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FOREWORD

This report represents the deliverable related to the activity Building Cooperation Mechanism, which is contextualised in the Work Package 5 “Capitalising” of the Interreg Med Green Growth Community. The main goal of this report is to provide a complete and exhaustive overview of the replication, transferring, liaising and mainstreaming activities that have been put in place by the Green Growth Community in the past 2 years and a half, including a glimpse to synergies creation actions and other tools of the previous phase of the Community, coordinated by the former project SYNGGI. In this way, best practices can be successfully replicated elsewhere in Europe and in the Mediterranean so to move towards sustainable and resource-efficient solutions that are widely implemented and adopted.

The **cooperation mechanism**, as intended for the Green Growth Community and based on more than 6 years of experience, is a complex interconnection of relationships among different types of actors, built over time and trust based. The mechanism is enabled by a series of tools, such as sharing platform, policy hub, indexes, stakeholders’ engagement workshops, etc..., that have been developed based on the Community needs. These tools can be adapted and replicated in other contexts to create similar mechanisms. Overall, the key aspect for a successful cooperation mechanism is the identification of common goals and the activation of win-win processes.

Reading this document, any kind of stakeholder can learn about and take advantage of the vast experience built in the past years by the Community. Different types of stakeholders can have benefit from this report, in different ways:

Other EU funded projects. At the beginning of 2022, European actors are entering in the vivid of the new programming period 2021 – 2027 and there will be many opportunities to design and implement new ideas and projects. A key driver will be the capitalisation and share of the best practices already developed, hence this report can provide a useful insight of large projects’ structure that already improved a substantial experience in this perspective.

Business organisations and clusters. Not only actors that intend to implement a funded project can take advantage of the Green Growth Community experience. Business organisations and clusters that want to support SMEs adopting capitalisation methods and protocols can learn from the fruitful experience of the Community, making their sharing and replication effort more efficient and effective.

Public Authorities and decision/policy makers. In order to make solutions and best practices widely adopted, replication and transfer alone cannot ensure enough visibility for a large scale diffusion. A key element in the capitalisation process is the mainstreaming: fostering the transformation of results into public policies and recommendations is fundamental to create a new benchmark of sustainability for SMEs and Public Authorities.

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1. GOALS AND STRUCTURE OF THE GREEN GROWTH COMMUNITY IN BRIEF

The work that has been done so far by the Community provides a one-of-a-kind example of integrated approach to support SMEs, as well as other stakeholders of the quadruple helix, towards the transition to green growth and circular economy. The aim of the “cooperation mechanism”, described in this report, is to make available the experiences, approaches and methodologies, as well as best practices and lessons learnt of the Community in the pro-active engagement of key stakeholders in the transition process. Since its very beginning, the Community, initially coordinated by the Horizontal Project SYNGGI (2016-2019) and, in its second implementation phase, coordinated by the project GREEN GROWTH (2019-2022), aimed at creating synergies and enhancing collaboration among the so-called Modular Projects (MPs). The MPs - clustered in the four focus areas of food systems, eco-innovation, waste management and smart cities - studied, tested and replicated valuable results to foster the adoption of innovative, circular and sustainable solutions for SMEs and Public Authorities (at local and regional level). The Community provided a coordinated effort to create synergies and to provide support in terms of communication and visibility.

Along the path, the Community identified some key obstacles, problems and critical issues in the implementation of the replication and capitalisation of results. Among other, we report the following relevant issues that have been then addressed thanks to the integrated approach which is summarised in this document:

- Insufficient support, mainly by local and regional Public Authorities, to develop bottom-up approaches and co-creation of shared solutions;
- Different levels of knowledge, lack of trust and poor understanding of the concerns and perspectives of others, especially among SMEs and Public Authorities;
- A standard approach cannot be applied across diverse regions, but some archetypes can be identified;
- A clear framework to engage all relevant (local/regional) actors is missing. Poor connection with policy makers at regional and local level.

To solve or at least mitigate the above mentioned problems, the Community developed its methodologies around the following key aspects for cooperation among stakeholders, finding and testing different solutions, tools and approaches that are described later in this document:

- Building trust (among projects of the community, public authorities and high-level institutions);
- Sharing knowledge;
- Finding common solutions;
- Adopting a win-win approach.

