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# Accelerating European Cleantech Innovation

Connecting innovators with public testbeds to accelerate European cleantech

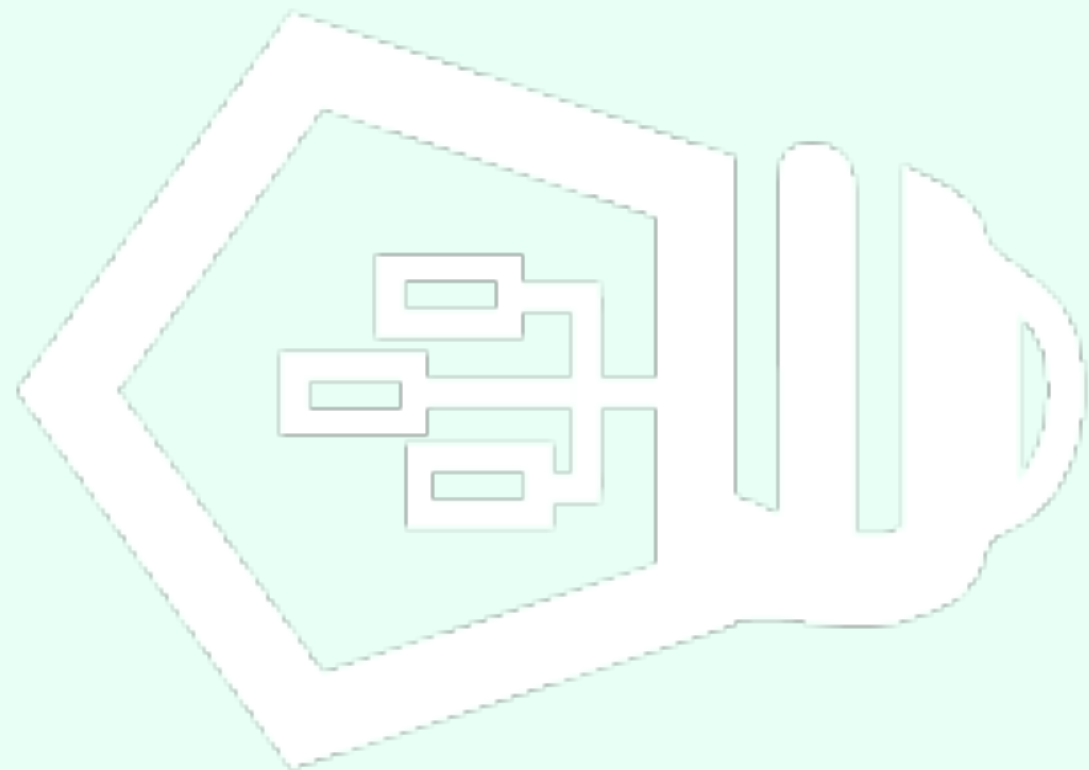
Niko Lankinen, Ecosystem Lead, EIT Digital

# Pitch Agenda

11:00–11:05	Welcome & Opening Remarks
11:05–11:30	FINEX Opportunities
11:30–11:45	Open Discussion & Feedback
11:45–11:50	Closing

