Country Sections

Romania

Handbook Update CLR II

Support service for citizens led renovation projects - ENER/2023/OP/0036

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR ENERGY

Directorate B – Just Transition, Consumers, Energy Efficiency and Innovation Unit B1 - Consumers, Local Initiatives, Just Transition

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Introduction

Romania's building stock offers major potential for citizen-led renovation, particularly in multi-family apartment blocks built before modern energy performance requirements and in older single-family housing where insulation levels and technical systems (heating, DHW, ventilation) often remain outdated. The energy performance baseline is frequently characterised by high heat losses, low indoor comfort, and high exposure to energy price shocks. Recent analytical work highlights that Romania's renovation challenge is not only technical (deep renovation need), but also systemic: project preparation capacity, quality assurance, financing structure, and integration with seismic/fire safety improvements are decisive for successful scaling.[1]

The national legal framework for building energy performance is anchored in Law no. 372/2005[2] on the energy performance of buildings, which sets rules for minimum requirements for new buildings and major renovations, energy performance certificates, and inspections of heating/AC systems. For citizen-led renovation projects, this law matters because EPCs and audit documents are often the entry point for defining a renovation package, estimating savings, and demonstrating compliance for public support or bankability.[3]

Romania's renovation policy increasingly promotes an integrated approach: energy efficiency upgrades combined with wider building safety needs, especially in a context of seismic risk. Under Romania's National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), Component C5 – "Renovation Wave" explicitly frames renovation as a bundle that may include energy efficiency, seismic strengthening and other safety measures. This integrated framing is important for citizen groups because it affects eligibility conditions, design scope, permitting complexity, and procurement.[4]

Public support has historically been complemented by local programmes and EU-backed financing approaches, but the current period is strongly influenced by PNRR pipelines and national co-financing structures. In practice, citizen initiatives (homeowners' associations, housing cooperatives, local partnerships) need to treat "renovation" as a multi-stage process: technical diagnosis (audit/EPC), resident decision-making, financing design, procurement and contract management, and quality monitoring. Romania's building-renovation policy analysis underscores that predictable pipelines and project facilitation are essential to improve performance and delivery at scale.[5]

In parallel, Romania is developing the legal and regulatory foundations for energy communities, enabling citizen groups to link renovation (demand reduction) with local renewable generation and local value sharing. However, the practical ability to share electricity beyond simple self-consumption arrangements remains an evolving area in Romania, which affects what citizen groups can implement today versus what may become possible as secondary regulation matures.[6]

[1] JustReno Baseline assessment report Romania – Link
[2] LEGE 372 13/12/2005 - Portal Legislativ – Link
[3] Energy Performance of Buildings Directive – Link
[4] The renovation wave - National Recovery and Resilience Plan – Link
[5] JustReno Baseline assessment report Romania – Link
[6] ORD DE URGENTA 143 28/12/2021 - Portal Legislativ – Link

Energy Communities in Romania

Romania introduced legal concepts for citizen participation in the electricity system through amendments transposing the EU Internal Electricity Market Directive, notably via Government Emergency Ordinance (OUG) no. 143/2021[7], which amended the Electricity and Natural Gas Law (Law no. 123/2012) [8] . Policy tracking notes that this step formally transposed the "citizen energy community" concept into national legislation and assigned responsibilities to the national regulator ANRE to develop supporting regulation.[9]

Romania also advanced renewable energy-related participation frameworks through OUG no. 163/2022, which supplements the legal framework for promoting energy from renewable sources (linked to the renewable support system). This ordinance is part of Romania's broader alignment with EU renewables rules and creates a pathway for renewable energy community-type structures, although detailed operational rules and market integration mechanisms continue to evolve.[10]

In practice, Romania's energy community landscape is still moving from legal recognition to operational reality. A 2024 ANRE consultation ("models of energy communities") indicates ongoing work to clarify practical community models, governance, and operational conditions. For citizen projects, this is relevant because the feasibility of community initiatives often depends on whether the regulator provides clear registration rules, roles and responsibilities, and non-discriminatory market access conditions.[11]

A key current limitation discussed in recent project communications is that remote electricity sharing among dispersed community members is not yet broadly enabled in practice, which means many community initiatives focus on self-consumption, direct lines, or building/site-based arrangements rather than multi-site sharing across the public grid. This matters for renovation-linked projects: integrated "renovation + PV" is generally most straightforward at the building level (e.g., rooftop PV supplying common services or internal allocation in the building), while broader neighbourhood-scale sharing may require further regulatory and technical development.[12]

[7] ORD DE URGENTA 143 28/12/2021 - Portal Legislativ – Link
[8] LEGE (A) 123 10/07/2012 - Portal Legislativ – Link
[9] Romania - REScoop – Link
[10] ORD DE URGENTA 163 29/11/2022 - Portal Legislativ – Link
[11] Modele Communitati de Energie – Link
[12] DECA – Link

