Building Local Climate Action

**A Practical Handbook & Toolkit for Enablers
Turning Participation into Impact**
Based on the Climathon methodology

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About the project: Outline

The Handbook & Toolkit **Building Local Climate Action** is a direct outcome of the **Enable the Enabler|Climate Action (EECA)** project (2024-2026).

The project brought together partner organisations from Czech Republic, Austria, and Turkey to strengthen local capacity for participatory climate action. It focused on developing and testing practical approaches that enable individuals and communities to initiate, organise, and sustain collaborative climate processes in their own contexts.

Building on the global Climathon methodology, implemented in more than 100 countries, EECA translated this experience into structured training, real-world application, and practical tools for locally anchored action.

What Happened — In a Nutshell

Between 2024 and 2026, the partners:

- Designed and tested an applied Enable-the-Enabler training programme grounded in real-world implementation
- Organised and facilitated multiple Climathons across diverse local contexts
- Adapted the methodology for schools, municipalities, cultural organisations, community groups, and young people
- Implemented both concise, one-day formats and extended, multi-phase processes integrating preparation, co-creation, and follow-up

The project reframed Climathons from one-off events to structured processes that move from participation to implementation.

Key Activities

- International exchange and joint learning
- Development and delivery of a modular, practice-based training programme
- Organisation and facilitation of Climathons in schools, municipalities, conferences, and community settings
- Adaptation of participatory formats for children, youth, and multi-stakeholder groups
- Mentoring, peer learning, and structured evaluation
- Development of practical tools, templates, and facilitation frameworks

About the project: Key Outputs

Implemented Local Actions

- Greening and climate adaptation measures (e.g. tree planting, urban cooling concepts, biodiversity initiatives)
- Student-led sustainability projects (food rescue, clothing swaps, clean-up campaigns, planting actions)
- Climate education tools (digital and analogue climate games)
- Community-based concepts (green campuses, composting ideas, rewilding activities, public space improvements)
- Creative climate communication formats using storytelling, arts, and participatory methods

Strengthened Enabler Capacity

- Local actors gained hands-on experience in designing and facilitating participatory processes
- Improved role clarity between organisers, facilitators, and stakeholders
- Tested approaches for working with children, youth, creatives, and multi-stakeholder groups
- Practical learning on follow-up structures, implementation pathways, and stakeholder anchoring
- Cross-country exchange of methods and facilitation insights

Methodological Development

- Adaptation of the Climathon methodology to different contexts (schools, municipalities, festivals, community settings)
- Clear distinction between minimum viable formats and extended process models
- Development of reusable tools, checklists, and facilitation templates — consolidated in this Handbook & Toolkit

How to Use This Handbook & Toolkit

This handbook & toolkit is a practical guide for initiating and organising local climate action through participatory, inclusive, and co-creative formats such as Climathons. It addresses the gap between motivation and implementation, providing tools for clarity, structure, and continuity, and inspiration through real-world examples. It complements the Enable-the-Enabler training.

It is written for both professionals (municipal staff, educators, NGOs, regional managers) and engaged citizens who want to activate and support climate processes in their communities.

First-time organisers can follow it step by step. Experienced practitioners may consult specific sections on challenge design, facilitation, stakeholder engagement, organisation, or follow-up.

Think of it as a field manual: something you return to while planning, facilitating, or reflecting.

Who This Handbook & Toolkit Is For (and for whom not)

This kit is intended for people who want to hold participatory climate processes in their local context, including:

- Municipal staff and regional managers
- Educators and school leaders
- NGOs and community organisers
- Sustainability officers
- Cultural institutions and creative hubs
- Engaged citizens and local initiatives

You do not need to be a climate expert.

You do need the willingness to bring people together and guide a structured process responsibly.

This kit may not be the right fit if:

- *You are looking for a ready-made event script that requires no adaptation.*
- *You want a purely technical manual focused on scientific or engineering solutions.*
- *You are seeking a top-down communication campaign rather than a participatory process.*
- *You expect immediate large-scale impact without investing in facilitation, preparation, and follow-up.*
- *You prefer competitive formats over collaborative co-creation.*

Climathon-based processes require relational work, shared ownership, and continuity beyond a single event.

1. Introduction and Underlying Approach

1.1 Why This Handbook?

Climate change, biodiversity loss, and related social and economic challenges are no longer abstract global issues: We experience heatwaves, water scarcity, floods, extreme weather events, food insecurity, and social tensions at the local level. At the same time, we have seen that people feel a growing sense of urgency combined with exhaustion or uncertainty about how to act effectively.

Climathons and similar participatory formats respond to this situation by creating safe, structured spaces in which people can share concerns, articulate needs, and collaboratively develop concrete, locally grounded solutions. They connect actors who rarely meet in everyday contexts for this specific purpose of collaboration: citizens, youth, municipalities, associations, experts, businesses, educators, and civil society organisations.

This handbook synthesises years of practical experience in organising Climathons across different countries and contexts. It translates these experiences into a clear, replicable framework that enables others to organise similar formats in their own communities.

