

# Climate-KIC and Cezanne HR

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The organisation behind the EU's main climate innovation initiative streamlines HR processes across their European operations



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Climate-KIC is Europe's largest innovation partnership, headquartered in London and operating through 18 European locations. The organisation is driving innovation in climate change by helping start-ups bring their ideas to market and providing education programmes to help students deepen their knowledge and test out their ideas. It also runs innovation projects on everything from greening cities to sustainable land use with a network of partners from academia and the public and private sectors

Climate-KIC is using online software system Cezanne HR to track time, improve data consistency and streamline HR processes across their European operations.

## The business need

Earlier this year, the organisation went through a major structural shift when 150 staff from partner organisations were brought together to form one co-ordinated business. This posed many challenges for the HR and finance teams, not least the need to find a way of accurately recording the time and resources spent on projects, so that they could meet the stringent reporting requirements demanded by their funders.

It was agreed that an HR software system with time management functionality would be the best solution, as it would have the added advantage of helping the newly enlarged business streamline its HR processes. The requirements, however, were complex. The system needed to be capable of accurately capturing data from staff in locations across Europe, working on more than 100 projects with different reporting needs and aligned to around 40 different cost centres.

"Getting the right time-sheeting system in place was our priority, but we also needed a system that would support our vision of a devolved structure

where local centres would be responsible for their own people management processes, using a framework developed and supported by us at HQ," said HR Manager Alex Hyde. "It was quite a challenge, because previously everything had been paper-based and centres weren't necessarily managing HR in a consistent way."

## Finding the right solution

After reviewing the market, it quickly became apparent that very few providers were able to offer the range of functionality that Climate-KIC needed. Cezanne HR stood out because of its robustness, cost-effectiveness and clean, user-friendly design. "I have worked with bad HR systems in the past and felt it was really important to find something that didn't just look good on the surface," says Alex. "The other systems we looked at just didn't feel as mature or stable as Cezanne HR. The Time module was capable of meeting our very complex needs and we could see that the system would also allow us to generate really good quality management information."

The organisation also felt the pay-as-you-go pricing module was a cost effective option (companies only pay for the active number of employees at any one time) and as a global business, the language capability (the system runs in nine European languages) also appealed.

## Getting up and running

Another attraction of Cezanne HR was the speed of set up. "We were able to get up and running with our data and processes really quickly," says Alex. The organisation took advantage of the free on-boarding support provided by Cezanne HR, which includes upload of core data and hand holding through some of the key set up steps.

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They also opted for paid-for consultancy workshops, allowing Cezanne HR to work closely with both the finance and HR teams to help them configure the system to meet their external and internal reporting needs. The Time module, for example, has been set up to provide a pre-formatted template that allows all the centres to report on total employee hours per project and to log any related cross charges. Centres can share information, run reports, add or amend projects and activities as required, and export information to Excel.

Cezanne HR was able to help Climate-KIC win internal support for the new system. “Local centre managers liked the idea of having better management information, but some felt that HR-related activity wasn’t really their area of expertise, so there was a bit of an engagement job to do,” explained Alex. “One of Cezanne HR’s consultants came out to Amsterdam to run a training session which demonstrated how the system could help them manage their teams and how they could use it to meet local needs. It helped people see how it would add value and really got them on board.”

## Supporting managers

The system was launched at the London HQ in January this year, and has since been gradually rolled out to the other centres. As soon as the Time module was up and running effectively, the organisation began to look at how else it could use the wider system to add value.

One of the most useful features has been the ability to generate management reports on areas such as resourcing and retention. Senior management, for example, can get an overview of head count, starters and leavers, and salary and overtime costs to support the overall cost management process. “If we wanted this kind of

information before we would have had to email round all the line managers and then compile the information into a report ourselves,” says Alex. “Now we can just generate instant reports with a few clicks of the mouse.”

Line managers are also able to easily access information about their people. They can get a helicopter view of planned or sickness absence at any one time, for example, and also receive prompts to remind them when probation periods are up or contracts are due for renewal.

Employees have also been able to take advantage of the self-service option to manage their own personal data. They can simply log from wherever they may be and update their address or bank details, request holiday, and keep track of their annual leave entitlement via their PC, tablet or smartphone.

The system has also helped the business improve communication and connectivity between centres. The organisational chart, which is automatically generated by the Cezanne HR system, makes it easy for people to see what someone’s role is, where they are based, and who they report to. “From a knowledge management perspective, Cezanne HR is a really useful tool and I think going forward will help people get the information they need or the answers to questions more easily,” said Alex. “Feedback overall has been really positive. The system is easy to navigate, it works and it is reliable.”

## Planning for the future

Climate-KIC is now looking at how the Training and Development area in the core People module can support its work and is currently using it to support a skills mapping exercise. Staff are being invited to log into the system and record their skills and qualifications from a defined list, which

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has made the whole task much quicker and simpler. “In the future we will be able to run skills matrixes so that if a project comes up and managers need to put a team together, they will be able to easily see who in the organisation has the background and experience they need,” says Alex. “We are still really only scratching the surface of Cezanne HR – there is a lot more scope to use the system to improve and develop the way we work.”

The organisation has been particularly impressed with the support they have received from the Cezanne HR team, and with their willingness to go the extra mile to understand Climate-KIC’s changing needs, and help them configure the system to match.

“The support has been excellent throughout,” says Alex, “I feel we’ve really benefited from having a primary contact who understands our requirements.” Climate-KIC has already recommended Cezanne HR to sister company, who has since signed up to use the system. “The fact that we feel comfortable recommending Cezanne HR to other organisations at such an early stage speaks for itself,” Alex concludes.

## About Cezanne HR

We’ve built something special at Cezanne HR; a powerful, configurable HR software solution that’s simple to deploy, easy to manage and remarkably cost-effective, whatever the size of your business. As a team, we’ve a long track record of delivering successful HR solutions to businesses worldwide. We’ve worked with companies of every size and across every business sector. That’s why we decided from the very start to build an exceptionally robust and scalable SaaS platform for human resources management which, like our customer community, is growing all the time.