



Kick Off Event Be.SHARE

EUROPEAN
URBAN
INITIATIVE

22/04/2026



Co-funded by
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Wi-Fi access : BEL-EVENT – password : Bel_2023



Please remember to **return the headphones** at the end of the event



Please do not eat or drink in the room

1.Introduction

Barbara Dewulf (Brussels Environment – Deputy Director-General)

Audrey Henry (State Secretary of Brussels-Capital Region for Energy)

Philippe Close (Mayor of The City of Brussels)

2.Keynote speakers

Kadri Uustal (European Commission)

Claire Roumet (Energy Cities)

3. Be.SHARE, projet presentation strategic & operational components

by representatives and project managers

4. Closing

Ans Persoons (State Secretary of the Brussels-Capital Region for the Environment)

5. Lunch & Networking

6. Site visit (optional)

Introduction

Barbara Dewulf



Deputy Director-General – Brussels-Capital Region
- Brussels Environment

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Introduction : Barbara Dewulf - Brussels Environment



Introduction

Audrey Henry



State Secretary of the Brussels-Capital Region
responsible for Spatial Planning, Urban
Development, Public Cleanliness and Energy

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Introduction Philippe Close



Mayor of the City of Brussels

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Kadri Uustal



Head of Unit Cities, Communities, People
European Commission – DG Regional and Urban Policy

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EU Agenda for Cities: Driving Growth and Prosperity



Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, April 2026

EU Agenda for Cities - Mandate

- Preparation of the Agenda originates from the **mission letter** of President von der Leyen to Executive Vice-President Raffaele Fitto, responsible for Cohesion and Reforms.
- This Agenda will reinforce the EU's approach to **sustainable urban development**, focusing on key areas of action.



EU Agenda for Cities: Key areas of action



Competitiveness,
digitalisation,
innovation and
investment



Social
inclusion
and
equality



Security, safety
and
preparedness



Affordable,
sustainable,
decent
quality and
inclusive
housing
and
buildings



Climate
action,
environment
and clean
energy



Mobility



International
cooperation



Context:

- Cities and urban areas account for around **45% of global GHG emissions** and face rising climate risks
- Urban and regional authorities deliver up to **70% of emission reduction measures** and around 50% of public investment
- **Cities are key enablers of the energy transition** through spatial planning, permitting, sustainable public procurement, and investment

Core principles

- Decentralised, decarbonised and citizen-led energy systems
- **Climate preparedness and resilience** through integrated planning
- **Energy efficiency** and **affordable energy** access
- **Place-based investment and multi-level governance** supporting local energy and climate action

Key EU frameworks: *European Climate Law, REPowerEU, Affordable Energy Action Plan, Cohesion policy (mid-term review: energy transition and water management), Social Climate Fund, etc.*

EU Agenda for Cities : Goals and action lines



Goals:

1. **Strengthening multilevel governance and cooperation** by better integrating cities' interests into EU policymaking.
2. **Streamlining diverse EU-level support** available to cities and urban area

Action lines:



(1) Continuous dialogue: Cities as key partners for EU policymaking



1. Continuous dialogue :

- Annual high-level political dialogue connecting EU and local leaders
- Targeted technical consultations **with city practitioners and experts**

2. Regular exchanges with the EU institutions, complemented by inputs from networks, consultations, UAEU partnerships, and more.

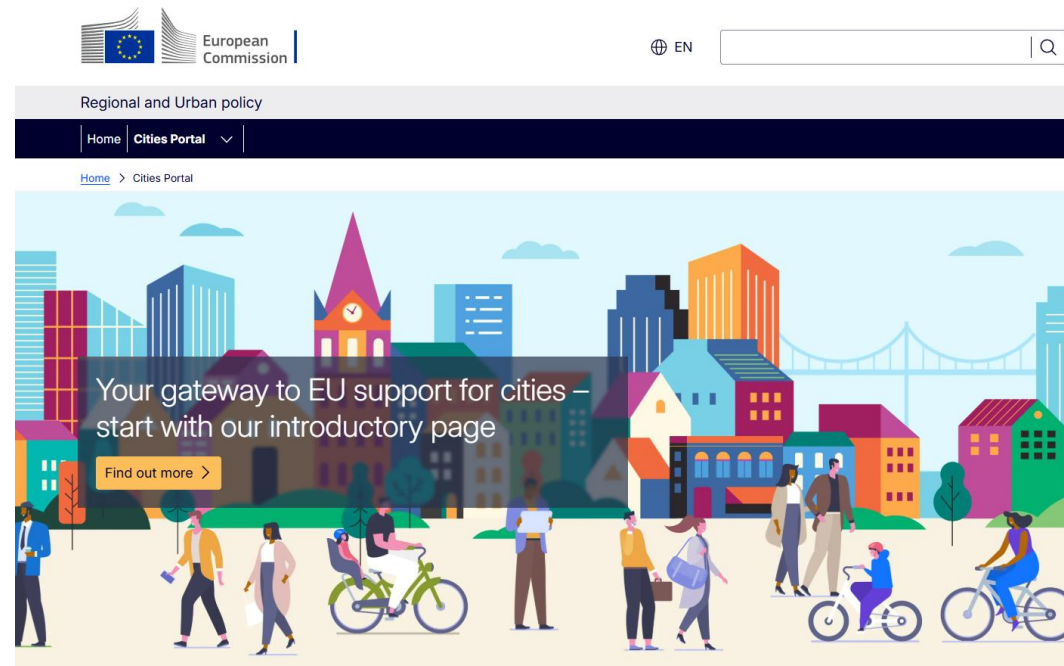
3. Cities Forum for workshops, policy discussions, and sharing of solutions – 7th edition in 2027.

4. State of European Cities Report to inform evidence-based policymaking – next edition in 2026

(2) Simplification and capacity building

5. The EU Cities web-portal launched on 3 December 2025 :

- Consolidates information on support opportunities for cities
- Brings together 80+ EU programmes and initiatives relevant to cities and urban areas of all sizes.



(2) Simplification and capacity building

6. Actions under European Urban Initiative (EUI)

Innovative Actions Fourth call

Open until 15 June 2026

- Focus on smaller-scale pilot projects testing innovative urban solutions, with particular emphasis on **small and medium-sized cities**.
- **Bottom-up approach** allowing cities to propose projects in line with the urban themes of EU Agenda for Cities.
- Around **EUR 60 million (ERDF)** planned to support approximately 30 projects across Europe.

Cities helpdesk

Q3 2026

- **Complementary to search tool** available on Cities web-Portal.
- Set up within EUI framework to **assist cities in identifying** EU urban support tools and funding opportunities.