1.2 What Is a Climathon – and What Is It Not?

A Climathon is neither a traditional workshop nor a lecture-based educational format. It is a co-creative process that brings people together to understand local challenges, develop shared perspectives, and initiate concrete actions.

Inspired by the hackathon logic, Climathons are intensive, collaborative, and outcome-oriented. But they are not limited to a fixed duration or format: A Climathon may last a few hours or several days. It may take place in a school, a community centre, a rural municipality, a coworking space, or in a hybrid setting. What matters is not the length of the event, but the quality of facilitation, the relevance of the challenge, and the connection to follow-up and implementation.

A Climathon is not a marketing or promotional event, a purely educational lecture, a competition focused on winning ideas, or a platform dominated by experts.

A Climathon is:

- an invitation to collective action,
- a space where diversity of perspectives becomes productive,
- a process that combines realism with future-oriented thinking,
- a format that translates motivation into concrete next steps.

1.3. Enable the Enabler – The Project

Implemented by the partner organisations Veronica (CZ), Originn Creative Hub (TR), and FBW/4 (AT), the project approaches the Climathon methodology as a replicable and sustainable model for learning and action. The project focuses on developing locally grounded climate solutions and strengthening community leaders who can translate ideas into practice.

The learning journey combines input sessions, real-world Climathon experiences, observation and feedback phases, and one-to-one mentoring. Structured in three modules, it guides participants from foundational understanding to adapting the methodology and facilitating their first Climathon.

Enablers learn through direct experience and contextual adaptation, developing Climathon frameworks tailored to their local ecosystems. This process supports the sustainable and scalable spread of community-based climate action.

The training strengthens those who create and hold participatory spaces. Enablers connect stakeholders, design processes, mobilise resources, and ensure continuity beyond a single event.

The approach is guided by the following principles:

→ **Low-threshold participation:**
Formats are accessible regardless of prior knowledge, professional background, or financial means.

→ **Co-creation alongside expertise:**
Complex local challenges require collective intelligence in dialogue with expert knowledge

→ **Process over perfection:**
Change evolves through iterative steps, reflection, and adaptation rather than fixed master plans.

→ **Active hope ≠ naïve optimism:**
Hope grows from agency, connection, and visible progress — without ignoring complexity.

→ **Regeneration and "do less, better":**
Inspired by regenerative thinking and Doughnut Economics, the approach emphasises trust, focus, and meaningful impact over excessive control.

An Organiser's Journey: The Enable-the-Enabler training

We offer a training for enablers who wish to organise a Climathon in their community. We have designed it hands-on, because we know your time is valuable.

The three interactive modules guide you from the design to the rollout of your Climathon, taileored to the needs of your community (cf. „Climathon Organisers' Roadmap").

If you are interested in the training, reach out to the partners, the contact details are provded on the page. 2

Module 1
Onboarding & Context
Background knowledge & first steps

Impulse

Citizen participation & the climate crisis – why are local solutions needed?

First Steps

Who is / where is my community?

How am I connected to this community?

What local issues concern me in my community?

How can a Climathon help address these issues?

What do I want to achieve with the Climathon?

Learning Objective

Understanding the role of the Climathon in local climate action

Time

2 hours, online

We highly recommend to participate in a Climathon previously

Module 2
Climathon Organisation
From idea to implementation

Topic

Structure, roles, entry points

Location Analysis

What issues concern my community?

Who is interested in working on these issues – and why?

What do I bring to the table?

(networks in the area, knowledge, skills)

Where do I need support?

What can the Climathon be connected with?

Can it be integrated into an existing program?

Learning Objective

Initial orientation in organising your own Climathon: identifying topics and required resources

Clarity about your own role & network (strengths & weaknesses) and boundaries within the given framework

Time

4 hours, in person

Module 3
Transfer – My Climathon
From planning to execution

Topic

Concept, communication & implementation

Planning & Organisation

What makes my Climathon unique?

How do I reach the right participants?

What materials, mentors, and partners do I need?

Who is part of my team?

How will we finance it?

Output

Completed concept including a communication plan

Time

Preparing a Climathon with stakeholders from your community may take more time than expected.

We recommend starting half a year before the desired date (decision-making processes may take time).

Format

Buddy system & coaching session

Implementation

(Co-)organisation of your first Climathon (in-person event)

Date

To be defined by you

For successful completion of the training

Submission of a written summary of results (process, outputs, photos, etc.) (digital)

2. The Role of Enablers

2.1 Who Are Enablers?

Enablers may be professional or non-professional actors:

Professional enablers include people working in municipalities, education, NGOs, coworking spaces, regional development, or sustainability programmes. They often have access to networks and institutional resources but must navigate complex stakeholder expectations.

Non-professional enablers include engaged citizens, volunteers, association members, youth groups, or informal initiatives. They are often deeply connected to local realities but may lack formal resources or experience in organising participatory processes.