THE PIECES OF THE PUZZLE

Ensuring multi-stakeholder engagement and mobilisation is key for the creation of innovation ecosystems. Make sure that all stakeholders are involved, including civil society, policy makers, primary producers, industries, finance, etc. that are often under-represented and less engaged in the debate. To do so, tailored stakeholders' engagement activities, methodologies and tools to address regional resources, needs and problems must be a focus. Moreover, setting up supporting interfaces, clusters, platforms and hubs, such as the Green Growth Capitalisation Platform, can promote the stakeholders' engagement at different levels (local, regional, national, and international).

2. COMMUNITY BUILDING AND TRANSVERSAL ACTIONS

The Interreg Med Green Growth Community structured, in the period 2016 – 2022, integrated tools and solutions, described below, which represent a cooperation mechanism that can be taken as example to replicate the successful approach. Among the many integrated approaches and tools, that will be described more in detail later in this document, some of them have a transversal nature. These serve not exclusively for transferring and capitalisation aim, but they contribute to create an enabling framework for the entire community. Although it is not likely to find similar horizontal tools in all contexts that might need cooperation mechanisms, also external approaches of tools developed in other projects or for different purposes can be exploited.

The following section of the document briefly describes the transversal actions and tools that have been developed and adopted by the Green Growth Community for reaching its capitalisation goals:

- Measuring the impact: the Green Growth Indexes;
- The Euro – Mediterranean policy hub;
- The Thematic working groups and the capitalisation outputs:
 - Circular Economy white papers and factsheets;
 - Catalogue of projects results;
 - Catalogue of projects actionable knowledge;
 - Green Growth Book;
 - Legal recommendations;
 - Policy recommendations;
 - Joint position paper “Strategic recommendations for sustainable use of resources in Mediterranean built environment”
 - Policy reflection paper.
- Synergies – networking for capitalisation purposes: activating key stakeholders.

MEASURING THE IMPACT: THE GREEN GROWTH INDEXES

The Green Growth Indexes (GG Indexes) aim to measure the impact of the Modular Projects of the Interreg MED Green Growth Community on three main aspects of green growth - environment, society and economy - in the Mediterranean area. The Indexes have been developed by the GG Community on the basis of indicators selected from existing dashboards used by international actors (GGGI, OECD, European Union, World Bank, UNEP, European LIFE projects etc.). These have been adapted to the thematic areas of the GG Community and gathered to represent in a comprehensive way the impact of the Community itself on the Mediterranean area. In some cases, new indicators were created to accommodate the distinct characteristics of the Modular Projects. A qualitative approach has been preferred to a quantitative one, in order to make easier gathering the inputs of the 14 modular projects, having different scopes on different focus areas. Nevertheless, the indexes, calculated on the basis of the projects' inputs, provide an enlightening outlook of the contribution of the Community to the Interreg MED Programme's objectives, as well as the contribution to other relevant sustainable development strategies for the Mediterranean.

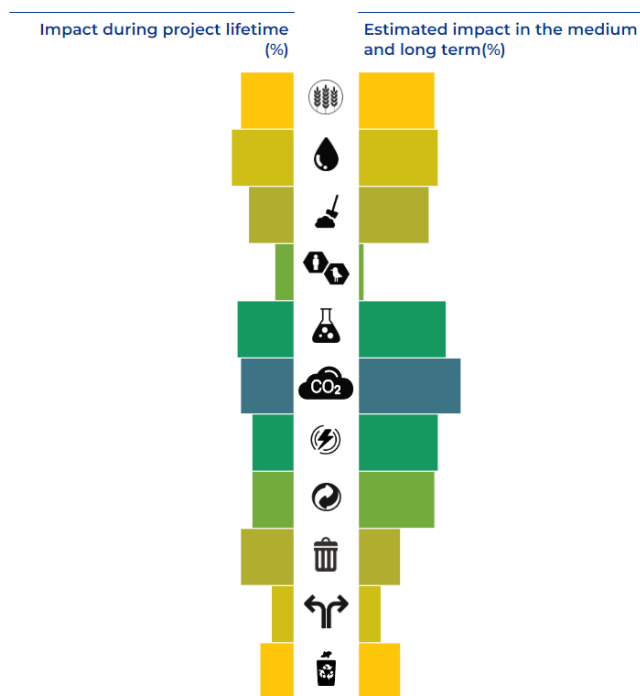
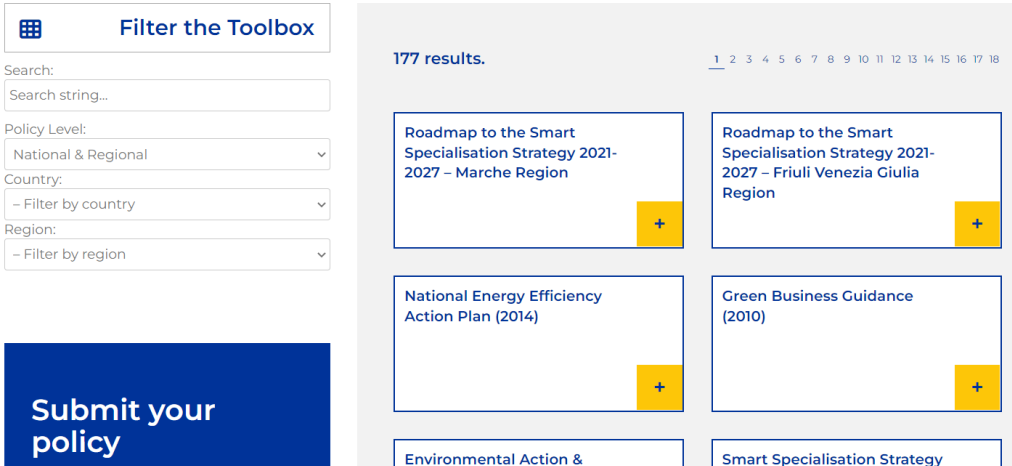