Fourth Call - Innovative Actions | EUI

List of Innovative actions projects funded under 3 calls in 2022-2025 | EUI

(2) Simplification and capacity building

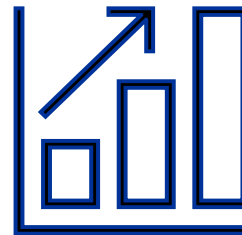
7. Creation of EU Cities Platform to consolidate support for cities and bring together initiatives, addressing both policy areas and operational challenges (next MFF).



(3) Investments (next MFF)

8. EU Member States and regions are **encouraged to step up their ambition in the resourcing of their urban strategies.**

9. **Cities may benefit from the EU Facility and the European Competitiveness Fund** in developing innovative projects and invest in clean transition.



Claire ROUMET



Leader of EU Policy and Strategic Partnerships Energy Cities

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BE SHARE
OPENING SESSION

"EUROPE'S INDEPENDENCE MOMENT"

Fossil phase out at every level, on every sector, for everyone



CLAIRE ROUMET

22/04/2026

Short outline of this presentation



It is critically urgent – and this is an understatement – to have honest conversations about the challenges ahead, what is coming and what each individual and every municipality can do both now and in the medium term. **Only coordinated action and a collective response to this “master crisis” can safeguard our rights!**

– **Claire Roumet**
Energy Cities

- New horizon > fossil-free for peace and prosperity
- Homegrown energy
- SHARE of energy
- EU is strong, cooperation is our DNA



SOCIAL UN-COHESION

Polarisation of the society.



UN-AFFORDABLE ENERGY

No competitiveness if energy is expensive, no affordable living either.



GEOPOLITICAL THREATS

War at the doors of Europe
Weaponisation of media



POLITICAL CENTRALISATION

Local authorities getting less resources. EU policies favoring nationalisation.



UN-PREDICTABLE FUTURE

Constant crisis mode, need to adapt our resiliency strategies towards robustness.

STATE OF EUROPEAN THE UNION 2025

(SEPTEMBER)

«“This must be Europe’s independence moment. I believe this is our Union’s mission. To be able to take care of our own defence and security. To **take control** over the technologies and **energies that will fuel our economies**. To decide what kind of society and democracy we want to live in. To be open to the world and choose to strike partnerships with allies - old and new. It is about having the freedom and the power to determine our own destiny. And we know we can do it. Because together we have shown what is possible when we have the same ambition, unity and urgency.”



→ Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission

- ✓ Invest in our quality of life : agricultural policies and adaptation
- ✓ European Social Fairness : agenda for cities (and a strategy for outermost regions)
- ✓ Competitiveness: Grid package
- ✓ Democracy and our values : resiliency of our media, > new AGORA programme

“enhance capacity to monitor and detect information manipulation and disinformation by putting in place **the European democracy shield**”

ANOTHER ENERGY PRICES CRISIS ?

- In the US National Defence Strategy: the United States is aiming for “energy dominance”. That is to say, they want not only control over supply (particularly European supply) but also dominance *through* energy
- 1973, 1979, 1990, 2020, 2022, 2026...
- The head of the International Energy Agency has called this the worst energy crisis in history, as the cost of fossil fuel imports has increased by €22 billion in just the first 44 days of the conflict. Oil companies are set to make a €24 billion windfall on road fuel alone in 2026.



Gas and fuel markets: not the same, and not the same consequences



Fossil fuel : not only building and transport (and industry) but food, SMEs...



22nd April: new toolbox by the Commission to support Member States in coping with energy supply future shocks and energy prices uprise

Letter

Oil companies need to pay up. It's time for an EU tax on windfall profits.

Exceptional windfall profits, different answers in different countries, capping price, capping volumes...”

NEW RISKS FOR CITIES

Local Democracy: under threat, lack of space to debate and decide

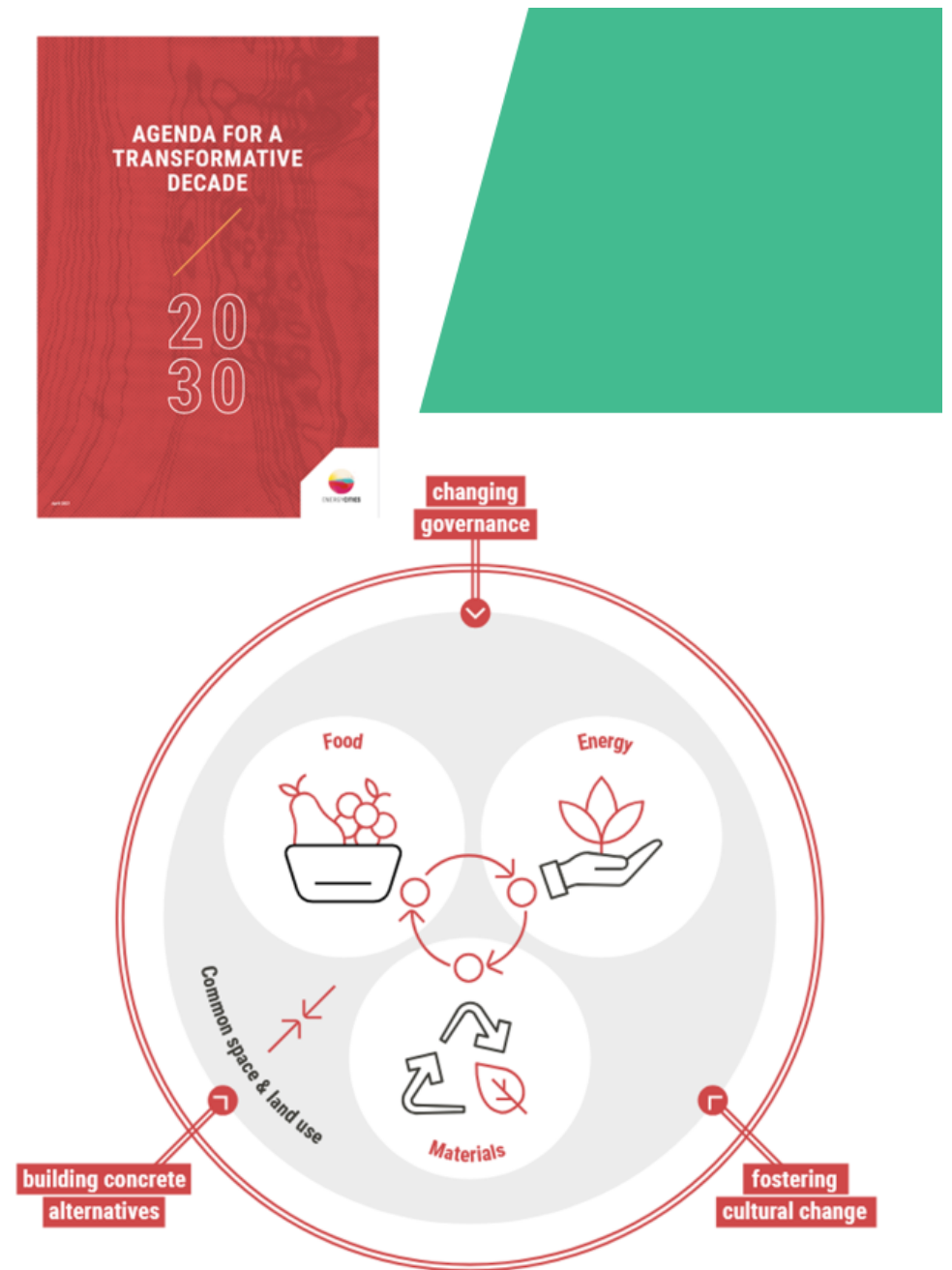
Budget austerity : even in wealthy countries, internal capacities

