Project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund

finMED

Boosting the financing of innovation for green growth sectors through innovative clusters services in the MED area

Collaboration Protocol for Regional and National Capitalisation of finMED Tools

Gozo Development Agency – Gozo Regional Committee

Work Package 6: Capitalising
Activity 6.3: Enhancing interactions and mutual learning among regional stakeholders
Deliverable Number 6.3.1: Regional Stakeholders' Collaboration Protocol
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1 Introduction

The finMED project is the only one belonging to the MED Green Growth Community. It has 48 months to study, test, transfer and capitalise concrete solutions to sustain the financing of innovation for green sectors. The project integrates efforts, practices and actions among different kind of actors, effectively re-enforcing the idea that green growth is a win-win viable strategy for the future of citizens, for the private sector, and for investors and financiers alike, and that therefore it must be sustained with proper financing practices. It aims to boost the financing of innovation in green growth sectors through improved delivery of policies and strategies and the introduction of innovative cluster services.

The project brings together 15 partners, including regions, clusters and business support organisations, knowledge providers and development agencies, from 9 different countries. The partners have agreed to joined forces within finMED in order to tackle the crucial challenges of green sector financing in pursuit of a rosier future for MED regions.

The project targets national, regional and local public authorities; clusters and business support organisations; sectoral agencies; green sector enterprises and SMEs; higher educational institutions; research organisations; and financiers, including financial institutions, banks, investment funds and business angels.

The project is now at the WP6: Capitalising. It is at this stage that the knowledge, tools and practices elaborated and tested by project partners are finally ready to be capitalised upon in the involved regions, and this applies especially to the efficient and effective transfer of results towards regional programmes, policies and practices, with the support of all the participating partners and the stakeholders concerned.

Activity 6.3, which is the subject of the current document, is a crucial step in promoting the use of the tools that the project has produced, namely the Capacity Building Tool (CBT) and the Support Service Tool (SST), as well as the MASDE Tool, at both regional and national levels. It envisages the mainstreaming of the tools in regional and national policies via the establishment of carefully crafted stakeholders' groups in a concerted effort to involve regional actors in the project. The main purpose of the activity is therefore to present and spread the use and adoption of the tools with potential users, and to promote the active use of the tolls when relevant policies are being developed and implemented in the regions.

The present document contains the Collaboration Protocol for the Stakeholders' Groups to be activated at regional or national level by the finMED partners. Specifically, the protocol consists of agreed up guidelines and norms for the groups, and provides a facilitated structure within which to organise focused and effective meetings. It is hoped that this will create fertile ground for continued responsible and dynamic collaboration well into the future.

2 About Work Package 6: Capitalising

WP6: Capitalising is amply described in Deliverable 6.1.1: *Methodology and guidance handbook for the WP6 implementation*, which was very aptly authored by IVACE – Instituto Valenciano de Competitividad Empresarial. The WP6 general objective is to reinforce, empower and increase coordination among clusters/business support organizations and public authorities in their efforts to assure access to finance to green sectors companies, and especially to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In WP6, the knowledge, tools and practices elaborated and tested by PPs are ready to be capitalised in the involved regions, especially the transfer of results towards regional programmes, policies and practices with the support of all concerned stakeholders.

The WP encompasses actions at regional level, with the set-up of regional stakeholder groups and support to policy improvements together with transregional and EU wide actions, with the launch of the finMED network and the organization of the high-level conference on innovation financing for green sectors in the next programming period. The capitalisation process includes the following activities:

- 6.1: Coordinating the WP6;
- 6.2: Support policy-learning of public authorities with the use of the finMED tool and technical experts;
- 6.3: Enhancing interactions and mutual learning among regional stakeholders;
- 6.4: Elaboration of Policy Procedures for the financing of green growth policy instruments;
- 6.5: Supporting regional, MED and EU debate on the future of green sectors and the financing of green growth strategies;
- 6.6: Partnership thematic project meetings

Together, these actions are intended to ensure that the position of the concerned governing bodies is translated into steps and results compatible with their vision and mission for the future of green sectors. As part of the capitalisation activities in WP6, the key element is to target key decision-makers and stakeholders potentially interested in the results of the project, including the CBT and the SST, as well as in the main outcomes and lessons learnt in the MED area and in Europe, in order to promote their achievement and implementation.