FIGURE 1 - EXAMPLE OF GREEN GROWTH INDEXES FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL PILLAR. SPECIFIC INDICATORS FOR MEASURING THE IMPACT OF CAPITALISATION ACTIONS CAN BE DEFINED AS WELL.

The GG indexes can be considered as a transversal assessment and monitoring tool, and their compilation by a heterogeneous variety of projects and their cumulative and qualitative approach allowed to analyse the impact of the Community as a whole. This kind of approach can be replicated and adapted in other contexts and the methodological approach followed by the GG Community could be of inspiration for other cluster of projects or initiatives. More information about the indexes can be found here: <https://interregmedgreengrowth.eu/green-growth-indexes/>

THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN POLICY HUB

The Green Growth Community developed the Euro-Mediterranean Policy Hub, a powerful tool available on the GG Capitalisation Platform (<https://interregmedgreengrowth.eu/euro-mediterranean-policy-hub/>). Thanks to this specialised search engine it is possible to have a clear overview of the current landscape of policy instruments on green growth and related topics at all governance levels and get an insight into where the EU and the countries and regions within the Interreg MED cooperation area currently stand in their policy frameworks and what their respective priority areas are. The Euro-Mediterranean Policy Hub gathers policy instruments on green growth and related topics that exist, or that are being developed, on EU, Mediterranean, national, and regional level. The core of the Hub has been compiled by the Community' partner but it is a dynamic tool: anyone can submit a policy instrument by filling all the required information in the online form. The Green Growth Community will evaluate each proposal, that can be related to any law, strategy and action plan that relate to the green growth and circular economy topics from the countries and regions included in the Interreg MED cooperation area.



The screenshot displays the 'Filter the Toolbox' sidebar on the left, which includes a search bar, a 'Policy Level' dropdown set to 'National & Regional', and 'Country' and 'Region' filters. A prominent blue button labeled 'Submit your policy' is at the bottom of the sidebar. The main content area shows '177 results.' with a pagination bar from 1 to 18. Below this, four policy cards are visible, each with a yellow '+' icon: 'Roadmap to the Smart Specialisation Strategy 2021-2027 – Marche Region', 'Roadmap to the Smart Specialisation Strategy 2021-2027 – Friuli Venezia Giulia Region', 'National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (2014)', and 'Green Business Guidance (2010)'. At the bottom, two category tabs are shown: 'Environmental Action &' and 'Smart Specialisation Strategy'.

FIGURE 2 - SCREENSHOT OF THE POLICY HUB TOOL ([HTTPS://INTERREGMEDGREENGROWTH.EU/EURO-MEDITERRANEAN-POLICY-HUB/](https://interregmedgreengrowth.eu/euro-mediterranean-policy-hub/))

In terms of cooperation, this tool represents not only a state-of-the art about policies and strategies Med-wide but can foster replication of good political practices and become an input for replicating recommendations in other territorial contexts. The large-scale adoption of valuable solutions pass through the mainstreaming action of local and regional authorities and the hub is a vast repository of the current benchmark.

