutions.

1.2 Service Offerings and Tailored Support

Helping Citizens Access Funding for Energy Efficiency and PV Systems, Burgas (BG)

The main function of RC is to provide information on available financing schemes supporting energy efficiency measures and implementation of renewable energy sources (RES) installations in single and multifamily houses. The staff of the RC provides also administrative support to citizens in preparing the documents necessary to apply to these schemes, which proved to be an effective

way to raise interest among the residents to apply for the schemes and eventually get to the available funding.

Furthermore, Burgas RC answers questions from citizens who decided to implement EE measures or install photovoltaic (PV) systems on their homes. This way the RC contributes to spreading information about the multiple ways to save energy on housing unit level and increases the overall interest in such solutions.

In-person energy-consumption counseling for municipal tenants, Józsefváros (HU)

Municipal tenants often face the problem that, due to limited knowledge, their flats are not used efficiently, leading to high utility bills, damp walls, and even mold. To maintain their health and property conditions, we offer them customized counseling. They can apply for a timeslot with a hired energetics expert, who goes straight into their flat and examines the windows, heating-system, arrangements of furniture... During this service, residents also fill out a questionnaire about their general energy-consumption methods. Based on the information gained, the expert gives them advice about what to change (behavior, setting) and draws the conclusion in a short report with recommendations. The service is free of charge.

Online and in-person counseling for homeowners and condominiums, Józsefváros (HU)

In the RC, there are flyers available about the online counselling service platform RenoPont with the contact information and a description of the service. Through the website, users can access practical online tools, such as energy and cost-saving calculators and a subsidy eligibility checker showing how much funding they can apply for. The site also offers detailed information on the benefits of renovation, the types of subsidies available, and the requirements for each.

Those who are interested in renovation can apply for a free consultation about a possible and effective renovation plan. This means tailored support since the focus is on the plans for the specific client. Additionally, residents can apply for financial and technical planning, for energetic expert examination or tender counseling for subsidy application. However, this service is subject to a fee.

For condominium managers, online consultations and management of renovation projects services are available.

Initial individual expert consultations and practical training sessions, Elektrėnai (LT)

The main objective of the RC is to provide the latest information on published calls for proposals, explain how to make better use of financial opportunities, and provide initial information on how to start renovation processes. If more detailed information is needed, applicants will be referred to the relevant specialists.

We are planning initial individual consultations and various practical training sessions and events for groups of residents, inviting external experts who provide qualified knowledge about financing schemes, possible renovation measures, help in choosing the most suitable renewable energy sources, etc.

Information accessibility and presentation methods, Kaišiadorys (LT)

Kaišiadorys RC is developed as a one-stop-shop system that provides technical, financial and legal-administrative advice on energy upgrades and that can support stakeholders in preparing necessary documents when financing programs are opened. It provides clear and up-to-date information on energy efficiency and renewable energy financing programs, subsidies available, other benefits, list of construction companies, financial institutions for funding, and similar. Updates are shared through websites, social media, and public events, ensuring that this package of knowledge reaches diverse audiences in the municipality and its surrounding areas.

1.3 Capacity Building and Community Engagement

Burgas as the leading municipality in renovation, Burgas (BG)

The RC is regularly organising info days and trainings on these topics:

- Requirements and preparation of project for financing of EE measures in MFABs
- Requirements and implementation of PV installations
- Improving the comfort in homes
- Heating/cooling installations
- Insulation materials
- Key considerations when renovating our homes

The greatest interest from citizens is for trainings related to EE measures. Every visitor to the office is registered with contacts and field of interest. When an event or info day is about to be organised, information is sent via e- mail so that the trainings are advertised effectively and get to people who are interested in them.

The RC in Burgas is already well recognised. People are constantly contacting the office with different questions, but mostly about available financing about EE. Since 2014, several programs for full renovation of MFABs have been implemented. Thanks to the work of the Burgas municipality and recent work of the RC, Burgas is now the national leader with most buildings refurbished. Despite the fears people had at the beginning of the process, now the interest to participate in these programs grows unequally to the available financing.

