Interreg Europe

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CLIBUS

3rd Newsletter



CLIBUS

Runway to Carbon Neutrality – Involvement of Business Communities in Climate Strategies

CLIBUS in Nutshell

Achieving carbon neutrality is a shared responsibility, and SMEs are essential partners in this journey. CLIBUS supports cities and regions to act as lighthouses, guiding business communities toward energy efficiency and climate-friendly actions. By fostering collaboration and capacity building, the project strengthens the role of SMEs in implementing local and regional climate strategies.

CLIBUS enables cities and regions to act as lighthouses, guiding SMEs in energy efficiency and climate actions

What is CLIBUS?

CLIBUS is an Interreg Europe project under the policy objective "Green Europe", focusing on energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction. CLIBUS promotes interregional learning among policy-relevant organisations. Through collaboration and knowledge exchange, the project aims to improve regional policies that support SMEs' climate and energy efficiency efforts.

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Programme:
Interreg Europe

Policy Objective:
Green Europe

Specific Objective:
Energy efficiency

Duration:
Core Phase:
May 2025 – April 2028

Follow-up Phase:
May 2028 – April 2029

Closure Phase:
May 2029 – June 2029

CLIBUS Activities

- Regional stakeholder group meetings
- Interregional meetings & experience exchange
- Site visits & good practice sharing
- Joint thematic studies & dissemination events

Capacity building happens at multiple levels:

- Individual
- Organisational
- Regional
- Interregional

Direct target groups:

- Public authorities
- Intermediary organisations (connecting public sector and SMEs)

Indirect target groups:

- Policy decision-makers
- SMEs

Expected Impact

- Stronger cooperation between cities/regions and business communities
- Increased climate and energy efficiency actions by SMEs
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions at regional level

LAB University of Applied Sciences · IMATRA · HILLERØD KOMMUNE · CERTH · HELLENIC REPUBLIC REGION OF THESSALY · Gemeente Emmen

Keywords & Focus Areas



SMEs:

Employ <250 people, Turnover ≤ €50M

Business Communities:

Industrial areas, business parks, networks, forums, etc.

Climate and Energy Efficiency Actions of SMEs: Energy efficiency, GHG emission reduction, energy consumption reduction

