



ClimateGO

Pathways to climate-smart governance

4th Newsletter

Published: 3/2026

Climate change is already affecting Europe in various ways. Rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, more frequent extreme weather events such as heatwaves, droughts, floods and storms pose significant risks to the environment, infrastructure, and human well-being across the continent. Thus, there is a need to better adapt to the situation. National, regional and local level governance that leads to actions play a crucial role here. Therefore, it is important that climate actions to increase resilience must be understood better by administration and decisionmakers, so that they can be implemented in practice, at local level in cities and regions.

ClimateGO addresses the urgent need for regions and cities to take proactive action against climate change. It emphasizes the importance of implementing laws and strategies to achieve climate targets while considering implications for society and nature. Beyond the evident focus on mitigation efforts, there is a need to emphasize the urgency of climate change adaptation and preparedness. Proactive adaptation enables larger benefits than reactive action, as both the avoidance of losses and the exploitation of opportunities are more effective. The ClimateGO project partners share a joint aim to ensure that anticipatory understanding of climate change is a central part of future decision-making.

Project Partners

Lead partner:

LAB University of Applied Sciences (Finland)

Collaborating with:

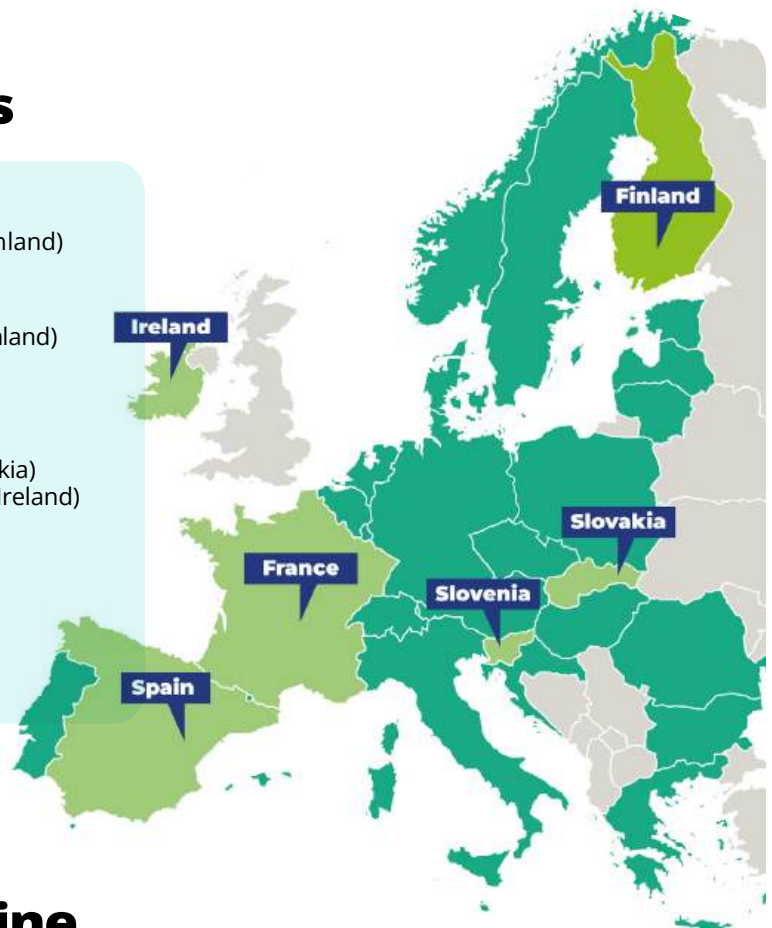
- Regional Council of Päijät-Häme (Finland)
- Alzira City Council (Spain)
- City of Grenoble (France)
- Regional development agency for Podravje - Maribor (Slovenia)
- Košice Self-Governing Region (Slovakia)
- Waterford City and County Council (Ireland)