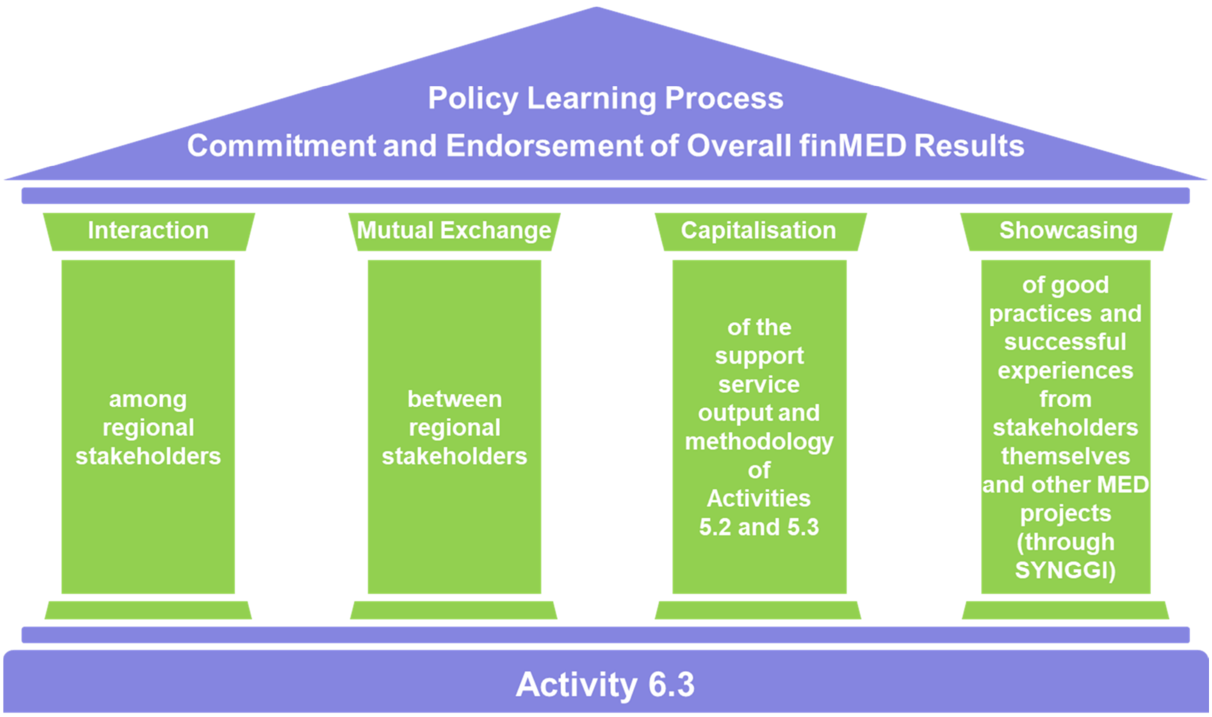
3 Description of Activity 6.3

3.1 Overview

Figure 1 depicts an overview of Activity 6.3 and its purpose. The activity sustains the policy learning process through interaction and mutual exchange among regional stakeholders. In so doing, the activity capitalises the support service output and methodology of Activities 5.2 and A5.3. It also supports the commitment and endorsement of the overall finMED results. The first purpose of the activity is to define a set of common criteria for the identification of regional stakeholders, which will be followed by the formal set-up of the collaborations, the signing of the collaboration protocol, and the organisation of 2 meetings per region of the stakeholders' groups. Finally, the project partners will set up a showcase of good practices, successful context-based experiences from past initiatives, and the finMED tools.

As activity leader, the Gozo Development Agency is entrusted with the task of coordinating the efforts of the different project partners, and of providing the methodological framework for the execution of all the actions envisaged by the activity. All the partners will participate in the actions, with the clear aim of maximising the capitalisation of the project outputs in their respective regions. They will identify the stakeholders using the common methodology that is laid down in the present document. Each partner will lead the formal establishment of

Figure 1 Overview of Activity 6.3



the stakeholders' groupings in their region, and will organize and participate in the meetings. The thrust will be the appreciation by all concerned of the importance of the partners' efforts in supporting the capitalisation process at local, regional, national and EU level. Hence also the involvement of public and private organisations, with the former being in a position to deliver concrete policies and procedures, while the input of the latter will, crucially, be in form of valuable ideas and recommendations as to how to optimise the utilisation of the project results and outcomes, as well as the best practices emanating from other MED projects in the context of the green growth economy and its financing.

3.2 The finMED Tools

In pursuing the overall objective of boosting the financing of innovation in green growth sectors of Mediterranean regions, the finMED project has developed the Capacity Building Tool, the Support Service Tool, and the MASDE Tool.

The purpose of the Capacity Building Tool is for public authorities to improve innovation financing in green sectors, and aims at overcoming knowledge gaps related to the specific mechanisms and solutions for financing of innovation in green sectors SMEs through European Structural Funds. It is intended to provide practical guidance to MED regional public authorities on the nature of capacities needed, and on how to support their development to concretely devise and adopt new solutions and practices for innovation financing of SMEs. It is designed to convey workable knowledge, develop new skills, and to support the organisational scale-up of tools and policies. The projected users of the CBT are staff, managers and policymakers of regional and national public authorities.

The Support Service Tool is tailored to help clusters and business support organisations to support SMEs access to finance for innovation in green sectors. It offers strategic and operational advice to green sectors SMEs that want to obtain financing for their projects and investments. It is structured around a questionnaire (60 questions) with an online interface. At the end of the questionnaire it provides a feedback report with an effective gap analysis of the SME with regard to minimum/highest standards required by the public and private economic-financial ecosystem. It also suggests what kind of financial instrument the particular SME looks to be ready to access. The report supports the definition of strategies and actions for the SME in order to maximize the results and minimize the effort of the SMEs in finding financial resources. The final beneficiaries of the tool are the SMEs, through the intermediation of clusters and business support organisations that concretely operate and use the tool.

MASDE is a service for companies currently going through difficult times owing to the impact of COVID-19 and its reverberations in the economy. In essence, the fundamental premise upon which the service rests is that, more than ever before in recent memory, strategic reflection has become a necessity within companies, as has the possibility of contrasting it in a context of cooperation with the relevant agents in its sector, cluster, and institutional framework. It makes it much easier for a company to find the most suitable strategic combination for recovery and sustainable development. For this reason, at first the service will be supported by an online tool (MASDE Tool). MASDE Tool will be the instrument that will allow the analysis of the business situation, and it will involve all the agents of the business ecosystem in the region.

3.3 Overall Objective of Activity 6.3

The development and testing of the tools were the subject of previous work packages of the project. During the studying phase the tools were designed and perfected; the testing phase aimed at providing proof of concept of the tools; and the transferring concluded the process in order to reconnect with real world users. These three steps actively involved all the actors in the innovation system of the green sectors, namely public authorities and regional agencies, clusters, business support organisations (chambers of commerce, technology and competence centres, business agencies), SMEs, and also of course the financial organisations.

The purpose of the capitalisation activities of WP6 is to target key decision-makers and stakeholders potentially interested in the results of the project. The CBT and the SST will take centre stage in this, supported by the capitalisation of other main outcomes and the lessons learnt in the MED area and in Europe, in order to promote their full and effective implementation on the ground. Activity 6.3 therefore becomes an essential step in promoting the use of the tools at regional and national levels, as well as their mainstreaming in regional and national policies. Consequently, the establishment of the stakeholders' groups is not simply a general exercise to involve regional actors in the projects, raise awareness or deliver communication activities. Rather, it is to present and spread the use and adoption of the tools with potential users and in the elaboration of relevant policies.

