



# Interim External Evaluation Report

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## Introduction

This interim external evaluation report of the CLIMAR project aims to provide an external perspective on its implementation and results achieved so far, in accordance with the Terms of Reference (TOR).

The specific purpose of this report is to conduct a value-based analysis of the project's progress during its first 18 months, using secondary information and insights gathered from the management meeting held in Panama. The analysis references the project's specific objectives, activities, milestones, and deliverables of each Work Package (WP), as well as the indicators defined in the Quality Plan.

This review assesses the project's progress in alignment with its objectives, identifies areas for improvement to optimize management, and seeks to maximize the project's impact from a professional external perspective.

This report represents the first phase of a broader external evaluation process, which will culminate in a comprehensive final report on the management, results, and impact of the CLIMAR project.

## Evaluation of WP1: Project Management and Evaluation

The Kick-off Meeting (KOM) was successfully held, preceded by an online preparatory meeting. The Project Management Team (PMT) and the Steering Committee (SC) were established and began functioning immediately and consistently, meeting the indicator for the frequency of PMT communications. No evidence was found of conflicts requiring time efficiency in resolution, another key indicator of this WP. Partnership Agreements were signed, and Management Guidelines and Tools (D1.1) and the Risk Management Strategy (D1.2) were successfully developed, led by ULPGC, OBREAL, and ASCUN.

The Quality Plan (D1.3) was completed under OBREAL's leadership, and the Quality Committee (QC) was formed, led by the University of Alicante (UA), the University of Caldas (UC) and OBREAL. Key deliverables (D1.1, D1.2, and D1.3) were completed effectively, providing essential tools for project management and quality monitoring. The finalization of deliverable D1.4 has enabled this external evaluation report.

No evidence was found of the QC implementing internal monitoring tools (T1.8). Although semi-annual satisfaction surveys have been conducted, no documented analyses or reports derived from these (T1.9) have been identified, nor have the results been shared with project partners, as stipulated by the indicator "Timely delivery of progress reports from partners." Furthermore, there was no verification of the inclusion of internal project reports in the project's website's restricted-access section. Meeting minutes or records from regular QC meetings are also lacking, which could hinder the effective monitoring of the Quality Plan.

### Recommendations for Improvement

**Strengthen QC Functionality:** Schedule more frequent QC meetings, document them with minutes, and share these with partners to ensure the completion of pending tasks and the implementation of internal monitoring (T1.8).

**Optimize Survey Analysis:** Conduct detailed analyses of semi-annual satisfaction surveys and share derived reports with the PMT, SC, and partners to promote continuous improvements.

**Implement Online Scorecard:** Integrate the Online Reporting Scorecard and internal reports into the project's protected website section, coordinate periodic updates, and ensure access for all partners.

These actions will ensure effective monitoring of project quality and management, enhancing the achievement of CLIMAR's specific objectives, all of which are linked to WP1.

## Evaluation of WP2: Trends and Expectations for Interdisciplinary Approaches to Climate Change, Circular Economy, and Tourism

WP2 delivered all its outputs within the established deadlines and with high quality and relevance. The Perception Survey (D2.1) generated key data to guide the development of training modules and interdisciplinary research topics (WP3, WP4, and WP5). The 17 national roundtables held between November and December 2023 involved 209 participants, including academics, entrepreneurs, public officials, and NGO representatives, resulting in a highly useful document (D2.2) that identifies essential needs in research and training. These actions successfully met indicators for sectoral diversity and representativeness in terms of functions, sectors, and gender.

The Orientation Report (D2.3) provides detailed guidelines for the next steps in WP3, WP4, and WP5. The materials developed in these three deliverables have a broad impact and strong potential for future courses and projects beyond the project's original scope. Another notable achievement was the study visit to Bolonia of 20 participants from Latin American partners, which included interactions with various academic and industrial stakeholders.

A satisfaction survey of the study visit was conducted with the purpose of linking the insights gained to the project objectives and subsequent WPs (Indicator "Travel reports from events and appropriate cost/output ratio."). This material will be useful for the second phase of the external evaluation to consolidate the activity's impact and maximize its contribution to upcoming WPs.

### Recommendations for Improvement

**Leverage the Value of Generated Materials:** It is highly recommended to organize the reports from the three deliverables into the project book (WP6) to disseminate the findings beyond the project, amplifying its impact. These documents will be useful in future course designs and training programs, extending beyond CLIMAR.