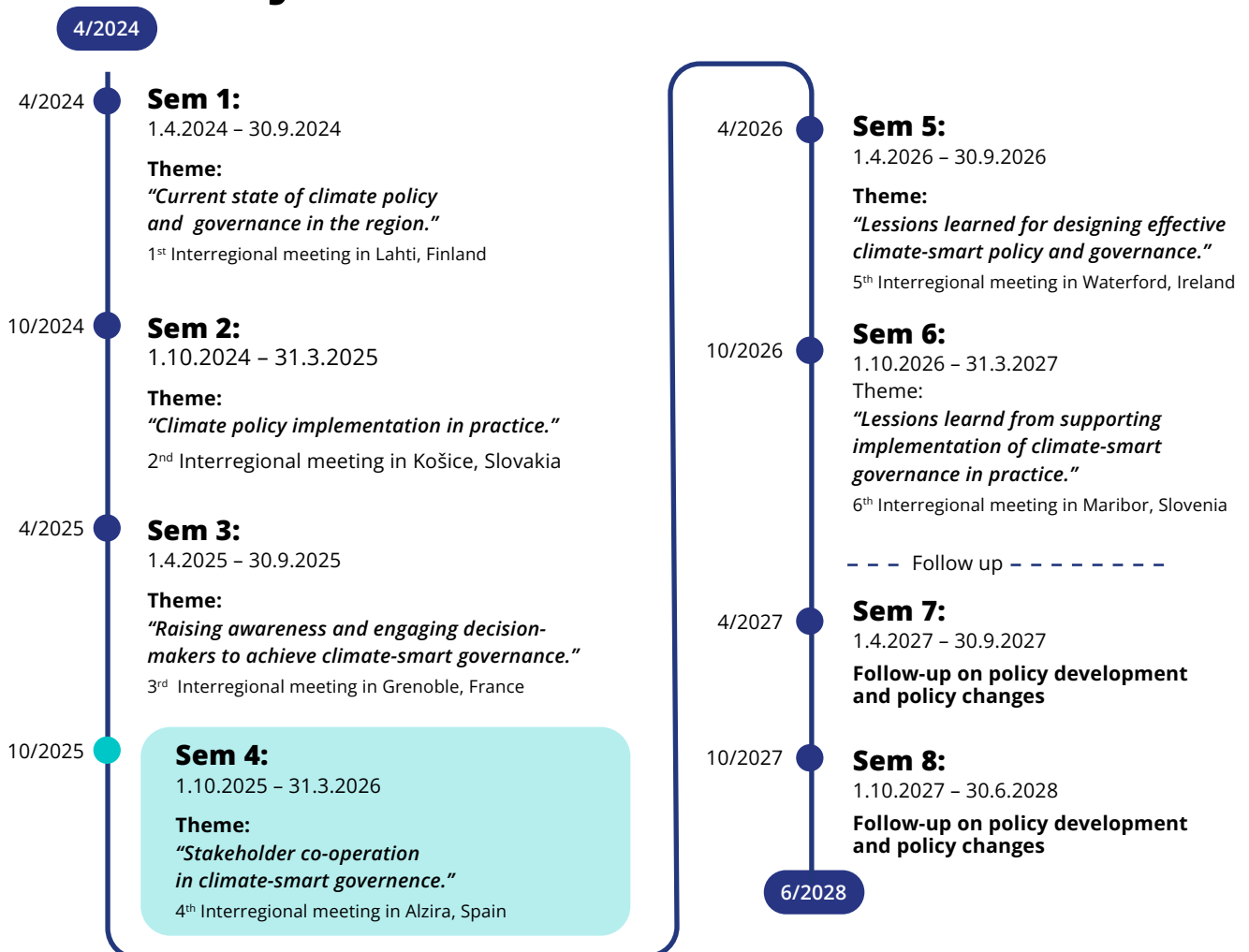
Budget
1,491,245 €



Duration
1st Apr 2024 – 30th Jun 2028



Project Timeline



Interregional Meeting

Alzira hosts ClimateGO meeting on climate resilience and flood risk management

From 3 to 5 March 2026, the city of Alzira hosted a ClimateGO project meeting, bringing together project partners to exchange experiences and explore local approaches to climate adaptation and resilience.

