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Advocacy activities at European, regional, and national level (2/2)

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1. Introduction

The capitalisation of the knowledge, experiences, best practices, and results generated by the Green Growth Community is one of the main objectives of the Green Growth project in its second phase (2019-2022).¹ Advocacy activities are an important part of the project's capitalisation work, and the objectives and initial plans for this work has been outlined in the Green Growth Capitalisation Strategy and Action Plan.²

Through its advocacy activities, the Green Growth project aims to represent a strong voice of support and encouragement to the sustainable development of the Mediterranean region, as well as present the success stories from the Green Growth Community and encourage others to follow. The Green Growth project strives to engage with institutions at the regional, national, Mediterranean and European level, to foster the uptake or the positioning in favour of the Green Growth Community's outcomes, messages and recommendations, and to inform and influence policies on the green and circular economy thematic. The advocacy activities therefore promote close interaction with European Union (EU), Mediterranean, national and regional policy-makers to address major knowledge gaps in green growth theory and practice, and to offer policy guidance and good practices to support the transition to a green and circular economy.

The Green Growth project has in the second half of the project's lifespan (March 2021 – July 2022) managed to organise meetings and events directed towards institutions at all governance levels to inform about and discuss the Green Growth Community's outcomes, and in some cases, offer policy guidance. The execution of the meetings has many times been supported by already existing contacts between the Green Growth project partners and the targeted stakeholder groups. The stakeholder target groups relevant to the Green Growth project's advocacy activities were in the Capitalisation Strategy and Action Plan defined as the following: European Institutions, including the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions, Mediterranean organisations and networks, primarily the Union for the Mediterranean, and regional public authorities, including regional public administrations and regional public advisory boards. In addition to these, national public authorities are targeted whenever the possibility arises.

This deliverable aims to provide an overview of the meetings, events and discussions which have taken place between the Green Growth project and public institutions at different governance levels, and how these engagements have been utilised to further the Green Growth Community's messages and work towards these institutions.

¹ Green Growth project website. Available [here](#).

² D5.1.1 Capitalisation Strategy and Action Plan, Green Growth project, March 2020.



2. Advocacy activities

The Green Growth project has in the second half of the project's lifespan (March 2021 – July 2022) continued engaging with public institutions at the European, Mediterranean, national and regional levels. The European, Mediterranean and regional levels are in general easier for the project to target, due to the previous contacts and nature of the Green Growth project partners. The aim of the meetings and discussions has been to inform the targeted stakeholders of the Green Growth Community's work, results and resources as well as to influence and inform the stakeholders' policy work. Some of the advocacy activities have taken place within the framework of larger events and meetings, whereas others have taken place in bilateral meetings between the project and the stakeholder groups. The organised meetings have in many cases built a basis for and tapped into potential further activities, such as the mainstreaming or transferring activities.

Below follows an overview of the engagements, meetings and discussions that the Green Growth project has had with European, Mediterranean, national and regional institutions.

2.1 European level

Targeting the European level is important for the Green Growth project in order to inform and influence future EU policies on the green growth and circular economy thematic, as well as to present the pool of knowledge that exists within the Green Growth Community and how this can contribute to EU policy-making. The engagements at the European level have to a great extent built on previous contacts between the project partners and the stakeholders, as well as the partners' roles in different European constellations.

2.1.1 European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform

Mercè Boy Roura, as coordinator of the Green Growth Community, was in November 2020 appointed member of the Coordination Group of the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP). The ECESP is a joint initiative by the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) that brings together stakeholders active in the broad field of the circular economy in Europe. The ECESP is a "network of networks", going beyond sectoral activities and highlighting cross-sector opportunities and challenges. It is a hub gathering knowledge, a place for dialogue, and a bridge between existing initiatives. It contributes to disseminating the concept of the circular economy at national, regional and local level by making the information more easily accessible and by providing a frame for exchange and discussion.

