

# Citizen-led renovation

# THE NETHERLANDS



## Services' overview

In the Netherlands, the consortium uniting Energie Samen and regional partner ESR, promotes a grassroots approach to collective renovation. Representing more than 450 energy communities, it forms the backbone of the Dutch community energy movement, driving local engagement and sustainable development through collaborative initiatives and regional partnerships.



Energie Samen blends national coordination with strong local involvement. Through regional branches, it trains thousands of energy coaches, builds capacity, and establishes One-Stop-Shop structures. In Rivierenland, this approach has already delivered over 20 collective heating projects and numerous home renovations, showcasing how local engagement drives impactful energy transitions across communities.

Energie Samen Rivierenland is the implementing cooperative and goes beyond technical solutions by prioritising social inclusion, community empowerment, and lasting sustainability. Their approach transforms social networks into powerful drivers of the energy transition, demonstrating that citizen-led initiatives accelerate change while ensuring fairness. By engaging communities and fostering collaboration, Energie Samen Rivierenland proves that the path to a sustainable future is not only technological but deeply social, where collective action makes the transition faster, more equitable, and resilient for generations to come.

The citizen-led renovation movement in the Netherlands is vibrant and expanding. Over 700 energy communities and numerous grassroots initiatives are active, increasingly focusing on energy efficiency. Around 346 initiatives provide energy-saving support, mainly through information or referrals. A smaller group of 172 employs energy coaches for direct household engagement, while about 71 offer tailored renovation advice. The fourth CLR initiative is planned for Tiel-West, a district facing significant socio-economic challenges. Due to these complexities, additional preparation is required, and the focus will be on addressing energy poverty. Consequently, Tiel-West will join the project later, before December 2026.

### Energie Samen (1) & Energie Samen Rivierenland (2)

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
|  | Geldermalsen (1) and Utrecht (2), the Netherlands                                   |  | (1) <a href="https://energiesamen.nu/">https://energiesamen.nu/</a><br>(2) <a href="https://energiesamenrivierenland.nl/">https://energiesamenrivierenland.nl/</a> |
| Cooperatives (non-profits)  |  | Community-led Renovation, Energy Efficiency, Long-term Sustainability               |   |

## Collectives supported

### Warm Westerkwartier (Culemborg)

Warm Westerkwartier is a citizen-led cooperative in Culemborg, driving a just and collective transition towards energy-efficient, fossil-free homes, focused on creating a community-owned district heating network for sustainable energy solutions.



In the Westerkwartier district in Culemborg, residents are investigating whether they can jointly realize a heat network. They are looking at whether heat from treated wastewater is a sustainable and (financially) interesting alternative to natural gas. The treated wastewater is discharged into the Lek via a pipeline along the district, and they want to use that as a heat source. In this way, residents can remain in control of their own heat supply and make the neighbourhood more sustainable. The project is currently in the development phase. In the project area, around 46% of owners and 3% of tenants are engaged in the project.

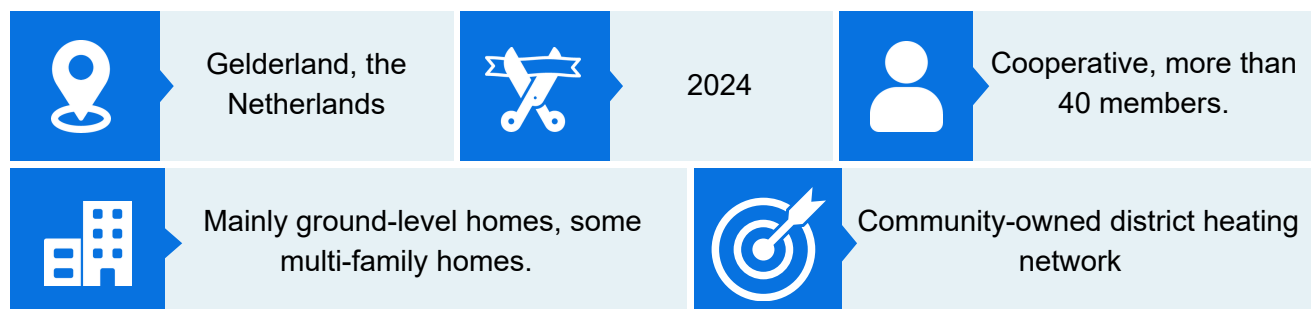
The Project’s capacity building includes active working groups.

The Communication channels for the initiative include website, newsletter, social media, WhatsApp, and local press. Ten ambassadors are appointed but still require activation.

The next steps will be to activate the ambassadors, to expand tenant outreach, to provide multilingual instructions and address lists for hard-to-reach residents, and to organize a technical session on district heating network scenarios.

### Warm Westerkwartier (Culemborg)

<https://www.warmwesterkwartier.nl/>



## Buurtvereniging Laageinde-Tuindorp (Geldermalsen, West-Betuwe)

BVLT is a long-standing neighbourhood association, founded in 1936, and fully citizen-led with open, voluntary participation. It recently revitalised its structure to address current social and environmental challenges in the community. It aims to enhance neighbourhood social resilience through collaborative community development initiatives.