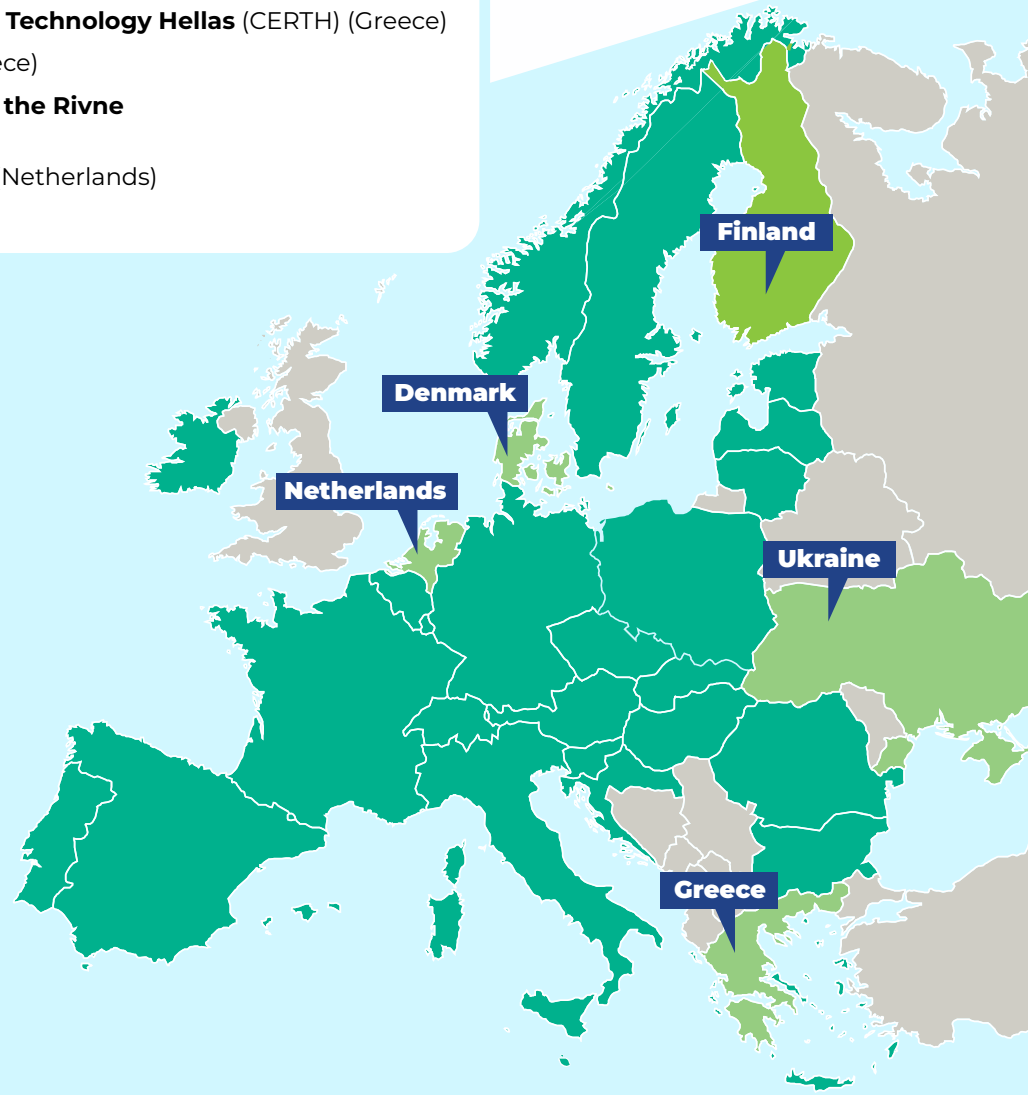
ESG Reporting: Environmental, Social & Governance data

Partnership

5 regions/countries, 7 partners



- **LAB University of Applied Sciences** (Finland)
- **City of Imatra** (Finland)
- **Hillerød Municipality** (Denmark)
- **Centre for Research and Technology Hellas** (CERTH) (Greece)
- **Region of Thessaly** (Greece)
- **Executive Committee of the Rivne City Council** (Ukraine)
- **Municipality of Emmen** (Netherlands)



29 September - 1 october 2026

3rd Interregional Event



Image: Aegli Giouni

The 3rd CLIBUS Interregional Meeting was held in Larissa, Greece, from 29 September to 1 October 2026. The main objective of the meeting was to explore how data generated and collected by businesses can contribute to more targeted and evidence-based climate and energy policies at regional and local level.

The meeting brought together representatives of the five project partners and eleven relevant stakeholders to exchange knowledge and experiences on the involvement of business communities in climate strategies, with a particular focus on the use of ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) data in climate and energy transition policymaking.

The meeting combined thematic presentations and discussions with the exchange of good practices and study visits to businesses and innovation organizations in the Thessaly region. This provided the project partners with an opportunity to explore both the policy dimension of ESG data and its practical application within the business community. The project partners had the opportunity to compare approaches, identify common challenges and exchange experiences that can be adapted to their respective regional contexts.

Day 1 - ESG data and Climate policy

The first day of the meeting focused on the relationship between ESG data and the development of climate and energy transition policies.

Representatives of the project partners from Imatra (Finland), Hillerød (Denmark), Emmen (the Netherlands), Rivne (Ukraine) and the Region of Thessaly (Greece) presented the current situation in their respective contexts and discussed the benefits, opportunities and challenges associated with the use of ESG data by SMEs.

The presentations highlighted the potential of ESG information to provide a better understanding of the environmental and sustainability-related performance of businesses and, consequently, to support the more targeted design of climate-related measures and policies.

A thematic presentation was also delivered by Dr. Triantafyllos Papafloratos, who has extensive experience in the field. His presentation addressed current trends and challenges related to the integration of sustainability indicators into local businesses and public policymaking. The presentation was followed by an interactive discussion with the participants, allowing the different perspectives of businesses, public authorities and other stakeholders to be considered.