In both cases, enablers are not expected to be experts in all areas. Their strength lies in **creating frameworks, building trust, and enabling collaboration.**

2.2 Core Competencies of Enablers

Based on project experience and evaluation of previous Climathons, five key competency areas are essential:

- Community and relationship skills: building trust, motivation, and belonging; listening and conflict sensitivity.
- Facilitation and process skills: guiding group dynamics, enabling participation, working with feedback and reflection.
- Organisational skills: planning, logistics, time management, and role clarity.
- Stakeholder and partnership skills: engaging municipalities, experts, NGOs, and sponsors transparently and ethically.
- Content framing skills: understanding climate-related topics sufficiently to frame challenges clearly and accessibly.

2.3 Roles Within a Climathon Team

Climathons work best when responsibilities are shared within a small core team. At minimum, the following roles should be covered:

- **Coordination / Project Lead:** overall responsibility, stakeholder communication, timeline.
- **Facilitation / Process Lead:** agenda design, moderation, group dynamics.
- **Communication & Organisation:** outreach, participant management, logistics.

Additional supporting roles may include coaches, technical support, documentation, and volunteers.

2. The Role of Enablers: Lessons learned

Multi-Stakeholder Anchoring (TR)

Originn Creative Hub has worked closely with policy makers, local authorities, business associations, and industry actors to ensure that Climathon challenges are grounded in real local priorities.

By involving decision-makers and practitioners early in the process, proposed solutions were more realistic, feasible, and aligned with existing implementation pathways. This multi-stakeholder approach increased the likelihood that ideas could move beyond discussion and translate into concrete action.

The experience highlights a key principle: when relevant institutions are engaged from the outset, participatory processes gain legitimacy, clarity, and stronger implementation potential.

The Role of Facilitation (CZ)

During the organisation of several Climathons, mentoring and coordination support were offered to local enablers, including facilitation assistance. In some cases, facilitation was declined, as the formats were perceived as simple (e.g. expert walks followed by outdoor discussions and idea brainstorming).

While engagement was strong, the project planning phase lacked structure. Discussions remained broad, next steps were not clearly defined, and ownership was not consistently assigned. In a few instances, interpersonal tensions emerged that were not actively moderated.

This experience reinforced a key insight: even shorter or seemingly informal formats benefit from clear facilitation and timekeeping. A designated facilitator helps guide discussions toward concrete actions, manage group dynamics, and maintain focus on implementation.

Non-Negotiables from Practice
(Cross-Country Insight)

- **No lone enablers**. Every Climathon requires at least two core roles: process (facilitation) and organisation. If responsibility rests on one person, both continuity and well-being are at risk.

- **Facilitation and timekeeping must be assigned**. Even small formats benefit from clearly defined roles to guide focus and group dynamics.

- **Follow-up ownership must be defined upfront**. Before the event ends, it should be clear who carries each next step forward.

3. Understanding Local Contexts

3.1 From Global Challenges to Local Questions

Whether addressing climate adaptation, water management, food systems, mobility, or biodiversity, meaningful action starts with locally relevant questions. People engage when they see how an issue affects their daily lives and when solutions feel achievable.

Climathons **translate global challenges into concrete local contexts**. Expert input is valuable, but it should inform, not dominate, the process.

3.2 Local and Community Analysis

Before defining a Climathon challenge, **consider:**

- Which issues are currently discussed locally?
- Who is affected and how?
- Which initiatives already exist?
- Where are conflicts or tensions?
- Which resources can be mobilised locally?

3.3 Working With Diversity

Climathons bring together people with different backgrounds, interests, and perspectives. Effective facilitation works **constructively** with these differences.

Key practices include:

- clear communication principles,
- small-group work,
- active listening,
- translating conflicts into shared questions.

The topics follow the audience (CZ)

- A parent initiated a community of parents and children reconnecting with nature through rewilding projects.
- A professor guided students in developing campus greening solutions.
- A team generated project ideas to be implemented in their local community.

Participation Pathway

- ☐ Open **calls** alone rarely have enough traction – especially in community settings.
- ☐ **Participation** increases when Climathons are embedded in existing ecosystems such as schools, associations, cultural spaces, festivals, or local events.
- ☐ **Warm-up touchpoints** (e.g. walks, assemblies, creative sessions) build trust before moving into problem-solving.
- ☐ **Start with this question**: Where do people already gather, and how can we connect to that?

4. The Climathon Journey

4.1 Climathons as a Process

Climathons should be understood as a process consisting of three phases:

1. **Preparation and warm-ups:** building trust, mobilising participants, engaging stakeholders.
2. **The Climathon event:** co-creation, teamwork, development of ideas and project outlines.
3. **Follow-up and implementation:** mentoring, partnerships, communication, and monitoring.

Warm-Up Formats

Warm-ups are preparatory activities such as information sessions, site visits, school workshops, or stakeholder meetings. They help clarify the challenge, attract participants, and build commitment.

Typical Climathon Structure

A typical Climathon includes:

- arrival and framing,
- challenge introduction,
- team formation,
- working phases with coaching,
- presentations,
- reflection and next steps.

