

Ready4Heat Newsletter

Ready4Heat at a glance

The project *Ready4Heat* is funded by the EU under the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE program. The *Ready4Heat* association comprises nine partners, including five technical partner dealing with environmental, social, governance and health issues, and 4 key demonstration cities (pilots). For 36 months of activities, from March 2023 to February 2026, the project *Ready4Heat* aims to set up Heat and Health Action Plans (HHAPs). The action plans carry out various pilot actions: Development of cooling green “urban islands” (Hajdúböszörmény), shading of a playground through the use of a green pergola (Maribor), the environmentally friendly cooling of rooms in a retirement home (Weiz), and the involvement of stakeholders within an urban area to build an active network (Worms). Furthermore, the partners set up local networks of concerned groups to support each other and tackle the heat problem. The project also makes proven and tested measures such as heat warning systems accessible to the cities and helps them to adopt these quickly.

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Ready4Heat

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1. Project description

Ready4Heat | Protecting citizens from heat - Development and implementation of heat and health action plans: Global heating is associated with more frequent, longer, and hotter heat waves. In many parts of Central and Southeastern Europe, the number of heat wave days increased by 10-15 days per decade between 1981 and 2010. This trend will continue and intensify. Tropical nights, when the temperature does not fall below 20°C, will also increase.

These more intense heat wave events stress the human organism and increase health risks. While many people suffer from heat stress, certain groups of people are particularly at risk: These include the elderly and those with pre-existing physical conditions, people in need of care and those living in isolation, pregnant women, infants and young children, the homeless, people living in community shelters, and people who work outdoors. Economically and socially disadvantaged people are also more affected by the impacts of heat waves.

Cities in central Europe need to adapt but many lack strategies and action plans to protect their citizens from heat. The *Ready4Heat* project supports them to introduce tested short-, medium- and long-term measures with a focus on the most urgent issue: sudden heat waves. A special focus of the project is therefore on acute measures that can have an immediate effect in the event of heat. The project also makes proven and tested measures such as heat warning systems accessible to the cities and helps them to adopt these quickly.

The *Ready4Heat* project is funded by the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE program. The total budget is €2,040,000, of which €1,632,000 are ERDF funds. The project funding period runs from March 2023 to February 2026.

Want to learn more? Please contact us at ready4heat@climatealliance.org



2. Project team

The *Ready4Heat* project is an association of nine partners from four different countries who together pursue the goal to develop heat resilience in cities through municipal strategies and action plans. The *Ready4Heat* association comprises nine partners, including five technical partner dealing with environmental, social, governance and health issues, and 4 key demonstration cities (pilots). Together, they address transnational challenges and help reduce regional disparities and strengthen cohesion in their cities. This builds capacities that enable each territory to learn from the others.

The project partners are:

- **Development agency Sinergija** (SI),
- **Centre for Health and Development Murska Sabota** (SI),
- **Municipality of Maribor** (SI),
- **Climate Alliance** (DE),
- **City of Worms** (DE),
- **Climate Alliance Styria** (AT)
- **City of Weiz** (AT),
- **Reflex Environmental Association** (HU) and
- **Municipality of Hajdúböszörmény** (HU).

Find more information about the project team by using the respective links.





Photo: Climate Alliance



3. Pilot cities and their planned investments

The project *Ready4Heat* aims to set up Heat and Health Actions Plans and make proven and tested measures such as heat warning systems accessible to the cities and helps them to adopt these quickly. Furthermore, the pilots will set up local networks of concerned groups to support each other and tackle the heat problem. These are primarily older and very old people, people with chronic illnesses and impairments, but also children and pregnant women as well as people working outside. The Action Plans will carry out various pilot actions, which will be a benefit for these vulnerable groups, among others:

- Development of cooling green “urban islands” (Hajdúböszörmény),
- Shading and cooling of a playground through the use of a green pergola (Maribor),
- The environmentally friendly cooling of rooms in a retirement home (Weiz) and
- The involvement of stakeholders within an urban area to build an active network (Worms).