Flyers and guidebooks, Józsefváros (HU)

Citizen Participation and Housing Office in the Municipality, along with the RC, have produced several flyers and guidebooks, which are available district-wide, e.g., at health care and social institutions. Flyers about available subsidies target those who are eligible but unaware of the opportunities, for example those who are not in touch with the Municipality in any way and are hard to reach online. For municipal tenants, the office issued a guidebook about how and where they can organize duties after the contract or report a problem. There is a brochure about the available social services in the district with the exact location and contact information.

Quarterly events for condominium managers, Józsefváros (HU)

Forums for condominium managers and members of committee are held every 3-6 months in the RC. The event, besides discussing the most frequent questions about legal issues and taxation, focuses on the subsidies available to HOAs. Tenders are for renovating common spaces, facades and renovations for mitigating urban heat island effect. The participants are informed by the employees of the municipality working with the tenders. They can also acquire information about how to manage renovations, and where they can get help. This encourages them to start investing in the improvement of their building, which can be measured in the number of applications for subsidies. The forums are advertised online and on premises of the Municipality (customer service centers, the office, etc.).

Building Communities and Trust, Józsefváros (HU)

Currently municipal tenants are reluctant to report or communicate about any hardship or problem they face in their flats or buildings due to lack of information and trust. As a first step, the goal of the RC's community organizers is to engage and empower residents in municipally owned buildings. That means continuous fieldwork there, listening to their problems, and facilitating communication between the parties. Besides, they facilitate the community to work together and implement a common goal in the building, e.g. greening the common garden together, constructing a compost-box, or similar. The aim is to strengthen social bonds and self-organization, realizing resources to share, and build trust towards the Municipality and its institutions. These

activities build a base for them to be more open to education about energy saving and understanding its importance, and more aware of their potential in this process.

InfoPoint for anyone interested, Józsefváros (HU)

It is often the case that when a resident would like to arrange their affairs or address their issue, they do not know where to go exactly, which institution is competent in their case. In the RC, residents who would like to renovate or apply for a subsidy like the Home-renovation Tender are informed, get all the documents and information about where they can apply. This process is identical to every tender and subsidy offered by the Municipality.

Regular face-to-face meetings with residents, Elektrėnai (LT)

To maintain good relations with residents and encourage their motivation, regular face-to-face meetings with residents are needed to discuss all issues that arise. Elektrėnai already has a practice of holding meetings with residents, which will be continued by the RC. To these meetings, representatives of the agencies implementing the renovation programs and other professionals are invited, and residents can ask them questions directly.

Some of these meetings are very popular, especially when new projects calls are discussed. The invitation is distributed physically on the noticeboard of each unrenovated multi-apartment building (inside the stairwell), published on the Administrator's website, and posted on Facebook. The duration of the meetings varied depending on the number of participants and questions raised (approximately from one to two hours per building).

Targeted information material and promotion of the center, Elektrėnai (LT)

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

Neighborhood events, Elektrėnai (LT)

Communities are involved in dialogue by organizing community festivals, for example by organizing a competition for residents of individual houses. Participation in the competition means a possibility to win a neighborhood festival in a form of community event connected with dialogue about renovation. In such settings, residents can chat in a loose atmosphere and talk to experts at the same time.

Regular trainings, face-to-face meetings, Kaišiadorys (LT)

The RC organizes regular information days, practical trainings, and consultations for citizens and HOAs about energy efficiency, financing options, and renovation processes. These events help raise awareness and encourage participation, especially when local success stories are shared. A contact database is maintained to invite stakeholders to workshops, campaigns, and follow-up meetings, which helps ensure consistent communication and community engagement.

Partnerships are built through regular meetings, personalized consultations, and close cooperation during project preparation and implementation. Continuous communication and trust-based relationships make it easier to address challenges quickly. This cooperation significantly improves project coordination and helps motivate more buildings to join renovation programs.

To overcome hesitation, the RC provides clear information about financial support, organizes meetings in residential communities, and offers face-to-face consultations. Testimonials from successfully renovated buildings are shared to build confidence. Special attention is given to

elderly residents by explaining the process in simple terms and helping with documentation and decision-making.

