

Agenda

Capturing value: industrial ecosystems and local benefits of just transition

Technical Regional Forum of the Just Transition Platform

4 and 5 November 2026

Regional and Urban Policy

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Technical Regional Forum in Aalborg, Denmark

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Introduction

Aalborg Municipality and the wider North Jutland region are at the forefront of Denmark's industrial decarbonisation, anchored by Aalborg Portland's carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) investment, recently awarded substantial national support. Alongside this flagship investment, Aalborg is pursuing a broader transformation towards a low-carbon industrial ecosystem that links heavy industry, ports, renewable energy, innovation actors, universities and local communities. This transition presents opportunities not only to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also to create new economic activities, strengthen industrial competitiveness, attract investment, and build future-oriented jobs and skills.

The transition of a long-standing cement and heavy-industry and maritime hub towards a low-carbon industrial ecosystem raises shared questions for Just Transition Fund (JTF) regions and other industrial areas across Europe: how to build value chains and business models around core infrastructural investments (such as CCUS), and how to ensure the transition delivers tangible benefits, acceptance, and new opportunities for local communities.

This Technical Regional Forum brings together regional and national authorities, port and industry representatives, researchers, and peer regions with experience in heavy-industry transition (these include Rotterdam, Chemelot, Bilbao and others) to exchange practical, implementation-oriented lessons on industrial transformation.

Event focus

The Technical Regional Forum (TRF) provides a high-level platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange and partnership development on the role of industrial decarbonisation in regional transformation. Building on Aalborg's experience with CCUS and industrial ecosystem development, the Forum seeks to explore how strategic infrastructure investments can catalyse wider economic, technological and social change across regions.

The event's objectives are:

- Explore how broader low-carbon industrial ecosystems can be developed around CCUS and other strategic decarbonisation investments (value chain cooperation, new business models, synergies with other industries).
- Identify opportunities for SMEs, research institutions and local stakeholders to participate in emerging industrial ecosystems.
- Discuss how the transition can generate tangible benefits for local communities (social acceptance, R&D and innovation capacity).
- Exchange experience on the journey from an industrial centre to a research and innovation hub.

- Strengthen connections between JTF regions and other industrial and maritime regions across Europe.
- Promote peer learning and establish new collaborations that continue beyond the event itself.

The expected outcome of the event is aiming at a strengthened understanding of how industrial decarbonisation projects can become drivers of regional transformation and competitiveness. Expected outcomes include:

- Shared examples and lessons learned from industrial regions across Europe undergoing major decarbonisation processes.
- Improved understanding of how value chains, innovation systems and industrial ecosystems can be developed around CCUS and related investments.
- Enhanced dialogue between public authorities, industry representatives and researchers.
- Identification of good practices related to community engagement, public acceptance and local benefit creation.

Participants

The event aims to welcome a broad range of stakeholders involved in industrial transition, regional development and decarbonisation, including:

- Representatives of local, regional and national public authorities and policymakers.
- European Commission representatives and other EU institutions.
- Industrial companies and industrial cluster organisations.
- Port authorities and logistics actors.
- Research institutions, universities and innovation centres.
- Business support organisations and innovation agencies.
- SMEs and entrepreneurs exploring opportunities in emerging low-carbon value chains.
- Representatives from Just Transition Fund regions including Chemelot (Netherlands), Rotterdam/Zuid-Holland (Netherlands), Moravian-Silesian Region (Czech Republic), Ida-Viru (Estonia), Le Havre (France), Central Germany, Kymenlaakso (Finland), Asturias (Spain), and other regions with experience in industrial decarbonisation, circular industry, ports, cement production and CCUS-related transition.
- Community organisations and stakeholders interested in the social dimensions of industrial transition.

Agenda

A focused, interactive two-day expert event for up to ~120 participants, combining framing speeches, panel discussions, workshops, and a site visit to Aalborg Portland. Sessions go beyond high-level panels to enable technical depth and peer exchange, consistent with the JTP TRF format.

DAY 1 Time	Agenda item	Speakers
09.30-10.00	**Registration of participants, welcome coffee**	**Venue**: Hotel Comwell *Vesterbro 2, 9000 Aalborg, Denmark*
10:00-10:20	**Opening** • Welcome and scene setting by DG REGIO of the European Commission • Welcoming remarks from Aalborg Municipality on the municipality's industrial transition ambitions	Speakers: • **Eva Nussmüller, DG REGIO**, European Commission • **Martin Rune Hoxer**, Aalborg Municipality, Denmark
10:20-10:30	**Housekeeping** • Moderator shares the agenda and the housekeeping rules	Moderator: **Karen-Marie Sandgren,** Nordic Energy Connection
10:30-11:15	Setting the scene **Setting the scene: CCUS as a local driver of industrial transition and competitiveness** The session sets the stage for the Forum by highlighting the local context on CCUS serving as a lever for industrial competitiveness and just transition, drawing on Danish research and policy perspectives.	Speakers: • **Lars Storm Pedersen,** AAU Energy, Aalborg University, Denmark
11:15-11:45	**Coffee break**	
11:45-12:30	Panel discussion **Session I — Building industrial value chains around core green transition investments** What does it take for a core investment such as CCUS, port infrastructure, circular industry or industrial symbiosis to become the anchor of a wider regional industrial ecosystem? The session explores how regions organise	Moderator: **Karen-Marie Sandgren,** Nordic Energy Connection Speakers: • **Björn Koopmans**, Chemelot Circular Hub, Netherlands • **Tanya Srivastava**, Cemex, Brandenburg, Germany