On 13 December 2021, the ECESP through its Leadership Group on “Cities and Regions” organised an EU Circular Talk focusing on how different supporting initiatives and tools are being used by cities and regions in fostering circular economy transition. Apart from the Green Growth Community, ACR+, the EIB Advisory Hub, the European Commission, the Government of Navarra, EIT Raw Materials, Dublin City and EUCE

completed the agenda. The Green Growth Community presented the community main results available for cities and regions, main activities where they can engage (mainstreaming, advocacy, etc.) and the success story of the uptake of the EMBRACE toolkit by the Aragón Region and its use to support the implementation of the Circular Economy Strategy of Aragón. The full agenda and recording of the EU Circular Talk is available [here](#).



Additionally, the Green Growth Community has participated in the development of the outcome documents and reflection papers of three out of the four Leadership Groups where the community has participated, bringing in case studies from the Modular Projects or general knowledge on the topic:

- *Leadership Group on Cities and regions:*
<https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/en/about/cg-activities-documents/outcome-document-leadership-group-cities-and-regions>
- *Leadership Group on Food waste, food systems and the bioeconomy:*
<https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/en/about/cg-activities-documents/outcome-document-leadership-group-food-waste-food-systems-and-bioeconomy>
- *Leadership Group on Retailers, Consumers and Skills:*
<https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/en/about/cg-activities-documents/outcome-document-leadership-group-retailers-consumers-and-skills>

2.1.2 Green Growth Knowledge Platform

The Green Growth project’s communication team established direct contact with the Green Growth Knowledge Partnership (GGKP) - a global community of organisations and experts committed to collaboratively generating, managing, and sharing knowledge through the policy-oriented Green Growth Knowledge Platform, Green Industry Platform and Green Finance Platform. Led by the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United



Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the World Bank Group, GGKP draws together more than 75 partner organisations.

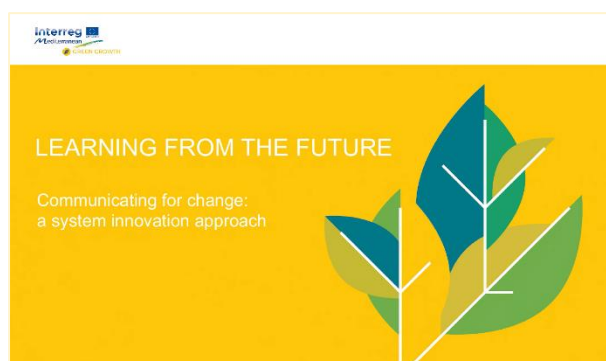
The Green Growth Knowledge Platform launched a dedicated site for dialogue and discussion called Green Forum and two articles produced by the Green Growth Community were published on the platform. The [‘Reimagining the future of waste’](#) article and [‘How can eco-innovation drive circularity in the Mediterranean region’](#) were published on the site.

2.1.3 The International Council for Circular Economy

ICCE is the largest international network for professionals, corporates, and organisations working in the circular economy. Their mission is to accelerate the transition to a circular economy that is restorative and regenerative by design. ICCE aims to build a resilient and thriving local network by providing expertise to design and strategise circularity emanating from the grassroots level. ICCE is a global thought leader, establishing the circular economy on the agenda of corporates, decision-makers across the business, government, and academia.

The International Council for Circular Economy published a new volume of the Journal on Circular Economy at the beginning of 2022 featuring one of the articles of the Green Growth Community that focuses on [How can eco-innovation drive circularity in the Mediterranean?](#) The journal can be read [here](#) (pages 37-42).

2.1.4 Green Growth Community communication training



The Interreg MED Green Growth Community held its second communication training on 22 February 2022. The session focused on envisioning the future of sustainable extra virgin olive oil production and developing a visual story following a systems innovation approach.

The second Green Growth Community training took place online gathering a diverse audience from across the Mediterranean. Representatives from local, national, and regional authorities; SMEs and enterprises; and NGOs mainly from Spain, Italy, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece and Tunisia participated in the training. REVOLVE – the Green Growth Community’s communications partner, invited the whole Interreg MED Community and any other initiatives or actors in the field of sustainability to imagine different scenarios of the desired future.



