

READY4HEAT – FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE

Digital E-Brochure | Key Messages from Four Policy Briefs



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Ready4Heat

HOW TO USE THIS E-BROCHURE

This digital e-brochure translates four Ready4Heat Policy Briefs into a clear, practical and accessible format. The brochure is intended for:

- **municipalities and cities,**
- **public authorities and planners,**
- **health and social care organisations,**
- **practitioners responsible for buildings, public space and services.**

Each chapter presents one policy brief as a standalone pilot solution. The structure is the same in all chapters to support easy reading and comparison:

- **context and challenge,**
- **solution overview,**
- **explanations covering the effectiveness of the solution and the steps municipalities take to decide.**
- **step-by-step implementation logic,**
- **key messages for decision-makers.**



NATURE-BASED SHADING IN PUBLIC SPACE – CITY SCALE

(HAJDÚBÖSZÖRMÉNY, HUNGARY)

Context and challenge

Urban heat island effects are intensified by dense construction, sealed surfaces and limited greenery. Large-scale technical cooling infrastructure is often costly and difficult to implement. Cities need affordable, visible and socially accepted solutions that can be implemented quickly and scaled gradually.

Solution overview

The Hungarian policy brief focuses on nature-based shading solutions, implemented as small-scale and distributed “green islands” in public space. These combine:

- vegetation (trees and climbing plants),
- light structures such as pergolas,
- seating and resting areas.



Why nature-based shading works

- Shade and evapotranspiration reduce surface and air temperatures.
- Measures improve comfort and usability of public spaces.
- Investment and maintenance costs are moderate.
- Public acceptance is high.
- Shade and evapotranspiration reduce local temperatures.
- Solutions are visible, affordable and socially accepted.
- Benefits go beyond cooling: health, biodiversity, liveability.
- Measures are modular and easy to replicate.

Key co-benefits

- **Reduced heat stress in outdoor areas**
- **Improved air quality and biodiversity**
- **Increased social interaction**
- **Enhanced urban attractiveness**

Practical implementation pathway

- Identify heat-exposed locations using heat maps and local knowledge.
- Select modular, flexible and low-maintenance designs.
- Involve citizens and institutions early in site selection.
- Plan maintenance responsibilities and budgets from the start.
- Monitor use and perceived cooling effects.
- Replicate the solution across districts.

Decision path for municipalities

Municipalities should decide:

- Which heat hotspots are addressed first?
- Are shading measures treated as single projects or a programme?
- Who is responsible for maintenance and care?
- How are citizens and users involved?
- How will success be measured (use, comfort, acceptance)?

KEY MESSAGE:



Many small nature-based shading interventions can create city-wide impact when implemented as a coordinated programme.



RENEWABLE-POWERED COOLING FOR VULNERABLE BUILDINGS

(WEIZ, AUSTRIA)

Context and challenge

Across Europe, heatwaves are becoming more frequent, longer and more intense. In many cities, indoor temperatures in public and social buildings exceed safe levels during summer heat periods. Elderly people, children, patients and staff are particularly exposed.

Traditional passive measures, such as shading or ventilation, are often no longer sufficient. At the same time, municipalities are concerned that active cooling could increase energy demand, costs and emissions.

Solution overview

The Austrian pilot demonstrates renewable-powered cooling as a sustainable heat mitigation measure. The solution combines:

- **high-efficiency cooling systems, and**
- **on-site renewable energy generation (photovoltaics).**

Cooling is treated as a strategic heat adaptation measure, not as a one-off technical upgrade. The pilot shows that indoor thermal comfort can be improved while keeping energy consumption, operating costs and emissions under control.



Why this solution works

- Cooling demand is matched with local renewable energy supply.
- Vulnerable users are protected during heatwaves.
- The solution is technically mature and feasible for municipalities.
- It can be embedded in Heat Action Plans, climate adaptation strategies and SECAPs.
- Heat is treated as a public health risk, not only as a comfort issue.
- Cooling demand is covered by local renewable energy, reducing emissions and grid stress.