Resiliency : floods after floods, scarcity in other regions, watersupply is going under major stress and EU is developing a specific strategy

Access to resources: net zero land take, food production, loss of biodiversity, the different recent crisis has shown how all resources systems are strongly interlinked and require a systemic planning

Perception of cities is changing: image of cities deteriorating: places of massive inequalities, rising cost and insecurities; smart shrinking

→ Are cities liveable places ??



Because everything needs to change

- “shifting economy” Brussels road map
- la [robustesse](#) d’olivier Hamant



HOME GROWN ENERGY

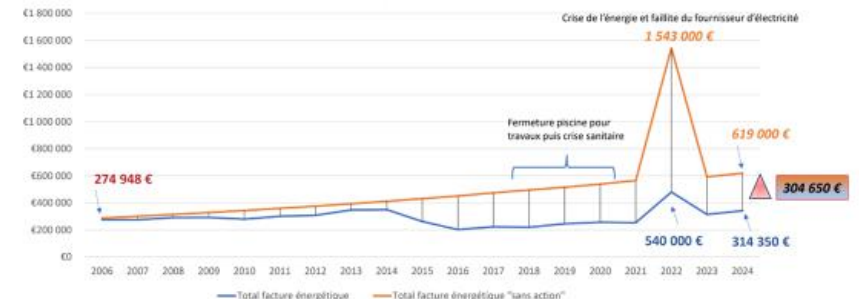
Municipality of Malaunay (FR-6200 inhabitants)

With the help of state funding, the municipality of Malaunay began decarbonising its real estate in early 2010 by installing PV panels on the roofs of municipal buildings and replacing its individual fossil fuel heating systems with a combination of individual biomass heating systems and a biomass-fuelled district heating system that include municipal buildings. Thanks to this approach they saved

- **304.000 euros** in 2024, when energy prices came back to normal levels
This was out of an annual budget of about 3.5 million euros in 2025.

- **1 million euros** in 2022 during the energy crisis, allowing them to maintain the municipal public service, while many municipalities in France have stopped them because they were not able to fund them anymore due to the surge of energy costs.

- <https://www.malaunay.fr/Malaunay-en-transition-s>



LOCAL SHARING

Romaflex (Italy)

This community-based flexibility project - developed by Enostra - brings together local producers and consumers within the same territory. It operates by coordinating electricity use from households, small businesses, and public buildings equipped with renewable generation, batteries, and flexible loads.

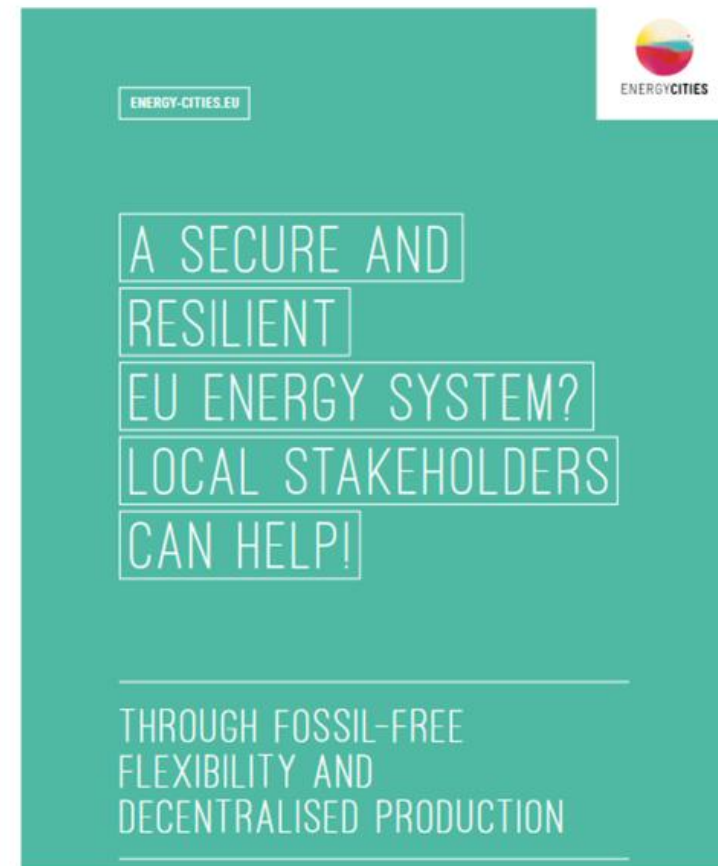
Through an energy management system, consumption and production are monitored in real time to shift demand when renewable energy is available. This flexibility is traded to the local DSO (Areti) to cover day-ahead and daily flexibility needs.

The project is implemented at neighbourhood scale, creating a local energy perimeter that reduces stress on the grid.

EU POLICY AGENDA

5 PRIORITIES 2026 and beyond

1. A budget to deliver Transition locally
2. Heat and cooling strategy in the Energy Union package
3. Decentralised renewable: open the flexibility services
4. Housing : Affordable Housing strategy
5. Governance : phasing out of fossil fuels (subsidies) : clear gas decommissioning strategies and targets



Be.SHARE presentation

Vincent Vandernoot



Brussels-Capital Region - Brussels Environment

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Why?

- Response to the heating decarbonisation target for the Brussels-Capital Region
- Fertile ground in the North District of Brussels
- Trigger = EUI - Call 3 - Topic 3.2 Energy transition
 - Quadruple helix with 6 Delivery Partners
 - Highly innovative projects
 - High subsidy rate (80%)
 - Budget = 6.25 mill. Euro in total

A graphic for the "Third Call for Proposals EUI - Innovative Actions". It features a colorful illustration of a city street with a wind turbine, a sun, and various buildings. The text reads: "Third Call for Proposals EUI - Innovative Actions". Below this, it states: "With an indicative budget of EUR 90 million ERDF, the third Call for Proposals of EUI - Innovative Actions is targeting innovative projects focusing on the two topics: 'Energy transition' and 'Technology in cities'." and "The Call for Proposals is open now!".