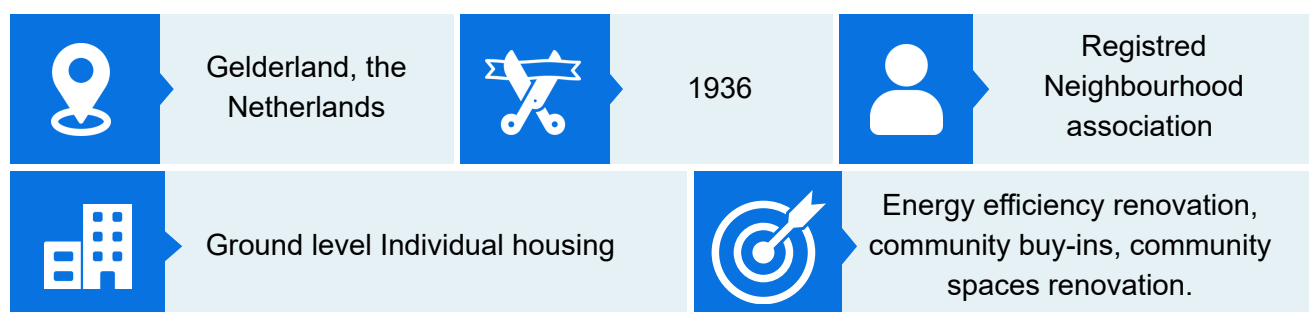


The BVLT initiative is currently supported by a staffed board and a dedicated core team overseeing daily operations. Several working groups have been established to address specific tasks and activities, complemented by the availability of a community centre that serves as a focal point for engagement. Communication channels include a regularly updated website, monthly meetings, and a news bulletin distributed through email groups. These efforts have successfully engaged 65 households, fostering active participation and collaboration within the community.

To build on this progress, the immediate priority is to organise a meeting focused on supporting the renovation of the community centre, ensuring it remains a vibrant hub for local activities. Another key objective is to integrate existing subsidy and support programs, making them more accessible and beneficial to residents.

Expanding community buy-in is essential; efforts will aim to encourage broader citizen participation across the neighbourhood, strengthening the sense of ownership and involvement. Additionally, communication strategies will be enhanced to improve outreach, particularly among tenants, ensuring that information is clear, timely, and inclusive. The ambassadors' role will continue to be pivotal in promoting engagement, fostering trust, and acting as a bridge between the initiative and the wider community.

## Buurtvereniging Laageinde-Tuindorp (Geldermalsen, West-Betuwe)



## Oranjebuurt (Dodewaard, Neder-Betuwe)

From July 2024, the municipality of Neder-Betuwe, housing corporation Thius and consultancy firm Bouwhulp started a sustainability project in the Oranjebuurt in Dodewaard. Together with local residents, they are working on improving the residential area and making both rental and owner-occupied homes more sustainable. By making adjustments to the homes, the aim is to increase living comfort and reduce energy bills.



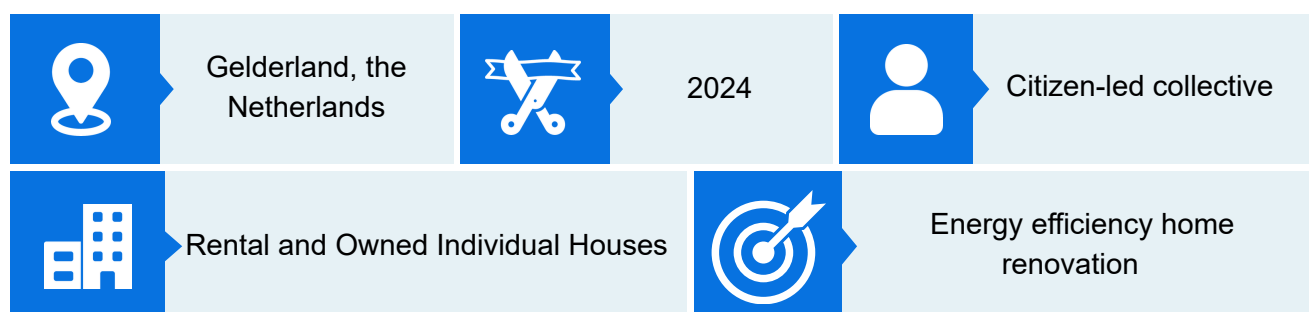
With this project, they aim not only to improve the homes, but also to enhance the quality of life and strengthen social connections in the Oranjebuurt. By working together, the partners aim to upgrade as many rental and owner-occupied homes as possible that currently have a poor energy label (C to F).

Citizen engagement is present primarily through active participation in both the working and steering groups. These groups have already undergone initial optimisations to improve efficiency and collaboration. Communication efforts have included interactive workshops and neighbourhood walks, fostering transparency and trust. Joint communication initiatives with the municipality and the housing association have further strengthened outreach. While ambassadors have not been formally appointed, their role is embedded within the existing groups, ensuring representation and continuity.

To deepen engagement, the focus will be on empowering the working and steering groups through targeted support and resources. Stakeholder consultations will be conducted with residents, the municipality, and Thius (housing association) to align priorities and expectations. Understanding residents' motivations and barriers to participation will be a key step in shaping future strategies. Practical measures such as deploying energy coaching and financial support programs, including subsidies, will help drive adoption of sustainable practices. Additionally, initiating discussions on collective insulation solutions will pave the way for broader implementation, ensuring long-term impact and community-wide benefits.

### Oranjebuurt (Dodewaard, Neder-Betuwe)

<https://www.samendetoekomst.nl/oranjebuurt/>



# Colophon

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| Completed in | April 2026   |
| Author       | Citizen-led renovation managed by the European Commission Directorate-General for energy   European Commission   DG ENER   |
| Written by   | Energie Samen & Energie Samen Rivierenland   |
| Reviewed by  | FEDARENE   |
| Contact      | info@citizenled-renovation.eu  |
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