3.4 Specific Objectives

Activity 6.3 aims to support the policy learning process, as well as the stakeholders' commitment and endorsement of the overall finMED results, through:

- interaction and mutual exchange among the identified and engaged regional stakeholders,
- capitalisation of the support service output and methodology of Activities 5.2 and 5.3,

- showcasing of good practices and successful experiences from stakeholders themselves and other MED projects.

The stakeholders' groups, therefore, are the very essence of the activity, as they will become the forums wherein the finMED results and the good practices from other projects will bear the desired fruit. The groups should thus prove to be an all-encompassing tool in and of themselves towards the achievement of the objectives of the finMED project. Indeed, without the associated capitalisation potential that they offer the project would be infinitely less effective.

3.5 Difference from Activity 5.2

It imperative at this point to fully appreciate the difference between Activities 5.2 and Activity 6.3. The former, namely the meeting with financiers, was part of the transferring process, with its aim being related to the validation of the Support Service Tool by financiers. It involved banking institutions, financial intermediaries, venture capital funds, and such like, in order to check if the Support Service Tool could have been considered valid and effective in real-world contexts from their points of view. On the other hand, Activity 6.3 is part of the capitalising process, and as such it is intended to promote the use and uptake of both tools (Capacity Building Tool and Support Service Tool) by potential interested users and/or in regional and national policies.

4 Implementation of Activity 6.3

4.1 Phases of the Activity

Figure 2 gives an overview of the phases over which Activity 6.3 will unfold. Three phases are envisaged, namely

I. Definition of common criteria and identification of stakeholders

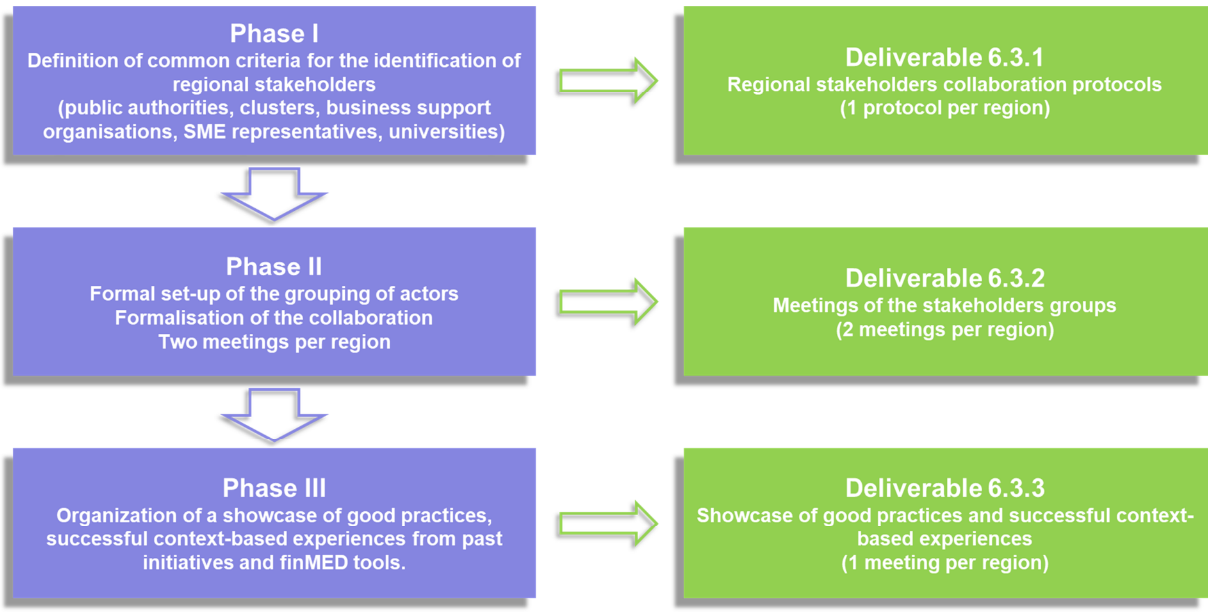
II. Formal set-up of the grouping of actors and meetings

III. Organization of a showcase of good practices

4.1.1 Phase I: Definition of Common Criteria and Identification of Stakeholders

The first phase of Activity 6.3 will consist of the definition of common criteria for the identification of regional and national actors, namely public authorities, clusters, business support organisations, SME representatives, universities. It foresees the finMED partners setting regional stakeholders' groups in each partner region to mainstream the tools. The actors identified as potential users of the tools, at regional and national level, are informed about the project by using appropriate communication tools produced by WP2 Communication, which may be adapted to the local language where appropriate. They will be invited to join the meetings that will follow.

Figure 2 The three phases of Activity 6.3



Generally speaking, the targeted potential users of the finMED tools will be as follows.

- The Capacity Building Tool will be targeted towards regional and national public authorities.
- The Support Service Tool will be directed towards clusters and business support organisations.

For the purpose of mainstreaming of the tool in regional and national policies, the relevant regional and national public authorities should also be addressed, in their case not for the use of the tool but for their uptake in policies or instruments.

4.1.2 Phase II: Formal Set-up of the Grouping of Actors and Meetings

The second phase of the activity will consist of the formal set-up of the grouping of actors, the formalisation of the collaboration, and the organisation of two meetings per region. One additional showcasing event will take place in each region, for a total of three meetings per region. However, given that most or all of the meetings will be online, the showcasing part can be inserted as a session in the other meetings, and in that case showcasing will be ongoing throughout the duration of the activity. The meetings will be devised as real opportunities to explain the tools to the identified potential users at regional and national level. According to the profile, mission, expertise and networking capacity, each partner identifies the tool to promote and mainstream. Ideally it should be both tools, but otherwise it can also be just the CBT or the SST. Based on the choice of tool, the partners will decide which actors to involve in the collaboration group in order for them to become tool users or adopters. The meetings can focus on one tool at a time with just the relative potential users, or they may cover both tools in tandem.

