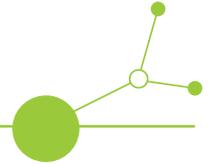


## D.3.1.1 Solutions recommended to improve sustainability of heat measures

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND CONTEXT

Across Europe, cities are experiencing a clear shift in summer conditions. Hot days are no longer isolated events, but occur more often, last longer and affect daily life in public buildings and care facilities. For municipalities, this means that heat is becoming a concrete management and health issue, not only an environmental one. Elderly people, children and people with existing health conditions are particularly exposed, and local governments are increasingly expected to provide safe and comfortable indoor environments during extreme heat periods.

The Weiz pilot focused on improving thermal comfort in a senior care facility, where indoor temperatures during summer heatwaves regularly exceeded safe levels. To address this, the city implemented a **renewable-powered cooling solution**, combining a high-efficiency cooling system with on-site photovoltaic (PV) energy generation. This approach ensured stable and safe indoor temperatures while keeping energy consumption, operating costs and emissions low. The pilot demonstrated that cooling can be part of climate adaptation strategies without increasing dependency on the electricity grid.

Beyond the technical solution, the pilot tested how such measures can be implemented in real municipal conditions. Close cooperation between the municipality, the care facility operator, the building owner and technical experts proved essential. The experience confirmed that early political commitment, clear governance structures and stakeholder involvement are decisive factors for success.

Based on the Weiz experience, this policy brief highlights several transferable recommendations for other municipalities:

- (1) treat heat mitigation as a long-term public responsibility, not a single project;
- (2) prioritise buildings used by vulnerable groups;
- (3) integrate cooling and shading measures into Heat action plans, climate adaptation strategies and SECAPs;
- (4) combine technical solutions with clear governance, communication and maintenance planning.

Heat protection is not only a local issue for Weiz, but a growing challenge for cities across regions and countries. Rising temperatures, ageing populations and increasing urban density make heat adaptation an urgent task for municipalities at all levels. The Weiz pilot shows that practical, scalable solutions already exist and that with the right planning and support, cities can act now to protect health, improve urban comfort and strengthen resilience in line with European climate and adaptation frameworks.

## Local context - Weiz

*In response to increasingly frequent and intense heatwaves, the City of Weiz tested a practical solution to protect vulnerable people from extreme indoor heat. The pilot activity focused on improving thermal comfort in a senior care facility, where high indoor temperatures during summer pose serious health risks to elderly residents and staff. Traditional ventilation and shading measures proved insufficient, especially during prolonged heat periods.*

*To address this challenge, Weiz implemented a solar-powered cooling system in the main communal space of the senior centre. The solution combines a high-efficiency cooling unit with an on-site photovoltaic (PV) system, allowing the building to maintain safe indoor temperatures while keeping energy consumption, costs and emissions low. The pilot demonstrates how renewable energy can be directly linked to heat protection and health resilience, rather than being used only for general electricity supply.*

*The pilot was designed as a real-life test of technical, organisational and governance aspects. It required close*



*cooperation between the municipality, the care facility operator, the building owner and technical experts. The system was successfully installed and commissioned, proving that such measures are technically feasible and institutionally manageable for municipalities.*

*This policy brief builds on the experience from Weiz to show how renewable-powered cooling can become a transferable heat adaptation measure for other cities. It highlights key lessons, enabling conditions and policy recommendations that can support municipalities in protecting vulnerable groups, strengthening climate resilience and aligning heat mitigation with long-term energy and climate strategies.*

# HEAT MITIGATION MEASURE - SOLUTION OVERVIEW

## Renewable-powered cooling for vulnerable indoor spaces

### *The key lesson*

*Renewable-powered cooling should be treated as a strategic heat adaptation tool, not as a single pilot technical upgrade. When embedded in municipal heat action plans, climate adaptation strategies or SECAPs, this solution can be replicated step-by-step across cities and regions, starting with the most heat-vulnerable buildings and scaling up as experience and capacity grow.*

**The recommended solution is the integration of renewable energy with high-efficiency cooling systems** to protect people from heat stress in buildings where vulnerable groups spend long periods of time. Rather than relying solely on passive measures (shading, ventilation), this approach combines active cooling with on-site renewable energy generation, most commonly photovoltaic (PV) systems. The goal is to ensure safe indoor temperatures during heatwaves while keeping energy demand, costs and emissions under control.

