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# drOp newsletter - Final edition - December 2025

The core ambition of drOp, a Horizon Europe project, is the development of an **integrated renovation methodology (IRM)** aiming to transform **social housing districts** into **inclusive smart neighbourhoods**.

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## Who are we?

The drOp partners consortium is rather small, counting **ten partners** from different corners of Europe (Belgium, Estonia, Italy and Spain). The **municipality of Ermua** is coordinating the project that will last for three years, between October 2022 and December 2025.

The skills in the team are well-balanced, combining **social and digital know-how** and deep **technical insights** and that combines **research, innovation and technology** development organizations, public administrations, and social housing associations to implement the integrated methodology proposed and to achieve cutting-edge results driven by applicability to a real case.

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## Before we start...

Dear reader,

"From design to reality": that has been the essence of drOp. When we started three years ago, we imagined a structured co-governance model with clear stages: engagement, co-creation, testing, evaluation. On paper, it looked solid. On the ground, in Ermua, Elva and Matera, it became something more human, more flexible, and ultimately more powerful. We learned that real innovation in urban regeneration is not about rigid frameworks or cutting-edge technology alone; it's about trust, adaptability, and the courage to involve people in shaping their own future.

What changed? Everything that needed to. We simplified, we translated technical processes into everyday experiences, and we turned meetings into street events with music and food when needed. We discovered that participation grows when it feels tangible and joyful ,and we saw how skepticism turns into action once people trust the process.

drOp was never just about renovating spaces; it was about relationships. It showed that acting at the neighborhood scale makes global challenges feel close and achievable. Through several co-created initiatives, we proved that urban transformation can start with small, visible steps that matter to people's daily lives.

As we close this chapter, we leave behind more than a methodology. We leave a community of practice, a set of tools, and a belief: that cities across Europe can replicate this approach if they dare to experiment, adapt, and share power with citizens. Because the biggest lesson of drOp is simple: neighborhoods change when people change them together, one 'drop' at a time.

Marta Lekue

*Coordinator of drOp project.*



## drOp in the past months

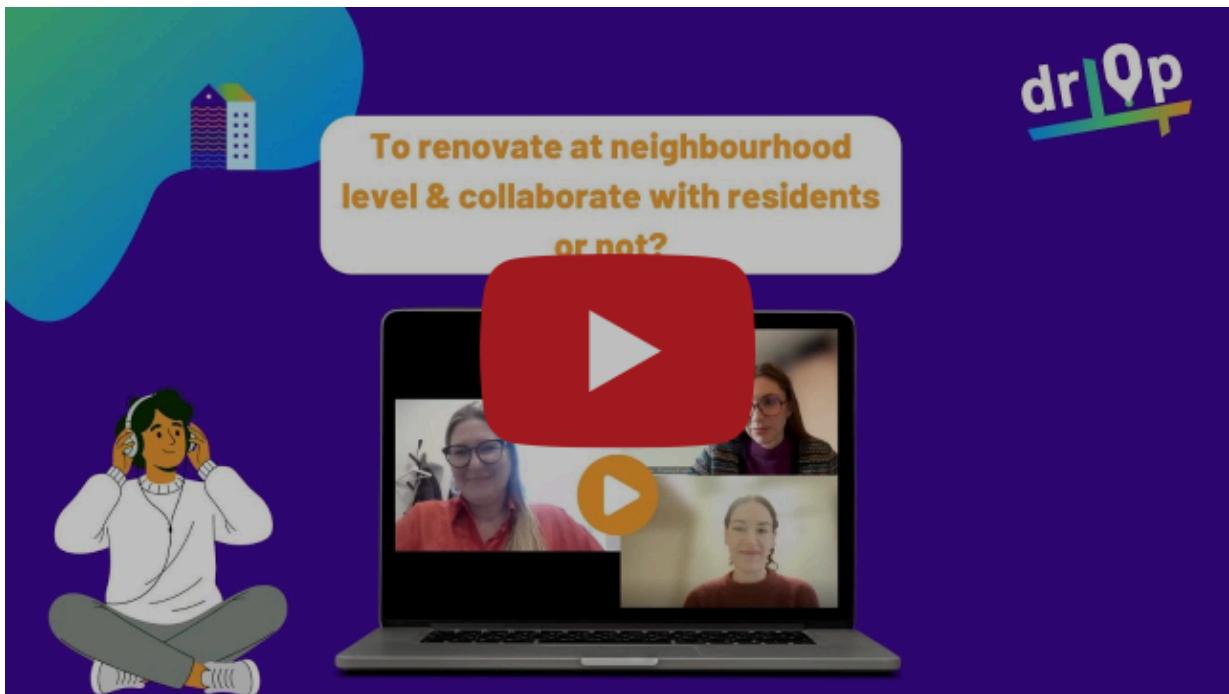
### Ermua moves towards the transformation of Santa Ana with a participatory session