The programme combined institutional sessions, technical visits and working discussions. The meeting started with an institutional welcome by the Mayor of Alzira, whose active involvement throughout the three days was highly appreciated by the partners and clearly demonstrated the municipality's strong political commitment to tackling climate change.

During the visit, participants explored key resilience initiatives through a technical tour of the city, including hydraulic infrastructures, flood protection systems and green areas such as the Anell Verd. In addition, the Reconstruction Agenda was presented, an update of the urban agenda aimed at supporting recovery after the DANA event and implementing preventive measures against future flooding.

The second day focused on the analysis of the DANA phenomenon, addressing its causes, the consequences it had on the territory and the planned actions to improve the management of such events in the future. Particular attention was also given to the negative impact of the DANA on the natural environment of the Albufera, highlighting the challenges related to its recovery and conservation.

Due to adverse weather conditions, the planned simulation exercise could not take place, as it involved students and their safety was prioritised. Instead, additional time was dedicated to discussions among partners, allowing for deeper exchanges. Stakeholders showed particular interest in the recent blackout, leading to an extended and insightful discussion on the management of such situations.

Overall, partners highlighted several key strengths of Alzira's approach: strong political leadership, a shared strategic vision across the municipal team, and effective coordination between local authorities, volunteers and community organisations.



Picture: Hanna-Mari Suurari



Picture: Hanna-Mari Suurari



Picture: Hanna-Mari Suurari



Picture: Esther Edo

Good Practices

Inspiring and tested policy solutions identified by Interreg Europe cooperation projects

During the project implementation time all ClimateGO project partners will identify and publish tested policy solutions from their own regions and cities.

The main idea is that these tested solutions can be transferred to other European regions and cities. Learning from each other and making use of already tested methods and solutions will help different European regions to develop further and more efficient.

Definition of ClimateGO Good Practices:

- proved to be successful
- transferable
- scope on city or region level
- sustainable (ecological, economic and social)
- related to climate change mitigation or adaptation
- systemic (changes in processes, structures and practices)
- increases regional resilience to climate change

Examples



The Kysak Nature Learning Trail

Climate change feels distant to many young people. This practice reconnects them with nature and climate issues through outdoor, experiential learning.

27 Feb 2026 | By project ClimateGO



Waterford (Ballybricken) eMobility eHub

The eHub provide access to share electric vehicles (EVs), e-bikes and e-cargo bikes to promote sustainable, shared transport.

26 Feb 2026 | By project ClimateGO



Implementation of water retention measures at the Secondary Technical School in Spišská Nová Ves

Project captures & stores rainwater to reduce extreme weather impacts, improve urban microclimate, and promote sustainable water management.

19 Aug 2025 | By project ClimateGO
Expert approved



Read more

ClimateGO articles

What hinders climate action in Finland?

Read more about climate obstruction and other obstacles that hinder climate action in Finland from our newly released article

Read more

<https://www.labopen.fi/lab-pro/what-hinders-climate-action-in-finland/>

Hotter Days Are Becoming the New Normal

Heatwaves are becoming more common and affecting more people's daily lives -something that was clearly felt last summer. But there are many ways to prepare for extreme heat, both in the short and long term

Read more

<https://www.interregurope.eu/climatego/news-and-events/news/hotter-days-are-becoming-new-normal>

Regional policy briefs are now available

Policy briefs for five European regions, **Alzira** (Spain), **Waterford** (Ireland), **Päijät-Häme** (Finland), **Maribor** (Slovenia) and **Kosice** (Slovakia) are now available.

These documents adapt the content of the **original ClimateGO policy brief** (pdf.) to increase local relevance and impact.