This solution is particularly relevant for **heat-exposed public and social infrastructure**, such as elderly care facilities, schools, kindergartens, health centres and community buildings. In these settings, overheating directly affects health, well-being and service quality, and climate change is making extreme heat events more frequent and longer lasting. Renewable-powered cooling provides a reliable and future-proof response where passive solutions alone are no longer sufficient.

**The pilot activity in Weiz serves as an illustration of this concept**, showing how a PV-supported cooling system can be implemented in a senior care facility. While the local context differs across regions, the underlying principle is widely transferable - matching cooling demand with local renewable energy supply to reduce operational costs and dependency on the electricity grid.

Beyond temperature reduction, the solution delivers multiple co-benefits that are relevant for policy makers:

- **Health protection:** reduced heat stress for elderly people, children and staff
- **Social inclusion:** safer and more comfortable conditions in public and care facilities
- **Economic benefits:** lower long-term energy and operating costs
- **Climate and energy benefits:** reduced emissions and increased energy self-sufficiency



# A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO HEAT MITIGATION

## Key lesson:

*Successful heat mitigation is not a single project, but a repeatable municipal process. Cities that treat cooling and shading as strategic public services rather than single pilots are best positioned to scale solutions across neighbourhoods and regions.*

This solution follows a clear process pathway that any municipality can apply, regardless of size or national context. While local pilots (such as the one in Weiz) provide concrete examples, the steps below describe a general and transferable approach for implementing renewable-powered cooling or comparable heat-mitigation measures.

## Secure political commitment and mandate

- Place heat protection on the **political agenda** (health, social care, climate adaptation).
- Obtain a **formal decision** (mayor/council resolution) approving the measure.
- Assign a **lead department** (e.g. environment, building management or climate office).

## Set up governance and responsibilities

- Involve key departments early:

**building management, energy/environment, social services, finance, procurement.**

- Clearly define who is responsible for:
  - investment decisions
  - operation and maintenance
  - liability and long-term ownership
- Formalise roles through internal decisions or agreements before procurement.

## Identify priority locations and assess needs

- Select **heat-exposed buildings** with vulnerable users (elderly, children, patients).
- Carry out a **simple heat and energy assessment**:
  - overheating risk
  - current energy use
  - suitability for active and/or nature-based solutions
- Consider combinations of measures (e.g. shading + cooling, green elements + technology).



## Prepare the technical concept

- Define the **type of solution** (e.g. renewable-powered cooling, shading, hybrid systems).
- Check basic technical requirements:
  - available space (roof, façade, outdoor areas)
  - structural capacity
  - grid connection or renewable integration
- Engage **external experts** if in-house capacity is limited.

## Secure budget and funding

- Allocate municipal budget and/or combine with **regional, national or EU funding**.
- Plan not only investment costs, but also **maintenance and monitoring**.
- Ensure funding decisions are aligned with durability and long-term operation.

## Engage stakeholders and users early

- Start **community and user engagement during the concept phase**, not at the end.
- Involve building users, operators and local staff through:
  - workshops
  - consultations
  - site visits
- Communicate benefits clearly: health, comfort, costs, climate resilience.

## Implement, monitor and scale

- Schedule implementation **before the summer season**, if possible.
- Plan **basic monitoring** (temperature, energy use, user feedback).
- Use results to:
  - improve the solution
  - replicate it in other buildings
  - integrate it into heat action plans or SECAPs



# ACTORS AND COOPERATION FOR SUCCESSFUL HEAT MITIGATION

## *Key takeaway:*

*Heat mitigation works best when it is co-designed, jointly owned and embedded in existing local structures rather than delivered as a stand-alone project.*

*The main lesson across pilot experiences is that early and inclusive involvement reduces governance risks, shortens implementation time and strengthens long-term sustainability. Municipalities that treat stakeholder engagement as a core part of heat mitigation—not as an add-on—are better positioned to replicate and scale solutions across buildings, neighbourhoods and regions.*

**Effective heat mitigation measures require early and broad stakeholder involvement.** Experience from different pilot contexts shows that technical or nature-based solutions alone are not sufficient; success depends on cooperation between municipal departments, operators, experts and users from the very beginning.

