



# **BauNOW final event**

# **AI citizens' support in the Municipality of Legrad**

Rome, 20-22 May 2026

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Partner organisation: REA North

Role in the organisation: Key Projects Manager

# From VIREAS to a Municipality-Wide Assistant

## Where we are today

In 2024, REA Sjever built **VIREAS** — a virtual one-stop-shop and AI chatbot answering citizen questions on energy efficiency and renewables.

*[vireas.rea-sjever.hr](http://vireas.rea-sjever.hr)*

## What we are adding

- A dedicated AI module for the Municipality of Legrad, hosted on its own address
- Covers all municipal services — not only energy renovation
- Built on the existing VIREAS architecture, extended with new functionality and a richer knowledge base



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# Today's Challenges at the Municipality

## Repeated phone calls

Many calls outside working hours, often asking the same questions.

## Broad range of topics

Local services, administrative procedures, communal issues, real estate.

## International inquiries

Foreign interest in local real estate drives the need for multilingual support.

## Seasonal information

Citizens regularly ask about communal and seasonal activities that change through the year.

## Document and contractor requests

Frequent requests for recommendations and document lookups.

## Decentralised documents

Decisions, minutes and other documents are not easy to search or find.



# Goals of the Upgrade

01

## Better access to information

Give residents a simple, centralised, 24/7 source for everyday, personal, business and administrative information.

02

## Relieve municipal staff

Reduce repetitive calls and queries so staff can focus on more complex work.

03

## Digitalise communication

Create a single digital channel for information, education and intake of citizen requests.

04

## Support international users

Provide equal access in multiple languages, given the strong foreign interest in the area.



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# Key Functionalities

01

## General Citizen Support

Document search, summarization on demand, and references to source documents. Guides citizens through municipal procedures, calls for proposals, and social benefits.

02

## Communal & Seasonal Info

Dynamic, up-to-date listings of communal activities, works, and notices. Structured retrieval when citizens ask broad questions about local services.

03

## Trilingual Communication

Auto-detects the citizen's language and responds in Croatian, Hungarian, or English — equal access for residents and international inquirers.

*Energy-renovation questions are automatically redirected to the existing VIREAS chatbot, which is specialised in that topic.*

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# How It Works for Citizens

## THE CITIZEN JOURNEY

- 1 Open on any device**  
Web browser on desktop or mobile (iOS/Android)
- 2 Ask in your own words**  
Croatian, Hungarian or English — auto-detected
- 3 Get a clear answer**  
Plain language, with references to source documents
- 4 Step-by-step guidance**  
Walks you through procedures, conditions, eligibility

## UNDER THE HOOD

- **Complex reasoning**  
Combines info from multiple documents to assess eligibility for funding and support programmes
- **Semantic search + keywords**  
Hybrid retrieval understands meaning, not just exact wording
- **Result re-ranking**  
Refines results so the most relevant answer comes first



# Current Status & Scope

## DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS



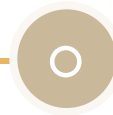
### UI Twin Built

Interface replicated from VIREAS, adapted for municipal needs



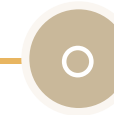
### Document Ingestion

Collecting and structuring municipal documents and data



### Self-Service Knowl. Base Tool

Interface for staff to add new documents independently



### Testing & Validation

End-to-end testing with feedback-driven refinement

## SCOPE & COMMITMENT

**400**

**priority documents**

Maximum processed by end of BauNOW project

**1,000 / month**

**free AI queries**

Per month, with unused queries carried forward, 10 interactions per query

**Until end of 2027**

**free of charge**

Pre-paid use through 31 Dec 2027 / After that → impact evaluation (burden, satisfaction) and GO/NO-GO for further financing



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# Thank you for your attention!

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