A Warm-up activates participation (AT)

Format: A public movie night with an open expert discussion (Day 1), followed by a dedicated Climathon day (Day 2).

Impact: The warm-up created a low-threshold entry point and a shared emotional reference. Participants arrived on Day 2 informed, motivated, and ready to engage in solution-oriented work.

Transferable lesson: Adding a preparatory event to an open call builds trust and momentum before co-creation begins.

Adapting a Climathon to Youth (AT)

Format: The Climathon journey was divided into three sessions on three separate days to fit the school timetable. We used the time in-between for reflection.

Outcomes: Students developed proposals, including a learning café, climate-resilient town centre concepts, and sustainable mobility ideas.

Transferable lesson: When working with youth, adjust pacing and structure to their energy, focus, and everyday realities.

4.2 Defining the intensity of the intervention: Minimum Viable Climathon vs. Extended Climathon Process

Use this as a planning decision tool. Start with the minimum viable version if resources are limited, but design for follow-up from day one.

Rule of thumb: If the target group includes children, overworked volunteers, or stakeholders who rarely meet, choose an extended process with smaller steps.

	Minimum Viable Climathon (MVC)	Extended Climathon Process (ECP)
Typical duration	4–9 hours (or 1 day)	2+ touchpoints over weeks/months (e.g., warm-up → co-creation day → implementation sprints)
Best for	First-time organisers, clear topic, limited capacity	Complex challenges, diverse stakeholders, youth/children formats, implementation focus
Warm-ups	One short briefing + local challenge framing	Pre-events (e.g., movie night, site visits, expert walk, stakeholder meeting)
Core outputs	1–5 project concepts with next steps, named owners, first partners	Implementation-ready roadmaps + pilots, partnerships, ongoing community groups
Follow-up	1 check-in within 2–4 weeks + handover to a host organisation	Mentoring/buddy system + recurring check-ins + lightweight tracking
Typical risks	Ideas remain abstract; low continuity	Process fatigue; needs clear pacing and distributed responsibilities

Enabler checklist

☐ Choose **MVC vs ECP** (Section 4.2) based on target group, complexity, and capacity.

☐ Define your '**process owner**' for follow-up (person and host organisation).

☐ Plan at least one **warm-up** (briefing, walk, movie night, or stakeholder round) before the co-creation session.

☐ Make time for **reflection and next steps**; end with owners, dates, and a first check-in.

Climathon Journeys: Two-Day Climathon "The Future of Water" (TR)

This example illustrates a structured, two-day Climathon format integrating co-creation, mentoring, and reflection, itself embedded into a larger conference.

Day 1 – Understanding and Developing Ideas

Arrival & Framing

Arrival, informal exchange, and introduction to the local challenge.

Clarification of purpose and expectations.

Team Formation & Challenge Definition

Participants form teams and refine the challenge from their perspective.

Working Phases I & II

Structured idea development supported by:

- mentoring sessions
- guided workshops
- introduction to simple prototyping methods

Evening Reflection

Check-in and reflection to consolidate learning and clarify next steps.

Day 2 – Refinement and Commitment

Warm-up & Focus

Reconnecting the group and clarifying goals for the day.

Working Phase III

Refinement of concepts and preparation for presentation.

Test Presentations & Feedback

Preliminary feedback rounds to strengthen proposals.

Final Presentations & Next Steps

Public presentation, feedback (e.g. jury or stakeholders), and clarification of follow-up responsibilities.

Transferable insight:

A clear rhythm of framing → development → mentoring → reflection → presentation supports both creativity and implementation focus.
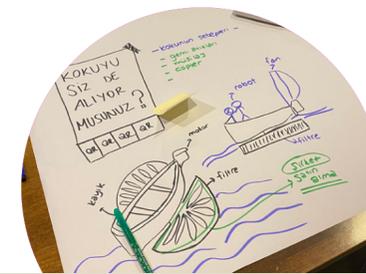
Climathon Journeys: A Short, Community-Based Climathon Adapted for Parents and Children (TR)

In this case, the Climathon format has been adapted to the time constraints and energy levels of the specific target groups.

Session 1 – Adults / Parents (Outdoor Focus)

- Connection & Grounding: Welcome circle, introduction to the Climathon idea, and shared vision setting.
- Experiential Learning: Storytelling, nature-based activities, and guided reflection (e.g. how personal experiences shape one's relationship to land and environment).
- Dialogue & Idea Framing: Small-group exchange and initial project ideas.
- Drafting Proposals: Indoor session to outline first project steps.

Session 2 – Parents and Children

- Shared Experience Outdoors: Name games, storytelling, gratitude or grounding rituals, and guided nature activities.
- Connecting Personal Experience to Action: Group dialogue (e.g. how parenthood shapes the relationship to nature).
- Selection of Focus: Participants select one concrete idea to develop further.
- Planning Next Steps: Indoor session to define responsibilities and immediate actions.

Further meetings can follow depending on the chosen project and implementation needs.

Transferable insight:

When working with families or time-constrained groups, shorter sessions, outdoor elements, and experiential methods build trust and engagement before moving into structured planning.