At the municipal level, **local government plays the coordinating role.** Key departments typically include building and facility management, urban planning, environment or energy units, public health and social services. Their involvement is essential to align heat mitigation with health protection, building standards, climate strategies and long-term maintenance responsibilities. Early political backing ensures that decisions on budget, procurement and ownership can be taken without delay.

Beyond the municipality, **building owners and facility operators** are critical actors, especially when measures are implemented in care facilities, schools or other public buildings. Their participation allows solutions to be adapted to real operational needs and ensures clarity on maintenance, liability and daily use. **Technical experts and service providers** (engineers, energy consultants, installers, ...) are needed to design feasible solutions and select appropriate technologies.

**Users and frontline staff** (care workers, teachers, maintenance personnel) should be involved early through consultations, workshops or on-site discussions. Their practical knowledge helps avoid design mistakes and increases acceptance. In broader measures affecting public space, **citizens, NGOs, community associations and the media** play an important role in awareness-raising, trust-building and long-term care of the intervention.

Stakeholder engagement should start **during the concept phase**, not after implementation. Common and transferable engagement formats include:

- stakeholder workshops and roundtables
- joint site visits and participatory design sessions
- continuous coordination meetings during implementation



# RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT HEAT PROTECTION

## Key lesson:

*Visible and positive messaging builds trust, encourages acceptance and supports replication. Cities that communicate heat mitigation as a shared community effort are better positioned to scale solutions across neighbourhoods and regions.*

**Clear, visible and positive communication is essential for the success of heat mitigation measures.** Experience from different pilot contexts shows that public acceptance does not come automatically from technical performance alone, but from how well people understand why a measure exists and how it benefits their daily lives.

Across municipalities, communication was most effective when it was **led by the local authority**, in cooperation with facility operators, social and health services, communication officers and, where relevant, NGOs and community organisations. This ensured that messages were credible, consistent and linked to broader public responsibilities such as health protection, social care and climate resilience.

Successful communication approaches followed a **simple and transferable pattern**:

- explain *the problem* (heat risks, health impacts),
- present *the solution* in plain language,
- highlight *practical benefits* (comfort, safety, cost savings),
- show how the measure fits into a wider municipal strategy.

Commonly used and replicable communication channels included **local newspapers, municipal websites, social media, on-site signage, public events and thematic days** (e.g. heat action days). In institutional settings, direct communication with users and staff proved especially important. Visual elements—photos, short videos, infographics and plaques—helped make the measures tangible and recognisable.

The pilot experience in Weiz illustrates this approach, where communication focused on protecting vulnerable groups, linking renewable energy with comfort and explaining long-term benefits. Although timing limited wider media coverage, the pilot clearly demonstrated that early and proactive communication would have increased visibility and public engagement

For broader application, municipalities are encouraged to:

- start communication **early**, already in the planning phase,
- use a **multi-channel approach** (offline + online),
- cooperate with health organisations, schools and social services,
- frame measures as **public investments in well-being**, not as technical projects.



# APPLYING THE SOLUTION IN OTHER CITIES

## *Key message for decision-makers:*

*Heat mitigation works best when treated as a systemic investment, not a single project. With the right conditions, municipalities across regions can replicate and adapt the approach to protect health, reduce risks and build long-term urban resilience.*

Heat mitigation solutions can be transferred and scaled when certain enabling conditions are in place. Experience from different pilot contexts shows that success does not depend on city size, but on political commitment, basic spatial conditions and long-term planning.

## Conditions for success

The solution can be adopted in other municipalities when:

- there is **political support** and a clear mandate to prioritise heat protection,
- **sufficient budget** is available for initial investment and maintenance,
- **appropriate space** exists (e.g. roofs for PV, courtyards, public spaces),
- the measure is linked to **local strategies** such as heat action plans, climate adaptation plans or SECAPs.

Institutional buildings (care facilities, schools, kindergartens, community centres) are often the most suitable starting points, as they host vulnerable groups and are usually under municipal responsibility.

## Barriers and how to overcome them

Common barriers include **upfront costs**, **maintenance obligations** and **complex governance** when several actors are involved. These can be addressed by:

- combining local budgets with **regional, national or EU funding**,
- preparing **clear agreements** on ownership, maintenance and liability,
- using **standardised technical solutions** and framework contracts,
- training local staff or outsourcing maintenance through long-term service agreements.