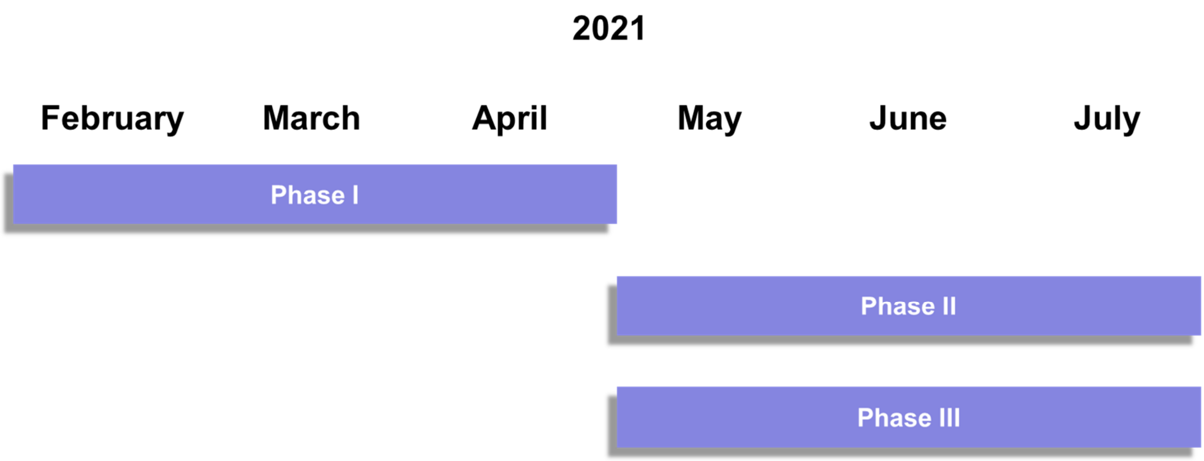
4.1.3 Phase III: Organization of a Showcase of Good Practices

A very important constituent of Activity 6.3 is the showcasing aspect. It will consist of the organization of a showcase of good practices, particularly successful context-based experiences from past initiatives, as well as the finMED tools themselves. It is intended to present the activities done during testing and transferring, to show the results obtained at regional level, and the lessons learnt throughout the process. Showcasing is aimed at spreading the use of the tool by demonstrating its usefulness, the potential and the benefit achievable by presenting success cases and the concrete experiences gained by the partners during the testing and the transferring. Indications on good practices and successful experiences come from the stakeholders themselves, but also from other MED projects.

4.2 Timeline

The timeline of the activity is shown in Figure 3. The activity is due for completion by the end of July 2021, with the various phases being scheduled in the intervening moths as shown. The partners are invited to use this timeline as a general guide, while adapting their own timing of the various activities to suit their own agendas.

Figure 3 Timeline of the activity



4.3 Expected Outputs

The outputs of Activity 6.3 will consist of:

- Deliverable 6.3.1: Regional stakeholders collaboration protocols (1 per region),
- Deliverable 6.3.2: Reports of meetings of the stakeholders' groups (2 per region),
- Deliverable 6.3.3: Showcase of good practices and successful context-based experiences.

4.3.1 D6.3.1: Regional Stakeholders Collaboration Protocols

The Protocols will define:

- the characteristics and functions of the participants in the context of green growth and financing,
- the rules of participation and collaboration mechanisms,
- the objectives of the group,

- lists of actors, and
- commitment from the participants to be discussed and obtained during the 1st on-line meeting.

Use will be made of the methodology and strategy developed by IVACE and applied in Valencia with the stakeholders in the Regional Observatory for Financing Innovation in companies as a useful example.

The target date for delivery of the regional protocols is April 2021.

4.3.2 D6.3.2: Meetings of the Stakeholders' Groups

Reports of the meetings of the stakeholders' groups, 2 per each involved region, will be produced, describing the processes, discussion topics and decisions taken. All meetings will be held online in accordance with COVID-19 social distancing measures that are currently in place in the participating regions.

The deadline for delivery of the meetings and the reports is July 2021.

4.3.3 D6.3.3: Showcase of Good Practices and Successful Context-based Experiences

One showcasing event will take place in each region, but showcasing can be ongoing throughout the duration of the activity, concurrent and combined with the other meetings of the stakeholders' groups. It will offer learning and reflection opportunities for all actors involved, be they the stakeholders themselves or the project partners. The events and their contents will be collectively discussed, chosen and developed during the stakeholders' groups meetings.

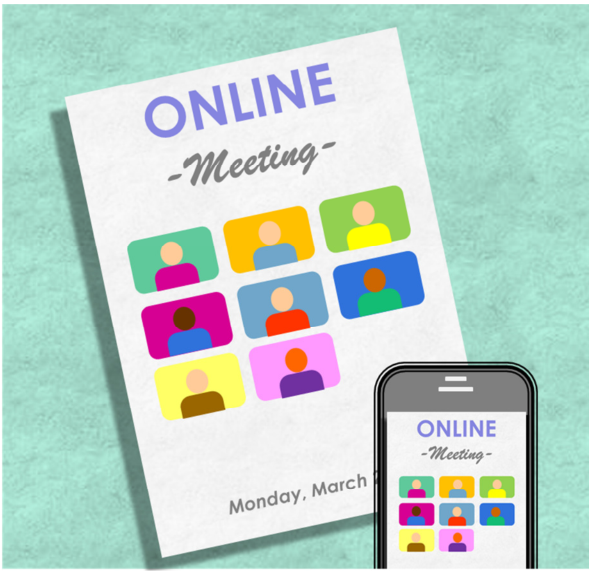
The deadline for delivery of the showcase is July 2021.

4.4 COVID-19 Restrictions

Owing to the current COVID situation in most of the participating regions, it is appropriate that the partners adapt the activities in order to comply with relevant measures in their regions and to keep people safe as much as possible. Suitable representations have already been made to the Joint Secretariat, and it has been agreed that the spirit of the application form can be met using suitable alternative means. Thus, although the AF envisaged that the formalisation step would include the signing of the protocol in all the regions, this will not now be necessary by agreement with the JS. Confirmations by email will suffice, in lieu of signed paper documents, and all meetings will be held online instead of in person.