As drOp comes to an end, Ermua, Elva and Matera shared their reflections on applying the Integrated Renovation Methodology in real neighbourhoods. A final recorded discussion – with Ermua and Elva, and a written contribution from Matera – highlights what worked, what didn't, and what genuinely matters on the ground.

Across all three cities, a clear message emerged: participation must stay simple, flexible and rooted in trust. Small early actions, informal conversations and temporary interventions often made more impact than formal structures.

Key lessons include starting with listening, adapting governance tools to local habits, securing political continuity, and using quick, visible improvements to build engagement.

 Watch the recording to learn from the cities who helped shape and test the drOp methodology.



## Ermua's drOp project recognised among Spain's most disruptive initiatives of 2025

The Municipality of Ermua has been selected as a finalist in the Disruptores Innovation Awards 2025, with drOp featured in the prestigious “50+ Disruptors” yearbook as one of the country’s most forward-looking public innovation projects.

Held on 23 October in Madrid, the ceremony gathered leading actors from Spain’s innovation ecosystem. drOp was recognised in the Best Public Project category, reinforcing Ermua’s position as a national reference in people-centred urban transformation.

Funded by the European Commission, drOp is piloted in Santa Ana (Ermua) and aims to turn social housing neighbourhoods into smart, sustainable and inclusive environments. The project combines energy efficiency, digital services and co-created public space improvements, with residents and local stakeholders shaping interventions such as the energy community, digital support services for seniors, and tactical urbanism actions. Being included in the “50+ Disruptors” yearbook is a shared achievement for the whole consortium and the Santa Ana community, showcasing how local participation can drive meaningful, scalable innovation.

👉 [Download the yearbook.](#)



## “Energía Eguna” Receives Asteklima Prize for Local Climate Action

Ermua’s community-driven activity Energía Eguna has been awarded the Asteklima 2025 prize for the best initiative in municipalities of its size. Organised within the drOp project and linked to the new local energy community, the event brought neighbours, schools and local actors together to learn about renewable energy in a hands-on way. The award was officially presented on 5 December.

 [Read more](#)



## Ermua Celebrates Its First Energy Day: Action and Participation to Transform Energy

On 24 October, Santa Ana celebrated Energy Day, presenting its new energy community Ekielkar during Asteklma 2025 and the International Day Against Climate Change.

The morning began at the Eskolabarri school, where 147 pupils learned about solar energy through hands-on demonstrations. In the afternoon, the pedestrianised square hosted practical activities: more than 65 residents completed an Energy Passport with micro-actions on solar power, energy savings and responsible consumption.

The event showed how Ermua, together with drOp partners, is making the energy transition local, practical and community-driven.

 [Read the full website post.](#)



## Replication Roadmap for Urban Regeneration in Europe

On 23 September, drOp held its fifth webinar, bringing partners and cities together to reflect on three years of neighbourhood-scale regeneration and how these lessons can be replicated across Europe.

