

D.3.2.2 Transnational GEKOS Network Action Plan (Activity 3.2)



SMEnergy Project Consortium

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SMEnergy Transnational GEKOS Coordination & Sustainability Action Plan

Implementation of the SMEnergy Strategy at Transnational Level

This Transnational SMEnergy Action Plan outlines how the transnational SMEnergy project consortium will continue to support the implementation and sustainability of the SMEnergy model and GEKOS hubs at transnational level.

1.0 Context and Objective

1.1 Background

SMEs across the Danube region face common structural challenges in implementing energy transition measures, including limited access to technical expertise, fragmented advisory services, and insufficient access to tailored financing instruments. While national frameworks differ, SMEs consistently require integrated, user-friendly support mechanisms combining diagnostics, advisory services, and financing guidance.

The [Interreg Danube SMEnergy project](#) addresses these challenges by establishing GEKOS (“Green Energy Knowledge, Operation & Services”) hubs as coordinated entry points for SME energy transition support, supported by a shared digital platform and transnational knowledge exchange mechanisms.

1.2 Link to the SMEnergy Strategy (D.3.1.1)

This Action Plan directly operationalises the SMEnergy transnational strategy by supporting:

- The GEKOS operational model as a distributed service system
- The SMEnergy digital platform (database & marketplace)
- Energy Transition Roadmaps (basic and advanced advisory levels)
- Integrated SME support services across partner regions

It ensures continuity of project outputs through structured cooperation, governance alignment, and institutional embedding of GEKOS functions.

1.3 Transnational Cooperation

Transnational cooperation enables:

- Comparison and benchmarking of SME support approaches
- Transfer of good practices across countries
- Harmonisation of GEKOS service delivery standards
- Joint development of tools, advisory methods, and financing pathways
- Strengthening of policy relevance under EUSDR objectives

2.0 Strategic Objectives

The SMEnergy Transnational Action Plan (D.3.2.2) aims to:

1. Sustain GEKOS hubs as embedded SME energy transition support structures across partner regions
2. Ensure consistent use and interoperability of SMEnergy tools (platform, roadmap, self-assessment, database)
3. Strengthen transnational advisory capacity through expert networks and knowledge exchange
4. Facilitate SME access to financing for energy transition investments
5. Support policy integration and long-term embedding within EUSDR and national SME frameworks

3.0 Key Stakeholders

The SMEnergy transnational model involves a multi-level ecosystem of stakeholders:

EU / Macro-regional level: EUSDR bodies, EU programmes, innovation initiatives

National level: Ministries, national energy agencies, SME support authorities

Regional level: GEKOS hubs, regional energy agencies, regional development agencies, chambers of commerce

Market level: SMEs, banks, ESCOs, technology providers, consultants, local energy agencies

Stakeholder Type	Role in SMEnergy Transnational Model
Energy Agencies	Technical coordination and advisory support
Chambers of Commerce	SME outreach and engagement
Banks / Financial Institutions	Financing instruments and investment support
SME Organisations	End-user engagement and feedback
GEKOS Hubs	Operational delivery of SMEnergy services
EU / Macro-regional Bodies	Policy alignment and scaling support

4.0 GEKOS Setup, Governance & Operational Approach

As outlined in D.2.4.1 (Draft validated SMEnergy model and GEKOS operation framework), the SMEnergy model is based on a shared set of GEKOS operating principles, core services, and operational functions , while allowing flexible adaptation to national and regional conditions. This principle reflects the real implementation experience from national pilot activities, where GEKOS was applied under different institutional, technical and market maturity contexts.

Accordingly, GEKOS follows shared operating principles and a common core service logic , which ensures comparability and coherence across countries, while its level of operational depth may vary depending on regional capacities and existing SME support structures. This enables partners to implement GEKOS either as a fully developed advisory system or as a more gradual entry model embedded in existing ecosystems.

The GEKOS approach is therefore based on shared operational principles and coordinated cooperation rather than on a centralised or formally standardised structure.

4.1 GEKOS Core Service Package

Across all implementation levels, GEKOS is built around a shared set of core functions:

- SME outreach and intake
- Digital self-assessment and diagnostics
- Energy Transition Roadmap development
- Advisory and mentoring services
- Financing guidance and investment linkage
- Monitoring and follow-up support

In practice, these functions can be implemented with different intensity. Some partners may operate a fully integrated advisory model, while others apply a lighter coordination, mentoring and referral-based approach, depending on institutional capacity and national context.

This gradual approach supports trust-building among SMEs and stakeholders and provides a realistic foundation for the progressive strengthening of GEKOS functions in future implementation phases.