Figure 4 Impacts of COVID-19 measures

- Owing to the current COVID situation in most of the regions, all meetings will be held online instead of in person
- Although the AF envisaged that the formalisation step would include the signing of the protocol in all the regions, this will not be necessary by agreement with the JS
- Confirmations by email will suffice, in lieu of signed paper documents



4.5 Role of the Activity Leader

The tasks of Gozo Development Agency as activity leader include the development of the current document over the course of Activity 6.3, thereby defining, among other things:

- The guidelines for the identification of regional stakeholders;
- the roles in various types of collaborations, such as networks, coalitions and strategic alliances, in relation to financing of green growth enterprises;
- indications as to how the collaborations can be developed, and how they can be adapted and implemented;
- the communication channels to be used.

GDA also needs to provide:

- a common template for the regional stakeholders collaboration protocols;
- a common methodology for the meetings of the stakeholders groups in the regions;
- templates for agenda, meeting reports, feedback forms
- guidelines for the showcasing of good practices and successful context-based experiences.

GDA will produce one report collating the proceedings and feedback from all the regional meetings.

5 Definition of Common Criteria and Identification of Stakeholders

The output of this phase of the activity will be the identification of regional and national actors by the project partners in accordance with the common criteria defined in this section. The project partners can follow a four-step structured process for analysis the stakeholders in their region, specifically:

1. Identify potential stakeholders
2. Classify the identified potential stakeholders
3. Select the final stakeholders
4. Understand your stakeholders

5.1 Identify Potential Stakeholders

Start by brainstorming in order to identify who the stakeholders actually could be. The thinking should be on the lines of which entities could be affected by the project outputs, and particularly by green sector financing. Ask pertinent questions, like:

- Which entities could have influence or power over green sector financing?
- Which might have an interest in its implementation?
- Which entities or persons could be important influencers of opinions in this regard?

Try to be as inclusive as possible at the stage, and do not exclude a potential stakeholder even if in doubt. List the stakeholders as they come up in the brainstorming session, applying no particular order or category.

5.2 Classify the Identified Potential Stakeholders

Partners may analyse the potential stakeholder pool by classifying them in order to assess suitability and the effort that will be needed to engage them. Categorisation may be by finMED tool mainstreaming target category; by organisation type; but also by various matrices, such as openness to collaboration vs knowledge.

5.2.1 Categories by Type

Each partner will carry on a mapping of the stakeholders, identifying relevant public and private actors with a possible direct interest in the tools.

The categorisation of those actors should follow the categories:

- Regional and local policy makers and institutions;
- Regional Development Agencies (or similar organisations);
- Clusters and business support organisations (Chambers of Commerce, Innovation Agencies, Business and Sectoral agencies, Technology Centres, Competence Centres, SMEs aggregators and consultancy);
- Educational Institutions (University, Research centres);
- Business communities (Trade associations, professional bodies);
- Financers, financial institutions, banks, investment funds, business angels.

5.2.2 finMED Tools Target Category

Mention has already been made earlier of the intended function of each of the regional stakeholders' groups in mainstreaming the CBT and the SST, as well as the intended users and target groups of each of the tools. This information is comprehensively summarised in Table 1. The declared target categories can be used in the identification of stakeholders, but they do not mean to imply that the stakeholders' groups must of necessity be structured along separate lines and strictly in according with the intended target audience of the tool to be capitalised. On the contrary, the partners are free to combine the two target categories into single groupings, thereby benefitting from the interaction and mutual exchange opportunities that such an approach would entail.

Table 1 Target categories for mainstreaming of the finMED tools

finMED Tool	Target Category
Capacity Building Tool	Staff, managers and policy makers of regional and national public authorities
Support Service Tool	Clusters and business support organisations, i.e.: Chambers of Commerce Innovation Agencies Business and Sectoral Agencies Technology Centres Competence Centres SMEs aggregators and consultancy Regional and National Public Authorities should also be addressed, not for the use of the tool, but for its uptake in policies or instruments

It is important to note at this point that financiers can also be involved in the stakeholder’s groups based on the activities already implemented in A5.2 and A5.3, and on the interest that the already involved financers have expressed as well as the various opportunities in place in each region or country.

5.2.3 Knowledge vs Openness

The following criteria can also support the identification of stakeholders:

- **Level of knowledge about the region:** the working groups should be composed by members that have a deep knowledge about its regional context, and in particular regarding the regional policy orientations for the green sectors.
- **Openness to collaboration:** the members of the regional working group should express their availability to contribute to the discussions and to get involved in finMED main developments.

Figure 5 depicts a matrix that partners can use to position potential stakeholders along the knowledge/openness continuums in order to formalise, as objectively as possible, a determination of the desirability of having them on board, as well as the effort that will be need to secure their engagement.

Figure 5 Knowledge vs openness grid for stakeholder classification

Level of Knowledge		Openness to Collaboration: Low	Openness to Collaboration: High
	High	**Highly Desirable** (Maximum Effort)	**Must Have** (Medium Effort)
	Low	**Can Be Excluded** (Zero Effort)	**Keep Informed** (Minimum Effort)

The position that you allocate to a stakeholder on the grid shows you the actions you need to take with them:

High level of knowledge, high openness to collaboration (Must Have – Medium Effort): You must fully engage these individuals or entities. Their contributions will be well informed, and they will interact and collaborate freely. Engaging them should not require too much work, but the importance of having them on board warrants diligence.

High level of knowledge, low openness to collaboration (Highly Desirable - Maximum Effort): Partners must put in a lot of work if they are to manage to get their interest. However, their contributions are highly desirable, and the challenge is to keep them interested the collaboration, and of course fully engaged.