Municipality of Hajdúböszörmény

Hajdúböszörmény is located at the Hungarian Great Plain. It is the fourth most populous city in region with a population of 32000, while it is the 4th largest settlement in the country with an administrative area of nearly 36,000 hectares. It's an agricultural area without forests or major water bodies. The summers are very hot and dry, only sometimes very monsoon weather like stormy rains at summertime. The municipality monitors the state of the environment in their city and reports annually to the Board of Representatives and the public. Based on this, an action plan is developed, which contains numerous measures for the protection of the environment e.g. regularly organized awareness-raising municipal events on environmental issues, like the Earth Day, the “TeSzedd” garbage taking Action, E. mobility Week. There was an initiative related to energy efficiency in the settlement, and energy renovation has taken place in several buildings in recent years. The city focusses to increase energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources, which would make the settlement more attractive to the residents as well as to tourism.

The pilot actions of the Municipality of Hajdúböszörmény are to create of shaping and cooling green islands in the public areas of the city. The project also contains the installation of green islands, and the measurement of the impact and effectiveness of these green islands. Therefore a local action strategy for heatwave protection will be at first developed. Furthermore, a heat alarm system will be installed to inform the public about upcoming heat waves.



Municipality of Maribor

The Municipality of Maribor faces heat island effects in urban areas although 11.4% of the area of Maribor is situated in Natura 2000. Maribor's newly adopted policies (municipal environmental protection program until 2030 and local energy climate concept) were designed to address these issues and to invest in green solutions. The Municipality of Maribor develop a strategy, design and test heat stress /wave warning network and as a pilot city implement an NBS pilot action to reduce the heat that has the potential to be scaled and is in line with Heat action plan development. Area of action relevant to climate adaptation is green and open spaces, addressing quality of stay in hot phases - shady elements (trees, biodiverse pergolas, etc.) for cool and shady areas.

The planned investment of the Municipality of Maribor: NBS - Biodiverse-climate vegetated pergola/canopy ("vegetated living pergola"): A biodiverse shading pergola is a small and simple structure with a minimum number of structural elements and a maximum micro-climatic effect. The main purpose is to provide shade over play area for vulnerable groups such as toddlers and pre-school children and to protect them from the heat (sandpit, etc.). The selection of plants will be according to safety requirements for children, climate effects, and biodiversity. The pergola is designed structurally and in terms of form with elements of traditional construction - a greenhouse, in such a way that at least one side (the horizontal structure - the 'shelter') can be used to (instantly) easily create a vertical or hanging garden, and the roof part of the structure can also be converted into a green roof ('living roof') or partly covered by plants and partly by perforated photovoltaic panels which allow thus to combine shading and electricity production by just one installation.



City of Weiz

For more than 30 years, Weiz has been developing strategies for renewable and efficient energy and resilient environmental protection systems. Since 1995, there has been an EcoPlan, since 2005 an Energy Action Plan and since 2017 a SECAP with attractive and successfully implemented energy and climate protection projects and measures (e.g. 100% thermal retrofit of public buildings, plus and passive houses, biomass district heating for 70% of all households, eco-funding programme, WASTI, 130 Weizbikes, city railway Weiz, SUMP) and more than 100 EU regional and EU projects on the topics of sustainable, renewable energy, energy efficiency and the environment. The current high greenhouse gas emissions accelerate climate change with weather extremes, floods and long periods of heat also in this region (eastern Alpine foreland). First measures such as urban greening, mobile trees against urban heat islands have already been implemented. Further innovative, technical solutions with renewable energy systems are necessary to protect the environment and the population in a sustainable way against the consequences of the expected heat waves.

In the pilot action, the city of Weiz will use technical measures in addition to ecological ones to prevent the heat waves caused by climate change. Initially, selected buildings in public, business and private areas will be used as models to demonstrate which technical and organisational concepts can be used for cooling and air-conditioning systems to prevent overheating indoors, which is harmful to health. These pilot applications are to be tested in existing buildings as well as in new buildings and their effectiveness analysed within the framework of ongoing system monitoring. In this context, the city of Weiz takes on the role of local initiator of heat and health measures based on the current energy and climate strategies of the city of Weiz. It promotes practical pilot applications in city buildings (e.g. city hall, kindergarten, primary schools, technology and research centres), in social facilities (hospital, nursing homes),

in companies (e.g. construction industry, manufacturing industry) and in residential buildings (social housing, older existing buildings and new construction projects). As a building authority, the City of Weiz can directly influence the installation of technical measures to protect against heat waves in renovation and new construction projects by means of climate protection guidelines vis-à-vis the developers. The City of Weiz can support the implementation with funds from the municipal eco-funding programme, which will promote the broad application of the tested heat and health measures in the city.