## Scaling pathways: from small steps to city-wide impact

*The key lesson is to start small, then scale strategically:*

- **Small towns** can begin with one priority location (e.g. one care home or school), use it as a learning case and gradually extend the approach to other buildings or spaces.
- **Larger cities** can integrate the solution directly into broader heat strategies and combine it with complementary measures such as:
  - tree planting and green infrastructure



- shading of playgrounds, squares and bus stops
- cooling islands and nature-based solutions
- spatial planning and building standards

*The pilot experience in Weiz demonstrates this logic: a single intervention can act as a proof of concept, while the real value lies in embedding the approach into long-term planning and replication across sites.*

## Role of regional and national support

Scaling up requires support beyond the local level. Regional and national authorities can accelerate uptake by:

- offering dedicated funding schemes,
- providing technical guidance and model solutions,
- integrating heat mitigation into building and planning regulations.

# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

*Scaling up heat mitigation requires coordinated action across governance levels. When local ambition is supported by regional frameworks and EU policies, municipalities are better equipped to protect health, reduce climate risks and build long-term urban resilience.*

### *At the municipal level:*

Heat mitigation should be treated as a core public responsibility rather than an ad-hoc project. Cities are encouraged to formally integrate cooling and shading measures into **Heat Action Plans, climate adaptation strategies and SECAPs**, ensuring long-term political ownership. This requires clear internal governance: municipalities should designate a responsible unit or coordinator, define cross-departmental cooperation (urban planning, building management, health and social services) and establish a **dedicated annual budget line** for heat mitigation measures. Urban planning departments should systematically integrate active and passive cooling solutions into the design of new public spaces, renovations and institutional buildings, so that heat protection becomes a standard planning principle rather than an exception. Public procurement rules should also reflect this shift by prioritising energy-efficient, climate-resilient and nature-based solutions.

### *At the regional and national level*

Authorities play a crucial enabling role. Regulatory frameworks and funding schemes should be adapted to support municipalities not only with initial investments, but also with long-term operation and maintenance. Clear technical guidance, model solutions and standardised procedures can significantly reduce administrative burden and speed up implementation. Integrating heat mitigation requirements into **building codes, urban development standards and public infrastructure** guidelines would create consistency and encourage wider uptake across cities and regions. Stable and predictable funding mechanisms are essential to move from pilots to large-scale implementation.

### *At the EU level*

Heat mitigation directly contributes to the objectives of the **European Green Deal**, cohesion policy and the **EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change**. Stronger links between local heat adaptation measures and EU funding instruments—such as cohesion funds, climate resilience programmes and mission-oriented calls—



can accelerate replication across regions. EU-level guidance and knowledge exchange platforms can further support harmonisation, help cities learn from each other and ensure that effective cooling and shading solutions become a mainstream part of urban development across Europe.

# LESSONS LEARNED: WHAT MUNICIPALITIES SHOULD CONSIDER

## *Key message:*

*Successful heat mitigation depends less on the specific pilot solution and more on how municipalities organise the process. Cities that plan ahead, coordinate actors early and treat heat protection as a long-term public service are best positioned to replicate and scale effective measures across buildings and neighbourhoods.*

**Implementing heat mitigation measures brings both technical and organisational challenges.** Experience across different pilot contexts shows that many of these challenges are not technical in nature, but related to governance, timing and coordination. Understanding these issues early can help municipalities avoid delays and scale solutions more effectively.

## Key challenges encountered

Common challenges observed include:

- **Delayed decision-making and procurement**, often caused by unclear responsibilities or lengthy approval procedures.
- **Late involvement of key actors**, such as building owners or higher-level administrations.
- **Maintenance uncertainties**, especially when long-term responsibilities are not clearly defined.
- **Timing issues**, when installation takes place outside the peak heat season, limiting monitoring and visibility.

## What works and what does not

### What works well:

- Early political backing and clear governance structures.
- Defining ownership, maintenance and liability before implementation.
- Continuous communication and regular on-site coordination.
- Combining technical measures with passive or nature-based solutions.