Thematic Studies

The Lead Partner presented the findings of the **1st Thematic Study**, focusing on SME participation in climate-related actions and strategies.

Read more on Page 16

A representative of Centre for Research and Technology Hellas (CERTH) covered the methodology of the **2nd Thematic Study**, which focused on how data collected by businesses from public authorities can be used to better target climate-related actions. The implementation of the study is expected to start in early November 2026.

The discussion provided an opportunity for partners to consider how the findings of the thematic studies can contribute to the wider objectives of the project and to the improvement of policy approaches supporting business engagement in climate action.



Good Practice Workshop

During the Good Practice (GP) workshop, partners and stakeholders shared five examples of climate action and energy transition:

- **Thessaly** presented AICoSME, an AI-based tool supporting SMEs in calculating and reducing their carbon footprint.
- **Emmen** presented its Energy Event, bringing stakeholders together around energy transition topics.
- **Hillerød** introduced its Climate Council, demonstrating how stakeholder dialogue can support local climate action.
- **Imatra** presented an ice rink waste heat recovery initiative, showing how waste heat can be reused to improve energy efficiency.

Bonus from Emmen's stakeholder:

- **Drenthe** shared its experience of involving Cleantech SMEs in energy transition policy.

The exchange highlighted different approaches to the green transition and the importance of cooperation between public authorities, businesses, research organizations and other stakeholders.

Read more about CLIBUS Good Practices in Section 3



Image: Aegli Gioumi

Day 2 - Site Visits

The second day of the meeting focused on the practical application of sustainable industrial and business practices in the Thessaly region.

The project partners carried out site visits to significant businesses and innovation organizations, including **ELVAK**, **Exalco** and **Joist Innovation Park**.

The site visits provided participants with first-hand insights into approaches related to sustainable development, innovation and environmental responsibility and offered an opportunity to exchange experiences on how sustainability considerations can be integrated into business operations and strategies.

The site visits also contributed to the wider interregional learning process by showcasing examples from the Thessaly region and highlighting the region's business, industrial and innovation potential.

Key Outcomes and Lessons Learned

The meeting highlighted several issues of relevance to the implementation of the CLIBUS project:

- **ESG data** supports sustainability assessment and more targeted climate policies, but requires sufficient knowledge, data access, and capacity among SMEs and public authorities.
- **Cooperation** between public authorities, businesses, and research organizations helps connect policy objectives with SMEs' practical needs.
- **The good practices and site visits** show already existing practical approaches to the green transition, such as digital innovation, carbon footprint assessment, sustainable production and cooperation between businesses and research institutions.
- **Interregional exchange within CLIBUS** helps regions identify common challenges and adapt successful approaches to their own contexts.



Images: Aegli Gioumi





Contribution to the CLIBUS Project

The 3rd Interregional Meeting contributed directly to the CLIBUS objective of strengthening the involvement of business communities in climate strategies.

By bringing together project partners, public authorities, research organizations and business-related stakeholders, the meeting facilitated the exchange of knowledge on the role of business data in climate policy-making and provided practical examples of how businesses can contribute to the green transition.

The meeting also supported the project's interregional learning process by combining policy-oriented discussions with practical examples from the Thessaly region. The thematic discussions and exchange of good practices will feed into the continued work of the project and the development of policy-related recommendations.

What CLIBUS stakeholders say

Netherlands

" The CLIBUS meeting in Larissa, Greece delivered the expectations as promised in the program for this meeting.