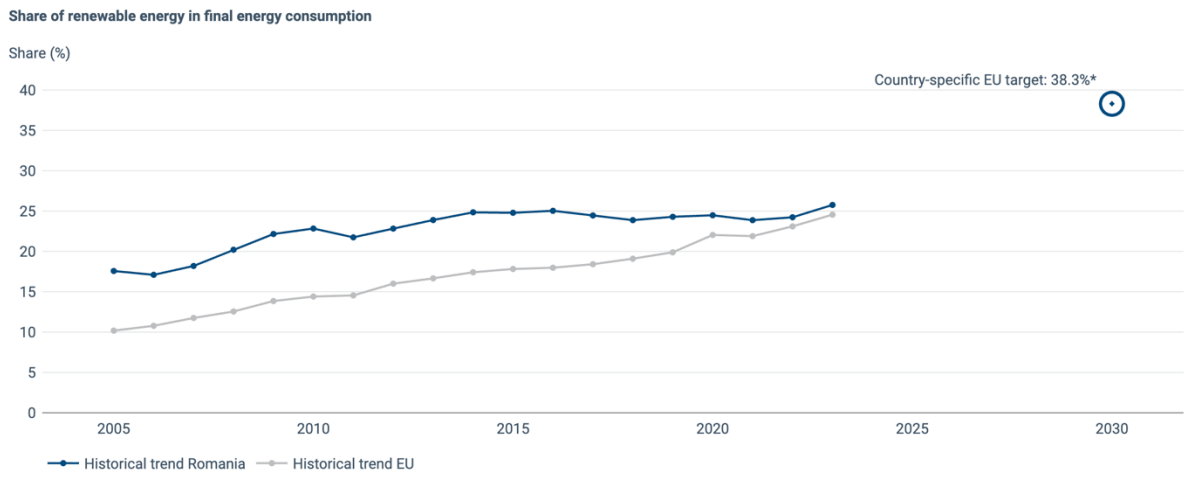

Fig. 1 Romania's share of renewable energy in final energy consumption. Target/objective will not be reached following the historical trend[13]

Despite these constraints, citizen interest in local renewables is growing, and public programmes supporting household PV and storage (e.g., AFM's Casa Verde Photovoltaice) create a widening base of prosumers who can later be organised into more formal community models when rules mature. For citizen-led renovation groups, this suggests a pragmatic approach: begin with building-level self-consumption models (where feasible) and design renovation projects to be "community-ready" (metering readiness, governance rules, allocation principles) so they can scale into fuller community operation as regulation evolves.[14]

[13] Share of renewable energy in final energy consumption | Romania | Europe's environment 2025 (EEA) – Link

[14] Finantare Fotovoltaice 2024 – Link

Country specific information on energy communities

In Romania, energy-community-type initiatives may be structured through associations, cooperatives, local NGOs, municipal initiatives, or project-based partnerships, depending on the scope and the legal pathway used. For renovation-linked citizen initiatives, the most practical "carrier" is often the existing homeowners' association (asociație de proprietari), because it already manages collective decisions, contracting, and long-term obligations for the building.[15] However, transitioning from "building governance" to "energy community governance" requires explicit rules on membership, benefit allocation, decision thresholds, and compliance responsibilities.[16]

What is realistically feasible today (typical models). Because multi-site remote sharing remains limited, citizen groups often start with:

1. On-site self-consumption: PV serves common areas and/or technical services (elevators, lighting, pumps).
2. Prosumer export: surplus is exported under prosumer rules (where applicable).
3. Direct lines / proximity models (case-dependent): some projects may use direct connections rather than grid-mediated sharing.

The choice depends on building electrical configuration, metering, supplier contracts and local DSO conditions, and should be assessed at concept stage so that renovation works do not lock in suboptimal designs.[17]

A typical citizen-led pathway (renovation + energy component) in Romania follows this sequence:

1. Establish a building project team (board + technical advisor) and secure facilitation;
2. Commission EPC/audit baseline under Law 372/2005[18];
3. Define a renovation package (envelope + systems) and assess optional PV/storage integration;
4. Pass formal association resolutions for renovation scope, financing, and procurement mandates;
5. Apply for support through relevant pipelines (e.g., PNRR C5 "Renovation Wave" for eligible categories, municipal programmes, or parallel PV programmes for households/buildings);
6. Procure works and implement renovation[19];
7. Commission verification/ EPC updates and operationalise PV/ self-consumption arrangements;
8. Monitor outcomes (energy savings, comfort, bills, maintenance).
   This sequencing reflects how Romania's major funding instruments are structured and why early documentation and governance are critical to project success.[20]

