International
Smart Energy Hubs
Conference



CONFERENCE REPORT · SMART ENERGY HUBS CONFERENCE 2026

Building resilience beyond technology

Resilient energy hubs: (em)powering Europe's energy future!

Wednesday 4 November 2026 • U Parkhotel, University of Twente campus, Enschede

Building resilience beyond technology

How can we create an energy system that remains reliable in the face of grid congestion, geopolitical uncertainty, cyber threats, and increasing demand for clean energy?

This question was at the heart of the Smart Energy Hubs Conference 2026, where more than 200 researchers, policymakers, businesses, municipalities, grid operators, and other stakeholders gathered under the theme “Resilient energy hubs: (em)powering Europe’s energy future!”

200+
visitors, including speakers

5
keynote speakers

13
parallel sessions

50
session speakers

KEY MESSAGE

Throughout the day, one message stood out: successful energy hubs require much more than technological innovation. Collaboration, trust, governance, and social acceptance emerged as essential ingredients for creating resilient local energy systems.



More than 200 participants at the U Parkhotel in Enschede.

02 OPENING

The five dimensions of resilience

The conference opened with a discussion of resilience as a multidimensional concept. A resilient energy hub must balance:

1 Physical resilience

2 Digital resilience and cybersecurity

3 Economic viability

4 Effective governance

5 Social trust and public support

Only by integrating these dimensions can energy hubs effectively withstand disruptions and adapt to changing circumstances.

03 KEYNOTE · LINKÖPING UNIVERSITY

Municipalities as system leaders and connectors



Sara Gustafsson: governing resilience in an interdependent energy system.

Professor Sara Gustafsson of Linköping University explored the role of municipalities in building resilient energy systems.

Rather than owning the system, municipalities act as facilitators and connectors, bringing together residents, businesses, utilities, and other stakeholders. They play a key role in creating long-term collaboration and enabling local energy initiatives. An important insight from her speech was that projects alone do not create lasting capacity. Sustainable progress requires ongoing partnerships, institutional learning, and long-term commitment.



04 KEYNOTE · SAXION UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Citizens as active participants

Research presented by Simone van der Burg from Saxion University of Applied Sciences on local energy initiatives in Amsterdam demonstrated that citizens want to be involved in decisions about energy use, flexibility, and data sharing. Three recurring values emerged from these discussions:

1. Autonomy
2. Fairness
3. Solidarity

The findings highlighted that energy hubs are not only technical systems but also social systems. Questions about privacy, data ownership, and the distribution of benefits are as important as the technologies themselves.



Simone van der Burg on the stories citizens tell about energy.

05 PLENARY KEYNOTE DEBATE

Decentralisation: opportunities and risks



A panel discussion examined the role of decentralised energy systems in strengthening resilience. While local energy hubs can support critical services during disruptions and help manage grid congestion, speakers emphasized that decentralisation does not automatically result in resilience.

Several challenges were identified:

1. Strengthening cybersecurity across increasingly connected energy systems
2. Defining clear responsibilities among stakeholders
3. Designing effective market incentives and regulatory frameworks
4. Preventing new vulnerabilities from emerging within local systems.

The discussion underscored that energy hubs are not a standalone solution but rather part of a broader energy system transformation.

06 ACROSS THE PARALLEL SESSIONS

Trust, collaboration, and data as key enablers

Across multiple sessions, a common theme emerged: technology alone is not enough. Successful energy hubs depend on trust between businesses, citizens, knowledge institutions, governments, and network operators. Whether on industrial parks, within energy communities, or in local energy-sharing initiatives, collaboration requires transparency, shared objectives, and a willingness to work together for long-term value. Participants also highlighted the growing importance of data. Access to high-quality data remains a prerequisite for effective planning, simulation, optimization, and energy management.





07 CONCLUSION

Looking ahead

As energy hubs continue to mature, the focus is shifting from technical feasibility to practical implementation and societal integration. The conference demonstrated that the future of resilient energy systems will depend on combining technological innovation with effective governance, strong partnerships, and public engagement.

The conversations and connections established during this year's conference provide a strong foundation for future collaboration and further development of resilient energy hubs across Europe.

One conclusion resonated throughout the day: the energy transition is not only a technological challenge: it is a collective effort.

Best presentations and more

In the closing session, conference vice-chair Yashar Hajimolana (University of Twente) presented the best presentation awards in two categories, each with a prize of € 250.



BEST JUNIOR PRESENTER

Daphne Piket

Identifying Robust Flexibility Investment Decisions for Grid Congestion



BEST SENIOR PRESENTER

Jeroen Boerkamps

How a Locally Owned Wind Farm Unlocks a Multi-Stakeholder Energy Community

13

Parallel sessions

Fifty speakers presented their work in thirteen sessions on governance, business models, risk, industrial electrification, energy management, power quality, district heating and grid congestion. All abstracts are collected in the Book of abstracts.

8

Live podcasts

De Energiehub Podcast recorded eight live conversations in Room M2, with speakers, policymakers, students and practitioners. Listen via energiehubs.nl/podcast.



Live podcast in Room M2.



Closing session.



Networking drinks.

09 ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

A growing meeting place for smart energy hubs

The International Smart Energy Hubs Conference brings together researchers, companies, grid operators, governments and energy communities that work on smart energy hubs: places where businesses or residents jointly generate, store, convert and share energy. Since its start in Enschede in 2024, it has grown into an international meeting place where science and practice learn from each other.

The conference is organised by the University of Twente and Saxion University of Applied Sciences together with Oost NL, in partnership with Kennisplatform Energiehubs and Energy Innovation NL.

From the first edition, Richard van Leeuwen (Saxion) and Yashar Hajimolana (University of Twente) have led the conference as chair and co-chair.

2024

FIRST EDITION

20 November 2024 · Connect-U, Enschede

More than 150 professionals and 42 speakers. Keynotes from TU Delft, the Dutch ministry responsible for climate and energy, Topsector Energie and Alliander.

2025

SECOND EDITION

12 November 2025 · U Parkhotel, Enschede

Theme: unlocking robust, decarbonised energy systems. Keynote by Henrik Lund (Aalborg University) and a panel with Enexis, Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Oost NL.

2026

THIRD EDITION

4 November 2026 · U Parkhotel, Enschede

For the first time as the International Smart Energy Hubs Conference: 200+ visitors, 5 keynotes, 13 parallel sessions and 50 session speakers.



Welcome to the third edition, Enschede, 4 November 2026.



International Smart Energy Hubs Conference



THANK YOU

Thank you to all speakers, session chairs, partners and participants

WEBSITE
conferentie.smartenergyhubs.eu

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Smart Energy Hubs
Oost-Nederland
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