Read more

<https://www.interregurope.eu/climatego/news-and-events/news/regional-policy-briefs-are-now-available>

Stakeholder Cooperation in Climate-Smart Governance: Lessons from Grenoble 2040

Climate-smart governance is increasingly recognized as a collaborative process rather than a purely technical one. Addressing climate change, resource scarcity, and social vulnerability requires cooperation between public institutions, experts, citizens, and academic actors. The city of Grenoble provides a compelling example of this approach through its long-term foresight initiative, Grenoble 2040.

By combining participatory events, academic partnerships, and critical debates on innovation and resource limits, Grenoble 2040 illustrates how stakeholder cooperation can shape a more resilient and socially just urban future.

Grenoble 2040: A Platform for Collective Foresight

The Grenoble 2040 initiative is led by the municipality's foresight unit and aims to prepare the city for long-term environmental, social, and economic transformations. Rather than imposing a top-down strategy, the initiative creates spaces for dialogue between municipal departments, researchers, students, civil society organizations, and residents.

Through public meetings, exhibitions, and collaborative workshops, Grenoble 2040 encourages citizens to reflect on key questions:

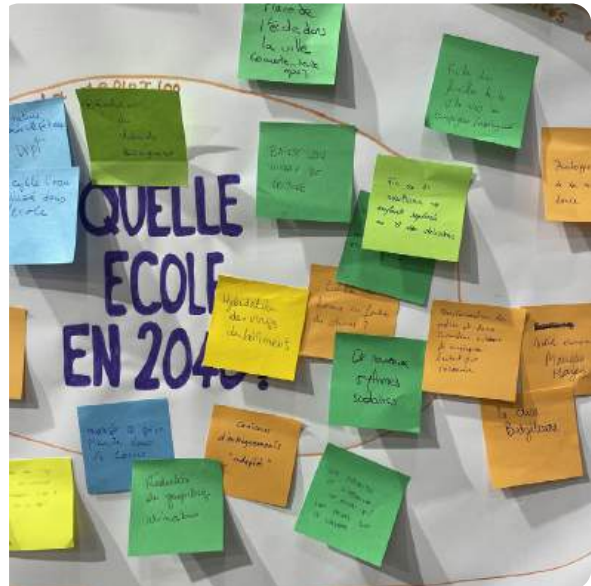
- What kind of city do we want in 2040?
- How can neighborhoods promote global health and well-being?
- How should public policies adapt to climate uncertainty?

This participatory structure ensures that climate-smart governance is grounded in collective intelligence rather than technocratic decision-making alone.

Innovation in a Constrained World

A significant example of this approach was the public event titled “Climate, Resources: What Innovation in a Constrained World?” organized by the Grenoble 2040 team. The invited speaker, Philippe Bihoux, is an engineer and author known for questioning the belief in a purely high-tech ecological transition. In his book « Ressources : un défi pour l'humanité », he highlights the material limits of our societies, particularly regarding metals and critical resources.

Bihoux argues that digitalization, complex renewable infrastructures, and “smart city” technologies cannot alone guarantee sustainability. Instead, he promotes sobriety, resilience, low-tech innovation, and reparability. By hosting such debates, Grenoble encourages stakeholders to critically assess dominant technological narratives and to explore alternative, more resource-conscious pathways.



Imagining a “City of Care”

Stakeholder cooperation in Grenoble 2040 extends beyond expert conferences to participatory and creative experimentation.

A notable example is the participatory evening organized as part of the Rencontres Grenoble 2040, dedicated to imagining a “city of care.” During this event, the municipality used design fiction—short prospective scenarios and prototypes of future public policies—to stimulate collective imagination. These fictional yet plausible narratives acted as conversation starters, allowing participants to explore questions such as: How can Grenoble become more attentive to vulnerability? What would a neighborhood that promotes physical, social, and environmental well-being look like in 2040?