Starting from a common vision about the desired future, participants had to address a challenge from a specific stakeholder perspective. The chosen challenge was inspired by the Green Growth Community's ARISTOIL project and focused on how to ensure sustainable extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) production. Participants were divided into three breakout rooms, each of them focused on a stakeholder: civil society, government, and industry. This exercise resulted in interesting and radical ideas of the desired future as the participants presented their visual stories.

The training provided an excellent opportunity to, on the one hand, showcase the ARISTOIL project's work, and, on the other hand, inspire and encourage people to think about circularity and sustainability issues and how different stakeholders perceive challenges related to these. The audience included a vast range of stakeholders from several countries, which enabled a wide reach for the information that was presented in the training session. The summary of the training and the video can be found [here](#).

2.1.5 Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform

Green Growth partner ERRIN organised a first meeting with the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform in January 2022 to discuss synergies and potential opportunities for collaboration. The Policy Learning Platform is the second action of the Interreg Europe programme. It aims to boost EU-wide policy learning by creating a space where the European policy-making community can tap into the know-how of regional policy experts and peers and offering information on a variety of topics via thematic publications, online and onsite events.

The aim of the meeting was to ensure that Mediterranean challenges and experiences deriving from the Green Growth Community also are shared with an audience outside the region. This allows for better policy-making on an EU level and facilitates the creation of links and sharing of knowledge across regions in the whole of Europe. The outcome of the meeting was to keep each other informed on future opportunities for collaboration.

A second meeting was therefore organised in May to discuss the possibility of the Green Growth Community to provide a speaker for a webinar organised by the Policy Learning Platform on the rural green transition, which will take place on 13 September 2022. The Green Growth Community will be represented by Professor Alexandros Papachatzis from the University of Thessaly, who will present the MED Greenhouses project's activities.

2.1.6 Podcast: Mobility and data in smart cities

The Green Growth Community Coordinator Mercè Boy Roura participated together with Athanasios Kalogeras from the ESMARTCITY project in a podcast episode as part of the Sustainable Mobility Series. In this episode,



they discussed the areas of innovation around smart cities and took a deeper dive into approaches to Open Data and the role of smart infrastructure in the context of smart cities. Further, they discussed and presented some best practices and took a look at the pros and cons of different ideas, especially regarding the crucial topic of sharing and utilising data, which is generated virtually on every corner in smart cities.

The podcast episode was an opportunity for the Green Growth Community to reach a different audience, as the podcast format presented a new forum that the project has not used before in its communication activities. The podcast is available [here](#).

2.2 Mediterranean level

Influencing upcoming policy frameworks and instruments on the Mediterranean level and contributing to discussions around sustainable development and circular economy by highlighting the experiences and outcomes of the Green Growth Community has been imperative to the Green Growth project. The results of the community are relevant to the Mediterranean region and many of the Green Growth partners have partnerships with strong actors at the Mediterranean level.

2.2.1 Union for the Mediterranean

The Green Growth project lead partner, the BETA Technological Center/UVic-UCC, has held periodic meetings with the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and contributed to the technical and policy discussions and framework on behalf of the Green Growth Community. The Green Growth Community participated in the UfM Task Force on Environment in May 2021 and the Working Group meeting on Environment and Climate Change in March 2022.

Moreover, the Green Growth Community has offered its knowledge to develop the indicators monitoring framework of the 2030 Greener Med Agenda, which was approved during the 2nd UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Action, held in Cairo on 4 October 2021, and where the UfM countries agreed to advance cooperation and alignment on environment across the region.

Besides this, the Green Growth Community was also invited by the UfM as keynote speaker to the first webinar of the webinar series by the SFS-MED initiative on “Food waste management and circular economy in Mediterranean cities”, which was held on Wednesday 25 May 2022. The SFS-MED Platform is a multi-stakeholder initiative for Sustainable Food Systems in the Mediterranean developed by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Partnership for Research



and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA), as an affiliated project of the One Planet Network Sustainable Food Systems Programme. The SFS-MED initiative aims at promoting dialogue and collaboration among Mediterranean countries and stakeholders while they implement national and local efforts for a transformation to more sustainable food systems.