4.2 GEKOS Governance & Operation at Transnational Level

GEKOS does not refer to a formal licensing system. Within this Transnational SMEnergy Action Plan, GEKOS refers to a flexible operational model that can be:

- adopted,
- adapted, or
- partially implemented depending on national/regional conditions.

This does NOT require the creation of a new legal entity.

Within this Transnational SMEnergy Action Plan, GEKOS is understood as flexible operational approach embedded within existing institutions and SME support ecosystems, ensuring:

- minimum service consistency across countries, and
- flexibility for national and regional adaptation.

GEKOS hubs are:

- Embedded in existing institutions (no new legal entity required)
- Coordinated through transnational SMEnergy partnership structures
- Guided by shared GEKOS operating principles and minimum service expectations, which vary on the national level

This approach ensures interoperability and quality assurance across partner countries, while allowing each region to define its own implementation maturity level, ranging from advanced advisory GEKOS models, where full service packages are delivered, to light GEKOS models, focused on coordination, SME outreach, mentoring, platform promotion, referral mechanisms, and financing orientation within existing support structures.

In this context, the varying implementation experiences of partners illustrates how GEKOS can be embedded in a lighter operational form within existing regional support ecosystems for renewable energy and energy efficiency. At this stage, this includes SME outreach, initial guidance, mentoring, promotion of the SMEnergy platform, referral to relevant experts and institutions, and financing orientation.

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5.0 Timeline

5.1 Action Plan Timeline

Action 1: Transnational GEKOS Coordination, Governance & Continuity Framework

Establish a structured transnational coordination and governance system for GEKOS and SMEnergy results, ensuring alignment across partner regions and long-term continuity beyond the project. This includes coordination meetings, shared reporting practices, and a framework for sustaining SMEnergy services at transnational level.

Lead Organisation: Elfi-Tech (SO3 Lead), together with all project partners (PPs)

Key Stakeholders: SMEnergy consortium, regional GEKOS hubs, and SMEnergy stakeholder networks (see Section 3.0 Key Stakeholders)

Timeline: By 31 May 2026 (set-up phase and ongoing coordination)

Expected Result: An operational transnational coordination and governance framework ensuring coordination, knowledge flow, and continuity of GEKOS beyond the project lifetime.

Action 2: Establishment & Formalisation of Regional GEKOS Structures

Define and formalise GEKOS — or equivalent SME energy support structures — in each partner region, including roles, workflows, and stakeholder responsibilities. Secure formal commitments, such as Letters of Intent (Lols) or cooperation agreements, to ensure institutional anchoring and long-term engagement.

Lead Organisation: All project partners (PPs)

Key Stakeholders: Regional authorities, chambers, energy agencies, SMEs, financial stakeholders, and advisory organisations

Timeline: By 30 June 2026

Expected Result: GEKOS structures operationalised across all partner regions with at least one formal stakeholder commitment per region (LoI, MoU, or equivalent), resulting in a total of 11 signed agreements.

Action 3: SMEnergy Tool & Service Harmonisation

Ensure harmonised deployment of SMEnergy tools and methodologies — including the Green Energy Database, platform, self-assessment tools, roadmap methodology, and advisory workflows — across all GEKOS hubs to guarantee consistency, comparability, and quality of SME support services.

Lead Organisation: Energiaklub (SMEnergy platform coordination) together with technical partners

Key Stakeholders: GEKOS hubs, SMEs, energy experts, and platform users

Timeline: July–December 2026

Expected Result: Standardised and interoperable SMEnergy tool usage across regions, ensuring consistent SME support quality and data comparability.

Action 4: Cross-border SME Pilot & Knowledge Transfer System

Consolidate pilot experiences from participating SMEs and facilitate cross-country learning to support the replication of successful advisory models and energy transition approaches. This includes SME case documentation, peer learning between partners, and the transfer of effective advisory practices.

Lead Organisation: All project partners (PPs)

Key Stakeholders: SMEs, energy experts, GEKOS hubs, and support organisations

Timeline: July–December 2026

Expected Result: A transnational SME case repository and lessons learned consolidation supporting the replication of effective approaches.

Action 5: Financing Ecosystem Integration & Investment Pathway Development

Develop structured cooperation with financial institutions, funding bodies, and investment support actors to improve SME access to financing instruments for energy transition investments.

Lead Organisation: All project partners (PPs)

Key Stakeholders: Banks, funding agencies, EU initiatives, chambers, SMEs, and energy advisors

Timeline: July 2026 – January 2027

Expected Result: Improved access to financing through mapped instruments and strengthened cooperation between SMEs and financial actors across regions.