**Third Call for Proposals
EUI - Innovative Actions**

With an indicative budget of EUR 90 million ERDF, the third Call for Proposals of EUI - Innovative Actions is targeting innovative projects focusing on the two topics: 'Energy transition' and 'Technology in cities'.

The Call for Proposals is open now!

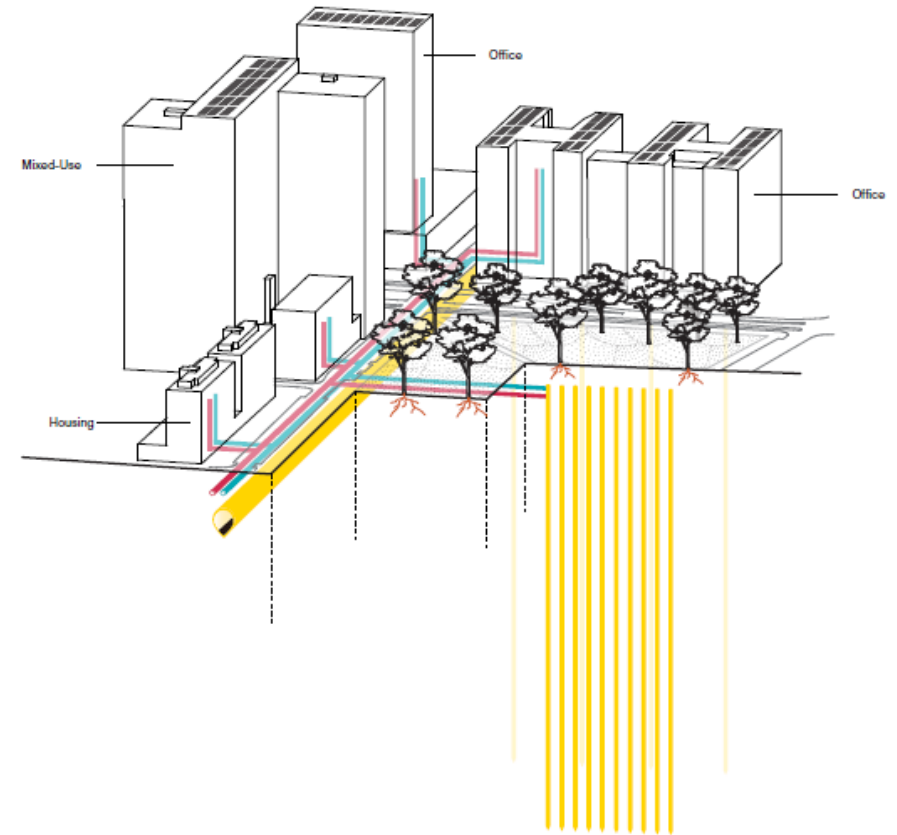
What?

Be.SHARE : an innovative heating and cooling network for the Brussels North District

Technical Innovation

A low-temperature district heating and cooling network (5th generation), comprised of local and decarbonised energy sources in the public domain : geothermal and riothermal energy.

Network efficiency enables energy exchanges between different types of buildings (housing and offices) with complementary needs



What?

Be.SHARE : an innovative heating and cooling network for the Brussels North District

Social Innovation

Just transition: provision of heat for tenants of social housing.
Support for a good understanding of the system and change in energetical behaviors

Governance Innovation

Innovative partnership in terms of the 6 partners it brings together

Inclusive transition: establishment of public-private-citizen governance from the project design stage onwards



Who? – 6 Delivery Partners and 3 Transfer Partners



Who? – 6 Delivery Partners



Main Urban Authority – delegation of Brussels-Capital Region with 3 divisions involved



Intermunicipal company – distribution network operator for electricity and natural gas of the Brussels-Capital Region

VIVAQUA

Intermunicipal company – the public water utility of the Brussels-Capital Region



Private company – developer and operator of thermal energy networks



Brussels-based university actively contributing to a sustainable future and a clean, equitable, and seamless energy transition



Non-profit organisation, supports residents, whether tenants or owners, in obtaining decent and sustainable housing, while promoting community life

Who? – Important Stakeholders

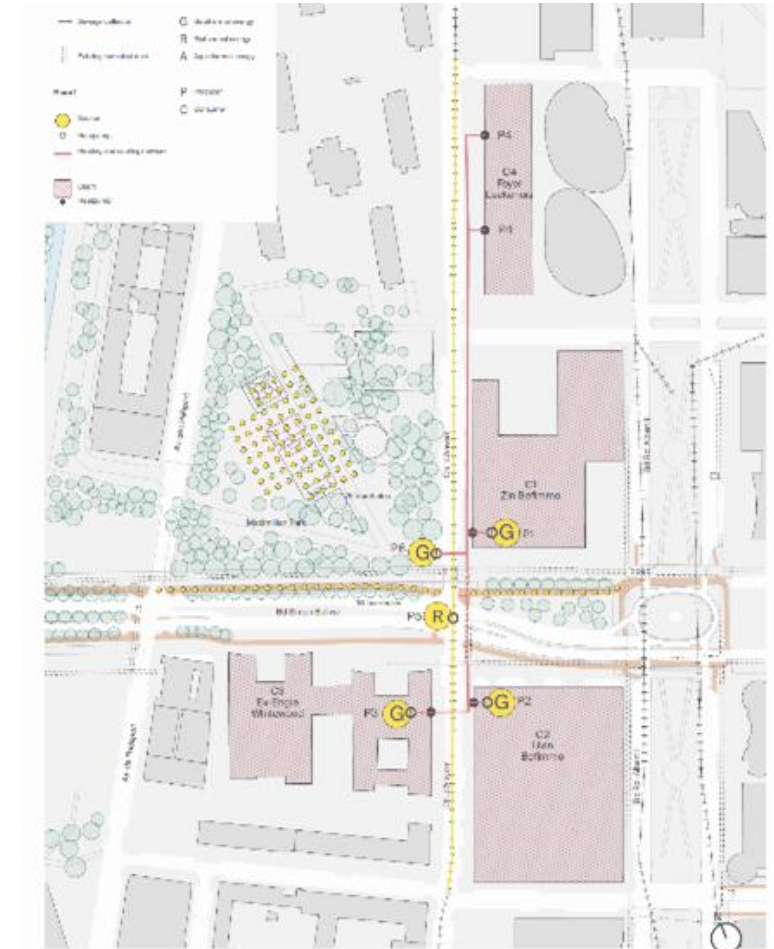
Owners of public land for geothermal energy