A diverse and mature consortium is working on policy development of climate actions which can both support climate resilience and business. Although national regulations between EU member states can differ considerably, parties are seriously involved in sharing good practices and learning from each other where similarities become visible. In this respect the site visits to both Elbak and Exalco provide proof of frontrunner's capabilities in taking measures on climate actions which also can or will enhance business or cost savings. As stakeholder, joining the CLIBUS meeting feels more as a spectator than a participant. In the program, stakeholder experiences could have a spot on the agenda to share insights. "

Jeroen Rijnhart

Program Manager Energy, Greenwise campus'
Academy director Tech & Design,
NHL Stenden University of Applied Science

"The CLIBUS regional meeting in Larissa demonstrated how ESG reporting can help SMEs turn sustainability ambitions into concrete action. The open exchange between partners highlighted the value of interregional cooperation in sharing good practices and developing new policies based on these experiences. I return to Drenthe inspired and with several concrete ideas to further strengthen our activities. My thanks to the Region of Thessaly for their excellent hosting, and to all partners for their openness, expertise and willingness to learn from one another. "

Alfred Middelkamp

Coordinator Energiesysteem,Industrie en Waterstof
Province of Drenthe

Denmark

"Participating as a stakeholder in Larissa was both valuable and rewarding. Two key takeaways from the first day stood out for me. First, it was insightful to learn that Denmark is not alone in seeing ESG reporting lose priority among companies. As one of the speakers explained, ESG appears to have become less of a priority for companies and has somewhat faded from focus due to the current global situation. Therefore, the second key takeaway is very important to note – because, as explained by the professor, ESG reporting does not have to be as complex as it may seem. Much of the required information is already available in companies' financial records and digital accounting systems, and AI can help make the process more manageable. At C4 Knowledge Center, we would like to explore this further and share practical knowledge with relevant companies. On the second day, it was inspiring to learn from our Greek colleagues' approach to ESG reporting and business development. The visit to JOIST was also very valuable to our organization. Thank you for the opportunity to participate and for a highly inspiring visit. "

Daniel Plambek

Business Coordinator,
C4 Knowledge Center,
Hillerod

Greece

"I really enjoyed my participation in the CLIBUS meeting in Larissa. I was invited as an external stakeholder to give a presentation titled Leveraging ESG Data. I was impressed by the level of interest and the vital discussions that followed my presentation. The participants were eager to understand more about ESG data and sustainability reporting, and I had the chance to learn how ESG data is perceived across different countries and organizations. This stakeholder engagement event was one of the most successful meetings I have ever attended! Thank you CLIBUS for a wonderful and fruitful experience."

Dr. Papafloratos

Founder & Managing partner,
Sustainability Business Case

Assistant Professor of CSR,
Sustainability, ESG

Business Administration Dpt.,
International Hellenic University

Ukraine

"It is important for Ukrainian businesses to understand how European countries are planning their transition to climate neutrality, how they balance environmental objectives with the economic interests of businesses, and how they support small and medium-sized enterprises in adapting to new approaches. We can draw on this experience without having to start from scratch, while learning from the challenges and mistakes our European partners have already encountered.

At the same time, Ukrainian companies are gaining unique experience in maintaining energy resilience amid war, significant risks, and constant uncertainty. This experience can also offer valuable insights to our European counterparts. My main takeaway from the visit is a very practical one. Every investment in energy resilience, energy efficiency, or resource management must deliver measurable business results: lower costs per unit of production, reduced dependence on external resources, more stable operations, and stronger competitiveness.

For Ukraine, the challenge is not only to help businesses withstand the current conditions. It is equally important to use this period to build a more modern, efficient, and competitive manufacturing sector. This is where I see the practical value of international cooperation through CLIBUS. "

Tetiana Vlasova

Founder and Director LLC "APC Aleksia" / PackaLoop
Representative of the local stakeholder group
- Association "Association of Light Industry"

Good Practices



A key element of the CLIBUS project is the identification and exchange of regional good practices, enabling partners to learn from successful approaches and transfer relevant solutions to their own regions. Joint criteria for defining good practices are needed in order to maximise the benefit for all project regions, since the sharing good practices is at the core of exchanging experiences and knowledge.

On 4 September 2025, the project organised an interregional online workshop, where ideas for joint criteria were collected from project partners and stakeholders. After the workshop, LAB created a proposal based on the workshop results. Feedback from project partners was collected on how well the suggested criteria meet their expectations and needs, and whether the criteria seem feasible from the potential good practices' point of view.