1.4 Partnerships and Collaboration

Constant communication between service providers owned by the Municipality, Józsefváros (HU)

Although the RC is integrated into the municipal body, it is physically located elsewhere than the Municipal. This separation creates a more approachable and less institutional atmosphere, which helps to build trust among tenants and residents who may otherwise be hesitant to engage with official bodies. The independent location also allows the RC to establish its own brand identity and reputation while maintaining a strong client-oriented focus. As a result, the RC can develop a more comprehensive understanding of clients' challenges and respond to individual situations with greater attention and sensitivity. Moreover, the integrated operational model enables the competent departments in the Office, Social Services or Asset Management to reach out to more people and react faster than before. With this cooperation, services in the district owned by the Municipality can operate more effectively than before.

Regarding energy poverty and energy sufficiency counseling, the RC involves external experts. For tenant consultations, it hires an experienced professional working with disadvantaged people in Józsefváros in energy-poor households. The online consultations are provided and funded by Hungarian Energy-Efficiency Office as continuation of previous RC RenoPont which had to stop its operation earlier. Their primary target groups are homeowners, and they provide services related to the renovation process. In the latter case, energetics and counselors help in conceptualizing financial schemes, while approved contractors list is available for those who apply for the whole process of renovation-planning.

Collaboration with "green sector", Józsefváros (HU)

Józsefváros is cooperating with Budapest Főváros' climate agency, Contemporary Architecture Centre, and Rév8 Inc. to advance the renovation of blocks of flats with the participation of residents. As all these organizations are currently running similar projects, and the Municipality aims to find synergies and share resources. This includes grants, support in selecting the appropriate financial structure, and raising energy awareness. Meanwhile, the Municipality is taking part in another project, funded by the EU, Rock the Block, frequently discussing with the Municipality of Egaleo and NGOs from Greece about methodology.

Ongoing communication with the municipality and state institutions, Elektrėnai (LT)

The RC will be established on the premises of EKV and will be managed by its employees who act as administrators of apartment buildings and are therefore well versed in the problems of apartment buildings. EKV is also a municipal enterprise of the Elektrėnai municipality, so there is already an ongoing cooperation with the municipality in developing and providing RC activities.

Other parties interested in the community are involved, such as social service companies working with vulnerable people. It is planned to involve state institutions participating in the renovation process, for example with APVA, the agency implementing state programs for the modernization of buildings, whose representatives will participate in meetings with residents, and such meetings are well attended and useful for residents.

Adopting good practices from colleagues, Elektrėnai (LT)

Some Lithuanian municipalities have separate departments (centers of excellence) dedicated to renovation issues and are achieving good results by applying different strategies and engaging with their communities. The Environmental Projects Management Agency (EPMA8) has a dedicated

"competence department", some tasks of which are similar to those of RC, for example to ensure smooth renovation processes by carrying out competence development, dissemination of information, and training, by providing methodical and consulting support; to collect examples of best practice, etc. Individuals can apply for consultation by filling in [an electronic form](#) on the website or by calling the information phone line. Also, the information can be found on the website where examples of the best practices, training, and methodical materials are provided, and training on relevant topics is arranged. In our opinion, it contains suitable information, but lacks direct communication with residents, to whom such a presentation is too complicated and who need a person to explain how to use these materials and where to start. ECU plans to meet with that colleagues and adopt their best practices and ideas to make the Elektrėnai RC more effective.

Cooperation with the municipality, related institutions and accessibility to residents, Kaišiadorys (LT)

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

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

1.5 Innovative Communication Approaches

Consistency as a way to success, Burgas (BG)

The communication of the RC is done mainly with e-mail, phone calls, and visits to the RC. The center has a [webpage](#) and [Facebook profile](#). Based on the database of visitors and areas of interest, directed invitations are sent to them for training, info days, and available funding. The office in Burgas is not implementing any innovative approaches, but its biggest strength is its consistency. Since its opening in 2023, it works every day from Monday – Friday and each visitor, phone call or e-mail has been answered in best possible way.

Forums in municipally owned condominiums, Józsefváros (HU)

Residents living in municipally owned flats often lack trust and information, which leads them not to report problems in the flat to the competent institution, resulting in further deterioration. Generally, the relationship between municipal tenants and colleagues from the Asset Management Company is cold. To counter this, community organizers from the RC organize forums in every municipal condominium, where a building renovation is going to be implemented. There, the colleagues describe what is going to be executed and what impact it brings to the residents' lives. Then tenants share their concerns, opinions, ask questions, and they are often interested in rules regarding the renovation of their flats or the common garden and spaces in the building. The forum is always facilitated by a community organizer, ensuring that everyone can speak up.