Main co-benefits

- **Health protection and reduced heat stress**
- **Improved comfort and safety in public buildings**
- **Lower long-term operating costs**
- **Reduced dependency on the electricity grid**

Step-by-step implementation approach

Municipalities can follow a clear and repeatable process:

- Secure political commitment and a formal heat protection mandate.
- Identify priority buildings serving vulnerable groups.
- Assess technical feasibility (space, demand, grid connection).
- Design the cooling system with renewable energy integration.
- Define responsibilities for ownership, operation, and maintenance.
- Monitor indoor temperatures and energy use.

Decision path for municipalities

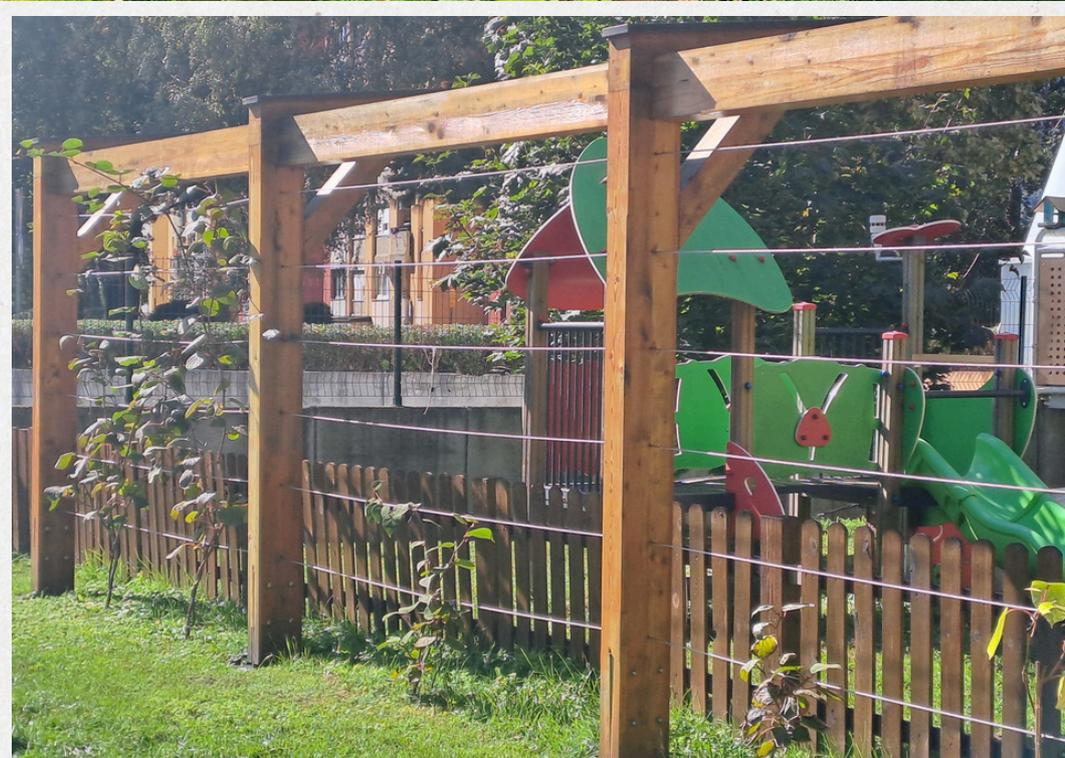
Municipal decision-makers need to decide:

- Do we officially recognise indoor heat risk in public buildings?
- Which buildings used by vulnerable groups are prioritised?
- Is cooling defined as a basic public service?
- Who is responsible for operation and maintenance?
- How is renewable energy integrated from the start?
- How will indoor comfort and energy use be monitored?

KEY MESSAGE:



Renewable-powered cooling is a viable and scalable heat adaptation measure when municipalities embed it in long-term planning and treat cooling as a public responsibility.



NATURE-BASED SHADING FOR VULNERABLE USERS – NEIGHBOURHOOD SCALE (MARIBOR, SLOVENIA)

Context and challenge

Children and elderly people are among the most heat-vulnerable groups. Outdoor spaces such as playgrounds and courtyards are often highly exposed to direct sunlight.

Solution overview

The Slovenian policy brief presents nature-based shading solutions in kindergartens, using simple wooden pergolas with vegetation. The focus is on everyday spaces with intensive daily use.



How municipalities can apply it

- Identify outdoor spaces used by vulnerable groups.
- Choose safe, climate-resilient and easy-to-maintain designs.
- Engage staff, users and caretakers early.
- Secure maintenance, especially during the first years.
- Use pilot sites as demonstration and learning spaces.

