THE BUSINESS CASE FOR DIGITAL BUILDING LOGBOOKS

chimni
Residential
Property Logbooks

Insights on the business ecosystem,
and financial & non-financial performance
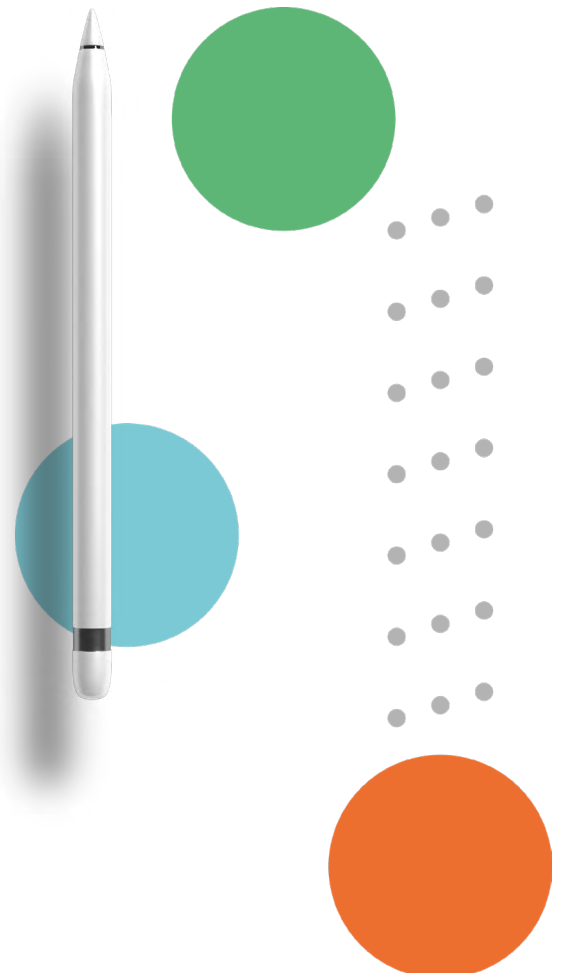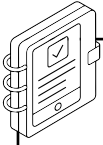
What is a Digital Building Logbook?

Digital Building Logbooks (DBLs) are digital repositories where data about a building's design, construction, materials, the land it's built on, as well as its environmental, social and financial performance are collected.

DBLs are used by various stakeholders—such as building owners, regulators, service providers, and financial stakeholders—to support decision-making, ensure regulatory compliance, assess investment risks, and improve building performance.

The Chimni Logbook

Chimni is a homeowner-facing digital property logbook for residential property in the UK. It enables homeowners to keep structured data and document records of property transactions, building work, certifications and maintenance. Chimni logbooks connect to permanent data sources like the Land Registry, Local Authorities, and certification bodies.

They also offer the potential to set up temporary connections to estate agents, conveyancers and other property professionals.

Value proposition

Chimni's core value proposition is to empower homeowners to better manage, plan, and optimise their properties throughout the building lifecycle, including purchase, renovation, maintenance and resale.

Key functionalities offered:

- **Digital documentation repository:** Owners can upload and securely store construction certificates, planning permissions, invoices, EPC ratings, warranties, and historical renovation data.
- **Permit process integration:** Through partnerships with local authorities, Chimni can act as a pre-filled interface to streamline planning applications.
- **Home improvement planning:** The system provides homeowners with tailored renovation pathways based on current building conditions, energy performance, and household goals.
- **Interactive timeline and alerts:** A visual tool enables users to track work history and receive reminders (e.g., when a warranty is about to expire or a boiler should be serviced).
- **Collaborative access:** Contractors, energy assessors, or estate agents can be granted temporary access, facilitating efficient communication and transparency.

For **public authorities**, Chimni enhances compliance monitoring, reduces administrative workloads, and improves targeting of renovation programmes.
For private actors (e.g., banks, insurers, tradespeople), it enables service personalisation and risk assessment.

Business model and ecosystem

Chimni operates under a platform model combining elements of:

- Freemium access for individuals, with optional upgrades for added features
- Contractual partnerships with local authorities, for integration with planning and retrofit support services
- Data service licenses and API integrations with third-party services such as surveyors, insurers, and financial institutions

A business ecosystem mapping conducted during the Demo-BLog project revealed that Chimni sits at the intersection of public digital services and the growing home retrofit market. Key stakeholders include:

- Citizens and homeowners (primary users and data owners)
- Municipal planning departments (integration partners)
- Property professionals (surveyors, solicitors)
- Retrofit contractors (beneficiaries of transparent building history)
- Policy implementers and funders (interested in decarbonisation impact)
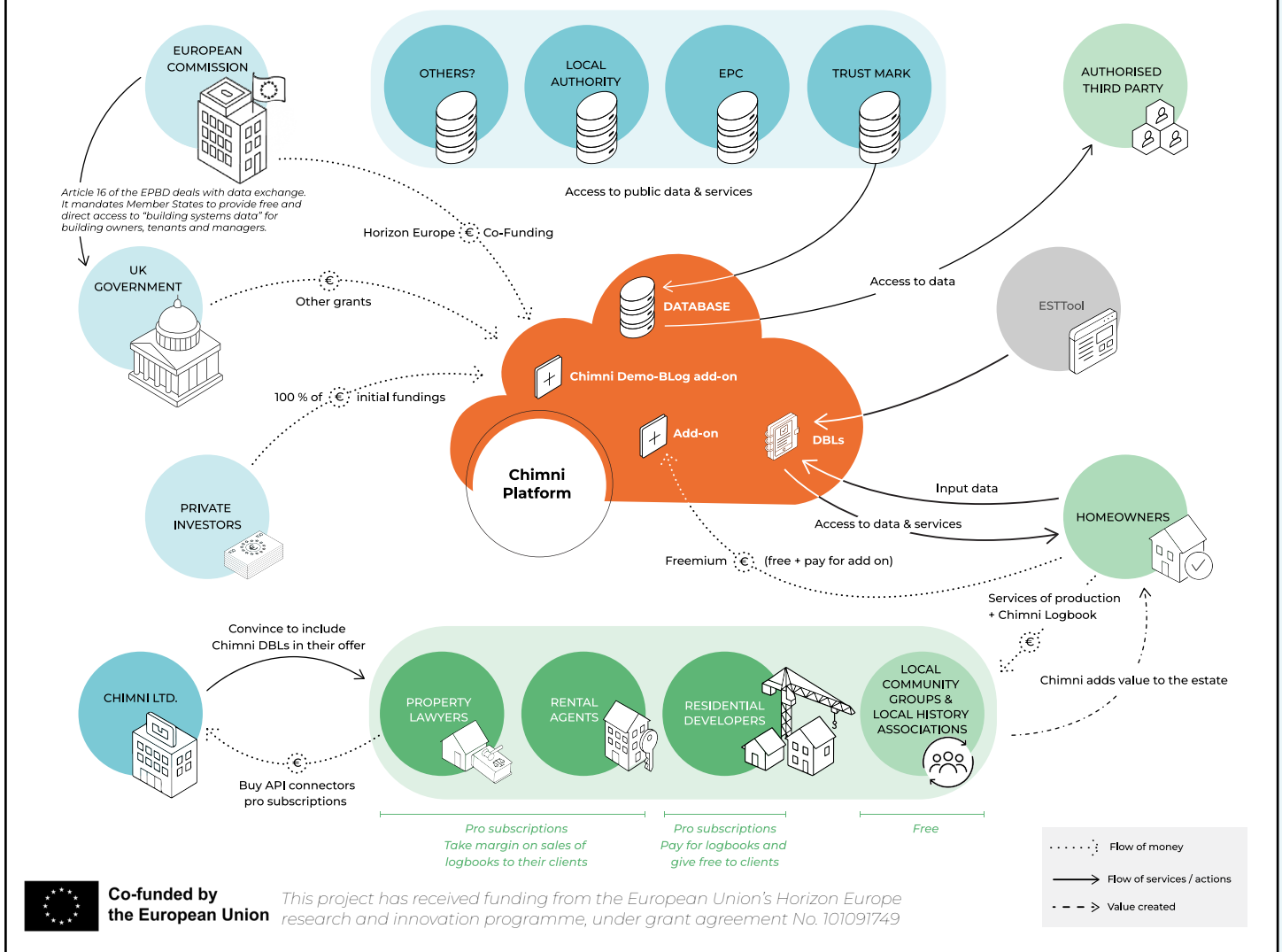
Chimni's cost structure consists primarily of software maintenance, data security and user support. Revenue streams are expected to grow through institutional licensing and services for professional users.

Implementation challenges

Several implementation hurdles emerged during the pilot phase, which were addressed through iterative design and stakeholder engagement:

- **Heterogeneous legacy systems in UK councils posed integration challenges.** Chimni developed lightweight API adapters and conducted bilateral workshops to facilitate alignment.
- **Data literacy among users varied.** The user interface was redesigned in late 2023 to simplify onboarding, supported by short instructional videos and contextual tooltips.
- **Concerns over data ownership** were addressed via a privacy-by-design approach, allowing users full control over access rights and offering detailed transparency logs. A close collaboration with local actors (e.g., Southwark Council) demonstrated that co-development and local championing significantly boost trust and uptake.