Online presence, Józsefváros (HU)

The RC is part of the Municipality's Office for Community Participation. It has its [own website](#) and [Facebook page](#). The website provides topic-based access to all current information related to ongoing matters and events, such as Public Forums, Participatory Budgeting, and Public Consultations. The Facebook page is updated daily with several posts concerning issues relevant to residents and related events, most of which are generally held at the RC. In addition, the RC has

a dedicated section on the official district website under the name "Participation", which provides direct access to the latest news related to the RC and participatory initiatives. The websites also offer the option to subscribe to a newsletter, which is available through four thematic channels: a general newsletter, one focused on how to get involved, one related to civil society matters, and another specifically addressing RC-related topics and municipal tenants.

Informing about services through various channels, Elektrėnai (LT)

It is planned to disseminate information through various channels that would reach the target audience: presenting information and online tools on the website, actively using social networks with messages and video material, reaching socially vulnerable groups and older people through municipal companies, social services, and cooperation with NGOs, as well as promoting services by organizing promotional campaigns, participating in city events, and encouraging better communication between neighbors by organizing neighborhood events.

Communication channels, Kaišiadorys (LT)

The RC maintains an active online presence through the municipal website, social media channels, and regular newsletters. These platforms share renovation updates, upcoming events, success stories, and practical information for homeowners. Social media is particularly effective for reaching younger residents and promoting ongoing initiatives.

Targeted campaigns are regularly organized for different audiences. Tailored communication materials and events are designed for HOAs, small businesses, and vulnerable households, focusing on their specific needs and challenges. This approach helps increase trust, improve understanding, and boost participation in renovation programs.

1.6 Operational and Staffing Practices

Exploring collaborations, Burgas (BG)

Currently, one employee is working in the RC with the most important thing for the job to be responsible and constantly learn and seek up-to-date information. The RC and Burgas Municipality maintain good relations with Centre for Energy Efficiency EnEffect, based in Sofia. Their experts support the RC in the organization of specialized training on energy efficiency, cooling/heating systems, insulation materials, etc.

Focusing on empowerment and engagement, Józsefváros (HU)

The RC puts a strong tenant/client-focus in the forefront of its operation. The staff consists of experienced community organizers. Besides representing the Municipality, they also advocate for the beneficiaries, taking an in-between position. Therefore, accumulated experience working with people from lower socio-economic status, empathy, and strong communication skills are needed to fill this position.

The space is open most days of the week, making it possible for any person to walk in, even without a pre-arranged appointment. During opening hours, programs dedicated to residents are held. One of RC's main goals is to draw in more residents and members of our target group, as the community organizers must know their interests and needs. They acquire this knowledge by constantly being present in the condominiums' community, facilitating. These serve not only to empower tenants and realize and share their resources, but also to build trust towards the institutions.

Emphasis on EU programs, Elektrėnai (LT)

The established RC will continue to be operated by people with expertise in energy efficiency, renovations, architecture and structures or related fields. The RC must pay a close attention to EU

programs and EU sustainability initiatives, because Lithuania periodically announces calls for participation in building modernization programs, and their conditions vary; there are also specialized calls, for example, for the installation of solar power plants or "small renovation" solutions, and the amounts and conditions of subsidies vary, so specialists need to be aware of the latest developments. information and legislation to offer the best solutions.

Different paths to different target groups, Kaišiadorys (LT)

The RC should operate of course during "classic" work hours but also with at least one evening per week dedicated to after-work consultations. Some centers organize on-site visits or community outreach sessions in residential areas, which makes services more accessible to people with limited mobility or tight schedules. On-site meetings are planned to tailor the discussion to specific needs. Working hours should be changed according to the needs of the customers.

1.7 Financial Models and Sustainability

Success in sustaining the RC, Burgas (BG)

The RC is part of the municipal structure. The in-person office is owned by the municipality and is used for free by the RC. The rest of the expenses, like salaries and utility bills, are currently covered by projects. If there is no subsidy for the operation of the RC, the expenses are covered by the municipal budget.