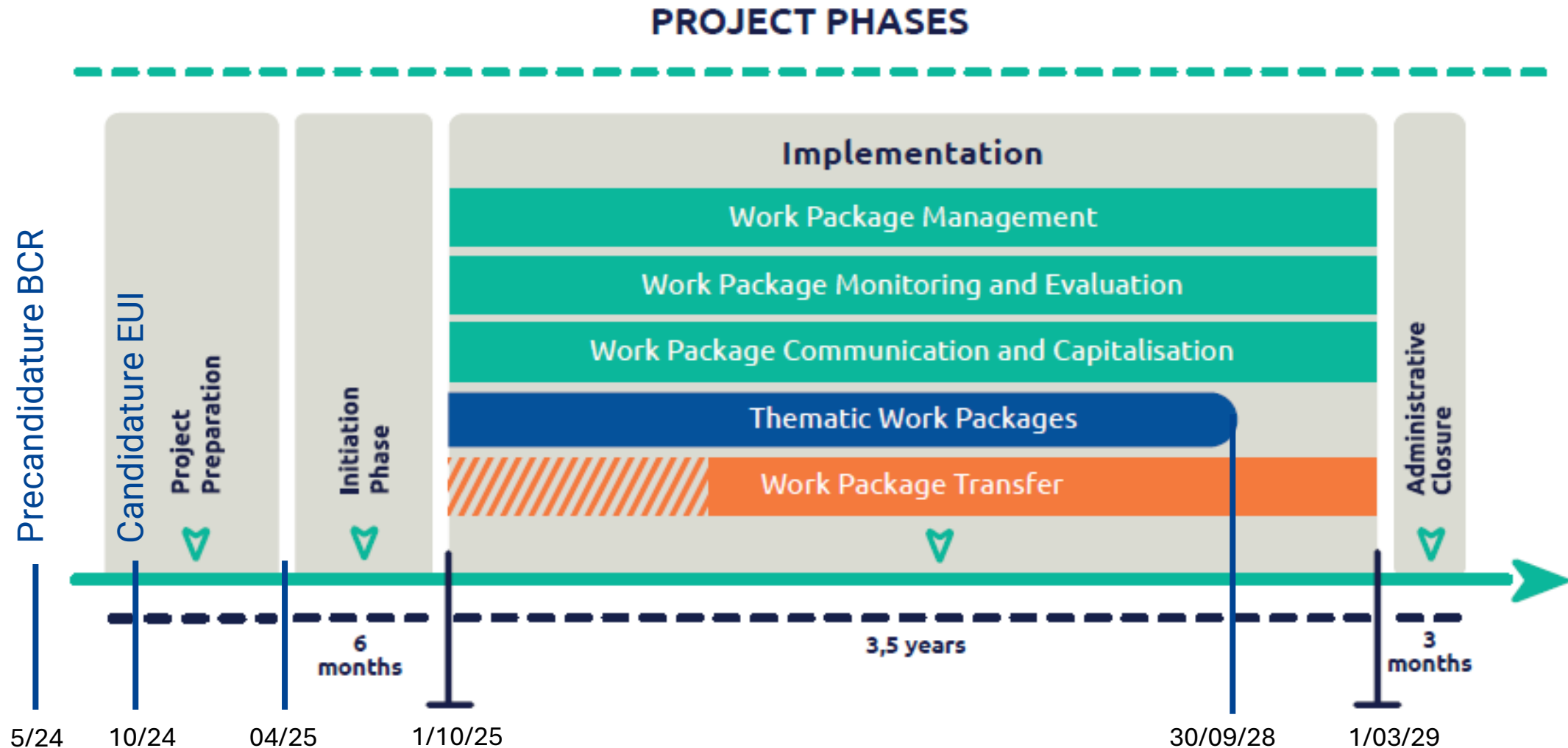
Owners of buildings – social housing and offices



Befimmo



How? – Timeline



How? – Project Structure

Project Be.SHARE is structured around 8 Work Packages, activities and deliverables

WP1 - PROJECT PREPARATION AND INITIATION PHASE

WP2 - MANAGEMENT



WP3 - MONITORING AND EVALUATION



WP4 - COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION



WP5 - DISTRICT HEATING AND COOLING NETWORK



WP6 – LOCAL AND ENERGY SOURCING



VIVAQUA

WP7 - ENERGY TRANSITION USER COMMUNITY



WP8 - TRANSFER PARTNERS



By asking your questions, you are helping to shape our dissemination strategy and our future communication initiatives

How to ask your questions ?

- **In person**, please raise your hand during the Q&A sessions later
- **Online** : use the Q&A chat
- Via **wooclap** :
 - **Scan the QR code**
 - Or go to **wooclap.com** and enter the event code in the top banner : **MHOJKG**



Be.SHARE presentation

Strategic component with representatives
of the partners

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Representatives present their incentives and expectations for the project, and the importance of innovation as a lever for transformation

						
Barbara Dewulf - Deputy Director-General BCR- Brussels Environment	Inne Mertens - CEO Sibelga	Gregory Meys - CEO KARNO	Laurence Bovy - CEO VIVAQUA	Sandrine Couturier - Director of Convivence	Prof. Peter Schelkens - Vice-rector for Innovation and Valorisation, VUB	Frederik Ceulemans - Deputy Mayor for Climate, City of Brussels

Why did Brussels Environment take the initiative of the Be.SHARE project ?

- Go beyond vision and planning : move to implementation
- Test the deployment of decarbonised heating and cooling networks
- Address land availability constraints in dense urban environments
- Overcome technical, administrative, and financial barriers



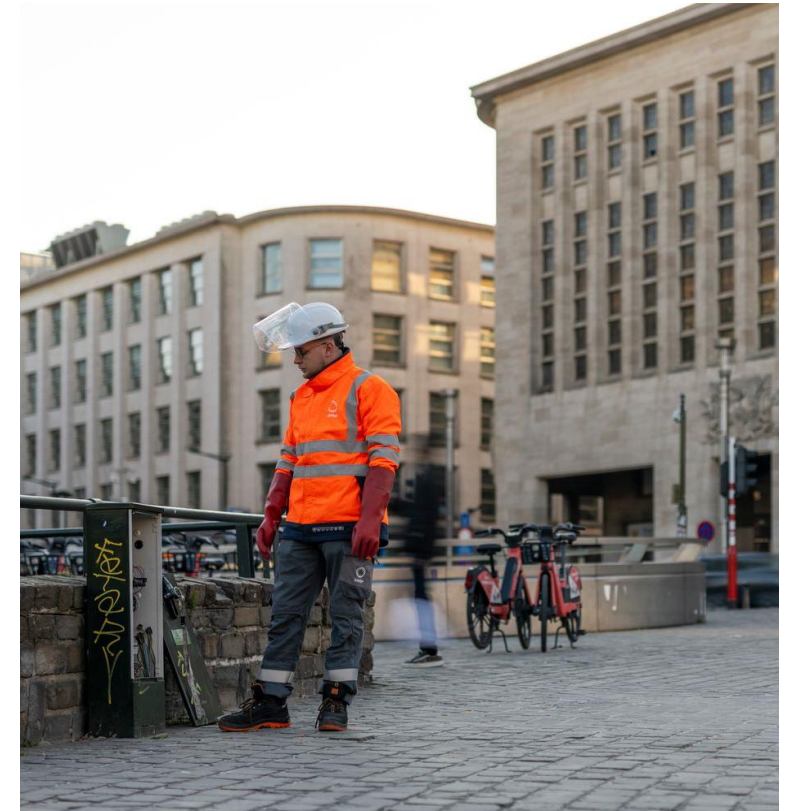
How important is innovation for Brussels Environment?