5. Challenge Design

5.1 Why the Challenge Matters

The challenge defines the direction of the entire process. If it is too broad, outcomes remain vague; if too narrow, participants feel constrained.

A good challenge is locally grounded, clearly phrased, open-ended, and connected to realistic implementation opportunities.

5.2 Formulating Effective Challenges

Effective challenges often start with:

- "How might we…"
- "How can our community…"
- "How can we collectively achieve…?"

5.3 Stakeholder Involvement

Early engagement of municipalities or institutions increases the likelihood of follow-up and implementation. Roles and expectations should be clarified transparently.

Challenge archetypes
(with country examples)

- **Place-based challenges** (AT): cooling a square, greening a campus, redesigning public space.
- **Behaviour-based challenges** (AT/TR): food rescue, clothing swaps, waste reduction.
- **Systems-based challenges** (CZ/TR): community food systems, composting, school–municipality interfaces.
- **Creative-communication challenges** (TR): murals, storytelling, games, public interventions.

Choose the archetype consciously – it shapes methods, outputs, and follow-up.

Challenge Design checklist

- ☐ Write the **challenge** in one sentence (How might we…?) with a clear local anchor (place, system, or community).
- ☐ Check the **scope**: not too broad (vague), not too narrow (pre-decided).
- ☐ Identify 2–5 **stakeholders** who can enable implementation and involve them early.
- ☐ Define **success criteria** for the day: what must teams deliver (e.g., roadmap, owners, first partners)?

5. Challenge Design: Case Examples

Youth & Arts (TR)

Challenge: How can children imagine and communicate future climate-resilient food and water systems through play and storytelling?

Outputs:

- Storytelling-based climate communication concepts
- Creative prototypes (murals, art-based interventions, playful formats)
- Participatory assemblies adapted to children
- Increased climate literacy and confidence among participants

Stakeholders involved:

Children and youth, teachers, artists, creative facilitators, local producers, NGOs, and municipal representatives.

University Campus (CZ)

Challenge: How can a university campus become greener and more biodiversity-friendly while strengthening student ownership?

Outputs:

- Green campus proposals (tree planting, biodiversity zones)
- Community composting concepts
- Formation of student sustainability groups
- Direct dialogue with faculty leadership

Stakeholders involved:

University students, professors, faculty leadership, sustainability experts, local community actors.

Intergenerational implementation (AT)

Challenge: How can the „Platz der Generationen" be transformed into a cooler, greener, and socially inclusive space under increasing heat stress?

Outputs:

- Building on the framing of a "Park of Generations", create lived spaces with large-canopy trees, shaded seating, and biodiversity elements
- Proposal for rainwater use and nature-based cooling measures
- Initiation of a scientific study on natural cooling potential
- Implementation of a mini-forest (625 native trees and shrubs) at the local care centre

Stakeholders involved:

Citizens, students, care home director, local schools, municipal representatives, environmental experts, Citizens Forests initiative.

6. Facilitation and Co-Creation

6.1 Facilitation Basics

Good facilitation creates safety, clarity, balanced participation, and momentum. It allows different perspectives to emerge while keeping the process focused.

6.2 Methods Used

The handbook draws on:

- Design Thinking,
- Co-Creation approaches,
- Futures Literacy,
- Storytelling,
- Embodiment practices.
- Awareness Creation
- Collaborative Production with Different Disciplines

6.3 Working With Emotions and Fatigue

Many participants are motivated but also tired or frustrated. Facilitators should acknowledge emotions, focus on achievable steps, and distribute responsibility within the group.

Method selection by target group

- **Children & youth:** imagination, play, repetition, shorter sessions (TR school formats).
- **Creatives:** storytelling, visibility, emotional framing, public output (TR murals & art).
- **Communities:** field experience, real stakeholders, concrete places (CZ expert walks).
- **Mixed groups:** clear facilitation, small groups, tangible artefacts to anchor discussion.

Facilitation Learnings

- Every Climathon needs a **clearly designated facilitator and timekeeper**, even in short or informal formats.
- Without facilitation, groups tend to remain in discussion and brainstorming, with limited **transition to concrete planning**.
- **Age-appropriate pacing** is critical: children benefit from imagination, play, and repetition; adults need clarity, structure, and realism.
- **Emotional engagement** (fieldwork, storytelling, art) significantly increases motivation and learning retention.

6. Facilitation and Co-Creation: Lessons Learned

What happens when facilitation is 'optional' (CZ)

Context:

In shorter community-based formats (e.g. expert walks followed by open discussion), facilitation support was considered unnecessary.

What happened:

Discussions remained broad and exploratory, but concrete planning steps were not clearly defined. In some cases, interpersonal tensions emerged without structured moderation.

Transferable lesson:

Even small or informal formats require a designated facilitator and timekeeper. Clear process guidance helps translate dialogue into action and supports constructive group dynamics.

Gamification as a Co-Creation Tool (AT)

Context:

A Climathon focused on climate adaptation and public space quality through game-based formats.