# Why FINEX?

The challenge we solve together



# FINEX – Accelerating European Cleantech Innovation (Sept 2024-Aug 2026)

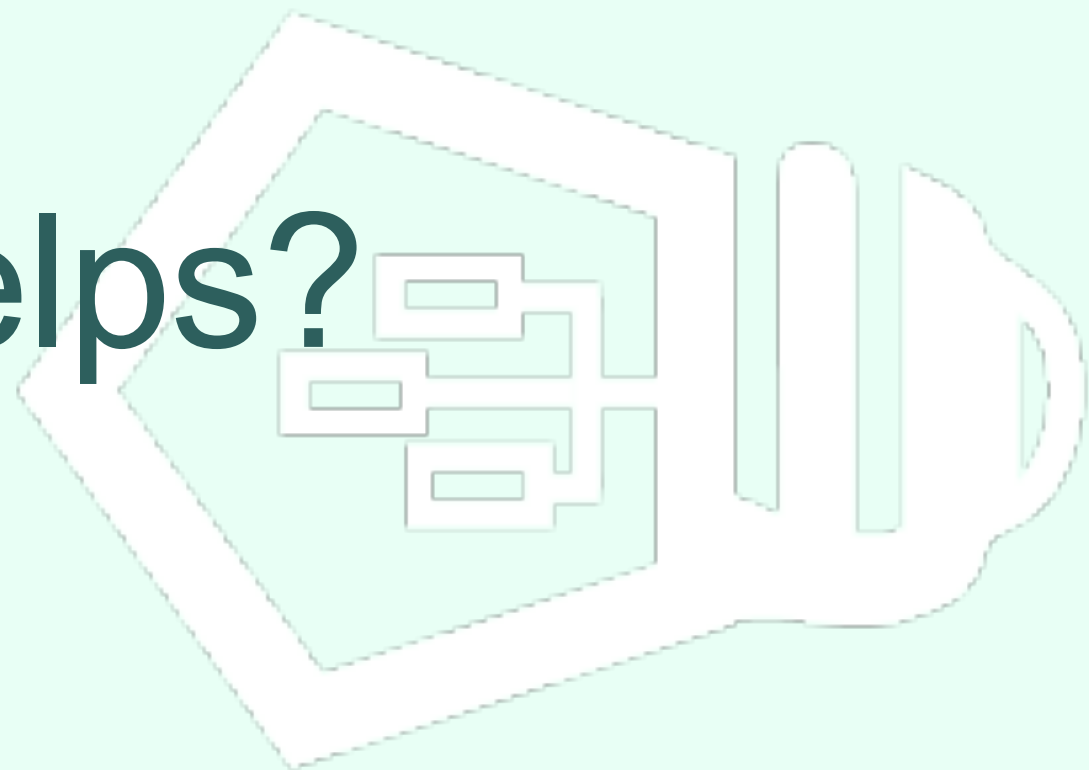
- Funded by Horizon Europe (CSA), the project connects innovators, research teams, and public actors with testing environments across Europe to accelerate cleantech solutions through collaboration.
- Project Partners:
  - [EIT Digital](#) (BE)
  - [HEC Paris and Cleantech Group France](#) (FR)
  - [KIOS Center of Excellence for Research & Innovation, University of Cyprus](#) (CY)
  - [Sunrise Valley Science & Technology Park](#) (LT)
  - [Riga Technical University](#) (LV)
  - [The Big Data for Smart Society Institute \(GATE\), Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski](#) (BG)
  - [Aalto University, School of Business, Center for Knowledge and Innovation Research \(CKIR\)](#) (FI)
  - [FinEst Centre for Smart Cities, TalTech](#) (EE)

# Cleantech Piloting Barriers

- **Access is fragmented**  
Access to testbeds and public-sector partners is fragmented. Startups often struggle to identify the right city, test environment or public authority — and many abandon testing altogether due to complexity or lack of response.
- **Regulations are unclear**  
Regulations are often unclear or inconsistent. Innovators struggle to understand what is allowed, which data or certifications are required, and which authority to contact for approval.
- **Public buyers are interested but overloaded**  
Public buyers are interested in green solutions, but often lack the time, capacity or internal processes to coordinate pilots or engage in innovation-friendly procurement.
- **Lack of strategic commitment**  
Without clear ownership or leadership commitment, even completed pilots fail to scale or deliver long-term impact.
- **This is why FINEX exists**  
To reduce friction, create structure, and make meaningful, cross-border pilots possible