2.2.2 The Switchers Talks

The Switchers Talks is an online event that seeks to gather the largest number of Green Entrepreneurs and organisations forming the Switchers Community. The main goal of this event is to foster the discussion on how The Community of Switchers should evolve to be more efficient and to offer the necessary tools to improve the Green businesses of the Mediterranean region.

The Green Growth project's communication team participated in the Switchers Talks policy track session sharing insights of the Green Growth Community policy efforts including examples such as the case of EMBRACE and the policy reports and recommendations developed by the community.

2.3 National level

Due to the contacts and nature of the Green Growth project partners primarily involved in the capitalisation activities, the national level has not been considered as one of the main stakeholder target groups relevant to the project's advocacy activities. However, the Green Growth project is always willing to exploit every opportunity to also reach the national level in its advocacy activities, in order to present and promote the success stories and knowledge of the Green Growth Community and further the discussion on the sustainable development of the Mediterranean and the EU.

2.3.4 Circle the MED

The Green Growth Community took part in the 2021 edition of the Circle the Med event by organising two panel discussions on 19 October, which included high-level politicians, researchers and representatives of international organisations. The 2021 edition was organised in a hybrid format with simultaneous live-streaming from both Greece and Egypt.

The Green Growth project's sessions focused on green growth in the Mediterranean, with the first session delving into strategic directions and actions and the second one into concepts, approaches, and stakeholders. The first panel was composed of high-level representatives of the Greek government and the business sector, while the second panel was composed of varied representatives from research and international organisations



from across the Mediterranean. The Green Growth Community was in the second panel represented by Sergio Ponsa Salas, who is the Director of BETA Technological Center.

Through its sessions in the Circle the MED event, the Green Growth Community brought together a wide range of stakeholders to discuss and debate the state of play regarding green growth in the Mediterranean.

Furthermore, a large audience was able to take part of the discussions online and, through these discussions, also learn about the Green Growth Community.



2.4 Regional level

The Green Growth project is targeting the regional level in its advocacy activities to, on the one hand, inform about the results achieved and the success stories of the Green Growth Community in terms of sustainable development, and encourage other regions across Europe to follow, and to, on the other hand, influence regional policy-making and promote the uptake of the results. The latter taps into the project's mainstreaming activities, which aim to promote the inclusion of the Green Growth Community's results, knowledge and best practices into regional policy frameworks.

2.4.4 Regional stakeholder engagement workshops

The Green Growth project partners will between October 2021 and September 2022 organise regional, that is sub-national, stakeholder engagement workshops within the frame of the transferring activities in work package 4 of the project. To this date, workshops have been organised in Catalonia (Spain), Thessaly (Greece), Emilia-Romagna (Italy) and Bosnia and Herzegovina. One final workshop series will still be organised in Région Sud Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (France).³

³ More information on the stakeholder engagement workshops can be found in D4.4.2.



These workshops have gathered local stakeholders from all quadruple helix stakeholder (public authorities, private sector, research/academia and civil society) groups to discuss local challenges and issues related to sustainable development and circular economy, as well as to identify potential solutions to these challenges. These workshops have provided a great opportunity for the Green Growth partners, who have acted as the organisers of the workshops, to present the community's activities and results and how the local stakeholder can benefit from this work. Furthermore, they have contributed to creating

discussions among local stakeholders on topics that are of importance to the local community and to developing recommendations on how to address the challenges. The long-term goal is for these initial dialogues and exchanges to lead to an improved collaboration between stakeholders on sustainability and circularity, and for the recommendations developed by the stakeholders to have an impact on the further local discussions around the tackled topics.

2.4.5 ERRIN meetings

ERRIN has aimed at reaching the regional level by informing the members of the network, who mostly consist of representatives of regional administrations, about the success stories of the Green Growth Community and engaging them in the Green Growth project activities. Within the frame of the mainstreaming activity (WP5), ERRIN has hosted a number of meetings with regional representatives to engage them in the activity by presenting the Green Growth Community's work and results.