- Explore innovative solutions to address energy and climate challenges
- Try out an innovative approach to partners and themes
- Reflect on evolution of regulatory frameworks, procedures and roles
- Expand our business areas by fostering close collaboration between our internal departments/ business areas



Why did Sibelga become a partner of Be.SHARE?

- **Decarbonising heating**
Public service responsibility for Brussels
- **No one-size-fits-all solution**
Mix of electrons & molecules · individual & collective · neighbourhood approach
- **District heating as a key lever**
Dense urban areas · local low-carbon energy · energy valorisation
- **Proven network expertise**
Infrastructure · public space coordination · cities & partners
- **Be.SHARE as a living lab**
New technologies · new configurations · new partnerships



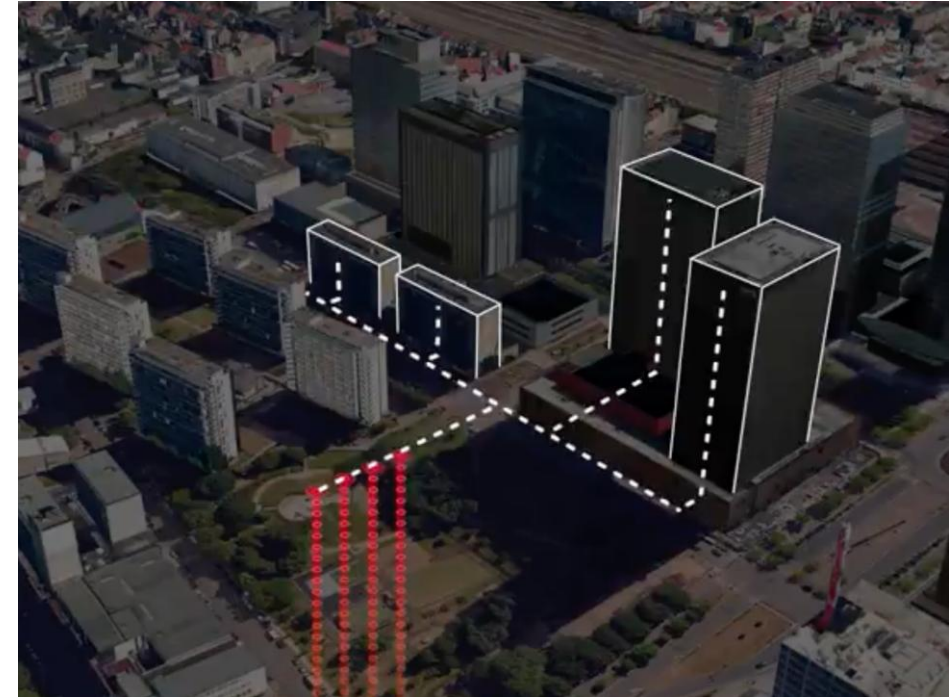
How important is innovation for Sibelga?

- **Innovation as a lever**
Public service mission · future-proof networks
- **Next-generation infrastructure**
5th-generation district heating · low-temperature sources · advanced networks
- **Method & discipline**
Targeted investments · long-term vision · public responsibility
- **Core business: network management**
Resilience · flexibility · new uses & technologies
- **Innovation is human**
Skills & training · diverse professions · stakeholder cooperation



Why did KARNØ become a partner of Be.SHARE?

- **Context-specific approach**
20+ projects / 9 operational networks
No one-size-fits-all solution
Adapted to Brussels' urban and regulatory context
- **Brussels as a demonstrator**
Validating Europe's pathway to decarbonised heating
Aligned with EU climate objectives
With support from EUI and EIB



How important is innovation for KARNØ?

- **Integrated ecosystem**
 - Public–private–citizen collaboration
 - Complementary partners across the value chain
 - Ensuring long-term system resilience
- **From pilot to scale**
 - Overcoming regulatory and financial barriers
 - Building stakeholder trust
 - Enabling replication across European cities



Why did VIVAQUA become a partner of Be.SHARE?

- Natural alignment with VIVAQUA's environmental DNA
- Collective response to growing energy challenges
- Valorisation of an innovative technology



VIVAQUA

How important is innovation for VIVAQUA?

- Improving sustainability and operational efficiency
- Adapting our services to meet citizens' expectations
- Ensuring the continuity of an essential service
- Developing new forms of cooperation



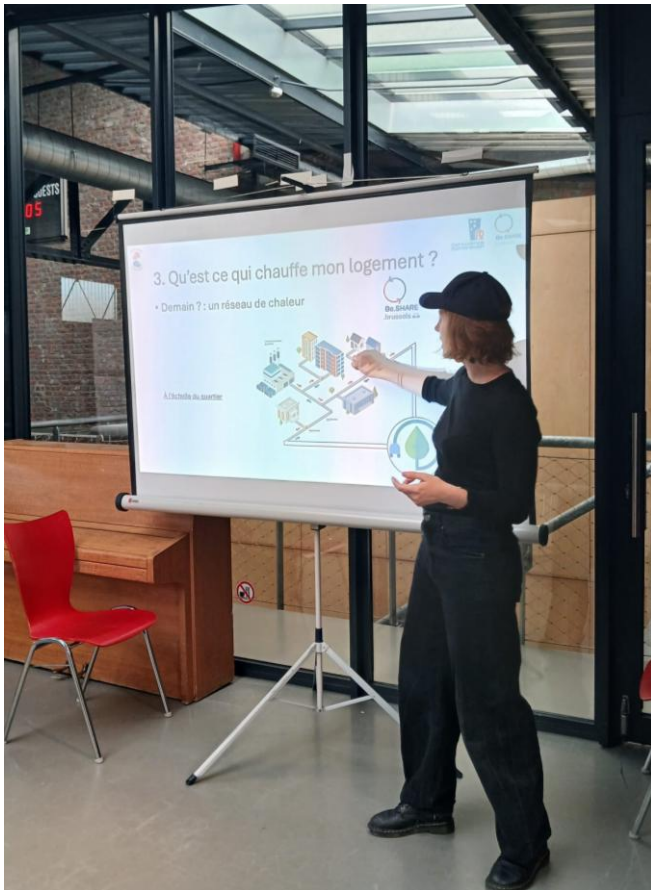
VIVAQUA

Why did Convivence become a partner of Be.SHARE?