City of Worms



Worms is one of the first cities that signed the European initiative "Mayors Adapt" of the Covenant of Mayors on Climate Change Adaptation (2014). In 2010, the city drew up an energy and efficiency concept with the participation of an interdisciplinary team from the administration and external experts, which was evaluated and updated in 2020. Due to the high impact of the consequences of climate change on the city of Worms, the municipality developed a concept for adaptation to climate change (KLAK) in 2016, also with the participation of experts, citizens and the administration. The adaptation concept, which has been successively implemented since 2017, includes many measures in the area of heat. Climate change adaptation projects already implemented e.g. include an awareness campaign on unsealing stone front gardens, offers walks through the city centre in summer, during which participants are informed about the topics of urban climate, heat and health, climate change and possibilities for prevention. Worms is one of the first municipalities in Germany to create a heat action plan too. They are a frontrunner and their baseline for this project is already prepared heat strategy and action plan, so they are ahead of all pilot cities. Thus, the focus is solely on the sustainability and implementation of the action plan. In the process of developing the heat action plan, it became clear that the implementation of such a plan poses particular challenges for municipalities. New structures must be created and networks established for a successful implementation. Because there are few cities on a national level that have a comprehensive heat action plan, there are few good examples from which other cities can learn. The particular challenge is to put the theoretical approaches into practice without being able to draw on the knowledge of other cities. Worms is thus a pioneer in this area and is therefore very interested in an exchange with other cities that would like to implement similar concepts. For the further development of the Heat Action Plan, cooperation with other cities is thus central for Worms. Transnational exchange offers Worms the opportunity to be inspired and to further adapt the plan what can be very enriching.



4. Train the trainers workshops

The preparation of a heat-health action plan requires different steps that need to be taken by a municipality. Building on the experiences from the development of the Worms heat-health action plan, Climate Alliance, with support of the city of Worms, organised nine online train the trainers workshops, in order to introduce the possible steps that can be taken while preparing a heat-health action plan.

The workshops took place between 8 May and 28 June 2023, and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. Each workshop started with a presentation on the respective topic. After that, there was time to raise questions, discuss the topic and exchange experiences. The workshops were supposed to build a shared knowledge among the project partners and to lay the foundation for the development of heat-health action plans in the participating municipalities.

The workshops focused on the most central points of heat-health action plans: the heat hot spot analysis, the most vulnerable groups, the stakeholder process and the main elements of a heat-health action plan (warning system, coordination, measure catalogue).



5. Stakeholder kick-off events

Stakeholder engagement in the context of heatwaves is of paramount importance due to the multifaceted and far-reaching consequences of extreme heat events on our societies, economies, and the environment. As temperatures rise and extreme heat events become more frequent and severe, the need for collective action and collaboration becomes increasingly urgent.

In order to create a basis for the development of a heat action plan and the implementation of heat protection measures, stakeholder kick-off events were held in the *Ready4Heat* pilot cities in July 2023. The events brought together a diverse group of stakeholders from various sectors. The primary objective of these local kick-off events was to foster collaboration, share knowledge, and develop the stakeholder networks to mitigate the impacts of heatwaves on communities, infrastructure, and the environment. In the following you find short reports from the events in Maribor and Weiz.

Municipality of Maribor at a glimpse

On 13th July the *Ready4Heat* Stakeholder Kick-off event was held in Maribor, Slovenia, where measures to mitigate increasingly frequent and stronger heat waves were discussed.

Although many stakeholders were already aware of the measures in the workshop that followed many ideas and concerns were exchanged. Among the proposals, appropriate information about heat waves e.g. SMS notifications, notice boards in multi-apartment buildings or homes for the elderly, urban planning of green (trees, green belts) and blue (water) areas in the context of managing heat waves were mentioned. During the discussion, the website of the Joint Environmental Protection Service of Maribor Municipality and the weather forecast of the Slovenian Environment Agency (ARSO) - national portal was also mentioned.

In the afternoon another *Ready4Heat* Stakeholder Kick-off event was held for those, who could not join the live event in the morning. Mostly experts from National Institute for Public Health joined and citizens (general public) joined this event. In addition to the same presentations held in the morning, state officials presented some data from the national institutes in further discussion.

The Kick-off event with stakeholders introduced the goals of *Ready4Heat* project and started cooperation with vulnerable groups in the field of preparing measures to mitigate climate change effects.

We reached a large group of stakeholders but will continue to search for more organizations to include as many vulnerable groups as possible.