### What does not work:

- Treating heat mitigation as a purely technical upgrade.
- Relying on informal agreements instead of written commitments.
- Starting communication and stakeholder engagement too late.



- Underestimating time needed for procurement and coordination.

## What could be done differently

Looking back, earlier formal agreements and earlier involvement of decision-makers would have reduced delays. Aligning implementation timelines with the summer season would also improve evaluation, visibility and public acceptance. In addition, embedding heat mitigation into existing municipal strategies rather than treating it as a stand-alone project would strengthen continuity and scaling.

## Practical takeaways for municipalities

For future implementation and replication, municipalities are advised to:

- prepare governance and contracts early,
- secure funding for both investment and long-term operation,
- plan implementation timelines strategically,
- integrate heat mitigation into broader climate and urban planning frameworks.

# KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS: WHAT DECISION-MAKERS SHOULD TAKE AWAY

*The experience from Weiz confirms that renewable-based cooling is not an experimental option, but a viable and necessary component of modern heat adaptation. Cities that act early, plan strategically and scale gradually can significantly improve health protection and urban resilience in a warming climate.*

## Three key messages stand out for municipalities considering heat mitigation measures:

### *Renewable-powered cooling is feasible and effective.*

Combining efficient cooling systems with renewable energy can reliably reduce heat stress in buildings used by vulnerable groups. The approach is technically mature, realistic for municipalities and delivers clear results during heatwaves, especially where passive measures alone are not sufficient.

### *Early governance and stakeholder involvement determines success.*

Implementation works best when responsibilities for ownership, operation and maintenance are clarified from the start and when political decision-makers, building operators and technical experts are involved early. Delays and risks increase significantly when governance issues are addressed too late.

### *Long-term operation must be planned, not assumed.*

Heat mitigation is not a one-off investment. Clear maintenance agreements, budget planning and basic monitoring are essential to ensure durability, user comfort and public trust over time.



## Why this matters

The benefits of this type of solution go well beyond cooling performance:

- **Health protection:** safer indoor conditions for elderly people, children and staff
- **Resilience:** better preparedness for longer and more frequent heatwaves
- **Cost savings:** lower operational energy costs through renewable integration
- **Public acceptance:** higher support when benefits are visible and well communicated

From a feasibility perspective, the solution is realistic and scalable for many municipalities, particularly in public or social buildings. However, decision-makers should be aware of limitations, such as upfront investment costs, space requirements (e.g. roofs), and administrative complexity. These barriers can be overcome through clear governance, external funding and standardised approaches.

## Follow-up actions for long-term impact

To move from pilot experience to widespread implementation, municipalities should:

- replicate the approach in other priority buildings,
- combine active cooling with passive and nature-based measures,
- embed heat mitigation into Heat Action Plans and climate strategies,
- seek regional, national and EU support for scaling.

# FROM DATA TO DECISION

*Key takeaway for decision-makers:*

*KPIs turn a “nice pilot” into a replicable solution. Clear figures on temperature reduction, people protected, energy savings and costs make it possible to extrapolate impacts city-wide or region-wide—and to justify investment decisions with confidence.*

**Well-chosen indicators and visuals help decision-makers understand whether a heat mitigation measure really works and whether it is worth scaling.** The experience from Weiz shows how a small pilot can generate robust evidence for wider adoption.

## Core performance indicators (proof of effectiveness)

The most visible impact is **temperature reduction**. Before the intervention, indoor temperatures in the main communal space of the senior centre reached **around 28 °C during heatwaves**. The installed high-efficiency cooling system is designed to keep temperatures **within 22-24 °C**, resulting in a **reduction of up to 6 °C during peak heat**. For elderly residents, this difference is critical for health and safety.

From an **energy and climate perspective**, the system demonstrates strong efficiency gains. Thanks to a **high Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER 7.9)**, annual cooling demand is estimated at **3.800 kWh**, compared to roughly **6.500 kWh** for a conventional system. This represents an **energy saving of about 41%**.



The integrated **6,09 kWp photovoltaic system** produces approximately **7.000 kWh per year**, fully covering cooling needs and creating near-zero grid dependency. This avoids around **1,3 t of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year**, based on the Austrian electricity mix.