What emerged:

Participants developed two concepts: a digital future-oriented climate game and an analogue board game for families. The playful approach made complex topics more accessible and strengthened engagement and confidence.

Transferable lesson:

Game-based methods can increase accessibility, motivation, and learning retention — particularly when working with young people or complex themes.

Facilitation checklist

☐ Assign a **facilitator** and a **timekeeper** (non-negotiable).

☐ Set **participation rules** (equal voice, listening, respectful disagreement).

☐ Use **methods** that fit the target group (games for youth, fieldwork for communities, storytelling for creatives).

☐ Build in **'from idea to action' moments**: prioritisation, feasibility check, and next-step planning.

7. Organisation and Implementation

7.1 From Event Organiser to Process Holder

Climathons can generate strong momentum — but without structure, that momentum fades.

Effective enablers move beyond organising single events and instead hold a longer-term process that includes:

- Early collaboration with relevant stakeholders
- Clear facilitation and role definition
- A realistic follow-up strategy

This shift requires shared responsibility and institutional anchoring.

7.2 Core Elements of Lightweight Project Management

To support this process, focus on a few essentials:

- Clear objectives
- Defined roles (coordination, facilitation, communication)
- A realistic timeline (preparation → event → follow-up)
- Stakeholder mapping
- A minimal but transparent budget
- Communication and outreach through trusted networks
- Keep it simple. Clarity prevents overload.

Minimum Viable Resource Plan

People

At minimum:

- 1 facilitator
- 1 organiser
- Optional: coaches or subject experts

Time

- Preparation: 30–50 hours
- Event: 1–2 days
- Follow-up: 10 hours over 3-6 months

Budget Categories

- Space
- Materials
- Food
- Facilitation
- Documentation

A hybrid funding model works best: combine modest cash budgets with in-kind and service contributions.

**7.3 Sponsor Engagement
& Financial Resource Management**

Sponsorship processes should be guided by a clear value proposition aligned with the Climathon's mission and ethical framework. This includes defining visibility opportunities, stakeholder benefits, and expected impact.

Financial planning should outline budget categories and a hybrid funding model, combining cash contributions, in-kind support, and service-based sponsorships. Effective sponsor engagement relies on well-prepared meeting strategies, transparent communication, and clear alignment of expectations.

Basic contractual considerations—such as scope of support, branding rules, reporting obligations, and exit clauses—should be clearly defined to ensure accountability, transparency, and long-term collaboration.

Sponsorship checklist
(for Organisers)

Before Sponsor Outreach

☐ Define the Climathon's value proposition and impact goals

☐ Identify target sponsors aligned with ethical guidelines

☐ Prepare budget breakdown and funding needs

During Sponsor Meetings

☐ Present sponsorship models (cash, in-kind, service-based)

Organisation checklist

☐ Build a small core team and define roles clearly (coordination, facilitation, comms/logistics).

☐ Create a realistic timeline (including warm-ups, event, and follow-up check-ins).

☐ Prepare a minimal budget and identify funding mix (cash + in-kind + services).

☐ Plan documentation (photos/notes, outputs) and communication of results

8. After the Climathon: Ensuring Impact

8.1 Follow-Up Structures

Follow-up should be planned in advance and include mentoring, stakeholder engagement, and regular check-ins.

Simple follow-up rhythm

- **Before the Climathon:** fix date & define host for first follow-up with key stakeholders like municipality.
- **Month 1-2:** check-in on responsibilities and barriers.
- **Month 3**: visible first action or decision (meeting with stakeholder, plan for a pilot, study, or partnership).
- **Month 6**: review progress, adapt plan, decide on continuation.

8.2 Measuring Impact

Simple indicators help track progress:

- **Outputs**: participants, ideas, teams formed.
- **Outcomes**: actions started, partners involved, resources mobilised.
- **Early impact signals:** pilot actions, studies launched, institutional anchoring.

Keep it lightweight – the goal is learning, not reporting.

Impact checklist

- ☐ Fix the first follow-up before closing (date + responsibilities).
- ☐ Assign clear ownership for each project (person + host institution).
- ☐ Track simple progress: output → first action → next step.
- ☐ Capture lessons quickly and adjust (what worked, what to change, what to keep).
- ☐ Share results and learnings to sustain momentum (pilot actions, partnerships, next milestones, case study).

From Idea to Implemented Action (AT)

Context:

A Climathon focused on urban heat stress and improving public space.

What was implemented:

- 625 native trees and shrubs were planted at a local care home.
- The planting was integrated into school biology lessons to ensure long-term care.
- A scientific study on natural cooling of the Platz der Generationen was initiated, linking citizen proposals with expert planning.

Why it mattered:

Ideas were anchored in existing institutions (school, municipality) and connected to clear implementation pathways.

Transferable lesson:

Implementation succeeds when responsibilities are shared with local institutions and follow-up is embedded in existing structures.

Immediate Action Builds Ownership (AT)

Context:

A school-based Climathon focusing on sustainability in everyday life.

What was implemented:

Student teams carried out projects within the same semester, including food rescue initiatives, tree planting, clothing swaps, and clean-up activities.