# How FINEX Helps?

Our solutions & services



# What FINEX offers to innovators?

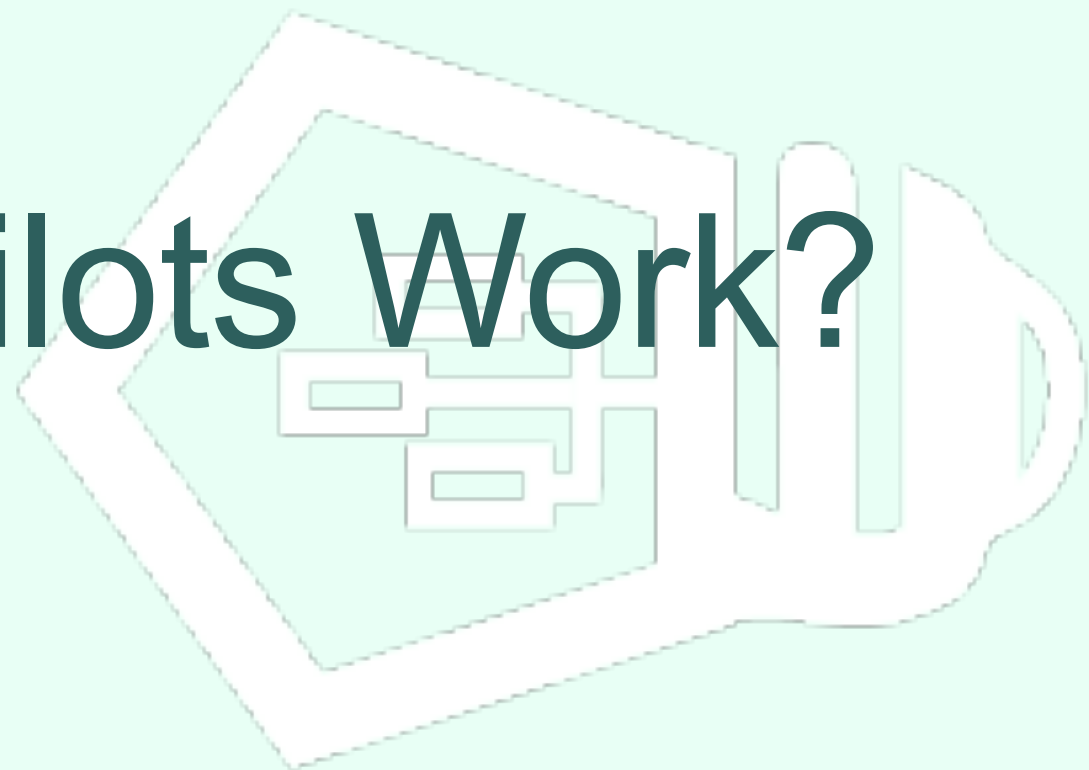
- **A chance to pitch your solution at national and EU-level matchmaking events:** These events serve as the gateway to identifying real piloting opportunities.
- **Experimentation Access:** If selected, you get to test your solution in real environments, not just simulations. These can include: energy-efficient buildings, smart city districts, public mobility systems, digital service platforms. The testbeds are operated by universities, public actors or innovation centres.
- **Support Services:** FINEX provides practical tools to plan your pilot. This includes helpdesk guidance, legal and technical templates, and checklists. Partners also assist in aligning with regulations, data requirements, and testbed needs.
- **Acceleration Pathway:** If your pilot shows strong results, you can access further support. This includes mentoring, investor visibility, and EU-level exposure. The best pilots are not just completed — they're scaled.

# Step-by-step to pilot — and beyond

- **Matchmaking**  
Participation in FINEX matchmaking at local and EU level helps you connect with the right partners, including research teams, private and public buyers, and investors seeking innovative solutions.
- **Helpdesk (from Aug 2025)**  
Single entry point for all questions — technical, legal, or local. You'll be redirected to the right national or EU-level contact.
- **Templates and Tools**  
FINEX provides ready-to-use pilot planning templates, legal guidance, and documentation formats accepted by testbeds and public actors.
- **Acceleration Pathway**  
After a successful pilot, selected innovators get follow-up support including mentoring, investor preparation, and international exposure.
- **EU-Level Visibility**  
Participation in FINEX pilots and matchmaking increases your credibility among public buyers and investors looking for tested solutions.
- **Ongoing Team Support**  
The FINEX team is with you from pilot to implementation.



# What Makes Pilots Work?



# What Does a Good Match Look Like?

- **Solution meets a real need**  
The testbed has a specific challenge that your innovation can directly address in practice.
- **Technical compatibility**  
The solution can connect with the testbed's physical or digital systems or operate as a stand-alone solution — without major redesign.
- **Good communication**  
Both sides are responsive, transparent, and willing to co-develop and adjust during the pilot.
- **Shared motivation**  
The innovator and testbed are both interested in real outcomes — not just PR or one-off testing.
- **Follow-up potential**  
Even if the pilot is not perfect, it opens doors for future collaboration, adaptation, or procurement.