	cooperation between industry, ports, public authorities, research actors and SMEs, and what enabling conditions are needed for value chains to emerge.	• **Jozef Vlček**, Cikarena-project, Materials and Metallurgical Research, Czech Republic
12:30-13:30	**Lunch**	
13:30-15:00	Peer review session **Session II — Regional challenge lab: translating industrial investment into territorial value** Three regions present real transition challenges linked to industrial transformation and territorial development (up to 3 slides and two challenge questions). Following short challenge pitches, participants join one of the facilitated peer-exchange tables to discuss solutions and share practical experience. The session concludes with a plenary report-back highlighting key lessons for industrial and Just Transition regions **Presenting regions (TBC) –** see speakers **Peers:** speakers from session I will be assigned to each station, together with JTP Groundwork experts and selected participants. Rest of participants can choose the group freely.	Facilitators: Groundwork team and representatives from different regions/ sectors Speakers: • **Michael Stie Laugesen**, Aalborg, Green Hub Denmark • **Helena Andersson**, Region Gotland, Sweden • **Frans van den Akker**, Techport Innovation Centre Green Incubator, Netherlands
15:00-15:30	**Coffee break**	
15:30-16:15	Panel discussion **Session III — Sustaining the journey: research, innovation and JTF networks** How can regions support the journey from industrial centre to research and innovation centre? Peer reflections from several Just Transition Fund regions on the sustainability of JTF support, networks and new international contacts beyond the funding period.	Moderator: **Eva Nussmüller**, DG REGIO, European Commission Speakers: • **Cristina Ugarte**, SPRI, Basque Country, Spain • **Alexia Jacobsen**, Aarhus University, Denmark • **Eva Korfová**, Ministry for Regional Development, Czech Republic
16:15-16:35	Presentation **JTP Groundwork insights: local benefits, stakeholder engagement and municipal coordination in Aalborg** Drawing on the Green Hub Denmark Technical Assistance, this short input will share emerging insights and	Speaker: • **Nanna Fredsted**, JTP Groundwork • **Nikoline Bak**, Green Hub Denmark representative

	learnings on local economic opportunities, anticipated citizen concerns, cross-municipal coordination needs and stakeholder engagement priorities linked to the Aalborg–Purhus CO_2 pipeline corridor. The session will serve as a bridge to Day 2 by framing the workshop discussions on local benefits, social acceptance and regional preparedness.	
16:45-17:00	**Day 1 closing and outlook on Day 2**	Speakers: • **Balbina Gluza-Czyczerska**, DG REGIO, European Commission • **Lasse Frimand Jensen**, Mayor of Aalborg, Denmark
17:00-19:00	**Informal dinner and networking**	

DAY 2

Time	Agenda item	Speakers
09:30-09:45	**Welcome of participants**	Moderator: **Karen-Marie Sandgren,** Nordic Energy Connection
09:45-11:15	Workshop **Session IV – Workshop on local benefits and social acceptance of the industrial transition** Short input presentations from experts, followed by rotating table discussions on: (Table 1) **Value creation locally** - what are the benefits in terms of business creation and employment for municipalities; (Table 2) **Social acceptance and community engagement** - drawing on experience from communities around infrastructure projects; (Table 3) **Regional preparedness and governance** - What should municipalities and regions do before major industrial investments arrive (planning capacities, coordination of stakeholders, skills)? Following the discussion, each table will be asked to report back.	Facilitators: • Green Hub Denmark • DG REGIO • JTP Groundwork Speakers: • **Henrik Halkier**, Aalborg University Business School, Denmark • **Charlotte Nørgargaard Larsen**, BIFROST, DTU, Denmark • **Annett Heibel**, Cemex, Germany
11:15-12:00	Presentation	Speakers:

	Aalborg Portland: role in the low-carbon industrial ecosystem Presentation on the Aalborg Portland's role in supporting industrial transition, logistics for CCUS value chains, and emerging opportunities for local SMEs and suppliers, followed by Q&A.	• **Jesper Sand Damtoft,** Aalborg Portland, Denmark
12:00-13:00	**Lunch**	Hotel Comwell
13:00-13:30	Transfer to site visit - ***Location: Aalborg Portland***	
13:30-15:00	Site visit **Aalborg Portland cement plant** Guided tour of the cement plant and its carbon capture investment, including discussion of the technology, scale-up plans, and links to the value chain and business-model themes from Day 1.	Presenter: • **Søren Konstmann Lausen**, ACCSION, Denmark
15:00-15:30	Transfer back to city centre/hotels	