- Alignment with Convivence's DNA: putting people back at the heart of technological developments and decarbonisation challenges ;
- Harnessing the experience and expertise developed by « Réseau Habitat » to support the district heating scheme ;
- Supporting residents through the energy transition so they become active participants.

How important is innovation for Convivence?

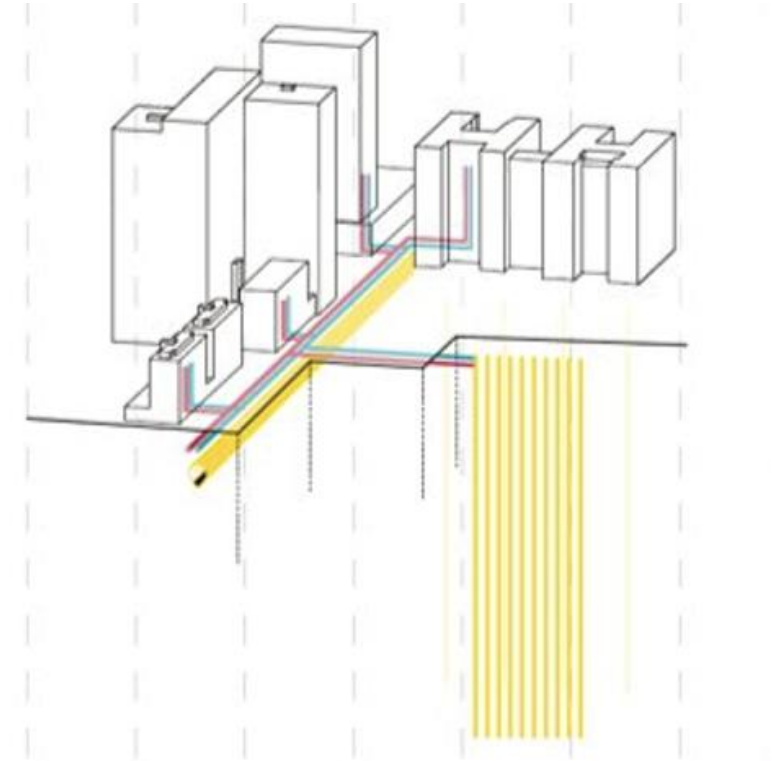


Turning constraints into opportunities :

- Integrating the human dimension into a primarily technical project ;
- Engaging tenants in environmental and collective issues, rather than individual and tangible ones ;

Why did the VUB become a partner of Be.SHARE?

- To contribute to innovative district heating and cooling in Brussels
- To strengthen research at VUB on district energy systems
- To collect real-world data for performance assessment
- To transfer knowledge to future students



Copyright Brussels Environment – Sketch by Citytools

How important is innovation for the VUB?

- Providing top-level research
- Putting research into practice, so society can benefit
- Valorisation of research in industry & the broader society
- Focus on economic impact and societal value



Why did the City of Brussels become a partner of Be.SHARE?

- Innovation is essential in tackling the climate crisis. Our objective is clear: to achieve tangible results for the city and improve the quality of life of our citizens. We are now at a turning point; the lessons we have learned must lead to decisive action.
- Be.Share project = real game changer, where our climate ambitions are translated into concrete action and measurable impact
- Transforming the North Quarter into our first Positive Energy District.

How important is innovation for the City of Brussels?

- Innovation is at the heart of leadership. By taking consistent, ambitious, and sustained action, Brussels aims to demonstrate that it is possible to address the climate crisis head-on while making lasting improvements to the quality of urban life.
- Taking action now to ensure a more sustainable, equitable, and livable future tomorrow.

By asking your questions, you are helping to shape our dissemination strategy and our future communication initiatives

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Be.SHARE presentation

Operational component with project managers



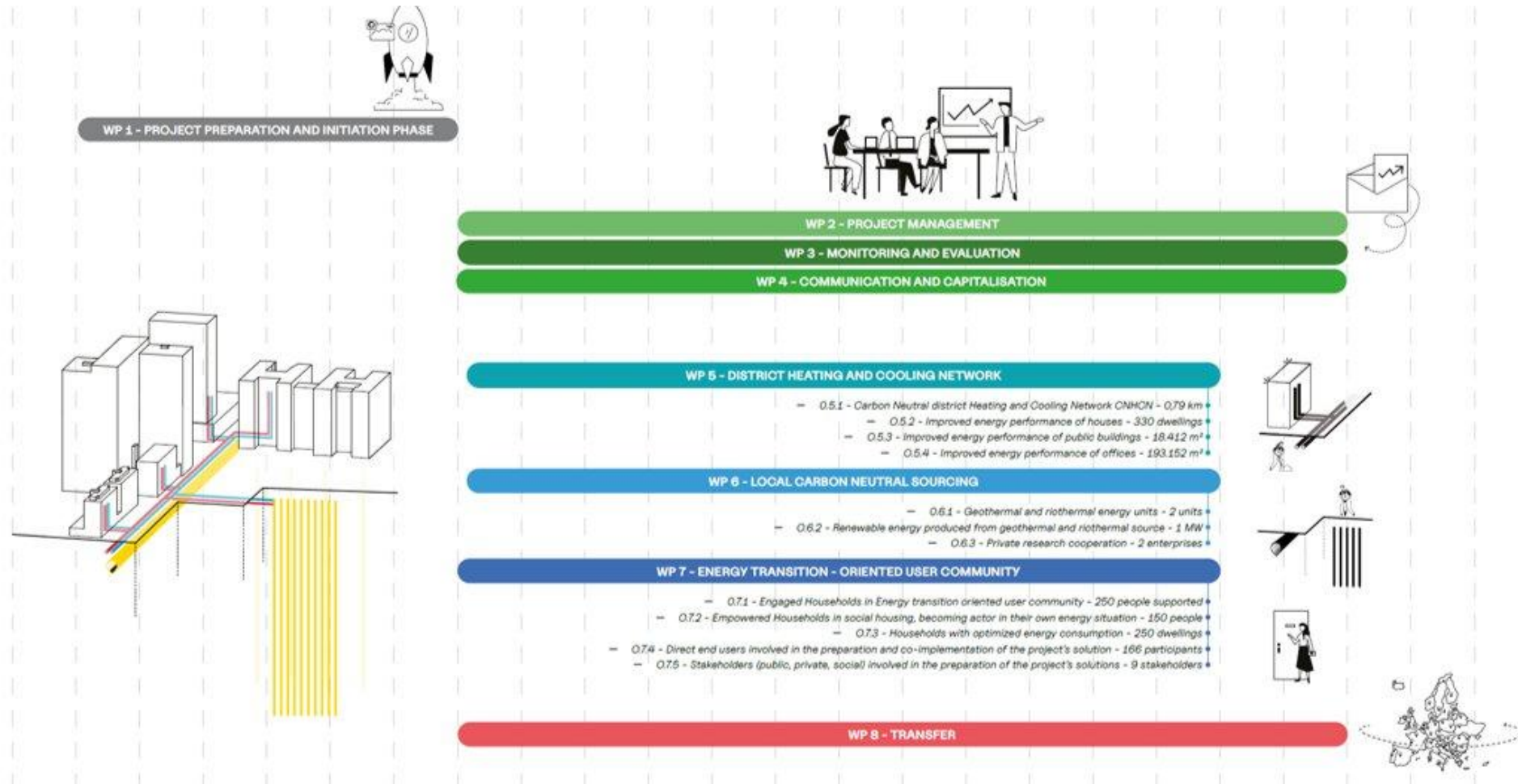
Project managers share the keys to successful partnership and their challenges