# What Makes a Pilot Successful?

- **Commitment from both sides**  
Both the innovator and the testbed assign key people — one technical and one strategic — to ensure follow-through.
- **Joint planning from day one**  
The innovator and the testbed define together what will be tested, how it will be done, and who will be involved.
- **Clear metrics**  
Both sides agree in advance how success will be measured — for example through environmental impact, resource efficiency, usability, or return on investment.
- **Time-boxed and realistic**  
Pilots should be short, focused, and feasible to implement within the FINEX timeline.
- **Built-in feedback**  
A successful pilot improves the solution — it's not just for show, but for learning and adaptation.

# Examples of FINEX Environments

## **Smart Campus (TalTech, Estonia)**

University buildings with real energy systems, sensors and EV chargers  
→ Test energy-saving tech, smart lighting, battery integration

## **Urban Simulation Lab (GATE, Bulgaria)**

Digital models of roads, buildings and data networks  
→ Try out traffic tools, city dashboards, and citizen engagement apps

## **Real Building Site (Sunrise STP, Lithuania)**

Pilot-ready office and lab spaces in a tech park  
→ Test solar panels, HVAC systems, environmental monitoring

## **Mobility Data Zone (KIOS, Cyprus)**

Access to real transport and GPS data on campus or city routes  
→ Test mobility dashboards, route optimization, EV charging tools

## **Digital Twin Lab (RTU, Latvia)**

Virtual replicas of buildings or districts  
→ Simulate building energy use, occupancy, and control systems

# Who Should Join & How?

Target group and next steps

# Who is FINEX for?

- **Startups**  
Looking for real-life test environments and potential distribution channels through public or corporate partners
- **Scaleups and SMEs**  
Seeking cross-border proof-of-concept, regulatory validation, or first international reference customers
- **Corporates and listed companies**  
Searching for high-potential solutions, startups or R&D partners to strengthen their sustainability or smart city portfolios
- **Research institutions**  
aiming to generate knowledge on innovations or to offer appropriate testing environments such as public infrastructure, urban settings, or living labs

# What Is Expected From Companies?

- **A clear description of your solution**  
Must be able to explain what problem your solution solves, how it works, and who it's designed for — in plain language
- **Readiness to pilot (TRL 5 or higher)**  
Your solution should already be tested in lab or early field conditions — at minimum a demo, prototype, or working version exists
- **Realistic commitment**  
After this event, you're invited to stay involved — join planning sessions and explore co-developing a pilot for 2025–2026
- **Open mindset**  
You're willing to adapt your solution to the testbed's environment, and accept input from users and public partners
- **Basic resources**  
At least one person from your team is available to handle communication, coordination, and pilot-related tasks

# How does the process work?

- **Shortlisting (March–June 2025)**  
Each national partner identifies and invites promising innovators to explore piloting opportunities within FINEX
- **Promo Events (June 2025)**  
Regional & cross-regional online events introduce the FINEX project, explain what support is available, and engage local innovators, testbeds, and stakeholders
- **Matchmaking and Selection (Autumn 2025)**  
Based on interest and fit, selected innovators are matched with relevant testbeds for concrete pilot planning
- **Acceleration (starting Autumn 2025)**  
Promising pilots receive further support — technical guidance, partner coordination, and sustainability planning to enable real deployment



# National Contact Points

- Bulgaria  
Contact: Simeon Malinov - [simeon.malinov@gate-ai.eu](mailto:simeon.malinov@gate-ai.eu)
- Cyprus  
Contact: Yiota Victoria Phakoukaki - [phakoukaki.yiota-victoria@ucy.ac.cy](mailto:phakoukaki.yiota-victoria@ucy.ac.cy)
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Contact: Paula Vanaga - [paula.vanaga@rtu.lv](mailto:paula.vanaga@rtu.lv)
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Contact: [lina@ssmtp.lt](mailto:lina@ssmtp.lt) or [evelina@ssmtp.lt](mailto:evelina@ssmtp.lt)
- EIT Digital (EU-level coordination)  
Contact: [niko.lankinen@eitdigital.eu](mailto:niko.lankinen@eitdigital.eu)



# Discussion & Feedback



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## **FINEX Helpdesk:**

Need more information or support?

Contact the FINEX Helpdesk!



[www.eitdigital.eu/finex-helpdesk](http://www.eitdigital.eu/finex-helpdesk)