Tecnalia presented the Integrated Renovation Methodology (IRM) — a co-creation framework that links social innovation, local economy, housing renovation and energy communities. Ermua shared its Santa Ana pilot, where more than 130 residents helped shape actions such as the Neighbourhood Office, the Mapathon, tactical urbanism, a community mural and the new energy community.

Elva presented its work in Nooruse, highlighting the importance of simplifying tools, focusing on small visible changes and building trust step by step.

The Institute of Baltic Studies introduced the Replication Roadmap, a practical guide with methods, case studies and key lessons for municipalities. **The message was clear: replication means adapting, not copying.**

 Watch the recording below and [explore the presentations](#).



## drOp travelled to Prague

At the Affordable Housing Initiative Days in Prague, Housing Europe presented drOp as a compelling example of what happens when renovation begins with people, not buildings. Speaking on behalf of the consortium, Andreea Nacu shared how the Santa Ana neighbourhood in Ermua became a living laboratory for the Integrated Renovation Methodology (IRM).

Built rapidly in the 1960s-70s, Santa Ana still faces accessibility issues, limited public space and ageing infrastructure – but also strong community ties. Over three years, drOp worked with residents through a step-by-step process of engagement, co-creation, testing and evaluation.

Ten actions were developed, including a neighbourhood office, a community-designed party wall, tactical urbanism pilots, a local energy community and a digital “Mapathon” to identify transformation sites. More than 130 residents have taken part, leading to visible improvements and a renewed sense of belonging.

The key message shared in Prague: trust, flexibility and shared ownership matter more than any tool. Participation is not a cost — it is an investment that makes renovation more effective, more accepted, and more resilient over time.

👉 [Read the full website post.](#)



## Sharing the knowledge

After three years of work across Ermua, Matera and Elva, we're closing the drOp project with a complete collection of final results — reports, tools and lessons that show what neighbourhood-scale renovation really looks like when social innovation, digital tools and affordability work together.

While you can pick and choose whichever piece of the puzzle that is missing from your process, together, they form a coherent methodology, tested in real conditions and enriched through peer learning.

Here is the full picture of what you can now explore:

### Integrated Renovation Methodology (IRM)

A clear framework outlining how to diagnose, plan, co-create and implement district-level renovation in a socially grounded way.

 **Core Methodology & Social Innovation** **Co-Governance & Co-Creation Methodology**

A structured model for building trust, engaging residents and sharing decisions – from first contact to evaluation.

 **Resident Engagement & Participation**

Concrete tools to activate communities, techniques for participation, and lessons on what truly drives involvement.

 **Cultural & Creative Industries insights**

How creative practices supported engagement and identity-building in Santa Ana and can help in other districts.

 **Technical, Digital & Economic Layers** **Digitalisation Pathways**

What digital tools were tested, what worked, and how cities can use them to improve participation, mapping and services.

 **Local Economic Development Strategy**

How renovation connects to local jobs, skills, creative industries and economic regeneration.

 **Recommendations for Integrated Renovation & New Business Models**

A practical look at technical, financial and organisational models to support district transformation.

 **KPIs & Evaluation Model**

A comprehensive set of indicators to measure social, environmental and economic impact at neighbourhood level.

 **Peer Learning, Replication & European Relevance** **Social Housing Contexts Analysis**

A comparative overview of housing realities in Spain, Italy and Estonia – essential for understanding replication.

 **Peer Learning Report**

How the three cities learned from each other: workshops, study visits, joint reflections and lessons for cross-city collaboration.

 **Replication Roadmap**

A step-by-step guide for municipalities wanting to adopt the IRM: from diagnosis to governance to long-term planning.

 **Peer Cities Plans**

How Matera and Elva adapted the IRM to their contexts – two different but equally insightful approaches.

 **[Browse the full results here.](#)**

Everything is freely available to explore and download.