THE THEMATIC WORKING GROUPS AND THE CAPITALISATION OUTPUTS

Apart from the creation of synergies among MPs and the enhancement of communications action, the Community worked with projects also to pursue a transversal goal: fostering a discussion about circular economy. Although the 14 MPs (and 3 PLUS projects) have been clustered into four diverse focus areas and approached the green growth from various perspectives, all of them were related, in a way or another, with circular economy. Hence, the GG Community decided to exploit this fil rouge and to work together, with a Thematic Working Group (TWG) approach, to provide the circular perspective of the Interreg Med Green Growth Community as a whole. The four TWGs were settled during the first phase of the Community, to reflect its four Thematic Areas and enable the Modular Project to work together in synergy.



FIGURE 3 - THE FOUR TWGS THAT GROUPS MODULAR PROJECTS ON THE BASIS OF THE THEMATIC AREAS.

A series of outputs at Community level have been delivered:

CIRCULAR ECONOMY WHITE PAPERS AND FACTSHEETS. Five technical reports presenting the Thematic Working Groups and their projects, as well as the horizontal cooperation approach in transitioning towards Green Growth and a Mediterranean Circular Economy.

- Make more with less: resource efficiency;
- Towards circular towns and cities: green & smart public;
- Zero waste: problems become opportunities in waste prevention & management;
- Fit for a circular future: competitiveness & innovation;
- Synergies for green growth.

GREEN BOOK. The Green Growth Book supports the Community's 14 modular projects in their future capitalisation and transferring activities. It includes:

- Overview of the Interreg MED Green Growth's horizontal SYNGGI project (2016-2019) and an introduction to the Green Growth Community;
- Description of the Green Growth Community's capitalisation approach and a list of the modular projects' completed and future capitalisation activities;
- Recommendations for future capitalisation processes.

CATALOGUE OF PROJECTS RESULTS. This document presents factsheets for each of the 14 Modular Projects providing insights into the problems addressed, projects' solutions, best practices, lessons learnt and recommendations.

CATALOGUE OF PROJECT'S ACTIONABLE KNOWLEDGE. This document maps all transferrable results from the 14 Modular Projects of the GGC systematising the specific features of each result, as well as their challenges, transfer and capitalisation potential and evaluation by end-users in an integrated document.

LEGAL RECOMMENDATIONS. The Legal Recommendations establish the procedure, methodology and roadmap for the formulation of Legal Recommendations over the project's future phases. They describe how the Green Growth Community's work can be homogenized to inform legal recommendations that can address some of the key regulatory barriers that are inhibiting the transition to a circular economy.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS. The Community's Policy Recommendations provides a holistic, integrated and cooperation-based framework for the development of circular economies. It involves various actors across different phases (production, consumption, management of waste, re-use of waste as secondary raw material)

and scales (local, regional, national, European). The paper presents 17 policy recommendations and 33 suggested interventions clustered around the following 6 thematic areas:

- Investments and access to finance;
- Technological infrastructure;
- Labour market and employment;
- Awareness and knowledge;
- Cooperation among stakeholders and technology transfer;
- Cross-cutting issues.



FIGURE 4 - POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND WHITE PAPERS DELIVERED AS CAPITALISATION OUTPUTS OF THE GREEN GROWTH COMMUNITY THROUGH THE THEMATIC WORKING GROUPS

POLICY REFLECTION PAPER. This paper aims at showcasing and reflecting on the contributions of the Green Growth Community, its projects and its four focus areas – food systems, smart cities, waste management and eco-innovation - to the objectives and targets set out in the European Union policy frameworks to achieve the main objective of the European Green Deal – a climate-neutral Europe by 2050. To this aim, it offers a comprehensive overview by showing the link between each MP's tools and results and the European Green Deal policies.