Low level of knowledge, high openness to collaboration (Keep Informed – Minimum Effort): Partners should keep these individuals and entities adequately informed, and talk to them to ensure that no major issues are arising. They will be willing to collaborate, but their contributions may lack substance, so they must be managed accordingly.

Low level of knowledge, low openness to collaboration (Can Be Excluded - Zero Effort): The lack of knowledge and interest do not lend much desirability for this category. Such potential stakeholders can be safely excluded from the final list.

5.3 Select the Final Stakeholders

Based on the foregoing analysis, partners should make their final selection of stakeholders to include in regional stakeholders groupings. They should also decide whether to have one group or different groups, once again drawing upon the previous analysis.

5.4 Understand Your Stakeholders

Partners should understand stakeholders' attitude towards the project generally, and towards the collaboration process specifically. Ask how best to engage them, and how best to communicate with them. Partners should ask themselves questions about the stakeholders, such as[1]:

1. What financial or emotional interest do they have in the outcome of the project? Is it positive or negative?
2. What motivates them?
3. What information will they require from you?

1 Adapted from Mindtools website, https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM_07.htm, accessed 12 February 2021.

4. What is the most appropriate communication channel to use?
5. What is their current opinion of the project? Is it based on good information?
6. Who influences their opinions generally, and who influences their opinion of the project? Do some of these influencers therefore become important stakeholders in their own right?
7. If they aren't likely to be positive, what will win them around to support the project?
8. If you don't think that you'll be able to win them around, how will you manage their opposition?
9. Who else might be influenced by their opinions? Do these people become stakeholders in their own right?

You can ask your stakeholders these questions directly. Asking for their opinions is often the first step in building a successful relationship with them.

5.5 Convening the Stakeholder Groupings

Following the identification and selection of the stakeholders, each project partner will proceed with the formal set-up of the grouping of actors by inviting the stakeholders to the meetings. The partners will send information about the project to the actors identified as potential users of the tools by using appropriate communication tools produced by WP2 Communication. The communication resources may be adapted to the local language where appropriate. In this regard, the finMED Result Factsheet published by the Green Growth Community will also be an essential and effective communication tool.

5.6 Reporting on the Identification of Stakeholders

Partners are to report on the identification of stakeholders and the composition of the grouping or groupings in their region using the reporting templates provided in Annex A.

6 Formal Set-up of the Grouping of Actors and Meetings

It is expected that the groupings will be formally set up in the regions by the end of April 2021. As already highlighted in Section 4, although the finMED application form envisaged that the formalisation step would include the signing of the protocol in all the regions, this will not be necessary by agreement with the Joint secretariat. Partners will be allowed to obtain confirmations by the engaged stakeholders by email, which will be acceptable in place of signed paper documents. Partners should provide to the GDA the list completed by their contacts.

It is envisaged that each partner will organise ideally three meetings of the stakeholders' groups in order to present the finMED project and the finMED tools. One of the meetings can focus on a showcase of good practices, particularly successful context-based experiences from past initiatives, as well as the finMED tools themselves. Partners can choose to introduce one tool per meeting or both tools in the same meeting.

6.1 Thrust of the Meetings

The regional stakeholder groups meetings are intended to spread the application of the tools on the ground, as well as their inclusion in public policy. They will also present an opportunity to set up a collaboration model as part of an open, cooperative and dialogue-based initiative aimed at establishing and improving policies and programs for financing innovation, on the same lines as the Regional Observatory for Financing Innovation constituted by in Valencia region by IVACE in 2019.

The stated objectives of the Regional Observatory are[2]:

- to map the innovation financing ecosystem by collecting the data of the entities that offer financing or investment instruments, the characteristics of the financial instruments, their beneficiaries and the types of investment;
- to organise working groups on different topics, such as financing start-ups, new financial engineering and guarantees, impact measurement and relationship with the ERDF, new financing instruments and their possible fiscal incentives or risk minimization (crowdfunding, crowdlending, guarantee funds etc.);
- to celebrate, in Valencia, the first European Congress of Financing for Innovation with the collaboration of the Associations of the Spanish and European Regional Development Agencies, and the European Commission.

2 Interreg Europe website, https://www.interregeurope.eu/innova-fi/news/news-article/5578/regional-observatory-for-financing-innovation, accessed 15 February 2021.

6.2 Objectives of the Meetings

Building upon the work of the previous stages of the finMED project, and particularly on the development of the finMED tools, as well as the experience of the Regional Observatory for Financing Innovation, we can define the objectives of the meetings of the regional and national stakeholder groupings as follows.

1. **The first objective is to spread the use of the finMED tools in the real world.** This is in line with the capitalisation objective of the Interreg MED Programme, whereby the knowledge, tools and practices elaborated and tested by the project are effectively exploited for maximum benefit in the involved regions.

2. **The second objective is to mainstream the tools in regional and/or national policies and/or instruments, with a specific focus on the upcoming programming period 2021-2027.** This objective follows from the stated aim of the MED Programme to empower the transfer of results towards regional programmes, policies and practices with the support of all concerned stakeholders. In this regard, the meetings will support the wider policy learning process among public authorities, the project partners, as well as external organizations.

3. **The third objective is to create a forum wherein collaboration among stakeholders can flourish at regional and national levels.** Such collaboration will facilitate interaction and the exchange of experiences at regional and national level for mutual learning among actors interested in the policy learning process, as well as the pooling of information about green sector financing ecosystems, including data about the financiers themselves, the characteristics of their financing and investment products, their beneficiaries and the types of investment.

4. **The fourth objective is to organise working groups on different topics.** These can include, on the same footing as the Valencia Regional Observatory for Financing Innovation, several themes related to financing instruments, policies an risk-minimisation options.

6.3 Development of the Collaborations

The finMED project partnership has hitherto adopted a flexible, results-oriented and pragmatic method to its activities, and the intended approach to the meetings will be no exception. Each partner, albeit in compliance with this protocol, should tailor the meeting events to the target groups involved, taking in account the different scenario in each region and identifying the more effective way to spread the adoption of the tools.

