

PRESS RELEASE

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LEADnet launches to accelerate the Clean Energy Transition for local and regional authorities.

EU co-funded initiative gets off the ground to empower public authorities
with tailored capacity building and AI-driven tools,
to reach 2050 climate goals.



Photo: Consortium members at the LEADnet Kick of Meeting, 25 February 2026.

By 2050, the EU aims to achieve a net-zero economy, with carbon emissions reduced to near zero through deep emission cuts and targeted measures such as energy efficiency, renewable energy deployment, and sustainable urban planning. Local and regional authorities are a decisive lever for achieving this carbon neutrality target. However, many of them face significant challenges related to the multi-sectoral skills and data access required to effectively implement Clean Energy Transition plans and strategies.

To address this urgent need, the LEADnet project has officially launched, co-funded by the EU LIFE Clean Energy Transition sub-programme. LEADnet will empower public authorities with comprehensive capacity building and advanced digital tools, supporting them in the delivery of ambitious climate action plans.

Tailored Capacity Building

LEADnet addresses specific capacity gaps through a collaborative, co-creation approach involving local stakeholders. The project will design a modular Capacity Building Programme tailored to the diverse needs of municipalities to build technical, legal, financial, and social skills.

A cornerstone of LEADnet is its innovative digital infrastructure. The project integrates an open-source Knowledge Management System with a new, AI-powered smart management layer. These advanced data-driven algorithms will provide LRAs with highly customized suggestions on priority energy transition measures and relevant training materials, based on their local context and available resources.

Large-Scale Impact across Europe

To demonstrate its versatility, LEADnet will be deployed across three diverse, large-scale European pilots: Catalonia (Spain), Ile-de-France (France), and the County of Norrbotten (Sweden). Through these pilots and a train-the-trainer cascade model, the initiative expects to train over 1,000 policymakers and public officers and support the implementation of 736 clean energy transition actions.

The project officially started on February 2026 and will develop its activity for 36 months.

Building on a Sustainable Legacy

During the opening meeting, Mrs. Anna Camp, Director of ICAEN, remarked the relevance of projects sustainability – specifically, the capacity for initiatives to continue after European funding ends. LEADnet is a strong example of this approach, as it advances the work initiated by the ePLANET project.

Funded by Horizon 2020 between 2021 and 2024, ePLANET focused on facilitating the deployment of coordinated energy transition actions by the public sector. LEADnet now builds upon the platform and digitalisation methodologies and harmonisation approaches for Energy Transition plans developed during ePLANET project, fostering further collaboration and the exchange of best practices among local and regional authorities for the implementation of energy transition action plans.



Photo: Anna Camp, Director of ICAEN, during LEADnet Kick of Meeting, 25 February 2026.

About the Consortium

The consortium unites eight expert partners from across the EU:

- CIMNE (International Centre for Numerical Methods in Engineering), project coordinator.
- FEDARENE (European network of regional and local energy agencies and regions).
- ICAEN (public energy agency of Catalonia).
- Energikontor Norr AB (regional energy agency for the county of Norrbotten in Sweden).
- Institut Paris Region (energy and climate department of Paris region).
- ESTRATS (sustainability transition consultancy).
- Three O'clock (social impact consultancy),
- INERGY (a third-party entity of CIMNE).

Contact details

Project coordination: CIMNE, Stoyan Danov – contact@leadnet-life.eu

Communication manager: ESTRATS – media@leadnet-life.eu