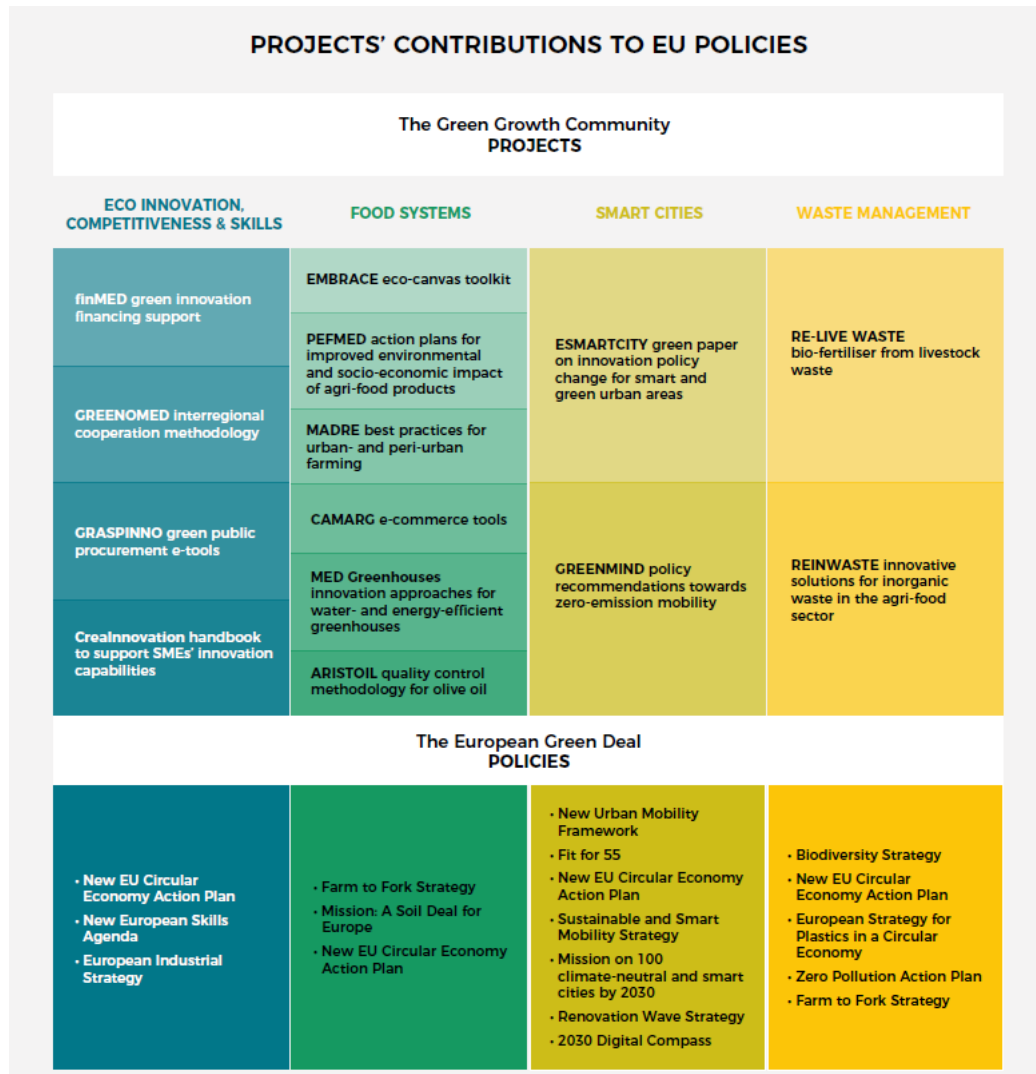


FIGURE 5 - POLICY REFLECTION PAPER – GGC MODULAR PROJECTS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE EU GREEN DEAL POLICIES

The above-described capitalisation outputs, apart from being themselves relevant results of the Community, continued to serve as actionable documents for further exploitations. For example, the Policy recommendations have been the base for further discussions and collaboration with other Interreg Communities, as well as with other international networks. The catalogue of projects results has been itself the reference document for starting the mapping of results with the highest transferring potential.

SYNERGIES-NETWORKING FOR CAPITALISATION PURPOSES: ACTIVATING KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The active engagement of relevant and influential stakeholders and international actors, such as Union for the Mediterranean and SwitchMed and having an active role in networks such as the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform is a massive advantage for the creation of cooperation mechanisms.