					
Vincent Vandernoot BCR - Brussels Environment	Guillaume Lambin Sibelga	Donald Gilbert KARNO	Olivier Broers VIVAQUA	Claire Gravouil Convivence	Svend Bram VUB

What are the keys to the partnership's success?



For Brussels Environment the challenge is to keep all partners truly synchronised



The overall work plan at the level of work packages

For KARNØ the challenge is building Confidence in the Transition - From Decision to Delivery



Building confidence in transition

- Adapting to new regulatory frameworks
- Aligning evolving procedures
- Clarifying roles across stakeholders

From decision to delivery

- Once milestones are secured
- Deploy scheduled works
- Ensure timely and coordinated rollout



Drilling test in Parc Maximilien in December 2025

For VIVAQUA the challenge is : Scaling up riothermy to the district level means mastering complex, multi-energy systems



In-sewer heat exchangers

VIVAQUA

For Sibelga the challenge is anticipation

- Preparing future with present data and uncertainties
- Adaptation during construction phase and evolution
- Anticipation with tests excavation



DH Trenches in NOH under construction



Dispatching Sibelga gas and electricity

- Network routing and sizing to allow future connections
- Decisions made in the public interest
- Exploitation - oriented

For VUB the challenge is obtaining the necessary data

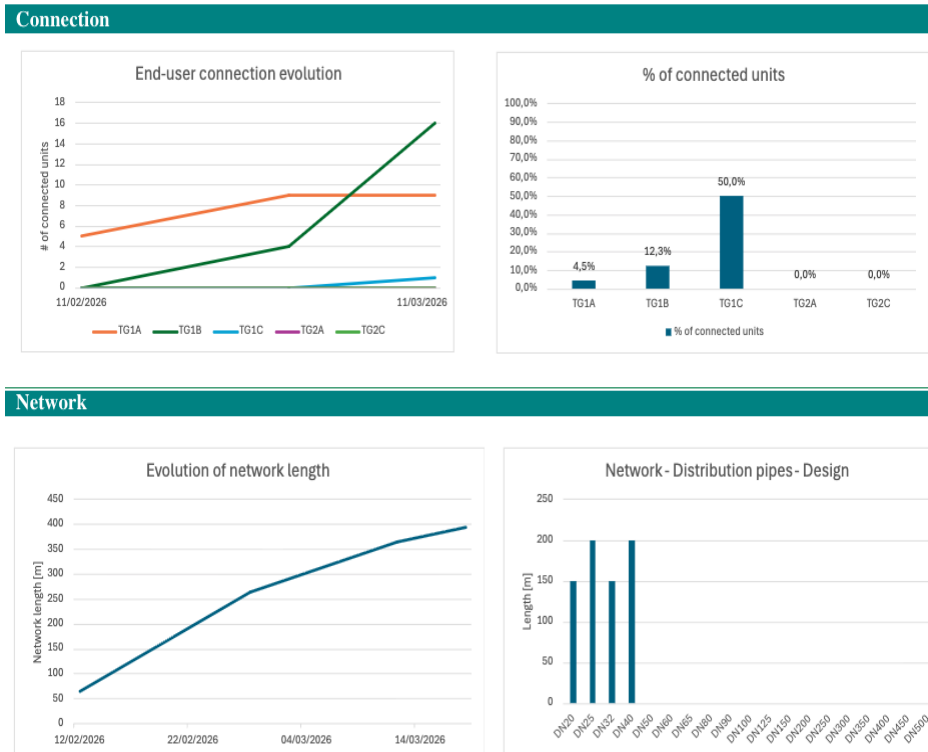
VUB is responsible for the monitoring & evaluation

- Monitoring the action plan
- Measuring the progress
- Keeping partners up-to-date



Challenges

- Obtaining the necessary data
- Combining technical & social indicators
(with help of Convivence)



**dashboard showing status & evolution
(example values)**

Monitoring and evaluation framework was developed



- Accessible for partners
- Contains transparent calculation sheets
- Reports result & output indicators



For Convivence, the challenge is...

Tenant engagement:

- A project that seems rather vague to them (connection in 2028, heating system unchanged)



Bonjour,

Nous sommes Claire et Séverine et nous formons l'équipe usage de l'asbl convivence.

Nous allons accompagner les locataires du bâtiment dans le cadre des travaux de rénovation du projet européen Be.SHARE.

Nous organiserons bientôt des séances d'information, des ateliers en petits groupes et sont également prévues des visites à domicile. Le but de cet accompagnement sera de mieux comprendre et maîtriser les techniques de votre logement et d'améliorer votre confort.

Nous passerons nous présenter lors d'un porte-à-porte aux dates suivantes :

JEUDI 19 MARS APRÈS-MIDI
MARDI 24 MARS MATINÉE

Nous sommes joignables par téléphone ou sur whatsapp au 0471/377 164

À bientôt !

CLAIRE ET SÉVERINE
ÉQUIPE USAGE



Flyer / postcard distributed to all tenants

Strategies implemented:

- Phased approach
- Progressive support
- Recognisable signage
- Variety of formats



Stand in the entrance halls



Group information session

For Brussels Environment the challenge is also to answer the issue of a just transition



PPC Governance : stakeholder engagement and knowledge sharing

By asking your questions, you are helping to shape our dissemination strategy and our future communication initiatives

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Closing Ans Persoons



State Secretary of the Brussels-Capital Region for
the Environment, responsible for Climate



4 groups - 4 colors – 4 guides (3 FR & 1 EN/NL)

			
Vincent Vandernoot GREEN French	Svend Bram YELLOW English & Dutch	Florine Thiry RED French	Antoine Crahay BLUE French

➤ **Departure at 2 pm** from the entrance of Brussels Environment