**Increase Activity Outreach:** Include local stakeholders interested in the theme in activities open to the public and extend the successful training approach to local stakeholders.

**Strengthen Results Dissemination:** Although under WP6, it is recommended to widely disseminate the reports and findings on social media, the project's website, and academic events, promoting their use as references for future interdisciplinary training and research initiatives.

In summary, WP2 has met its established objectives, generating high-quality outcomes essential for subsequent WPs. This WP contributes to achieving specific objectives 1 to 3 and contributes engaging social partners and industry at an early stage.

## Evaluation of WP3: Consolidating Multidisciplinary Research Groups

WP3 fulfilled its planned deliverables, establishing six multidisciplinary research groups with clear and solid objectives with international perspective. Progress was made in preparing and presenting joint research projects in three competitive calls in Panama, Colombia, and Mexico, aligned with the public policies of these countries.

The training provided exceeded enrolment expectations and significantly enhanced participants' competencies, as reflected in the lessons-learned reports. Furthermore, WP3 fostered multidisciplinary and international collaboration through transnational cooperation. These achievements align with Quality Plan indicators, including inclusivity of transnational and multidisciplinary research groups specializing in CC&T, diversity of partners involved in research-based collaborative teaching, and evaluation of educational training activities.

The presentation of three projects to national calls is a commendable step; however, ensuring that universities outside the country of the call can actively participate in these projects if selected remains a priority. Additionally, the impact of hybrid workshops on the competencies acquired by participants should be explored more thoroughly during the second phase of the internal and external evaluations. Finally, no progress has been observed in the groups' production according to the "publication indicators" established by the groups themselves (D 3.1). While some of these results consist of chapters for the book to be published at the end of the project, other expected outcomes—such as conference presentations, submitted/accepted articles for publication, and web publications on high-impact platforms, including the CLIMAR website—show no signs of progress.

### Recommendations for Improvement

**Ensure Participation in Calls:** Address how each project approved through national calls will ensure the participation of partners from universities outside the coordinating institution. This will strengthen collaboration and ensure the sustainability of network-based work.

**Consolidate Training Learnings:** Develop comprehensive evaluation of hybrid workshops to monitoring their impact on participants and identify potential improvements for future editions. Integrate generated materials and reports into an accessible database for all partners.

**Ensure progress in the production of results:** focus on generating outputs through publications in articles, conferences, and websites to meet the publication indicators established by the groups.

**Enhance Results Communication:** Promote WP3 achievements, such as the presented projects and publications through regional and international dissemination channels, encouraging stakeholders to visit the project website.

**Ensure Project Sustainability:** Guarantee continuous monitoring and support for the presented projects, particularly if not approved in the first call, to secure their viability.

In conclusion, WP3 has met the initial expectations, achieving solid results that should be further strengthened in the next phase. Implementing these recommendations can maximize the impact of these achievements and ensure their long-term sustainability, contributing to the fulfilment of CLIMAR's specific objective 1.

## Evaluation of WP4: Multidisciplinary Teaching – A Module for CC&T

WP4 successfully developed a study module consisting of 10 courses that meet international standards, tailored to the specific needs of each institution. The collaborative methodology allowed for the integration of diverse perspectives, while the flexible design of the module ensures its adaptability to different educational systems, promoting the sustainability of tourism training in Latin America.

The definition of common parameters, such as perspectives, models, and approaches, is highly valued as it enables the development of courses that address a diversity of themes and participants. Deliverable D4.1 meets the project's objectives and aligns with indicators for interdisciplinarity, inclusivity, and diversity among partners. The 10 courses share a common structure, including descriptions, objectives, learning outcomes, activities, evaluation methodologies, and thematic content.

A key challenge lies in extending these common parameters to other aspects of the courses. While the diversity in duration, student effort, and methodologies is appreciated, some discrepancies in credit calculations were observed. These discrepancies should be reconsidered before validation to ensure alignment with common criteria for calculating student effort and balancing lectures with practical activities—emphasizing a student-centered perspective. Harmonization is necessary as the courses aim for wide applicability across institutions and educational systems. Without prior adjustments, these differences could hinder implementation in diverse national contexts.

### Recommendations for Improvement

**Harmonize Parameters Before Validation:** Review and adjust the uniform calculation of student effort to ensure adaptability to the educational systems of each country. Additionally, balance the weight of theoretical and practical components in some courses, adjusting lecture-heavy content to include more participatory activities.