Integrated financial model, Józsefváros (HU)

Learning from the experience of the financial struggles of RenoPont, the new RC is integrated into the Municipal Office structure, under the Social Participation Department. The offered services are strongly aligned with several Municipal and district-wide strategies: it is integrated into not only the Long-Term Asset Management Plan, the Environmental Protection Program of Józsefváros, but also in the Local Program for Equal Opportunities. Moreover, they are parallel with the Urban Developmental Strategy of Budapest as well. Therefore, financial sustainability is politically assured, since it depends on the decision of the Body of Representatives. Besides direct municipal funds, we expect to channel in occasional EU-level funding. With this integrated financial model, we can enhance the sustainability of the RC.

Sustainability based on cooperation between EKU and the municipality, Elektrénai (LT)

The idea of establishing the RC in Elektrénai to promote the modernization of apartment buildings was raised in ComActivate project. There had been no such entity before, and some of the work was done by EKU, the municipality, or non-governmental organizations implementing projects in this area. However, such activities were not continuous, structured, nor effective, so the hopes are that the RC changes this situation.

The RC will bring a "roof" to supportive services to the community and continue to be coordinated by EKU already experienced in the field. To maintain the RC after the project end, cooperation among the EKU and Elektrénai municipality is planned. It is very important for the municipality to promote renovation using various measures. Hence once the RC proves successful, it will provide sustainable services to residents in cooperation with EKU and the municipality.

RC funding, Kaišiadorys (LT)

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

1.8 Policy and Advocacy Role

This subchapter highlights several existing good practices in advocacy, an area that has proven particularly challenging. A key advantage of the RC's central role is their direct contact with end-users – residents – allowing the RC to gain valuable insights into citizens' challenges and attitudes toward renovation. Positioned at the intersection between communities and decision-makers, the RCs are well placed to gather and share lessons with municipalities and other stakeholders responsible for shaping policies at local, regional, or national levels. The following examples also include future aspirations and can serve as inspiration when designing policy-related activities in other developing RCs.

Joint Action for Evidence-Based Renovation Policy, Burgas (BG)

Building on EnEffect's long-standing partnership with Burgas Municipality, the collaboration under the project has focused on translating local experience into national policy impact. Together, the partners have used Burgas's ongoing building renovation and renewable sources (Burgas successfully piloted its own first energy community with the support of EnEffect) initiatives as a testbed for developing practical recommendations on sustainable financing and citizen engagement models. Joint activities have included targeted information days, training seminars for municipal staff and local professionals, and participatory consultations that fed directly into EnEffect's national advocacy on the new National Renovation Program and the Social Climate Plan. Despite an increasingly challenging policy environment, the advocacy and expert communication efforts were particularly visible during ComActivate Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue event in the Spring of 2025, when discussions on the financing framework for the National Program for Energy Efficiency and the Social Climate Plan intensified. This close cooperation has reinforced the call for co-financed, staged renovation schemes grounded in real municipal practice.

Mandatory consultation in the RC as part of the application for tenders, Józsefváros (HU)

The municipality have used the RC services as a mandatory step for residents who applied for its renovation-tenders. In practice it meant that a consultation in the RCs was a mandatory requirement for applicants of municipal home-renovation tenders. This way, the RC became a central entity in provision of additional support and monitoring of the interest in tenders.

The goal for future is to make the RC even more involved in policy and advocacy work. As colleagues of the RC closely observe everyday struggles of tenants, it can serve as a platform, through which these problems are channelled into other departments of the Municipality closely working and conciliating with them. This way, it influences preparation of policies. Moreover, these cross-departmental discussions are frequently opened to colleagues from other districts or NGOs, who work on similar projects to share experiences. On national-level, municipalities are powerless to influence stakeholders and participate in the process of country-level policymaking. Unfortunately, there are no thematic national funding programs available for condominiums, only for single family dwellings with specific households. Therefore, on national level, condominiums can rely only on bank loans when it comes to meaningful sources of financing. Similarly, in Hungary, EU-level grants only available for innovation or research purposes, because the country is not eligible for the cohesion funds. On city-level, the 'Green Prefab Program' is in preparation, together with Budapest Climate Agency. It is about energy efficient renovation of prefabricated condominiums. Other opportunities on Municipality-level are always continuously discussed and offered for those who apply for counselling and advertised online and in the municipal premises district-wide.