During this reporting period (March 2021 – July 2022), ERRIN organised meetings with representatives of five regions to present the Green Growth Community and some of the modular projects' results, and to give an overview of the mainstreaming process. A meeting with the European Office for Cyprus was organised on 11 March 2021; a meeting with the Business & Research Organisation of Slovenia was organised on 16 March 2021; a meeting with the Aragon Region (Spain) was organised on 26 March 2021; a meeting with the Region of Murcia (Spain) was organised on 25 May 2021; and a meeting with ACCIÓ, which is the public agency for the competitiveness of Catalan enterprise connected to the Government of Catalonia (Spain), was organised on 28 May 2021.

The meetings allowed the project to present the work and results of the Community towards stakeholders representing the public sector (regional administrations) and the private and research sector. The Region of



Aragon decided to join the Green Growth project's mainstreaming activities, meaning that further meetings took place between the region.

2.4.6 Mainstreaming workshop in Aragón

As part of the Green Growth project's mainstreaming activity that the Region of Aragón joined, a mainstreaming workshop was organised in Zaragoza on 12 November 2021 as a final step. The aim of the workshop was for CEEIARAGON and the Department for Economy, Planning and Employment of the Government of Aragón to gain an understanding of the Ecocanvas methodology and tools, which was the mainstreamed result, and how the tools could be used in practice and be applied to the type of companies that CEEIARAGON works with. The workshop consisted of an informative part, where the creator of the Ecocanvas tool presented the purpose of the Ecocanvas methodology and introduced the tools. This was followed by a hands-on part, where a dedicated facilitator guided the workshop participants through the practical use of some of the tools and the participants had the opportunity to apply the tools to relevant case studies.

The workshop was attended by the following regional stakeholders: the Director and four Project Managers from CEEI Aragón (Centro de Empresas e Innovación de Aragón); a Project Manager from SARGA (Sociedad Aragonesa de Gestión Agroambiental), that was a partner in the EMBRACE project; and two people from the Regional Government of Aragón.

The mainstreaming activity and especially the workshop allowed the regional stakeholders to learn about the Green Growth Community and deep dive into the results and work of the EMBRACE project. The Ecocanvas tool has now been added to the [website](#) of the Aragon Regional Circular Economy Strategy as a best practice, enabling other regional companies and businesses to use the project's outcomes in their activities. This will ultimately help furthering the use of sustainable practices and the development of circular business models in the region.





3 Conclusions

The Green Growth project has through its advocacy activities reached a great number of European, Mediterranean, national and regional actors and institutions over the past years – ranging from civil society and public authorities at local, regional and national level to businesses, SMEs and research institutions. This has enabled the project to share information on the Green Growth Community's outcomes and activities in order to provide a voice for the challenges experienced in and the solutions deriving from the Mediterranean region, while also influencing and informing instruments that will enable the transition to a more circular and sustainable future – both in the Mediterranean and beyond.

The project's active participation in the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform has provided great opportunities for the project to convey the Green Growth Community's messages and results to a wide range of public institutions and actors within the circular economy. The contacts and meetings between UVIC-UCC and UfM have likewise enabled the community to contribute to and influence policy instruments at the Mediterranean level.

The Circle the MED event presented an opportunity for the project to tap into the national level and facilitate discussions between high-level politicians on the green growth topic. The regional stakeholder engagement workshops enabled the project to gather local stakeholders around important sustainability topics and challenges, and involve all stakeholder groups in the development of solutions to address these challenges. This will hopefully provide a starting point for further dialogues and exchanges among the stakeholders around circular economy and sustainable development.

Through the advocacy activities, the project has ensured that the results and work deriving from the Green Growth Community are not forgotten when the project finishes, but continue making a difference and influencing activities in the Mediterranean region. The project will in its last months continue its advocacy work and exploit the opportunities that arise to spread the messages of the community to a larger audience.