Final selection of the joint criteria was made during the Interregional Event in Imatra on 13 November 2025. The criteria consist of key criteria (partly mandatory criteria) and guiding criteria (voluntary criteria to serve as inspiration or example):

CLIBUS Key criteria for Good Practices

(criteria number 1-3, and one to three of criteria number 4-6 must be fulfilled)

1. Is successfully proven in practice
2. Is replicable and transferable to other regions
3. Is connected to regional or local policy
4. Supports regional or local carbon neutrality goals
5. Enhances collaboration between public and private sectors
6. Improves directly or indirectly SMEs' possibilities to increase energy efficiency or reduce greenhouse gas emissions

CLIBUS Guiding criteria for Good Practices (can be)

- Strengthens the role of public authorities in facilitating regional or local climate actions
- Provides financial, technical, or capacity-related support for public authorities
- Improves communication or interaction between public and private sectors
- Supports the sustainability transition of SMEs
- Is meaningful and easily adoptable from SMEs' point of view
- Provides financial, technical, or capacity-related support for SMEs
- Provides either a practical or strategic-level solution
- Is targeted directly to SMEs or indirectly via business communities
- Promotes innovative utilisation of ESG data

Good Practices

CLIBUS project partners have so far identified six Good Practices, including two GPs identified and published during the 3rd semester:



Periodic Energy Event Emmen (the Netherlands)

The Periodic Energy Event Emmen is a long-running regional platform that brings together businesses, public authorities, knowledge institutions and energy organisations to address energy transition challenges. Through presentations, workshops and networking, participants exchange knowledge and explore practical solutions related to renewable energy, energy storage, grid congestion and industrial decarbonisation. The event demonstrates how stakeholder collaboration can accelerate the energy transition and support regional competitiveness.

Read more



Periodic Energy Event Emmen

Annual energy transition event in Emmen fostering public-private cooperation and supporting regional climate and energy goals.

18 Sep 2026 | By project CLIBUS



Imatra ice rink - waste heat recovery

The City of Imatra invested in the Imatra ice rink to capture the condensation heat generated during ice production to warm the hall's ventilation air.

03 Aug 2026 | By project CLIBUS

Expert approved

Imatra ice rink - waste heat recovery (Finland)

The City of Imatra has improved the energy efficiency of its ice rink by recovering waste heat from the cooling process and reusing it to heat ventilation air. The solution reduces the need for purchased heating energy, lowers operating costs, and decreases emissions. The rink has also transitioned to bio-based district heating, further supporting local climate goals and energy self-sufficiency.

Read more

Read more

CLIBUS Good Practices

Introducing CLIBUS partners

LAB University of Applied Sciences (LAB)