Action 6: Long-Term Communication Meetings

Establish biannual, pre-scheduled transnational communication meetings within the SMEnergy consortium to ensure sustained engagement, knowledge exchange, and continued alignment between SMEs, energy transition stakeholders, and project partners beyond individual project milestones. These meetings will serve as a structured continuity mechanism to maintain momentum, disseminate results, and strengthen the SMEnergy community of practice over time.

The meetings will function as an open dialogue platform where partners and stakeholders can share progress on energy efficiency and renewable energy adoption in SMEs, discuss challenges in accessing financing and technical support, and exchange updates on regional developments and policy changes relevant to the energy transition.

Lead Organisation: All project partners (PPs)

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Key Stakeholders: SMEs, energy experts, GEKOS hubs, and support organisations

Timeline: November 2026, February 2027, ...

Expected Result: A series of structured transnational virtual meetings ensuring continuous engagement between SMEs and energy transition stakeholders, leading to strengthened cross-regional collaboration, improved knowledge transfer, and sustained visibility and uptake of SMeEnergy results beyond the project lifetime.

6.0 Letter of Intent / Stakeholder Commitment

To ensure the sustainability and operational continuity of the SMEnergy model, consortium partners are encouraged to formally confirm their intention to continue supporting GEKOS functions beyond the project lifetime.

This internal commitment strengthens the transition from project-based implementation to a sustained transnational GEKOS coordination and knowledge exchange activities.

Each partner is required to provide a Letter of Intent (LoI) confirming their role in the continuation of SMEnergy-related activities, including:

- Continued operation or hosting of GEKOS functions
- Use and maintenance of SMEnergy tools (platform, roadmap, diagnostics)
- Participation in the transnational GEKOS coordination network
- Contribution to knowledge exchange and capacity building activities
- Support for SME energy transition advisory services beyond project end

The LoI represents a non-binding but structured expression of willingness to ensure long-term sustainability of the SMEnergy ecosystem.

7.0 Expected Impact

The implementation of this Action Plan is expected to deliver:

- Strengthened SME awareness and uptake of energy transition solutions
- Improved access to integrated advisory and financing services
- Enhanced cooperation between SME support organisations and energy actors
- Increased SME investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy measures
- Institutionalisation of GEKOS hubs within national and regional frameworks
- Improved policy relevance of SMEnergy outcomes under EUSDR

8.0 Risks & Mitigation Measures

Risk	Mitigation
Uneven GEKOS implementation across countries	Minimum service standards and coordination framework
Low SME engagement	Strong outreach via chambers and regional partners
Limited financing availability	Early engagement with banks and funding bodies
Fragmentation of tools usage	Standardised training and harmonised guidance
Post-project discontinuity	Early Lols and institutional embedding strategy

9.0 Monitoring

Implementation will be monitored through a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators:

Key Indicators

- Number of SMEs engaged in SMEnergy activities
- Number of Energy Transition Roadmaps completed
- Number of advisory sessions delivered
- Number of GEKOS hubs operational
- Volume of financing opportunities identified or mobilised
- Number of stakeholder agreements (Lols/MoUs)

- Platform usage statistics (users, interactions, downloads)

9.1 Monitoring Approach

- Regular consortium reporting cycles (biannual throughout SMEnergy project, up until final reporting/monitoring period until October 2026)
- SME surveys and feedback collection
- Workshop-based qualitative evaluation
- Platform analytics and usage tracking
- Annual synthesis of transnational outcomes

9.2 Transnational KPIs

KPI	Target by January 2027	Details
Number of partner-level established GEKOS coordination model	10	Confirmation through completed Action Plans and partner implementation records
Number of stakeholder organisations actively engaged in GEKOS implementation	50+	Stakeholder lists, attendance records, cooperation evidence and partner reports
Number of documented stakeholder commitments (LoIs, MoUs or equivalent written confirmations)	10+	Signed LoIs/MoUs or documented written commitments collected by partners
Number of SMEs receiving advisory, mentoring or GEKOS-related support	70+	

Organisations with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across the borders):	18 (PPs + ASPs)	R1: Organisations undergone a learning process (more than one tangible exchange – like pilots)
Number of SMEs referred to or actively using SMEnergy tools (platform, self-assessment or roadmap methodology)	100+	Platform analytics (where available) and partner reporting
Number of LOIs / MoUs from organisations embedding SMEnergy/GEKOS services into regular post-project activities	10	Evidence of action plan uptake (e.g. management strategy or internal doc of the adopting organisation)