Key challenges include: resident trust and decision-making, project preparation complexity, quality control in construction, disruption in occupied buildings, and alignment with safety requirements

[15] Legislate Afis – Link
[16] EPBD wise NBRP – Link
[17] Energy communities in Romania moving from concept to reality – Link
[18] Legislate Public – Link
[19] Component 5 – The renovation wave National Recovery and Resilience Plan – Link
[20] JustReno Baseline assessment report Romania – Link

(including seismic/fire risk).[21] For energy community elements, the main risk is planning for a sharing model that is not yet operationally supported; citizen groups should therefore design “upgradeable” governance and technical systems that can evolve with regulation (e.g., install metering-ready infrastructure and adopt transparent allocation rules that can later support more advanced sharing).[22]

[21] JustReno Baseline assessment report Romania – Link

[22] Modele Communitati de Energie – Link

Relevant legislation

Renovation-related legislation

- Law no. 372/2005 on the energy performance of buildings. This is the core building energy performance law. It covers minimum performance requirements for new buildings and major renovations, EPC obligations, inspection requirements for heating and AC systems, and control mechanisms. It is central for renovation project design, eligibility documentation, and verification.[23]
- Electricity and Natural Gas Law no. 123/2012 (as amended). While primarily an energy market framework law, it is relevant for renovation-linked energy projects because it defines roles in the energy system and provides the legislative base on which prosumer and community provisions are layered.[24]
- PNRR / Renovation Wave policy framework. The PNRR "Renovation Wave"[25] component frames renovation as an integrated approach (energy efficiency + seismic + safety measures). For citizen groups, this matters because it influences eligible project types, documentation needs, and technical scope expectations in major pipelines.[26]

Legislation on engagement of neighbours and volunteers in the renovation

Romania does not rely on a single "neighbour engagement law" for renovation. Engagement and decision-making are instead driven by the governance rules of the relevant building entity (e.g., homeowners' associations), procurement/contracting obligations, and conditions imposed by funding bodies. In practical terms, citizen-led renovation projects must ensure that decisions (resolutions, mandates, cost-sharing) remain valid throughout the project lifecycle, since renovation projects can span multiple years from audit to commissioning.[27]

Volunteer involvement is generally feasible for non-technical activities: communication campaigns, resident coordination, meeting facilitation, basic documentation support, feedback collection, and monitoring/dissemination. Construction execution and regulated electrical/installation works must be delivered by qualified professionals through properly contracted works. A safe practice is to separate volunteer tasks (social mobilisation) from licensed professional delivery (technical execution) and to ensure clear communication on liability and safety boundaries.[28]

[23] LEGE 372 13/12/2005 - Portal Legislativ – Link

[24] Law no. 123 of July 10, 2012 of electricity and natural gas - Climate Change Laws of the World – Link

[25] Component 5 – The renovation wave National Recovery and Resilience Plan – Link

[26] Establishment of a renovation wave fund to improve energy efficiency of the existing building stock - Reforms and Investments – Link

[27] JustReno Baseline assessment report Romania – Link

[28] JustReno Baseline assessment report Romania – Link

Funding bodies and schemes

Funding bodies in Romania

- Ministry of Investments and European Projects (MIPE) / EU Funds platform. MIPE coordinates major EU-funded programmes, including PNRR[29] implementation information and calls. The official EU funding opportunities portal provides structured information on PNRR components and call status.[30]
- European Commission / Romania PNRR investment oversight context. EC information on specific PNRR investments (e.g., establishing a renovation wave fund) provides authoritative framing of the policy objective and scope, especially relevant for multi-family buildings and public buildings.[31]
- ANRE (National Energy Regulatory Authority). ANRE is central to operationalising energy community rules and market participation arrangements, including consultation documents clarifying community models. Citizen groups planning community initiatives should track ANRE guidance and regulatory updates.[32]
- AFM (Administrația Fondului pentru Mediu – Environment Fund Administration). AFM implements household-level support schemes for renewable installations (notably PV), shaping the prosumer landscape and enabling renovation and renewables combinations at the household/building level.[33]

Funding schemes in Romania

- PNRR Component C5 – "Renovation Wave". This component supports renovation through an integrated approach that includes energy efficiency and can incorporate seismic/fire safety measures. For citizen-led renovation, relevance depends on eligibility categories (e.g., multi-family/public buildings; integrated measures). The official portal summarises objectives, framing, and programme approach.[34]
- Renovation Wave Fund / investment for scaling renovation. EC project documentation describes an investment aimed at increasing renovation rates of multi-family and public buildings in Romania, acknowledging seismic exposure and the need to integrate energy and seismic renovation. This reinforces the importance of integrated packages and pipeline-building for scaling.[35]
- AFM Casa Verde Photovoltaice (PV + storage support). This programme provides financing rules for household PV systems (including mandatory components specified in the financing guide). While primarily household-focused, it can complement citizen-led renovation projects