Read more about LAB
CLIBUS LAB website

City of Imatra

Read more about City of Imatra
City of Imatra website

Hillerød Municipality

Read more about Hillerød
Hillerød website

Executive Committee of the Rivne City Council

Read more about Rivne
Rivne website

Region of Thessaly

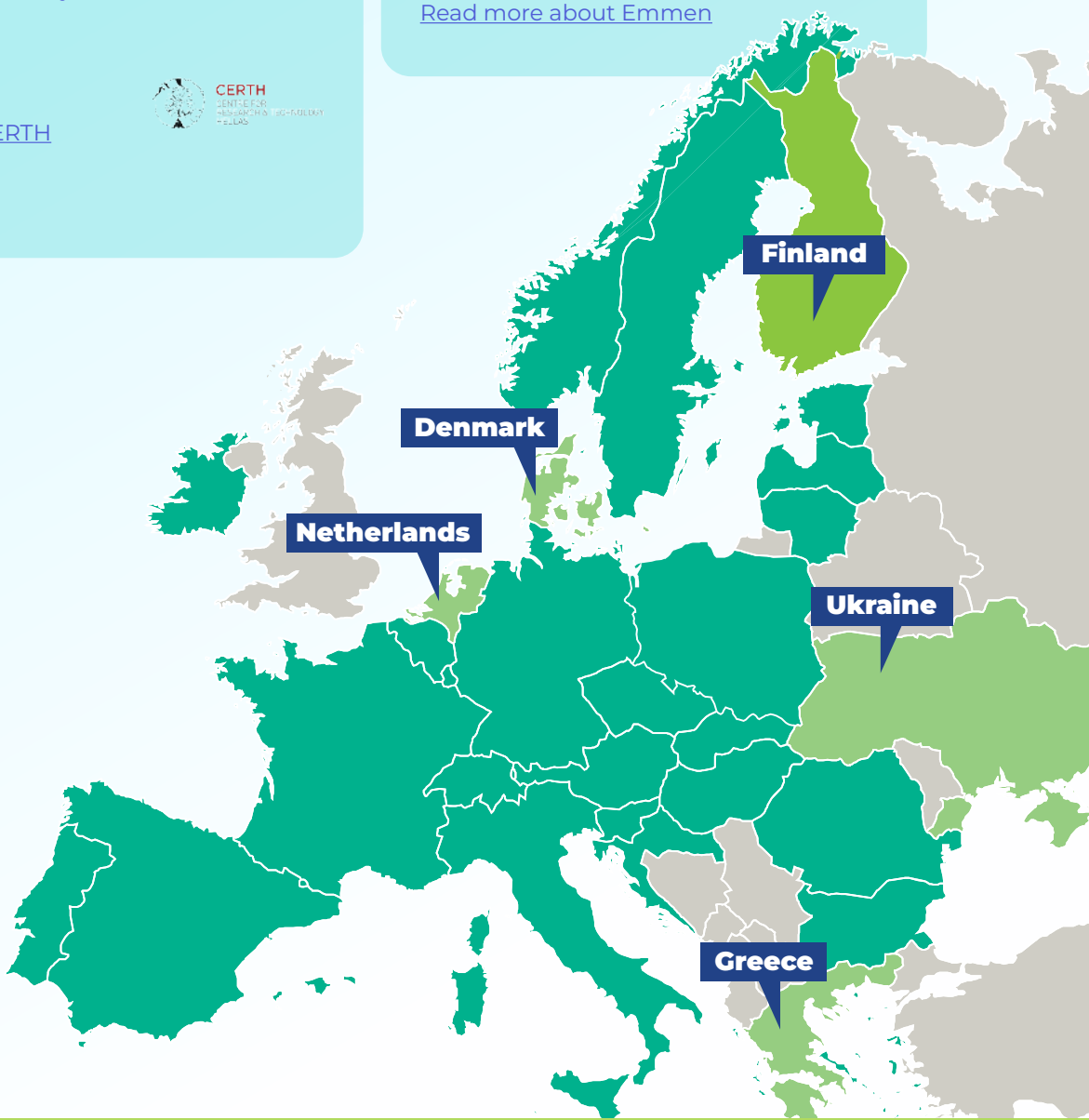
Read more about Thessaly
Thessaly website

CERTH

Read more about CERTH
CERTH/iBO website

Municipality of Emmen

Read more about Emmen



Addressed Policy Instruments & Development

Finland:

CLIBUS Supports Sustainable Development in Imatra

Imatra is strengthening climate and sustainability measures through its new city strategy and CLIBUS cooperation, supporting energy efficiency, green transition investments and sustainable business development.

Read more

Denmark:

Hillerød strengthens stakeholder role in climate planning

Hillerød is revising its Climate Action Plan (2026-2027) with broad stakeholder involvement. The process strengthens business engagement, cross-sector partnerships and community-led climate action, drawing on CLIBUS project experiences.

Read more



Greece:

Thessaly Prepares Next Steps for Policy Improvement

Preparatory work, stakeholder consultations and the analysis of CLIBUS good practices are laying the foundation for a policy proposal in Thessaly. The proposal will support future sustainability initiatives and seek approval and funding for implementation.

Read more

Ukraine:

Policy Instrument Description update from Rivne

Rivne updated its SECAP, integrating it with the Municipal Energy Plan and including existing business support measures. Further actions to improve business energy efficiency and decarbonisation will be developed through CLIBUS.

Read more

Netherlands:

Developing future-proof business parks in Emmen

The Municipality of Emmen is developing a new programme for sustainable and future-proof business parks, addressing challenges such as energy infrastructure, climate adaptation, accessibility, and working environment quality. The programme aims to support sustainable economic growth and Emmen's ambition to become climate-neutral by 2050 through cooperation, innovation, and effective use of data.