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## From our project family

Affordable housing for remodelled neighbourhoods across Europe



### 👉 drOp opens ProLight's new Lunchtime Knowledge Exchange series

drOp has been invited to kick off the new *Lunchtime Knowledge Exchange* hosted by the Horizon Europe project **ProLight**, a monthly space to share practical insights on neighbourhood renovation, energy communities and affordable housing.

In this first session, **Andra Asser** will present drOp's **Replication Roadmap**, highlighting how the lessons from Ermua, Elva and Matera can support other cities in scaling community-driven renovation approaches. The session will also explore links with ProLight's own replication work.

No registration is required – just join in and learn from the exchange.

**From a Neighbourhood to a Community: drOp's Replication Roadmap**

Monday, December 15, from 13-14h CET

**Momir Tabakovic**  
FHTW, ProLight project

**Andra Asser**  
IBS, drOp project



# SUPERSHINE

**Beyond efficiency: putting the social factor at the heart of Europe's energy transition**

SUPERSHINE shows how energy-efficient renovation becomes truly transformative when finance, design quality and resident participation come together. Working across Italy, Latvia and Denmark, the project illustrates how New European Bauhaus principles can turn energy poverty into an opportunity for inclusion and neighbourhood renewal. Its tools and financial models offer concrete support for cities facing similar challenges.

👉 [Explore the full interview to see how social housing renovation can become a driver of Europe's just energy transition.](#)



## Webinars alert

### Inclusive Renovation: Reaching Vulnerable Groups and Tackling Energy Poverty

SUPERSHINE will join the next Renovation Dialogue webinar to discuss how renovation initiatives can better reach vulnerable groups and tackle energy poverty. Riccardo Coletta and Flaminia Rocca will share insights from renovating social housing districts and empowering residents through co-creation. The session brings together leading EU projects exploring inclusive, community-driven approaches to the Renovation Wave.

📅 Dec 10

📍 Online

👉 [Discover the programme and register](#)

### Smart and Sustainable Planning for Cities and Regions

This December, SSPCR will bring together global experts to discuss how digital and sustainable solutions can help cities tackle climate, social and resource challenges. Hosted in Bolzano, the event focuses on resilience, equity and actionable urban planning.