By way of an example, concerning the Capacity Building Tool the approval of Minutes of the Meeting by the participants could be a way to actively involve public administrations. In fact, people attending the meeting often cannot sign any formal commitments, but a clear communication of project tools, supported by the demonstration of their usefulness, could actually generate high acceptance, new skills, and generally support the organisational scale-up of tools and policies.

The partners can also encourage different types of collaboration to emerge from the meetings, including but not exclusively a regional observatory on the Valencian model, different types of loose networks, more formalised coalitions, as well as strategic alliances where appropriate. Discussions to this effect can be facilitated during the working group workshops.

6.4 Communication Channels

The term 'communication channels' relates to the way information flows between stakeholders. The success of any project depends on how efficiently and effectively we perform communication: It is a vital tool in project management. The number of communication channels is based on the number of people talking to each other: The greater the number of people, the greater the number of communication complexity. Indeed, the latter is a measure of the channels by which individual members of group are talking to all other members, and therefore communication complexity is much larger than the number of members in the group.

It is important that partners plan communications management by understanding the communication approaches of their stakeholders, particularly as part of the analysis described in Section 5.4. Partners should also take into consideration current COVID-19 restrictions when planning their communication. They should then manage communications as per the communication plan, including monitoring communications in order to ensure that the information needs of the stakeholders are being met.

6.5 Meeting Methodology

Partners should make the following considerations when planning the meetings, which would be conducive to successful meetings and effective use of the protocol:

- **Engage a responsive and attentive facilitator.** It is recommended that the partners assign a competent facilitator who will be in charge of the meeting. The must-have qualities of good facilitator are the following[3].

- **A good facilitator is an active listener**, having both the ability to listen to others and to encourage others to listen. A facilitator needs to be able to actively listen to their group and understand what they are trying to say.
- **He or she should ask questions**, because asking questions is crucial to allowing valuable dialogues to be had. The facilitator does not want to simply talk to the group and tell them things. Instead, they must come up with them themselves.
- **A competent facilitator is authentic**, because people will soon tune out, disengage and not trust what he/she is saying if he/she is insincere. Being authentic allows them to connect and relate much easier with the participants.
- **A good facilitator aims to be impartial**, as having an unbiased perspective and not tainting other's opinions with the facilitator's own is crucial to allowing open and worthwhile discussions. He/she must endeavour to create a forum where people can freely discuss and express themselves, enabling problems to be solved and decisions to be made.
- **He/she must be enthusiastic**, and to know how and when to bring the energy into the room and at the same time when it needs to be reeled back in. The facilitator's energy holds the ability to control the feeling and environment of the room, helping to inspire, encourage and motivate the group.
- **A proficient facilitator must also be patient**, a fundamental trait when it comes to staying calm in discussions or when things get heated. It is important to limit any tensions or situations before they occur, helping to improve the situation, so leading by example and keeping composed is essential.
- **Finally, a good facilitator keeps the goal in sight**, because holding the participants on track and keeping the conversation aligned with the main outcome is important and sometimes tricky. It is human nature that conversations go off on a tangent, but the facilitator needs to know when and how to bring the conversation back to the main purpose of the meeting.

– Plan and organise the meeting properly depending on the type of meeting, whether face-to-face or virtual. Determine and communicate the purpose of the meeting

3 Adapted from the Mentimeter website, https://www.mentimeter.com/blog/great-leadership/the-7-key-traits-of-an-excellent-facilitator, accessed 16 February 2021.

among the invitees. Finalise the agenda by interacting with each presenter, and double check on availability and time. Check on venue, equipment, and any catering arrangements; or on the conferencing platform in the case of an online meeting. Once the agenda is finalised, wrap up the details, such as preparing any handouts or other items needed for individuals attending the meeting.

- Make the purpose meaningful by clarifying opportunities, advantages, and most importantly the gains that can be achieved from the use of the finMED tools. Most stakeholders are very busy people, so the meeting must be made important to them.

- Purposefully align the meeting or discussion to the purposes of the stakeholders. Once again, engaging an audience entails making the meeting worthwhile to the participants.

- Communicate forcefully and effectively any background knowledge to all participants on the purpose and use of the tools. Use proper communication tools, and do so judiciously to avoid ambiguity. Keep to the point.

- Follow the steps of the protocol and share it with the stakeholders.

- Allow time to reflect on any feedback about the effectiveness of the tools from the stakeholders themselves.

6.6 Meeting Agendas

The partners are free to set the meeting agendas as they see fit and according to their circumstances. However, it is recommended that the meetings be split into sessions, as detailed hereunder. The sessions can be held during each meeting, or spread over all the meetings. The sessions can be:

1. Plenary sessions, during which the partner presents the finMED tools to the participants, including practical sessions in their use, as appropriate.

2. Working groups, with the participants split into smaller units to discuss and come up with policy proposals on such themes as financing start-ups, new financial engineering and guarantees, impact measurement and relationship with the ERDF, new financing instruments and their possible fiscal incentives or risk minimization (crowdfunding, crowdlending, guarantee funds etc.), but with a special focus on the use and mainstreaming of the finMED tools. Working groups can also explore different types of collaborations, such as networks, coalitions and strategic alliances, and how they can be used to effect in relation to financing of green growth enterprises and the finMED tools.

6.7 Reporting on the Stakeholders' Group Meetings

Partners are to send the various documents associated with each meeting to the Gozo Development Agency, including agendas, minutes of the meetings, signature lists (in the case of in-person meetings), and so on, using the reporting templates provided in Annex B. These should be supported by photos of the sessions or, in the case of online meetings, by screenshots.

One very important aspect of the reporting is to cover the central issue of the activity 6.3, namely the use and uptake of the tools by potential users and regional/national authorities.

The templates provided cover all the relevant aspects of the meetings to be cover in reporting, including:

- Place, date and time;
- Participants i.e. list of people, institutions, organisations, companies, public authorities;
- What has been presented, Which tool (CBT or SST or both);
- How the tools have been presented;
- The main issues discussed;
- Use of the finMED communication products (videos, flyer, factsheet);
- Conclusions and lessons learnt from the meeting.