Read more

Regional Stakeholder Group Meetings

12 May 2026

CLIBUS stakeholders gathered in Hillerød

The participants shared good practices and explored ways to support SMEs in the green transition through collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Read more

Image: Hillerød Municipality



25 June 2026

CLIBUS stakeholders met in Imatra

During the meeting, stakeholders discussed project progress, shared experiences from partner regions, and explored how SMEs can be better supported in climate action and energy efficiency. The meeting highlighted the potential of ESG data, good practices from across Europe, and the importance of regional cooperation in advancing the green transition.

Read more



Image: CLIBUS

1 July 2026

Stakeholders shaping the future of Emmen business parks

In Emmen, businesses and other stakeholders came together to explore the future of local business parks and contribute to a new policy framework. Discussions focused on economic development, spatial quality, and sustainability, highlighting topics such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, energy storage, and greener business environments.

Read more

The CLIBUS meeting in Rivne explored how ESG data from businesses can help improve local climate plans. A survey will identify business needs, awareness and barriers to ESG reporting.



Image: Municipality of Emmen

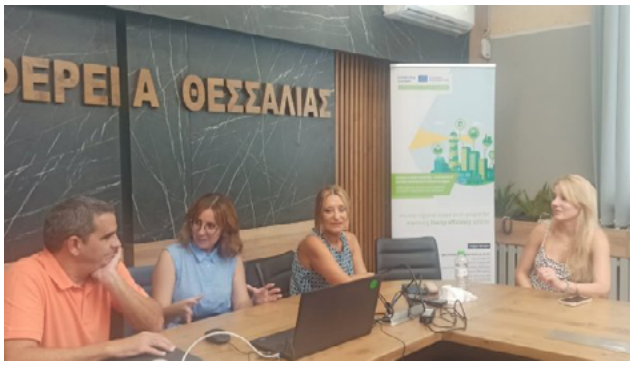
17 September 2026

Regional stakeholder group meeting in Larissa

Stakeholders in Larissa met to discuss how ESG data can support energy efficiency and climate action among SMEs. The discussions highlighted both the opportunities of ESG reporting, such as improved access to finance and market competitiveness, and key challenges, including limited resources and awareness. The meeting also advanced preparations for the upcoming CLIBUS interregional event in Thessaly.

Read more

Image: Region of Thessaly



16 October 2026

ESG Reporting as a Tool for Local Climate Policy: CLIBUS Project Consultation in Rivne

The CLIBUS meeting in Rivne explored how ESG data from businesses can help improve local climate plans. A survey will identify business needs, awareness and barriers to ESG reporting.

Read more



Dissemination and Feedback Sessions

Finland, 7 October 2026, 11 people:

Dissemination session held to share the latest CLIBUS updates

Following the CLIBUS interregional event held in Larissa, Thessaly, on 29 September-1 October 2026, Imatra disseminated the latest project news and shared observations and experiences gained during the visit to Greece at a regional online meeting of energy efficiency and climate experts from public sector organizations in South Karelia.

The online meeting took place on 7 October and was attended by 11 participants. In addition to sharing greetings from Larissa, the participants were informed that a ESG survey within the CLIBUS project will be implemented by the end of 2026.

Finland, 29 May 2026

CLIBUS at the Vitality Forum in Imatra

CLIBUS project's current activities and recent results were presented at the Vitality Forum, a regular event organized by the City of Imatra for regional decision makers and key officials, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders.

Read more



Image: City of Imatra

Greece, 14 October 2026, 9 people:

CLIBUS Insights Shared with Regional Stakeholders in Larissa

A feedback and dissemination session following the third CLIBUS interregional meeting in Larissa was held on 14 October 2026 at Joist Innovation Park. Regional stakeholders discussed key project outcomes, including ESG data integration for SMEs, evidence-based policymaking, good practices, and the next steps in CLIBUS implementation.