Why it mattered:

Visible action shortly after the event strengthened confidence and sustained engagement.

Transferable lesson:

Early, tangible implementation increases ownership and motivation — especially in educational settings.

9. Learning From Practice

Case Study | Veronica (CZ)

Context

A university teacher organised a Climathon to engage students in sustainability and involve them in shaping the future direction of the faculty.

Challenge

Participant numbers were unstable: around one third of registered participants withdrew shortly before the event. In addition, the six-hour format limited time for deeper project development and concrete planning.

Process

The standard Climathon structure was followed in a condensed format. University staff supported logistics and communication. Two facilitators and one expert accompanied the working phases, and the faculty dean attended the final presentations.

Lessons Learned

- A preliminary meeting can strengthen commitment and reduce last-minute cancellations.

- A duration of at least 8–9 hours allows sufficient time for structured project planning.

- Even within a short format, student engagement extended beyond the event, with continued collaboration afterwards.

Case Study | Originn Creative Hub (TR)

Context

Enablers trained within the project facilitated a child-focused Climathon process, requiring adaptation to age, learning pace, and school schedules.

Challenge

The traditional 24-hour format proved unsuitable for younger participants. In addition, implementation during the summer holiday created continuity and motivation challenges.

Process

The format was redesigned into shorter, modular phases spread over time. Teachers were actively involved, strengthening facilitation quality and alignment with the local context.

Lessons Learned

- The Climathon methodology must be adapted to age and context.

- Phased processes increase accessibility, engagement, and learning retention.

- Involving educators strengthens both facilitation and long-term impact.

Selected Quotes & Survey Insights

"I watched with admiration how young participants—some of whom were my professional peers—demonstrated strong curiosity, genuine interest, and ownership of the process. In a very short time, they developed projects and presented them to the public with full conviction and excellent time management."

"Sometimes it helps just to say it out loud and materialize the challenges we think we face. Climaton „guided" us through the entire process in a very structured way, and at the end we presented the results of our group work to each other. This part was the most empowering."

"For us as food community volunteers, the Climathon was a warm and hopeful experience that reminded us that 'despite everything, we can succeed together.' We realised once again how important the support and ideas of young people are, and that we should create more opportunities to come together, listen, and collaborate. Similar events can further encourage joint thinking, idea generation, and action between young people and food communities."

"The biggest challenge was definitely the uncertain number of participants – just before the event, about a third of those who had registered withdrew. Next time, it might be a good idea to hold preliminary meetings before the event so that participants get involved and motivated to come again."

"From the beginning of the collaboration, we had concerns about whether the 24-hour Climathon format was suitable for the participants' age group. By dividing the process into shorter phases and involving school teachers, we developed a more sustainable and age-appropriate approach aligned with the target participant profile."

"This pilot showed that groups usually excluded from Climathons, such as parents and caregivers with young children, can participate meaningfully when the format is adapted to their real-life constraints.This Klimathon used shorter, flexible sessions and community-focused activities, making it easier for people with limited time and energy to engage. For future events, a staggered, handover-style approach - where activities happen over several sessions and responsibilities can be shared or passed between participants, groups, or organizers - could make participation even easier. It could also give ideas more time to develop, adapt, and reach beyond the group."

10. Toolbox and Templates

Hands-on: Mapping & Facilitating the Process

This guide may be your practical companion before, during, and after a Climathon, with **guiding check points** in the upper section, **guiding questions** in the bottom section.

pre-Climathon

1. Orient & Decide

- Clarify purpose, target group, and context.
- Decide: Minimum Viable Climathon or Extended Process.
- Name core roles and follow-up owner.

Who is the primary target group?

Which local issue feels urgent and tangible?

Do we need an MVP or an extended process? Why?

Who will hold the process after the event?

2. Prepare & Warm Up

- Build participation through trusted channels.
- Use warm-ups: walks, assemblies, movie nights, creative sessions.
- Frame the local challenge clearly.

How might we… (challenge sentence)

Which place, system, or community is this about?

Which stakeholders could enable implementation?

What would a realistic first success look like?

Climathon

3. Co-Create

- Facilitate teamwork with clear timekeeping.
- Use methods adapted to the target group.
- Translate ideas into concrete actions.

Who facilitates? Who keeps time?

Which methods fit our participants best?

How will we ensure equal voice?

How will we move from ideas to action?

4. Decide & Commit

- Present ideas, gather feedback.
- Name owners, partners, and next steps.
- Share first follow-up date before closing.

Which roles are covered in the core team?

What resources do we already have?

What is our minimum viable budget?

What could be provided in-kind?

post-Climathon

5. Implement & Support

- Provide light mentoring or buddy support.
- Enable first pilots or decisions.
- Communicate early wins.

When is the first follow-up meeting?

Who owns which action?

What indicators will we track?

How will we communicate progress?

6. Reflect & Iterate

- Run 48-hour after-action review.
- Capture learnings and adapt tools.
- Decide on continuation or scaling.

What worked better than expected?