The role of mediator and bringing together stakeholders, Elektrėnai (LT)

Through its daily work with residents and stakeholders, RC's staff is aware of the problems associated with the modernization of MFABs and may be able to offer needed guidance and possible solutions. Therefore, such ideas will be raised in cooperation with the municipality. The

dialogue between stakeholders that took place in this project showed how important it is to bring all interested parties together around one table and talk directly about the existing renovation challenges. Such formats also give rise to proposals for policymakers, who can improve the legal framework and actually encourage the growth of interest in renovation in Lithuania.

The bridge between the municipality and the state, Kaišiadorys (LT)

The RC is expected to collect insights and recommendations based on first-hand experience with residents and HOAs. This information will be shared with local and regional authorities to help them better understand community needs, renovation barriers and policy development opportunities. In some cases, feedback will be provided to national authorities responsible for housing and energy efficiency programs.

The RC will further play a key role in promoting and implementing national subsidy programs at the local level. It will inform residents about available financial incentives, help with application procedures, and provide step-by-step guidance throughout the renovation process. This local outreach ensures that national programs reach more households and achieve higher participation rates.



4. Recommendations for new Resource Centers

RCs play a pivotal role in supporting communities with building renovation, energy efficiency, and sustainable housing. Drawing on experience from Bulgaria, Hungary, and Lithuania in and beyond ComActivate project, this summary consolidates key lessons and best practices to guide the effective design, operation, and sustainability of RCs.

Accessibility and Visibility

- **Central, visible locations:** Situate RCs in easily accessible, well-known community spaces (e.g., municipal buildings, cultural centers).
- **Multi-channel access:** Combine walk-in, phone, and online services to reach diverse audiences.
- **Inclusive design:** Ensure spaces are welcoming, barrier-free, and visible both physically and digitally.
- **Targeted outreach:** Use social media, newsletters, and local events to promote services to specific groups (e.g., seniors, vulnerable families).

Service Offerings and Tailored Support

- **One-stop-shop model:** Offer integrated technical, financial, and legal guidance for renovation and energy efficiency.
- **Personalized consultations:** Tailor advice to each building or household's situation, maximizing their comfort and energy savings.
- **Referral networks:** Maintain vetted lists of contractors, architects, and energy experts to ensure adequate support and quality delivery.
- **Blended delivery:** Combine in-person help with online tools (cost calculators, subsidy checkers, templates).
- **Proactive assistance:** Guide citizens through documentation and funding applications to increase participation rates.

Capacity Building and Community Engagement

- **Regular trainings & info days:** Provide continuous learning opportunities on EE measures, available and planned funding, and PV installation.
- **Community empowerment:** Use participatory activities (forums, neighborhood events, shared projects) to build trust and ownership.
- **Targeted communication:** Design materials for different audiences (families, elderly, HOAs representatives, vulnerable groups).
- **Continuous contact:** Maintain databases of residents to follow up, invite to events, and sustain engagement.
- **Peer learning:** Share success stories and organize visits to renovated buildings to motivate others.

Partnerships and Collaboration

- **Cross-sector partnerships:** Collaborate with municipalities, NGOs, contractors, local/national agencies, and other stakeholders for better reach and expertise.
- **Integrated municipal support:** Embed RCs within local administrative frameworks to ensure long-term stability.
- **Knowledge exchange:** Adopt and adapt methods from other successful municipalities and European centers.

- **Shared communication channels:** Align messages between RCs, municipalities, and service providers for consistency.

Innovative Communication Approaches

- **Multi-platform presence:** Use websites, newsletters, and social media to maintain a steady information flow.
- **Community forums and events:** Hold open dialogues to increase transparency, reduce misinformation, and foster participation.
- **Targeted campaigns:** Create tailored messages for HOAs, small businesses, and vulnerable households.
- **Consistency over novelty:** Regular, reliable communication builds credibility and trust more than sporadic innovation.