Chimni Business Ecosystem Mapping

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

OTHERS?

LOCAL AUTHORITY

EPC

TRUST MARK

AUTHORISED THIRD PARTY

Article 16 of the EPBD deals with data exchange. It mandates Member States to provide free and direct access to "building systems data" for building owners, tenants and managers.

Access to public data & services

Horizon Europe €: Co-Funding

UK GOVERNMENT

Other grants

Access to data

DATABASE

ESTTool

Chimni Demo-BLog add-on

100 % of €: initial fundings

Add-on

DBLs

Input data

Chimni Platform

PRIVATE INVESTORS

Access to data & services

HOMEOWNERS

Freemium €: (free + pay for add on)

Services of production + Chimni Logbook

Convince to include Chimni DBLs in their offer

CHIMNI LTD.

PROPERTY LAWYERS

RENTAL AGENTS

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPERS

LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS & LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATIONS

Chimni adds value to the estate

Buy API connectors pro subscriptions

Pro subscriptions Take margin on sales of logbooks to their clients

Pro subscriptions Pay for logbooks and give free to clients

Free

· · · · · Flow of money

⟶ Flow of services / actions

- - -▷ Value created

Financial and non-financial KPIs

Chimni submitted **financial KPIs** (Key Performance Indicators) in 2024 as part of Demo-BLog's performance monitoring. Key insights include:

- CAPEX (capital expenditures): Development of platform architecture, data security protocols (UK GDPR compliance), and planning integration modules. Most CAPEX incurred before and during early project phases (2022–2024).

- OPEX (operating expenses): Cloud infrastructure (Azure-based), bug resolution, support desk operations, and communications.

- Cost per user (indicative): Decreases sharply with scale — for 2024, estimated at £12–£16 per user annually.

Non-financial KPIs measured or projected:

- ~3,500 registered users by end of 2024, with ~1,100 active monthly users

- ~70% user satisfaction (via voluntary feedback surveys)

- ~15–20% reduction in time-to-approve for planning permissions in partnered councils using the CHIMNI integration (pilot evidence)

- Positive impacts on data readiness for green finance, as users can consolidate EPCs, retrofit invoices, and carbon estimates.

While data heterogeneity and user privacy rules limit KPI uniformity across all pilots, Chimni has provided one of the most mature, structured data sets among the Demo-BLog DBLs.

About the Demo-BLog project

Demo-BLog is a Horizon Europe project that is testing and further developing five existing Digital Building Logbooks (DBLs).

We are a consortium of 14 partners coming from Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK.

The project addresses key gaps in building data availability, accessibility and usability that hinder progress towards EU goals such as climate neutrality, digitalisation and affordable housing.

Transparent and accessible data

Transparency and access to information are critical to ramp up building renovation at the scale and pace needed to achieve a climate-neutral building stock. The extremely limited availability of information, combined with a lack of a common repository of data directly leads to additional costs and inefficiencies in designing, constructing, operating and financing buildings.

Demo-BLog gathers all related data from building Renovation Passports, smart readiness indicators, Level(s), EPCs (Energy Performance Certificates), and other sources, to drive net-zero carbon building design, construction, management and renovation. By promoting interoperable, user-friendly DBLs, the project enables better data-driven decisions, supports renovation, energy efficiency and whole-life carbon assessments – advancing a transparent, circular and high-quality sustainable European building stock.

Demonstrating four functionalities

Demo-BLog aims to demonstrate capturing, integrating and storing building data, as well as converting this data into actionable information for relevant stakeholders across the construction market value chain.

The project is further developing four functionalities in terms of automation, digital and ICT (Information Communication Technology) tools, APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) and software applications, and is demonstrating their implementation in five front-runner DBLs – **Chimni is one of these DBLs.**
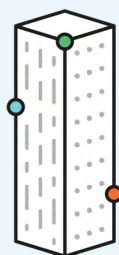
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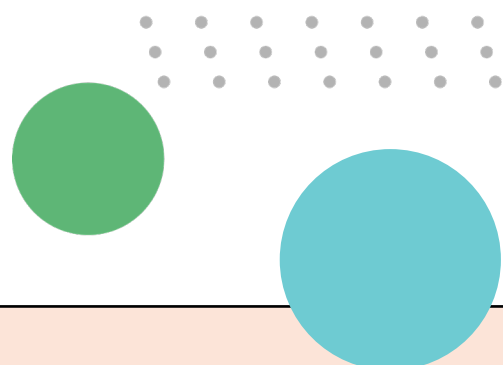
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Demo
Blog

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