



LEUVEN

Civic Contracting for Climate

LEUVEN, BELGIUM

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

Civic contracting | District energy | Distributed leadership | Net-zero finance | Governance | Heat planning | Energy cooperatives

Levers of Change

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

Description of the Pilot Activity

Leuven's pilot focused on developing new tools and capabilities in governance, policy, and finance to decarbonise heating. By embedding heat planning into core municipal departments and evolving a local energy cooperative into a professional partner, the project demonstrated how abstract climate goals can be translated into concrete project delivery.

Innovation Highlights

The C. Meunierstraat lighthouse district provides a concrete demonstration with a feasibility study by Sweco and formalised tendering—a replicable model for other districts.

Impact & Results

Leuven achieved a cultural and organisational shift by embedding heat planning into the core mandate of its Public Works Department. What began as siloed collaboration grew into genuine co-ownership, with Public Works taking responsibility for tendering a green heat network in the C. Meunierstraat lighthouse district. A change order within an existing sewer contract allowed integration of heat infrastructure.

Streamlined deployment of district heating networks targeted GHG reduction of over 4,000 tonnes of CO₂e and over 20,000 MWh per year—based on replacing individual gas boilers with collective green heat systems.

Local energy cooperative ECoOB made heat a structural area of activity, moving from ad hoc involvement to embedding a dedicated staff role and board-approved vision for collective heating. ECoOB developed agreements with institutional actors, tested new outreach strategies such as door-to-door campaigns, and secured a role in the Interreg NWE project E2-CUTIES.

The pilot catalysed a move from fragmented, project-based debates to a coordinated programme of heat clusters, clarifying priorities across city departments and stakeholders. The Leuven Heat Programme received formal city council approval.