The Interreg MED Green Growth Community was labelled by the 42 Member States of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in October 2019. Since then, the Green Growth Community and the UfM have been collaborating to advance cooperation in the field of the green and circular economy in the Mediterranean region. The goal for The Union of the Mediterranean is to promote and give visibility to projects through communication and networking, by granting their recognition thanks to the “UfM label”. It also provides support to projects through technical expertise, making sure that their implementation goes smoothly. The UfM label recognises the Green Growth Community’s acknowledging its potential to advance cooperation in the transition to a green and circular economy in the Mediterranean region. Thus, it opens for the first time the possibility to cooperate and expand the thematic community current scope with the southern Mediterranean countries. Apart from communication actions, in October and November 2021, the Interreg MED Green Growth Community have co-organised two workshops with UfM, with the aim of sharing knowledge on green and circular economy practices to address some of the most important challenges in the Mediterranean region in terms of sustainability of food systems and sustainable consumption and production. Participants in the two sessions, which were conducted in English with simultaneous translation into French and Arabic, were able to learn from the experience acquired by various organisations through cooperation initiatives, programmes and projects such as FAO, PRIMA, Interreg MED, ENI CBC MED and SwitchMed, among others. This kind of activities is crucial and help fostering the collaboration among organisations and countries, for achieving new positive cross-border impacts. Among the various collaborations, Mercè Boy Roura – coordinator of the Green Growth community – highlights the contribution of BETA Technology Centre in the conceptualisation of the 2030 Agenda for a Green Mediterranean (2030 GreenerMed Agenda) and the participation in the Environmental Working Group.

3. THE TRANSFERRING PROCESS

The transnational dissemination and transferability are crucial aspects of the Green Growth Community and, together with the mainstreaming, they represent main pillars of capitalisation. The community developed, at the beginning of 2020, a methodology to standardise the transferring approach. The Green Growth Community developed a “Transferring Strategy and Action Plan”, presenting the methodological framework for the transferring of results and practices into partners’ territories and beyond. In the Interreg MED programme, transferability refers to the degree to which projects’ main outputs can be generalised or transferred to other

contexts or settings. This concept, however, can be extended and generalised to other results, outcomes and best practices outside the programme's boundaries.

The action plan defines a clear pathway towards the transferring process, as summarised in the steps below:

1. Identification and prioritization of the key knowledge to be transferred through the mapping of MPs results;
2. Setup of an efficient way of communicating with MPs;
3. Identification of target groups and stakeholders to be involved in transferring activities, so that they can capture and apply the knowledge in other regions;
4. Setup of an efficient way of communicating with other HPs and PANORAMED;
5. Setup of activities to enable territorial context for transferring;
6. Organisation of transferring events and use of transferring tools;
7. Monitoring and evaluation of transferring actions;
8. Communicating the transferring results. Step 8 will be developed in relation to the Communication Plan.

The process described by the 8 steps is specifically designed for transferring of Modular Projects' results in the context of the Interreg Med Green Growth Community. However, it is possible to extrapolate the key elements for successfully apply this approach in other contexts, reducing the process to 5 fundamental steps, as reported in Figure . This approach could be used to transfer and replicate products and services of a start-up or a spin off, or to valorise results of projects developed in other programmes.

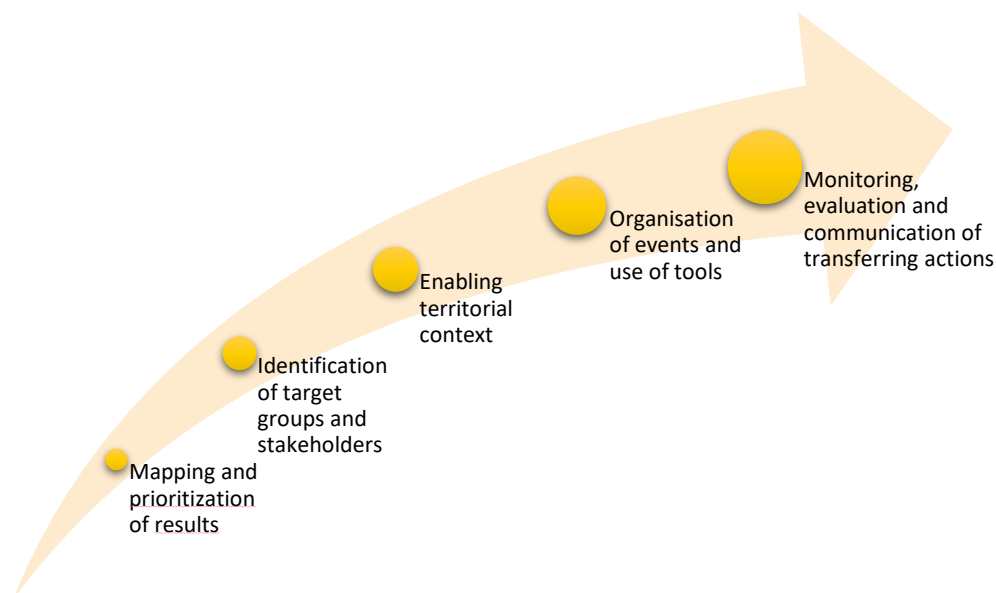


FIGURE 6 - SIMPLIFIED TRANSFERRING PATH, DERIVING FROM THE GREEN GROWTH COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