Photo: Municipality of Maribor

The City of Weiz at a glimpse

On July 12, 2023, stakeholders, experts, and interested parties gathered in Weiz for the inaugural event of the groundbreaking project *Ready4Heat*. Together with the city of Weiz and the Climate Alliance Styria, a significant step was taken to prepare for the challenges posed by extreme heat events while simultaneously maintaining the quality of life in our cities. The event commenced with a warm welcome to the participants by mayor Erwin Eggenreich, MA MAS and vice-mayor Mag. Oswin Donnerer. The project was introduced to stakeholders, emphasizing that *Ready4Heat* is not merely an initiative but a holistic approach to addressing the increasingly frequent heatwaves in urban areas. Friedrich Hofer from the Climate Alliance Styria emphasized the importance of heat protection plans and the necessity of better preparing cities for future heatwaves. Climate and weather expert Andreas Gobiet from GeoSphere Austria illustrated the connections between extreme weather events and human-induced climate change. Environmental physician Hans-Peter Hutter provided insights into the health effects of heatwaves, ranging from brain damage to psychological stress. Experts and stakeholders from various fields contributed their expertise and perspectives to discuss issues of heat and health. These discussions focused not only on the challenges but also on the opportunities presented by tackling heat events. These lively discussions yielded valuable insights and ideas that will be incorporated into the project's further development. The networking opportunity was extensively utilized, allowing participants to establish contacts, exchange experiences, and find potential partners for future collaboration. In the coming months, the first workshops within the *Ready4Heat* project will be conducted in collaboration with stakeholders. The goal is to develop and implement concrete measures to mitigate the impacts of heatwaves in the city of Weiz.



Photo: City of Weiz

The Municipality of Hajdúböszörmény at a glimpse

The Hungarian project opening event took place in Hajdúböszörmény on 13 July 2023 with the participation of local representatives of the target groups. At the event, László Főríz, Deputy Mayor of Hajdúböszörmény, welcomed the participants, who listened to the presentations of the project partner Reflex Environmental Association, and the lecture of the President of the Green Circle of Hajdúböszörmény. The presentations outlined the main project objectives, which include the development

of a municipal heat strategy and action plan with short, medium and long-term measures to mitigate heat waves; to facilitate the integration of the solutions gathered into policy; to raise awareness; to make the cities involved in the project more resilient by introducing pilot actions and to develop a heat stress management system for heat waves. The project results are expected to serve as a model for other Hungarian municipalities.

In the framework of the pilot measure in Hajdúböszörmény, the municipality will establish 47 green islands, each with a minimum surface area of 4 m² and covered with plants, at 20 locations where the urban heat island effect is enhanced. The pilot action aims to improve the local microclimate, reduce the heat island effect and provide cooling points for the inhabitants. The green islands not only provide shady resting places for passers-by, but the planted plants improve thermal comfort through evaporation and shade, contributing to increasing urban biodiversity and the number of green spaces.

Several representatives of different target groups actively participated in the event and expressed their interest in further activities. The event was also reported on [city television](#).



Photo: Municipality of Hajdúböszörmény



6. International events

1. COP28 | 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference | 30.11. - 12.12.2023 | United Arab Emirates - Save the Date

[More information](#)

2. Conference for Mayors on Translating the EU Green Deal into Local Action | 15.03.2024 | Brussels (BE)

Local authorities are in the driver's seat of Europe's transition, as the ones implementing the Green Deal on the ground. Their mobilisation capacity should be embedded in the heart of the EU Green Deal initiatives to facilitate the best possible participation of citizens, enterprises, and local community organizations.

Holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2024, the government of the Flanders region of Belgium is inviting 550 mayors 'Fit for 55' to highlight the way

forward for EU Green Deal's supportive initiatives for local governments, based on practical experiences. As a concrete example, Flanders has launched a Local Energy and Climate Pact as a contractual basis for tangible targets and support, per number of inhabitants, between the regional and local governments.

[More information](#)

3. International Sustainable Energy Conference - ISEC 2024 | 10.04 -11.04-2024 | Graz (AT)

This time, ISEC 2024, the 3rd International Sustainable Energy Conference will focus on the role of the heating sector and resource efficiency in a networked sustainable energy system. ISEC 2024 sees itself as a generator of innovative ideas for research, business and energy policy.

The conference programme consists of invited speakers from industry, science and politics as well as lectures and poster presentations by researchers from all continents.

[More information](#)



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