



LINK

Left Bank towards Inclusive Climate Neutrality

ANTWERP, 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 Terms

Condominium renovation | Inclusive financing | Renovation prevention | Energy poverty | Vulnerable households | Budget neutrality financing | Co-ownership | Deep retrofit | Acceptance testing

Levers of Change

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

Description of the Pilot Activity

Year 1 completed comprehensive data mapping to identify what information exists — and what doesn't — about apartment owners' financial situations. Two pilot condominium buildings were selected, and a survey achieved a 40% response rate (63% in one building), with 10% of owners agreeing to in-depth interviews for acceptance testing. Working with Impact Finance Belgium, CLIMACT developed two financing mechanisms built around "budget neutrality" — where post-renovation savings on energy and maintenance cover monthly repayments, enabling participation by owners with no upfront financial capacity. Two workshops with nearly ten financial players refined the mechanisms through expert input. The project now moves to field testing with target groups.

Innovation Highlights

The "budget neutrality" mechanism is a direct response to the core challenge: designing renovation finance around what people will save, not what they currently have. Grounding the mechanism design in acceptance testing with real building owners — rather than theoretical modelling — increases the likelihood that what gets built will actually be used. Early and deep involvement of financial stakeholders through Impact Finance Belgium ensures the mechanisms reflect market reality from the outset.

Year One Highlights

Antwerp's LINK project is tackling one of the most persistent barriers in urban renovation: how to enable apartment owners with little or no repayment capacity to participate in building retrofits without being displaced by the costs.

Identifying financially vulnerable owners is hindered by both data gaps and social stigma — those most in need are often hardest to reach through standard outreach. The survey format was deliberately chosen over group meetings to allow owners to share financial concerns privately. Non-responding owners may be among the most vulnerable, yet remain the hardest to engage.

Key Insight

"Co-ownership laws allowing majority-imposed financial contributions risk displacing vulnerable residents."

Twinning with Ghent (Belgium)

Antwerp and Ghent share comparable challenges — similar target groups and large stocks of older apartment buildings — making the twinning particularly relevant. Key learnings from Ghent include a CRM-based referral system that Antwerp is adapting