[29] National Recovery and Resilience Plan - EU funding opportunities – Link
[30] Component 5 – The renovation wave National Recovery and Resilience Plan – Link
[31] Romania's recovery and resilience plan - Reforms and Investments – Link
[32] Modele Communitati de Energie – Link
[33] Administrația Fondului pentru Mediu – Link
[34] Component 5 – The renovation wave National Recovery and Resilience Plan – Link
[35] Establishment of a renovation wave fund to improve energy efficiency of the existing building stock - Reforms and Investments – Link

by enabling more residents to become prosumers and by supporting PV deployment where building-level implementation is feasible.[36]

- Technical assistance / municipal renovation planning tools. Romania has benefited from policy-development and municipal support initiatives aimed at improving renovation planning and financing strategies (e.g., Building Renovation Passports pilots and municipal financial strategies). These are not direct grants, but they help build the "soft infrastructure" needed for citizen-led renovation scaling (project preparation, pipeline management).[37]

Special grants for vulnerable households

Romania has an explicit legal framework for protecting vulnerable energy consumers through Law no. 226/2021, which establishes social protection measures that may include heating aid, energy consumption support, and support for acquiring energy-efficient equipment and improving building energy performance. This law provides a formal backbone for addressing energy poverty and vulnerability in the energy transition.[38]

In renovation contexts, the practical challenge is to ensure that vulnerable households can participate in collective projects and are not excluded by upfront costs, administrative complexity, or repayment burdens. Analytical work on Romania's building renovation highlights that social considerations and capacity constraints can slow uptake, particularly where residents have limited ability to co-finance works or where buildings require combined energy and seismic interventions. Citizen-led projects can mitigate these constraints through blended finance, phased measures, and targeted facilitation (help with documentation, contractor selection, and communication).[39]

Romania's national planning documents and EU reporting also acknowledge vulnerability protections in the energy sector and reference the vulnerable consumer framework in the context of energy price volatility and social protection instruments.[40] This policy context matters for citizen-led renovation because it shapes how social assistance and energy policy interact, and it provides a rationale for integrating renovation support with vulnerability targeting where feasible.[41]

For citizen-led renovation projects, a practical approach to inclusiveness can include: (i) designing renovations to achieve strong energy savings (reducing bills structurally); (ii) using available public funding pipelines where they reduce upfront costs; (iii) supporting vulnerable residents in administrative steps and decision processes; and (iv) aligning renovation communication with social benefits (comfort, health, affordability), not only climate objectives. This "social framing" improves acceptance and helps stabilise collective decision-making in buildings with mixed income profiles.[42]

[36] Administratia fondului pentru mediu - casa verde fotovoltaice – Link
[37] Financing strategies for the deep renovation of buildings - Romania – Link
[38] LEGE 226 16/09/2021 - Portal Legislativ – Link
[39] JustReno Baseline assessment report Romania – Link
[40] Energy Poverty – Link
[41] ROMANIA - NECP 2021-2030 – Link
[42] JustReno Baseline assessment report Romania – Link

Useful tools

- Portal Legislativ (legislatie.just.ro) – official Romanian legal texts. Key laws and ordinances relevant to citizen-led renovation and energy communities include:
  - Law no. 372/2005 (energy performance of buildings).
  - Law no. 123/2012 (electricity and natural gas framework).
  - OUG no. 143/2021 (transposition step for electricity market rules incl. community concepts).
  - OUG no. 163/2022 (renewables framework updates).
  - Law no. 226/2021 (vulnerable energy consumer protections).
- ANRE consultation and guidance. ANRE's public consultation on energy community models provides an official view of emerging regulatory approaches and is useful for understanding expected governance and operational setups.[43]
- PNRR / EU funds portals (calls and programme framing). The official opportunities portal provides PNRR component descriptions (including C5 Renovation Wave) and call information, helpful for citizens tracking what is open and how programme objectives are framed.[44]
- AFM Casa Verde Photovoltaice portal and financing guide. AFM provides official programme pages and the annual financing guide (conditions and eligible components) for PV deployment. Useful for renovation groups planning PV integration or household prosumer uptake.[45]
- Evidence and practice resources (renovation + policy). Independent technical-policy analysis (e.g., BPIE baseline work and municipal renovation financing strategy outputs) can support citizen facilitators in designing realistic project pipelines and governance.[46]

[43] Modele Communitati de Energie – Link

[44] Component 5 – The renovation wave National Recovery and Resilience Plan – Link

[45] Administratia fondului pentru mediu - casa verde fotovoltaice – Link

[46] Financing strategies for the deep renovation of buildings - Romania – Link