By projecting participants into possible futures, design fiction helped move beyond abstract debate. Citizens and stakeholders were encouraged to confront different viewpoints, identify potential tensions, and propose concrete actions. This method shows that innovation in governance can be social and imaginative, not only technological.

The Grenoble 2040 initiative demonstrates that stakeholder cooperation is central to climate-smart governance. By combining critical reflection on resource limits with participatory imagination and democratic dialogue, the city integrates environmental responsibility with social care.

In doing so, Grenoble illustrates a broader lesson: facing climate constraints requires not only smarter technologies, but also stronger cooperation, collective foresight, and the courage to rethink innovation itself.

The Current State of Climate Policy in Päijät-Häme Region



Engaging local decision makers and stakeholders in climate policies

For the past six months ClimateGO project has engaged local decision-makers throughout Päijät-Häme region. The mission has been to provide information to newly elected decision-makers and municipal authorities regarding climate change adaptation. This has included municipal visits, workshops, and distributing regional policy briefs to decision-makers. In addition, the ways in which decision-makers prefer to receive information related to climate change have been surveyed.

In October 2025, municipal decision-makers in Päijät-Häme were asked how they would best receive information about adapting to climate change. The theme was approached from two perspectives: 1) How would decision-makers personally like to receive information, and 2) What methods of communication generally reach decision-makers?

Decision-makers wanted information to be shared locally and focused on their own municipality, for example in connection with council meetings. Online events from the perspective of their own municipality also received support, but general webinars or videos did not inspire enthusiasm.

In short, the message gets across. In other words, short, informative messages are the most effective and are easily absorbed. (Open response.)

Of the respondents, 52% felt that the topic was prominently featured in decision-making, but only 40% believed that decision-makers had sufficient information. The majority did not see any challenges in adaptation, and 53% believed that decision-makers were also aware of the new opportunities brought about by climate change.

A total of 54 people responded to the survey sent to all municipal councilors in the region, giving a response rate of 17.4%. The survey was further explored in interviews that were conducted in November 2025. The results are still being analyzed and will be published at the "Smart Cities in Smart Regions" conference held in Lahti in the autumn.

Meetings with local governance stakeholders foster dialogue

Municipal elections took place in spring 2025 and about 40 percent of those elected were new councilors. ClimateGO project offered to introduce and discuss local climate and sustainability issues with municipal decision-makers. Three municipal meetings were organized in autumn 2025: online meetings with Asikkala and Kärkölä councils and a live meeting in Iitti. Sustainability issues were also discussed in an online training organized by the Regional Council for all region's councilors. The meetings highlighted the importance of face-to-face dialogue, but also the difficulties in organizing such discussions.

A planning tool for monitoring adaptation activities in municipalities originally developed in the Steps to Prepare for Climate Change project to assess climate change risks and evaluate municipal preparedness – has served as a basis for structured dialogue within municipalities. At the same time, broader discussions on climate change and resilience have taken place in several municipalities in the Päijät-Häme region. These discussions have been framed through the specific contextual perspectives of each municipality.

The tool is designed to clarify the concept of climate change adaptation and to identify practical measures that municipalities can implement to enhance adaptive capacity. It supports the assessment of a municipality's current level of adaptation and addresses multiple thematic areas, including buildings, transportation systems, water supply, power outages, flooding, green spaces and biodiversity, heat waves, and forest ecosystems. (Malinen-Lallukka et al. 2024, 117–125)

Regional work to adapt to climate change continues

During the ClimateGO project it has become increasingly clear that adaptation to climate change and climate-smart decision-making in municipalities are still in their early stages. Continued efforts are essential to advance this work. These efforts will be further supported by a new ERDF-funded project Climate Change Adaptation in Päijät-Häme Region, commencing in January 2026. The new project aims to strengthen climate change adaptation in Päijät-Häme by focusing on key industries and supporting municipalities in identifying and implementing adaptation measures. Its primary objectives include helping regional industries adapt to climate risks and advancing the implementation of regional and municipal climate and adaptation plans.