📅 Dec 9-12

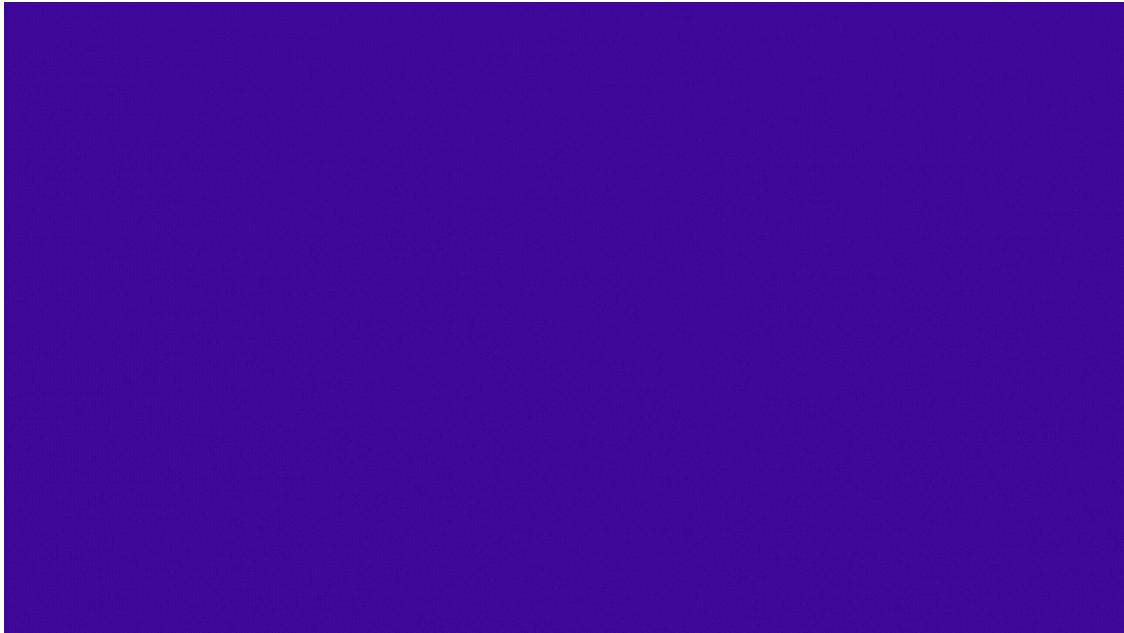
📍 Bolzano, Italy

👉 [Discover the programme and register](#)

## Discover our materials

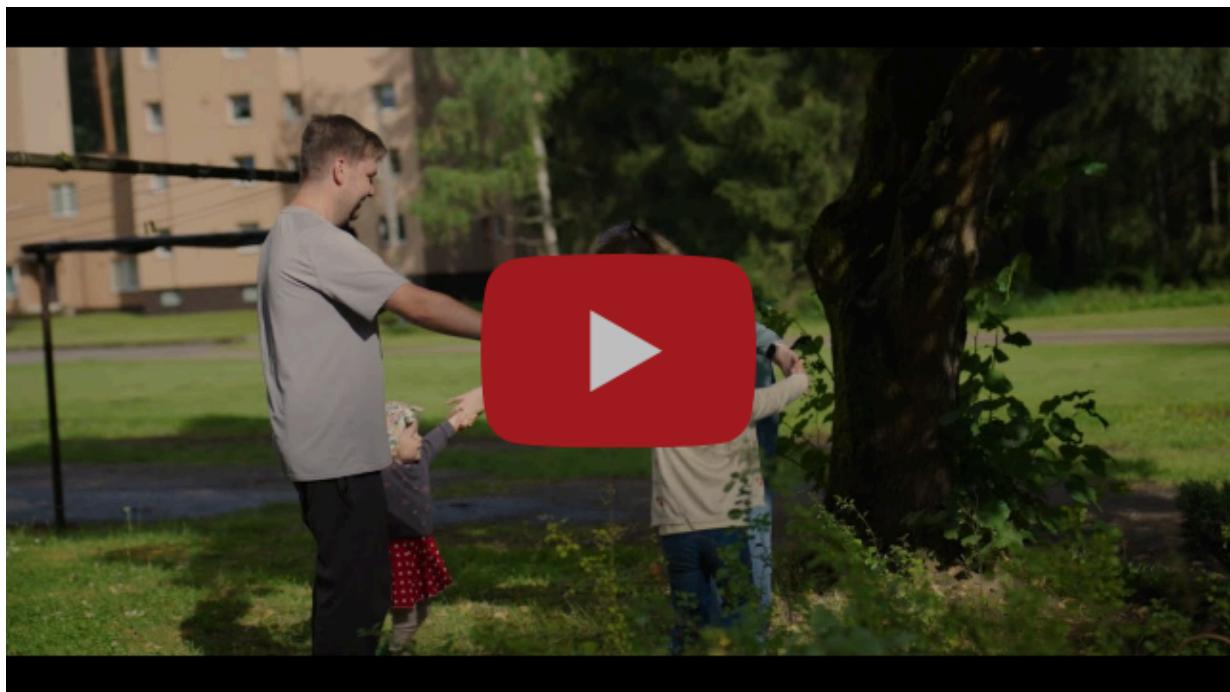
While drOp partners are continuously working towards achieving the established goals, they also made sure that the project is visible and accessible to all.

Check the new materials [here!](#)



Do you want to see how applying the Integrated Renovation Methodology looks in Estonia?

🎥 Press play▶





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