**Promote Sustainability and Replicability:** Document the module design and implementation process so it can serve as a reference for similar future initiatives. During the next phase, with the results of the deliverable 4.2 ("Evaluation report of the study module") in charge of the Quality Committee, consider creating an "implementation manual", to facilitate the adoption of the module by other universities in the region.

In summary, WP4 has made significant progress in developing an innovative and adaptable academic module, contributing to CLIMAR'S specific objective 2. Implementing these recommendations will ensure greater cohesion and facilitate the module's implementation and long-term sustainability.

## Evaluation of WP5: Professional Development in Climate Change and Tourism

The Continuous Training Curriculum Development Team (CTDT) was successfully established, comprising specialists from various universities who are actively collaborating on course development. Six priority topics for the course were identified, with four selected for development based on surveys, roundtables, and previous WP results. Themes were assigned to specialists, with the coordination of this WP emphasizing the importance of promoting inter-institutional collaboration in material development. To ensure diversity and quality in course content, it has been proposed in the last Management Meeting that at least two specialists from different institutions work together on the development of each topic.

Progress has also been made in planning future actions, including unifying standards for student workload, credits, course usage across institutions, and participant recruitment. This planning anticipates potential challenges for efficiently implementing the course in diverse contexts.

## Recommendations for Improvement

**Advance Course Development:** Encourage active collaboration among specialists from different universities to strengthen the diversity and quality of course themes.

**Standardize and Adapt to Contexts:** Define a common method for calculating course workload and adapt it to national systems in each country. Consider flexible formats, such as micro credentials or MOOCs, to enhance accessibility and professional recognition.

**Design Recruitment Strategies:** Each university should develop a plan to identify and engage potential participants, exploring incentives such as academic credits, professional validity, or other forms of institutional certification.

**Plan for Sustainability:** Foster agreements between the course provider (OBREAL) and universities to integrate the course into their continuing education offerings. Explore funding mechanisms, such as fee-based income generation.

**Evaluate and Adjust:** Create a clear evaluation system for the pilot, considering participant profiles, course satisfaction, and areas for improvement.

WP5 has progressed as planned in creating a professional course on CC&T, fulfilling its initial objectives and contributing to the project's specific objective 3. Implementing these recommendations will enhance the pilot's execution and ensure its future sustainability.

## Evaluation of WP6: Consolidating University-Industry-NGO Collaboration on Climate Change, Circular Economy, and Tourism

Progress has been made in rescheduling dialogue events in Bogotá and Buenos Aires, developing a project website that meets its communication objectives, and launching a social media campaign to keep partners informed. Additionally, a clear communication and dissemination strategy document was established, the project logo was designed, and regional coverage by partners was initiated, which should be expanded as the project advances.

It is necessary to consolidate an expanded communication team with adequate representation from all partners to implement national and global dissemination strategies effectively. The project website should be updated with key documents, a publication repository, and audiovisual content already developed (indicators: Project Website updates and Promotional Video for the Project). Furthermore, there is limited generation of original content on CLIMAR's social media accounts, which predominantly repost partner activities, some unrelated to the project.

The global reach of the project is still limited, particularly in terms of attracting new stakeholders through increased social media followers and other dissemination methods. This aspect should be addressed as the project's outputs become available in the next phase (indicator: Robustness of project outreach and dissemination lists to different stakeholders).

## Recommendations for Improvement

**Enhance Digital Strategy Implementation:** Publish original content on CLIMAR's social media, linking it to the project website; regularly promote the project video and audiovisual materials via YouTube; increase the frequency and reach of social media posts; and expand stakeholder engagement for future activities.

**Foster Interaction Among Partners:** Through an expanded dissemination committee, encourage each partner to share original CLIMAR content on their accounts, balancing reciprocal communication between the project's and partners' social media channels.

**Strengthen Key Indicators:** Implement social media and dissemination strategy targets and develop a monitoring system to evaluate the impact of actions.

**Reinforce Regional and Global Impact:** Design a strategy to attract key stakeholders and use courses and activities to recruit new participants, leveraging targeted dissemination efforts to these sectors.

These actions will ensure effective monitoring of the project's communication and dissemination strategy, strengthening the achievement of CLIMAR's specific objectives and its impact.