

NEUTRALPATH Public Webinar

NEUTRALPATH in Action: Ghent's Positive and Clean Energy District and Pathways to Replication

Date: 7 May 2025

Time: 13:00 – 14:30 CEST

Platform: Microsoft Teams
[Register here](#) to the webinar

Relevance of the topic

The European Union is leading the way in urban energy transformation through the **Cities Mission under Horizon Europe**, focusing on climate-neutral and smart cities. As part of this mission, the **NEUTRALPATH project** is developing and testing **Positive and Clean Energy Districts (PCED)** to serve as replicable models for cities striving for energy transition.

Ghent stands out as a **fellow city** within NEUTRALPATH, demonstrating a **holistic approach to energy-positive districts** by integrating innovative **technical solutions** (smart grids, renewables, energy efficiency) and **social engagement models** (community co-creation, governance, and behavioral change).

This webinar is a key milestone for **disseminating** the early project results and ensuring their **replication across EU cities**. It will bring together **NEUTRALPATH partners, city representatives, and urban energy experts** to share **actionable insights, best practices, and strategies for implementation** in other urban contexts.

Objective of the session

- **Disseminate** the key results, learnings, and innovations from Ghent PCED.
- **Provide cities with practical insights** into technical and governance dimensions of energy-positive districts.
- **Support replication and upscaling** of PCED models across EU cities.
- **Facilitate knowledge exchange** between cities, policymakers, and energy practitioners
- **Outreach to NEUTRALPATH City Alliance** to small, medium cities in peripheral regions of Europe and beyond.

Target Audience

With the participation of the NEUTRALPATH consortium, project partners, and cities, the webinar aims to engage a broad audience of external stakeholders, including city representatives, urban practitioners, and participants from EU-level and international projects who are interested in Positive Energy Districts, energy transition, and sustainable urban development.

AGENDA

This webinar is structured in five parts. It opens with a brief **introduction to NEUTRALPATH**, followed by an **interactive overview** of the **Living Lab and breakthrough project** to set the scene.

The core of the session combines technical and governance perspectives grounded in a district-level case study. The **technical segment** explores heat demand and sources, building typologies, and the current state of the building stock, compares individual and collective fossil-free heating solutions, with three collective solutions being examined in more detail.

Complementing this, the **governance segment** focuses on the conditions for implementation, including cost dynamics, phased approaches, public participation, fair heat pricing, and the distribution of roles and risks.

The webinar concludes with an **interactive discussion**, offering space for reflection, questions, and exchange among participants.

Time	Topic	Speaker
13:00	Welcome and Agenda	Moderator, Eurocities
13:05	Introduction to NEUTRALPATH project and PCEDs	NEUTRALPATH Cecilia Sanz, Project Coordinator
13:10	General introduction on Living Lab and breakthrough project	City of Ghent Roeland Keersmaekers, City Project Manager
13:25	Technical Insights – Case Study Deep Dive + <u>Analysis of the Case Study</u> - Heat Sources & Demand - Zoom in & Definition of Typologies + <u>Fossil free solutions for the district</u> - Individual vs collective - Collective solution scenario's - impact of heating behavior on the solutions	Ghent University Hannelore Scheipers, Doctoral Fellow, Building Physics Research Group
13:45	Governance & Strategic Insights + <u>Cost determines heating strategy</u> - Extensive renovation as a hindrance & Phased approach + <u>Need for public participation</u> - Fair pricing of heat & Distribution of roles and risks	City of Ghent Roeland Keersmaekers, City Project Manager
14:10	Interactive Q&A	Moderator / All
14:25	Wrap Up	Moderator, Eurocities

Organisers

City of Ghent & Eurocities on behalf of NEUTRALPATH

More about NEUTRALPATH project: <https://neutralpath.eu/>