Operational and Staffing Practices

- **Qualified, empathetic staff:** Recruit personnel skilled in community engagement, communication, and energy topics.
- **Flexible operation:** Adjust opening hours and outreach activities based on community needs (e.g., evening consultations).
- **Collaborative training:** Ensure staff stays up to date on changing funding, legislation, and energy programs.
- **User-oriented approach:** Focus on listening, empathy, and empowerment rather than one-way information delivery.

Financial Models and Sustainability

- **Municipal integration:** Locate RCs within local government structures for stable funding and institutional support.
- **Diversified funding:** Combine municipal budgets, national schemes, and EU funds to ensure continuity.
- **Shared facilities:** Use existing municipal spaces to minimize costs.
- **Performance-based justification:** Demonstrate impact through participation data to secure long-term funding.

Policy and Advocacy Role

- **Feedback loop to policymakers:** Channel on-the-ground experience from residents to improve local and national renovation policies.
 - **Mandatory consultations:** Make RC visits a requirement in funding applications to ensure informed participation.
 - **Facilitate stakeholder dialogue:** Organize roundtables between residents, contractors and other involved stakeholders, and public institutions.
 - **Local-to-national bridge:** Use RC insights to inform local/regional/state programs and legislation on energy efficiency and housing modernization.
-

5. What comes next?

Successful RCs operate as trusted, visible, and inclusive community hubs that combine practical guidance, education, collaboration, and advocacy. Their effectiveness depends on strong partnerships, sustainable funding, and consistent engagement that empower citizens and accelerate energy-efficient renovation across Europe.

The ComActivate project aims to strengthen the role and sustainability of existing and emerging RCs within their local contexts. Field experience demonstrates that, while RCs play a vital role in supporting the communities, their long-term stability often depends on numerous external factors, such as funding availability, policy shifts, or municipal priorities, beyond the direct control of their staff and leadership.

An **illustrative example comes from Burgas**, where the municipality's strong commitment ensured the RC's continuity despite a significant decline in consultation demand caused by the absence of renovation subsidies. Instead of closing the office, the municipality proactively sought new purposes for it, such as integrating the RC into other on-going and planned EU projects. Further it established a partnership with a photovoltaic company and expanded its advisory services to include PV-related consultations, hence strengthening the RC's position to promote other green solutions for the community. This flexibility and capacity to adapt to changing conditions exemplify how municipalities can keep RCs active and relevant, even in challenging circumstances.

Building on these real-life experiences, it is worth mentioning several ComActivate's innovative tools and approaches designed to strengthen RC operations and expand their capacity to support communities more effectively. The project bridges technical innovation with social engagement, helping RCs to evolve from information points into strategic local hubs driving energy transformation.

One of the project's key innovations is the development of **3D neighbourhood models for the pilot locations**. These models assess current energy use, estimate potential savings, and evaluate renewable energy generation capacities of selected MFABs. This data-driven approach enhances the RCs' ability to target the lowest-performing buildings and prioritize interventions based on real needs and opportunities.

Another central innovation is the creation of **Neighbourhood Energy Sufficiency Roadmaps (NESRs)** which is a new planning tool providing a comprehensive framework for tackling energy poverty and inefficiency at the neighbourhood level. NESRs combine social, technical, and environmental perspectives, integrating energy efficiency measures, renewable energy potential, and investment planning into a single actionable strategy. This enables local authorities to get clear insight in entire residential stock on their territory and scope of pertaining energy-saving and emission-reduction needs and opportunities. By linking data analysis with participatory community engagement, these roadmaps help RCs better understand local contexts, promote renovation efforts, and foster cooperation among residents, local authorities, and market actors. However, one of the challenges ahead remains the identification of qualified local experts capable of continuing the NESR development and analysis beyond the project's lifetime to ensure that these innovative tools translate into lasting, community-driven change.

In conclusion, the initial RCs have begun to demonstrate their potential as local platforms for promoting energy efficiency, engaging residents, and facilitating dialogue between communities, municipalities, and national stakeholders. Their proximity to citizens offers opportunities to translate renovation and energy transition goals into locally relevant actions. Within the ComActivate project, the RCs are gradually strengthening their institutional capacity, exploring new tools, and piloting approaches that may support their development into more sustainable and community-oriented structures over time.



EKOINVEST