Decision path for municipalities

Key decisions include:

- Which vulnerable user groups are prioritised?
- Which everyday spaces are most exposed to heat?
- How is maintenance secured in the first years?
- How are pilots used as learning and demonstration sites?
- How is scaling planned from the start?

KEY MESSAGE:

Protecting vulnerable people from heat starts with simple, visible and people-centred solutions in everyday spaces.





ACTOR-CENTRED HEAT PROTECTION NETWORKS

(WORMS, GERMANY)

Context and challenge

Heat risks are not only technical. They are also organisational and social. Many vulnerable people are not reached directly by municipalities, but through intermediary actors such as:

- care institutions,
- childcare facilities,
- social and welfare organisations,
- employers and outdoor-working sectors.

Without coordination, heat action plans often remain abstract and are not translated into everyday practice.

Solution overview

The German policy brief presents actor-centred heat mitigation through a Municipal Heat Protection Network. The focus is on governance, cooperation and preparedness rather than new infrastructure.

The network brings together municipal departments, health and social services, childcare institutions, civil society organisations and other local actors. Cooperation is formalised through light governance tools.



Why this solution works

- It builds on existing organisations and routines.
- Financial requirements are low compared to infrastructure measures.
- Responsibilities are clarified before heat events occur.
- Preparedness and response capacity are strengthened.
- Heat risks are organisational and social, not only technical.
- Existing actors already work daily with vulnerable groups.
- Coordination and preparedness reduce health risks at low cost.
- Light governance tools ensure continuity beyond projects.

Core elements of the approach

- A cooperation charter defining roles and expectations.
- Thematic working groups (e.g. care, childcare, outdoor work).
- Practical tools such as heat hotlines and maps of cool places.
- Differentiated communication tailored to target groups.

How municipalities can apply it

- Anchor heat protection in Heat Action Plans and health strategies.
- Assign a permanent coordination role within the administration.
- Focus on intermediary actors with daily contact with vulnerable groups.
- Formalise cooperation using simple, low-threshold tools.
- Use recognition and visibility to sustain engagement.

Decision path for municipalities

Key decisions include:

- Do we treat heat protection as a governance task?
- Which intermediary actors are critical in our city?
- Which department coordinates the network?
- How are roles and responsibilities formalised?
- How is cooperation sustained beyond project funding?
- How do we recognise and motivate participating actors?

Key messages for decision-makers

- Actor-centred heat protection is effective and affordable.
- It strengthens public health and municipal resilience.
- Long-term success requires stable coordination and modest resources.
- The approach complements technical and spatial heat measures.



Heat mitigation becomes effective when municipalities invest in coordination, cooperation and preparedness, not only in infrastructure.

SHARED LESSONS ACROSS ALL FOUR POLICY BRIEFS

Common principles

- Heat is a public health and governance issue.
- Political commitment is a key enabling condition.
- Clear responsibilities and maintenance planning are essential.
- Communication and visibility increase acceptance.
- Start small, learn, and scale gradually.

What municipalities should avoid

- Treating heat mitigation as a one-off project.
- Underestimating coordination and maintenance needs.
- Late stakeholder involvement.
- Expecting immediate results from nature-based solutions.

What municipalities must decide

Across all four policy briefs, success depends on clear political and organisational decisions.

Municipalities must explicitly decide:

- that heat protection is a core public responsibility;
- which vulnerable groups and spaces are prioritised;
- who holds the coordination mandate;
- how maintenance and operation are financed long-term;
- how heat mitigation is embedded into Heat Action Plans, SECAPs and planning rules;
- how progress is monitored (temperature reduction, people protected, usability).

FINAL MESSAGE FOR DECISION-MAKERS

Heat adaptation does not require waiting for future technologies. The Ready4Heat policy briefs show that practical, affordable and transferable solutions already exist.

The most resilient cities are those that:

- protect vulnerable people,
- combine technical, nature-based and governance solutions,
- embed heat mitigation into everyday municipal practice.

About Ready4Heat

Ready4Heat supports municipalities across Central Europe in turning Heat Action Plans into real impact on the ground. Policy briefs, pilot solutions and further materials are available on the project website.

All images used in this brochure are copyrighted and provided by the pilot municipalities.