The current state of climate policy in Podravje region



Photo credit: Rok Breznik

Local Green Deals in Maribor and the Podravje Region: From vision to implementation

Over the past two years, Maribor and the wider Podravje region have taken important steps towards the development of Local Green Deals – structured partnerships between the public sector, businesses, research institutions, and civil society aimed at the coordinated and just implementation of climate and sustainability measures. These processes represent a local reflection of the European Green Deal, adapted to the specific challenges of the region.

Why Local Green Deals?

Climate challenges in Podravje are significant: heatwaves in the urban environment of Maribor and other towns in the region, flood risks along the Drava River and its tributaries, periods of drought, and impacts on agriculture and forests. At the same time, the region is marked by an industrial legacy and socio-economic challenges, which means that the green transition must also be socially just.

A local green deal is therefore not merely an environmental document, but a process of aligning interests: how to simultaneously address energy efficiency, emission reductions, strengthened climate adaptation, the protection of vulnerable groups, and the preservation of economic competitiveness.

The co-creation process: stakeholder engagement

In Maribor, the preparation of local green deals follows a participative approach. Key steps include:

- Stakeholders mapping (municipality, public utilities, university, regional development agency, NGOs, companies, local communities).
- Workshops and thematic meetings to define priority areas (energy, mobility, green infrastructure, water management, circular economy).
- Identification of concrete measures with the greatest impact and feasibility in the local context.
- Definition of indicators and performance criteria to enable progress monitoring.

Special emphasis is placed on involving vulnerable groups and smaller municipalities in the region, ensuring that the green transition does not remain limited to the city centres but extends across the wider Podravje area.

Linking with existing strategies

Local green deals in Maribor are not being developed from scratch. They build on already adopted documents, such as heat adaptation strategies, sustainable urban strategies, spatial plans, and regional development programmes. The main purpose of green deals is to integrate dispersed measures into a unified vision, ensure better cross-sectoral coordination, and strengthen access to European and national funding sources. In this way, local green deals function as an “operational bridge” between strategic objectives and concrete projects.

The regional dimension: Podravje as a pilot area

At the regional level, the Regional Development Agency for Podravje – Maribor plays a key role in connecting municipalities and facilitating the transfer of good practices. At the same time, together with partners in projects such as TICCA4DANU (Horizon Europe), it is developing models of transformative and just adaptation that go beyond the administrative boundaries of individual municipalities.

Challenges and opportunities

The preparation of local green deals also brings challenges: aligning diverse interests, ensuring long-term political support, limited human resources, the need for clear and measurable targets, and others. However, the process simultaneously strengthens trust among stakeholders and enables more stable and predictable development planning.

For Maribor and Podravje, local green deals represent an opportunity to position the region as a good practice example within the Danube Region – as an area where climate resilience, social justice, and economic development are addressed in an integrated manner.

Looking ahead

The next steps include the formalisation of agreements, the definition of priority investments, and the establishment of a monitoring system to track progress. It will be crucial to keep the process open and inclusive, while regularly communicating results to the public.

Local green deals are therefore not a one-off document, but a long-term process of learning, cooperation, and shared responsibility for the sustainable future of Maribor and the Podravje region.

The current state of climate policy in Waterford City



Stakeholder cooperation in Climate- smart governance

New eMobility eHub launches in Ballybricken, Waterford

On Friday, October 31st, Mayor Seamus Ryan officially launched the third of Ireland's four shared eMobility eHubs in Ballybricken, Waterford. These eHubs allow people to choose suitable transport options, encouraging them to explore various mobility solutions for work and city travel. Each site features an ESB charging station, one e-cargo bike, and four e-bikes. The two shared EVs, provided by Enterprise Car Club, can be booked for an hour or a day. The initiative is part of a broader strategy to promote shared transport in Ireland, reduce congestion and parking issues, and meet emissions targets, as shared mobility addresses urban development and environmental challenges.