7 Organisation of a Showcase of Good Practices

Effective showcasing starts with some thought being given by the partners to their expectations for the exercise, as well as to what it is desired to achieve. It is therefore imperative that each partner demarcates clearly the aims and objectives of the showcasing, and defines the steps that it needs to take in order to achieve them.

1.1 Planning your Showcasing

Planning can take the form of an internal brainstorming session, at the end of which the partner should be in a position to come up with the showcasing techniques of choice, taking into account the target audience and the format to be adopted. In the current COVID-19 situation, which is expected to remain critical in most of the regions, the format will of necessity be some kind of virtual, online meeting.

The showcasing technique should

- describe the project and its results;
- explain the role of the project within the context of the institutional and business environments;
- profile your target groups;
- define your promotion methodology;
- have provision for assessing the effectiveness of the message.

1.2 Implementation and Reporting

The partners are free to choose whether to hold a separate ad hoc showcasing meeting, or whether to have the showcasing as distinct sessions in the other stakeholder groups meetings. In the former case, the organisational aspect and reporting of the showcase meeting should be the same of the other meetings, and should make use of the reporting templates in Annex B. The choice of the showcase contents can be developed during the stakeholder groups meetings.

If the showcasing is not carried out as a separate meeting, the showcasing technique and content can be pre-defined by project partners in consultation with the involved stakeholders. The content can include successful practices, useful experiences, and such like. The final choice will take into account the particular interests of the stakeholders themselves, who will be served with the agenda beforehand and invited to comment and make suggestions. A specific section of the meeting minutes must then cover the showcasing, describing the purpose and the methods used, how they were chosen and proposed, the tools used, as well as the reaction of the participating stakeholders.

The distinction in reporting regular meeting content from the showcasing will make for a better reflection of actual proceedings, and it will also also facilitate the final reporting by GDA as part of Deliverables 6.3.2 and 6.3.3.

Annex A Reporting Templates: Phase I

A.1 Stakeholder Classification Form Template

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Activity 6.3: Enhancing interactions and mutual learning among regional stakeholders

STAKEHOLDER CLASSIFICATION FORM

<table>
<tr><td>Partner:</td><td colspan="5"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">STAKEHOLDER CLASSIFICATION</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Potential Stakeholder</td><td rowspan="2">Type[1]</td><td rowspan="2">Target Category[2]</td><td colspan="3">Knowledge/Openness Grid</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level of Knowledge about the Region[3]</td><td>Openness to Collaboration[3]</td><td>Knowledge/Openness Classification[4]</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

[1] Choose one: Regional and local policy makers and institutions; Regional Development Agencies (or similar organisations); Clusters and business support organisations (Chambers of Commerce, Innovation Agencies, Business and Sectoral agencies, Technology Centres, Competence Centres, SMEs aggregators and consultancy); Educational Institutions (University, Research centres); Business communities (Trade associations, professional bodies).

[2] Capacity Building Tool or Support Service Tool.

[3] Low, medium or high.

[4] Must Have – Medium Effort; Highly Desirable - Maximum Effort; Keep Informed – Minimum Effort; Can Be Excluded - Zero Effort.

A.2 Stakeholders' Group Composition (Final) Template

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STAKEHOLDERS' GROUP COMPOSITION (FINAL)

Partner:				
STAKEHOLDER GROUP COMPOSITION				
Stakeholder	**Type**[1]	**Target Category**[2]	**Contact Name**	**Contact Email**

[1] Choose one: Regional and local policy makers and institutions; Regional Development Agencies (or similar organisations); Clusters and business support organisations (Chambers of Commerce, Innovation Agencies, Business and Sectoral agencies, Technology Centres, Competence Centres, SMEs aggregators and consultancy); Educational Institutions (University, Research centres); Business communities (Trade associations, professional bodies).

[2] Capacity Building Tool or Support Service Tool.

Annex B Reporting Templates: Phases II and III

B.1 Meeting Report Template

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MEETING REPORT

Partner:	
Meeting Title:	Stakeholders' Group Meeting No. #
Date:	
Time:	Start Time – End Time
Venue:	
ATTACHMENTS	
☐	1. Meeting Agenda
☐	2. Meeting Participants List
☐	3. Meeting Signature Sheet
☐	4. Meeting Minutes

B.2 Meeting Agenda Template

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MEETING AGENDA

Partner:	
Meeting Title:	Stakeholders' Group Meeting No. #
Date:	
Time:	Start Time – End Time
Venue:	
AGENDA	
Start – End	**Welcome** *Speaker Name, Partner Name*
Start – End	
Start – End	
Start – End	
Start – End	
Start – End	**Conclusions and Lessons Learnt**

B.3 Meeting Participants List Template

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PARTICIPANTS LIST

Partner:			
Meeting Title:	Stakeholders' Group Meeting No. #		
Date:			
Time:	Start Time – End Time		
Venue:			
PARTICIPANTS			
Name	**Organisation**	**Position**	**Email Address**

B.4 Meeting Signature Sheet Template

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SIGNATURE SHEET

Partner:		
Meeting Title:	Stakeholders' Group Meeting No. #	
Date:		
Time:	Start Time – End Time	
Venue:		
PARTICIPANTS		
Name	**Organisation**	**Signature**

B.5 Meeting Minutes Template

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Activity 6.3: Enhancing interactions and mutual learning among regional stakeholders

MEETING MINUTES

Partner:	
Meeting Title:	Stakeholders' Group Meeting No. #
Date:	
Time:	Start Time – End Time
City:	
Country:	
Description:	Online/Face-to- face
Participants:	
MINUTES	

- What has been presented, Which tool (CBT or SST or both)
- How the tools have been presented
- The main issues discussed
- Any working groups
- Use of the finMED communication products (videos, flyer, factsheet)
- Conclusions and Lessons Learnt