

From Designed Performance to Real Impact

Why the Future of Real Estate depends on closing the Energy Performance Gap

The real estate industry has become exceptionally good at measuring. We model energy consumption, calculate carbon emissions, secure certifications and align with increasingly complex regulations. Yet one fundamental challenge remains: a building rarely performs exactly as designed.

For decades, this gap between predicted and actual performance was largely accepted. Today, it has become impossible to ignore. Energy costs have become a strategic concern, regulations are tightening and investors are no longer asking what energy label a building carries. They want to know how it performs in reality.

As Julie Willem, Development Director at Atenor and Head of Archilab, puts it:

“The real challenge is no longer designing sustainable buildings. It is ensuring they continue to perform sustainably every single day after delivery. Sustainability is not a design feature; it is an operational outcome.”

ENTER: Energy Compass by Archilab.

This conviction led Atenor's innovation platform, Archilab, to develop the Energy Compass: a methodology designed to bridge the gap between design ambition and operational reality. Rather than adding another layer of reporting, the Energy Compass connects every stage of a building's lifecycle—from design and energy modelling to monitoring, optimisation and occupation—ensuring that performance targets translate into measurable outcomes.

Tangible results

The results are tangible. Across Atenor's portfolio, buildings are designed to consume up to 30% less energy than standard new developments, generating an estimated €5.7

million in annual savings for occupants. More importantly, the focus remains on actual performance rather than theoretical promises. Through continuous monitoring and collaboration with independent experts, buildings are optimised long after handover, turning sustainability commitments into verifiable results.

In an increasingly uncertain world, predictability has become a new form of value. Markets will fluctuate, regulations will evolve and energy prices will remain volatile. The buildings that will stand out tomorrow are not necessarily those with the most ambitious targets, but those that consistently deliver on them.

“The future will always be uncertain. Our responsibility is to create buildings that perform, adapt and remain resilient through change”, concludes Julie Willem.