Carbon Neutral Waterford City Steering Group

On November 19, 2025, the final meeting of the year was held with the Carbon Neutral Waterford City Steering Group. This group brings together key stakeholders dedicated to leading Waterford towards a low-carbon and sustainable future.

The meeting focused on the main Climate Action Projects for Waterford Council and the stakeholder organisations for 2026, discussing how we can work together to achieve climate-smart governance.

South East Energy Agency - South East ...Health Service Executive (HSE) ...South East Technological University ...IDA Ireland - Athlone ChamberWaterford Chamber of CommerceA group of people sitting at a table





Climate Innovation Programme

The Community-Based Climate Innovation Summit took place on 8th December 2025 at Trinity College Dublin, marking the conclusion of an intensive three-month programme. The initiative was co-delivered by Waterford City and County Council, Munster Technological University (MTU), and Trinity College Dublin through the Knowledge Centre for Carbon, Climate and Community Action (IKC3). The programme was supported by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) through the Human Capital Initiative (HCI).

The summit served as a national forum where participants from Waterford, Kerry, Meath, South Dublin, and Wicklow showcased community-led climate solutions developed over the course.



The Over 55s Climate Chats in Waterford have successfully wrapped up after six engaging workshops led by climate facilitator and former UN diplomat, Jacinta Barrins. Organised by our Climate Action and Age-Friendly teams, these free sessions at Dungarvan Library brought participants together over tea to discuss and learn about climate change in a relaxed setting.

Attendees shared inspiring stories about practical actions they took at home, such as installing solar panels and adopting energy-efficient practices. Many expressed increased confidence in discussing climate issues with family and friends. The program underscored the vital role older adults play in climate leadership and community action, and the enthusiasm shown throughout was truly inspiring.



Community Climate Action Fund

The Community Climate Action Programme (CCAP) is a 100% capital grant funded by the Department of the Environment and managed by local governments, such as Waterford City and County Council. This program empowers local non-profit groups to lead the transition to a low-carbon future. The projects must focus on one or more of the following areas: Energy (retrofits/solar), Travel (cycle hubs), Food & Waste (community gardens), Circular Economy (repair cafés), or Local Biodiversity. The grant is open to PPN-registered community groups, sports clubs, and environmental organisations. All potential applicants received support from the community climate action officer. We received more than 40 applications, and the successful applicants will be announce shortly.



The current state of climate policy in Košice Self-Governing Region



Expert Forum "WATER COUNCILS" Focused on Water Retention and Climate Resilience

On 9 December 2025, the Košice Self-Governing Region hosted the expert forum "WATER COUNCILS", aimed at fostering professional discussion and knowledge exchange on water retention measures and blue-green infrastructure as essential tools for climate change adaptation.

The event brought together experts from public administration, academia, and practice to address current challenges related to water management, landscape resilience, and sustainable solutions for regions increasingly exposed to droughts and extreme weather events.

Presentations in this part of the programme were delivered by representatives of regional institutions and academia, including experts from the Technical University of Košice, who highlighted the importance of evidence-based approaches and measurable impacts.

Practical experience with blue-green infrastructure

The second part of the forum focused on practical implementation of blue-green infrastructure. Guest speaker Michal Šereš from the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague shared real-world case studies, demonstrating which measures are most effective, what challenges typically arise during implementation, and what lessons can be drawn from practice.

These examples provided valuable insights into how nature-based solutions can be successfully applied in different local contexts.

Cooperation for a more resilient region

The forum concluded with a moderated discussion that enabled participants to exchange experiences, strengthen professional networks, and explore opportunities for future cooperation. The event represented an important step toward promoting sustainable water management and nature-based solutions in the Košice Region.

The expert forum was organised within the framework of the ClimateGo project and supports the region's long-term objective of building a more climate-resilient, water-sensitive, and sustainable landscape.