Read more



Image: Aegli Gioumi

Ukraine, 26 October 2026, 12 people:

Rivne shares lessons from the CLIBUS meeting in Greece

Rivne shared key lessons from the CLIBUS interregional meeting in Greece with local stakeholders, highlighting innovative approaches to decarbonisation, energy efficiency, ESG reporting, and business engagement in climate policy. The exchange helped identify good practices that could support stronger climate action and SME involvement in the Rivne community.

Read more



Image: Iryna Mykhaliuk

Netherlands, 27 October 2026, 7 people:

Emmen stakeholders discuss smart energy and data

Seven stakeholders met in Emmen to discuss CLIBUS progress, exchange good practices and explore how smarter use of energy data can support businesses and regional development.

Read more



CLIBUS Thematic Studies

Within the CLIBUS project, two thematic studies are planned:

- **Thematic Study 1** – Involvement of SMEs in implementation of public climate policies (completed)
- **Thematic Study 2** – Utilisation of ESG data in public decision making (in progress)



The **CLIBUS Thematic Study 1** explored SME engagement in regional climate implementation across Europe

A survey was conducted and distributed by project partners in Finland, Denmark, Greece, Ukraine, and the Netherlands. A total of 79 responses were collected, providing valuable insights into SMEs' needs, challenges, and cooperation with public authorities.

The findings show that SMEs are generally motivated to contribute to climate action, but participation remains limited due to financial constraints, administrative burden, regulatory uncertainty and fragmented support systems.

A key insight is that motivation alone is not enough. SMEs need clear participation pathways, visible business benefits and accessible support services.

These findings have now been translated into draft policy recommendations through stakeholder discussions and the CLIBUS workshop in Larissa, Greece.

The resulting CLIBUS Policy Brief highlights five priority areas:

- Improve policy visibility
- Clarify participation pathways
- Link climate action to business value
- Reduce structural barriers
- Strengthen coordination of support services

Together, these actions can help regions better engage SMEs in local climate and energy transitions.

The CLIBUS partnership has launched preparations for **Thematic Study 2**, which will investigate **SME engagement in regional climate action across Europe**.

At the 3rd Interregional Meeting in Larissa, **CERTH** introduced the study's methodology, timeline, and main thematic focus. Scheduled to begin in November 2026, the study will explore how data generated by both public authorities and businesses can be used more effectively to design and target climate-related measures.

Partners also discussed how the study's findings can support the project's wider objectives and help improve policies that encourage stronger business involvement in climate action and the green transition.



1st CLIBUS Policy Brief is published!

Read the Policy Brief (PDF)



1st CLIBUS video is published!

Watch the video (youtube)





Upcoming in Semester 4

Stay Tuned: Online Learning for More Energy-Efficient SMEs

We will focus on how public services can help SMEs improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

A key highlight will be the 4th Interregional Event, held online, bringing together project partners, stakeholders, and experts from across Europe to exchange ideas, experiences, and good practices. In addition, we will organise an open-access thematic webinar, offering an opportunity for an even wider audience to join the discussion and learn from successful approaches.

Together, these activities will help identify practical ways for public authorities to better support SMEs in their sustainability journey.

Stay tuned for upcoming online events and inspiring examples from across the partnership!

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@CLIBUS #CLIBUS

CLIBUS timeline

Semester 1
01/05/2025-31/10/2025
Imatra, Finland
LP, PP2
Building up networks for enabling cooperation and change

Semester 2
01/11/2025-30/04/2026
Hillerød, Denmark
PP3
Public-private collaboration models in supporting SMEs in energy-efficiency

Semester 3
01/05/2026-31/10/2026
Thessaly, Greece
PP4, PP5
Utilization of ESG reporting data in targeting climate actions

Semester 4
01/11/2026-30/04/2027
Online event
LP
Public services to support energy-efficiency actions in SMEs

Semester 5
01/05/2027-31/10/2027
Emmen, Netherlands
PP6
The role of business communities in SMEs' energy-efficiency and climate actions

Semester 6
01/11/2027-30/04/2028
Rivne, Ukraine
PP7
Competence of SMEs in energy-efficiency and GHG emission reduction actions

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