

**Warsaw, Poland****What challenge did the project address?**

Addressing energy poverty and completing the thermal modernisation of municipal buildings are significant challenges for Warsaw in the next decade. According to Warsaw's Green Vision, 36% of urban buildings should undergo deep thermal modernisation by 2035. Social housing in Warsaw tends to be energy inefficient, and houses lower-income residents who are more likely to experience financial burdens. The "Stop Smog Campaign", led by the city in conjunction with civil society groups, has made significant progress by replacing coal boilers with district heating, heat pumps, or electric heating sources in around 85% of municipal buildings, in line with the city's Climate Action Plan's targets to reduce emissions and improve indoor and outdoor air quality.

Making social housing more energy efficient is crucial to addressing energy poverty and tackling climate change, yet this effort faces significant challenges. Inconsistent data on the energy efficiency of existing housing stock hinders accurate assessments and targeted renovations. Furthermore, inadequate tools for monitoring, diagnosing, and planning housing retrofits impede effective progress and the roll out of action. C4O's Inclusive Climate Action (ICA) Cities Fund kick-started Warsaw's Carbon-neutral and Affordable Retrofits for Everyone in Need (CARE) project to address these challenges and drive forward equitable climate solutions.

What did the city achieve?

Through the ICA Fund, Warsaw created the innovative CARE tool – a platform that classifies buildings according to environmental and social criteria, allowing the city to identify where energy efficiency renovation investments will have the biggest impact for people and on emissions. The CARE project focused on 1,900 municipal buildings over which the city has agency, and where there is a high prevalence of energy poverty among residents.

To design a successful tool, the city consulted representatives from various stakeholder groups involved in social housing, including municipal government units, tenant organisations, and institutes researching urban policies and housing. The data analysis provided the city with policy recommendations around best practices for data-driven retrofits to alleviate energy poverty, as well as various resources to support implementation, including

a detailed database, an interactive dashboard, and capacity-building sessions for city officials. This strategy enabled the city to target low-income populations, who are most likely to suffer the adverse effects of climate change, putting their needs at the centre of Warsaw's ambitious climate policy to ensure a just transition and improve quality of life for its most vulnerable residents.

The Fund supported the city's efforts to secure the €3.5 million (US\$3.9 million) ELENA grant, awarded by the European Commission, to prepare comprehensive technical documentation for the thermal modernisation of 50 multi-family municipal buildings. As part of the ELENA grant agreement, Warsaw has committed to invest €33 million (US\$37.5 million) in energy efficiency retrofits within three years of the award.

The project offers huge opportunities for replication in cities beyond Warsaw. The results have already been shared during various city peer-to-peer exchanges among C4O member cities and at international conferences, seminars, and discussion panels – such as the 2023 and 2024 Energy Poverty Advice Hub Conference – as well as with regional and local authorities, NGOs, researchers, and businesses.

How did the Fund advance inclusive climate action?

- The project contributes to implementing the city's vision of reducing energy poverty among frontline residents; improving housing conditions, health, and wellbeing; and ensuring cost-effective climate change mitigation actions, in line with Warsaw's Climate Action Plan.
- The Fund's support was key to the city's success at breaking silos and fostering the cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary cooperation between various municipal units, tenant organisations, and research institutes required to advance inclusive and equitable energy efficiency retrofits of municipal buildings.
- The Fund was instrumental to the city's ability to leverage significant funding from the Masovia provincial government and the European Commission, enabling the city to start retrofitting social housing buildings.

