



NEEST

NetZero Emission and Environmentally Sustainable Territories

KRAKÓW, ŁÓDZ, RZESZÓW, WARSAW & WROCLAW - POLAND

Emissions domains addressed by the Pilot Activity



Consumption of non-electricity energy for thermal uses in buildings & facilities



Consumption of electricity generated for buildings, facilities & infrastructure



Key Focus Areas

Energy poverty | Building retrofit | Social inclusion | Scalable models | Urban resilience | Data integration | Inter-city cooperation

Levers of Change

Democracy and participation | Financing and funding | Governance and policy | Learning and capabilities | Social innovation | Technology/infrastructure

Description of the Pilot Activity

Five major Polish cities face a common challenge: ageing infrastructure, persistent social inequalities, and an urgent need to modernise building stock. NEEST united them around residential retrofitting as the cornerstone of energy transition—designed not only to improve energy performance but to reduce energy poverty, enhance living conditions, and empower communities. The programme also innovated in governance, experimenting with cross-sectoral coordination, multi-level financing, and deep civic engagement.

Impact & Results

Through scenario modelling, the pilot estimated a reduction of 4,300 MWh in total energy consumption per year per city quarter. But the deeper impact was institutional. City-wide review of building and district information revealed significant fragmentation in municipal data management. Warsaw's comprehensive Data Flow Map identified overlaps, gaps, and untapped resources, prompting cross-department dialogue and laying the foundation for coordinated planning. This mapping proved replicable for other Polish and CEE cities facing similar data challenges.

The programme produced model investment concepts and practical guidelines for sustainable urban development, tested through simulated investments. A "modernisation calculator" tool received input from 73 municipal officials. One educational institution began modernising its building using solutions developed in the project. Collaboration among the five cities deepened into sustained partnerships. Weekly coordination meetings created a stable platform for peer learning and troubleshooting. A Memorandum with the Ministry of Climate and Environment now supports Municipal Climate Contracts in all five cities. The emphasis on analysing the five most common building types across Poland ensures solutions are widely applicable.

Innovation Highlights

NEEST challenged the dominance of sectoral and fragmented planning approaches, advocating instead for integrated, cross-sectoral policy innovation. Cities began viewing climate transition as aiming not just to retrofit buildings but to revitalise entire neighbourhoods and communities—integrating housing policy, ageing population needs, and public services within retrofit strategies.

The replication toolkits for citizen engagement, financial models, and data-driven retrofit approaches were explicitly designed for adaptation by other municipalities across Europe.