The Current State of Climate Policy in Alzira



Stakeholder cooperation for climate-smart governance: the case of Alzira

During semester 4 of the ClimateGO project, the Municipality of Alzira has strengthened its approach to emergency prevention and climate adaptation through governance based on stakeholder cooperation. In a context marked by the increasing impact of extreme weather events such as DANA episodes, the city is advancing coordination models that bring together public administrations, technical staff, emergency services, and citizens.

One of the most representative examples of this cooperation is the implementation of training activities and emergency simulations in schools, complemented by the organisation of emergency awareness days open to the public. These initiatives, addressed to primary and secondary school students, combine prior training with practical exercises to improve response capacity in real emergency situations. A wide range of stakeholders are actively involved, including Local Police, firefighters, Civil Protection, VACIF, the Red Cross, teaching staff, and the Municipality through the Office of Resilience and Strategic Projects.

These actions have been further reinforced through the organisation of a large-scale emergency awareness day, where additional actors such as the Military Emergency Unit (UME), Guardia Civil, National Police, forest brigades, and specialised rescue teams participated. The event included educational and interactive activities for children, such as demonstrations and the exhibition of emergency vehicles, bringing these services closer to the community and promoting a culture of prevention in a participatory way.

Alongside these practical actions, Alzira is promoting more strategic governance through the update of its Urban Agenda. This process is being developed col-

laboratively between municipal departments and external stakeholders, with the aim of incorporating a specific reconstruction annex following the DANA. This approach seeks not only to support recovery but also to establish a strategic framework to prevent future flood events.

In this context, cooperation with external institutions is essential. The Júcar Hydrographic Confederation is involved in planning actions related to flood risk management, while CEAM provides technical expertise on climate adaptation. In coordination with the regional government (Generalitat Valenciana), guidelines and recommendations are also being developed for the creation and management of indoor and outdoor climate shelters.

Furthermore, Alzira has actively participated in knowledge exchange processes promoted by the Interreg Europe programme, such as peer reviews, including the one held in Sarajevo, where the city presented its Urban Agenda as a strategic tool for flood prevention. At the local level, Alzira has also hosted a peer review process for its Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP), strengthening decision-making through the incorporation of external expertise.

Overall, the experience of Alzira shows that climate-smart governance requires combining practical actions with strategic planning, always supported by strong stakeholder cooperation. This approach contributes to building a more prepared, coordinated, and resilient city in the face of current and future climate challenges.

ClimateGO organizes webinars

on themes related to climate change mitigation and adaptation from a governance perspective.

For more information, please visit our website

[Read more](https://interreurope.eu/climatego)

<https://interreurope.eu/climatego>



Watch ClimateGO video!

[Watch!](https://youtu.be/ACrTi20IsE7?si=imFfCQjmhBcin7e)

<https://youtu.be/ACrTi20IsE7?si=imFfCQjmhBcin7e>

Subscribe the Newsletter!

[Subscribe](http://eepurl.com/YhBIY)

<http://eepurl.com/YhBIY>

Lead Partner



LAB University of Applied Sciences
Finland – Etelä-Suomi

Contact

Marjut Villanen
RDI-specialist
+358 44 708 5208
marjut.villanen@lab.fi

Susanna Vanhamäki
Chief Specialist
+358 44 708 1516
susanna.vanhamaki@lab.fi

Hanna Suutari
RDI-Specialist
+358 50 473 4754
hanna.suutari@lab.fi

Project Partners



Regional Council of Päijät-Häme
Finland – Etelä-Suomi



City of Grenoble
France – Rhône-Alpes



Košice Self-Governing Region
Slovakia – Východné Slovensko



Alzira City Council
Spain – Comunitat Valenciana



Waterford City and County Council
Ireland – Southern



Regional development agency for Podravje - Maribor (RDAPM)
Slovenia – Vzhodna Slovenija