Where did energy drop?

What should we change next time?

What should we definitely repeat?

Organiser's Canvas: Preparing and Designing Your Climathon

This canvas is a guide in planning and designing a Climathon.

v03.2026

Climathon Organisers' Roadmap

This roadmap supports you in planning a Climathon. We invite you to work with it in iterative loops—through self-reflection and exchange with others. For example: in a first round, collect initial thoughts; in a second step, add ideas; and in further steps deepen ideas as needed, correct assumptions, and adapt. Have fun preparing your Climathon!

Version

No, date

My Climathon is planned for: _____ in _____

Name — Date — Area (city, region)

Timeline (milestones, e.g.)

Municipality as partner: CHECK — Experts: CHECK — Start Outreach — Catering: CHECK — **Climathon** — Follow-Up

---

Challenge design

Goal:
A strong Climathon challenge creates tension, invites people to search for solutions — and is locally relevant.

What makes a good challenge:
- Open & solution-oriented: don't build the solution into the question.
- Regionally anchored: refers to a locally/regionally relevant problem.
- Connects actors, e.g., the municipality, citizens, and local initiatives/associations.
- Has continuity: can be pursued further after the event.

Questions for your inspiration:
- How can we prepare our municipality for heat waves?
- How can we create safe, climate-friendly routes to school?
- How can we strengthen supply security in our region?

Stakeholder-Category
Municipality as partner:
e.g. Mayor, Environmental dept., Climate committee
Contact

Stakeholder-Category
Initiativen / Vereine
e.g. Transition initiatives, Environmental groups, Youth groups
Contact

Stakeholder-Category
Education & Youth
e.g. Schools (incl. adult education), teachers, youth centers
Contact

Stakeholder-Category
Companies / Business
e.g. local businesses, SMEs, sponsors
Contact

Stakeholder-Category
Media / Public
e.g. regional newspaper, social media, event calendar
Contact

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2 Political Framework & Funding Logic

Which of the topic areas addressed by the challenge is/are part of municipal politics (e.g., anchored in a master plan)?

Are there political agendas or funding programs it fits well into?

Keyword participation (deep participation), long-term local co-creation.
(Practice examples: e5 energy-efficient municipalities, KLAR! program)

Who in the municipality/region could support my initiative?

Tip: Identify cross-party and cross-sector entry points; bring as many parties on board as possible to achieve broad, non-partisan support (goal: long-term support for the project ideas emerging from the Climathon (=teams=citizens)).

Role
Experts
Task: **Subject input**
Who?

Role
Coaches
Task: **Support groups**
Who?

---

5 Experts & Coaches

Who can contribute what to the topic? How does it help participants move forward? Which format makes sense: coaching or an impulse talk?

Who do I know who knows someone?
What budget do I have for this?

Note: Difference between expert impulse and coaching:
Coaching = accompanying teams during the Climathon;
Impulse = 10–15-minute input aiming to provide a specific insight into the topic (e.g., approach, solution, …). Time for Q&A; with the audience.

---

3 Target Groups, Audiences & Outreach

Who do I want to reach with the Climathon?
Who might be interested in participating?
Who might be interested in forwarding the info to their target group?
(see thematic link = challenge = "why")
Who do I know personally? Who is well connected?
Who could help me approach these people?
Note: Also think about: communication strategy; who has skills in communication (e.g., journalist, graphic designer)

---

1 Challenge-Definition

Focus: local social and ecological impacts of climate change; identify current local topics:

Which issues are on my community's mind? What are people talking about at home, at the regulars' table (Stammtisch), or when chatting with neighbors? [Use the thoughts from Module 1; organize and deepen them as needed.]

Do I see connections between the topics? What could be a central guiding question that captures the core themes and questions people in the community are asking? [see also the "Challenge Design" box]

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4 Resources & Financing

What do I need (spaces, materials, money)?
How can I cover it (funding, sponsorship, own resources)?

Buddy-Agreement
(for peer support in Module 3)

We, _____
and _____
support each other as a buddy team in Module 3.

We commit to:
- _____ check-ins; date: _____
- support with questions & decision situations
- joint reflection on challenges

Contact details:
_____

Role
Enabler
Task: **Coordination & overview**
Who?

Role
Organisation
Task: **Venue, tech, catering**
Who?

Role
Communication / Outreach
Task: **Promotion, press, social media**
Who?

6 Roles & Team

Which role do I take on myself? Which roles are still missing?
Who can support me in what way (skills), when (timing, e.g., the event), and for how long (over what period)?
Do I have a budget for this or would the person need to contribute voluntarily / self-fund?
[Examples of different roles: Core team: involved in the process over several months, e.g., planning, coordination and communication; Moderation: in the weeks before the event, fine-tuning the agenda as facilitator; Ad-hoc: on the event day itself, e.g., helping hands on site, baking a cake the day before, …]

Role
Facilitator
Task: **Guidance & structure throughout the agenda/ process**
Who?

Role
Helping hands / Volunteers
Task: **Set-up, support/ hosting, logistics**
Who?

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Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union