## Social impact and protection of vulnerable groups

The measure directly benefits **around 110 elderly residents and 120 staff members** who use the cooled spaces daily. Stable indoor temperatures reduce the risk of dehydration, heat exhaustion and cardiovascular stress. Although full medical data could not yet be collected, staff feedback confirms improved preparedness for future heatwaves and reduced risk of emergency situations.

### Scalability example I:

If one cooled communal space protects **230 people**, then replicating the measure in **10 similar facilities** would directly protect **over 2.000 vulnerable citizens** during heatwaves.

## Cost and economic logic

The total investment consisted mainly of:

- **18.000 €** for the cooling system
- **10.000 €** for the PV installation

Annual maintenance costs are approximately 600 €. Eliminating grid electricity for cooling saves around 450€ per year, resulting in 6.800 € savings over 15 years, excluding rising energy prices. When avoided health costs and increased comfort are considered, the cost-benefit balance becomes clearly positive.

### Scaling example II:

If one installation costs around **28.000 €**, replicating it at **20 sites** represents a strategic investment of **560.000 €** with long-term savings, health protection and emissions reduction across the city or region.

## Strategic and governance indicators

The pilot engaged multiple municipal departments (energy, environment, health, building management), facility operators and technical experts. Importantly, the results are already feeding into **local heat adaptation and climate planning**, demonstrating institutional uptake beyond the pilot.

# ANNEXES

This annex provides an overview of the key stakeholders involved in the Ready4Heat activities in Weiz. It presents the organisations engaged across different sectors, reflecting the broad and interdisciplinary cooperation required to address heat risks and implement effective heat mitigation measures at local level.



## City government

- City of Weiz - City council
- City of Weiz - Mayor and deputy mayors

## Healthcare and social care facilities

- District Retirement Home Weiz
- Volkshilfe Care Home Weiz
- Weiz Social Services
- Christina Lives (Christina lebt)
- Lebenshilfe Weiz
- Caritas Weiz
- Weiz Regional Hospital (LKH Weiz)
- Mobile Care Services - Volkshilfe
- Mobile Care Services - Caritas
- Physiotherapy Frieß
- DLG - Meals on Wheels

## Outpatient doctors / medical practices

- Outpatient medical practices (self-employed doctors)
- Doctors' Centre - resident doctors
- Medical Centre - resident doctors

## Pharmacies

- Weiz Pharmacy
- Paracelsus Pharmacy
- Steirer Pharmacy

## Child care and education facilities

### Kindergartens

- Bunte Knöpfe Kindergarten
- Regenbogenwelt Kindergarten
- Hofstatt Kindergarten
- Krottendorf Kindergarten
- Schnitzlergasse / Glückspilze Kindergarten



- Parish Kindergarten (Pfarrkindergarten)
- Villa Kunterbunt Kindergarten

#### Schools and education services

- Weiz School Authority
- Weiz Primary School
- Weizberg Primary School
- School Social Work Services

### Emergency and rescue organisations

- Weiz Fire Brigade
- Red Cross Weiz
- Weiz Municipal Police
- Austrian Federal Police - Weiz
- Water Rescue Weiz
- Mountain Rescue Weiz

### Construction, business and outdoor work

- Municipal Construction Yard Weiz
- Lieb Bau Weiz
- Strobl Construction - Timber Construction
- Pichlerwerke
- Eibisberger Group
- Marko (construction company)
- Weiz Road Maintenance Authority
- Agricultural Enterprises (regional)
- Trieb & Kreimer
- Berger Windows
- Klimatech
- Wachmann Bakery

### Other stakeholders and interest groups

- East Styria Tourism Office
- Chamber of Commerce Styria - Weiz District
- Public Employment Service (AMS) Weiz
- Austrian Health Insurance Fund (ÖGK)



- Chamber of Agriculture Styria
- City Communication Office Weiz
- Municipal Property Management Weiz
- Building Authority Weiz
- Water Utility Weiz
- KEM & KLAR Climate and Energy Region
- W.E.I.Z. - Innovation Centre Weiz
- Weiz Counselling Centre
- Weiz Heart Association
- AREA 52 Youth Network

## Neighbouring municipalities

- Municipality of Naas
- Municipality of Thannhausen
- Municipality of Mortantsch
- Municipality of Mitterdorf an der Raab
- Municipality of St. Ruprecht an der Raab