MAPPING AND PRIORITIZATION OF RESULTS

Identifying through a constant exchange with the MPs the most relevant results achieved, on the basis of their factual experience with the stakeholders who benefit of the projects activities. The exchange can be realised through internal meetings, sharing of experiences, mutual involvement in multi-stakeholders' events and workshops at local, national and international level. This allowed both the GG Community and the MPs to better identify and focus on the results, which could be also relevant in other contexts, different from the specific one directly affected by the projects.

MAPPING AND PRIORITIZATION OF NEEDS

Systematic mapping of the main challenges to be addressed through multi - stakeholders' collaboration and co-creation that are relevant to the current policy discussions. During the diverse occasions promoted and realised by the Green Growth Community where the MPs have been involved, the GGC worked in order to detect the upcoming needs arisen during each project activities. Above all, there were identified the ones which were fundamental to face in order to allow the prosecution of the projects' impact after the end of each of them and to ensure their concrete follow up.

A powerful mapping tool that has been developed by the Green Growth Community is the “[Euro-Mediterranean Policy Hub](#)”. It gathers policy instruments on green growth and related topics that exist, or that are being developed, on EU, Mediterranean, national, and regional level. Thanks to this map, it is possible not only the analysis of policy best practices, but also to identify what regions in the Med were more advances in their CE strategies, what regions where in its development and what regions did not have any CE strategy yet.

Get a clear overview of the current landscape of policy instruments on green growth and related topics at all governance levels and get an insight into where the EU and the countries and regions within the Interreg MED cooperation area currently stand in their policy frameworks and what their respective priority areas are. The compilation of information on relevant policy instruments has been feasible due to the diverse expertise and geographical distribution of the Green Growth project partners.

IDENTIFICATION OF TARGET GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The constant exchange inside the Community with the MPs ensured to clarify both the general target of the Green Growth Community projects and its specific ones: SMEs, public authorities, researchers, private organisations, Universities and Research Centres, citizens directly and indirectly reached by the MPs results and activities made them improve in their efforts, even bringing to their capitalisation in some cases (PEFMED plus, ARISTOIL plus and GRASPINNO plus). The lesson learnt was about the significant need to make a project able to impact the widest target, involving if possible all the quadruple helix stakeholders. This was the approach followed during the Green Growth project, with planned specific activities, such as the Stakeholders Engagement Workshop carried out at regional level in each project partner country. This approach highlighted the strategic role of the local stakeholders to move towards international shared goals such as the circular economy ones or practical operational ones such as sectorial clusters.

ENABLING TERRITORIAL CONTEXT

Throughout the local stakeholders’ engagement workshops and meetings, the GG project aimed at involving directly the local actors in order to provide them with information about the best practices carried out along its implementation. The project offered several opportunities to allow an exchange between policy experts, local associations, local authorities’ representatives, companies and its modular projects representatives. Each occasion was built on the ongoing and most relevant topics addressed by the project, around its main goal of contributing to the circular economy, in accordance with the European Green Deal. The ability was to create a link between the general EU framework, the main results and tools achieved by the GGC Modular projects and the policy activities carried on at local level (Smart Specialization Strategies). Its success has been to facilitate and enable the cooperation between those different levels.

ORGANISATION OF EVENTS AND USE OF TOOLS

With the aim of spreading the Green Growth Community experience, several events and workshops were organised, as well as several were the occasions where the Community involved its Modular Projects (despite the pandemic period). Main events are listed below:

- ECOMONDO (2020);
- CrealInnovation - Esmartcity event (2020);
- Circular Week – Innowo (2021);
- EU Green Week (2021);
- Re – Think International Forum (2022);
- Stakeholders Engagement Workshops (2021-2022);
- Social and Creative Innovation Camp (2022);
- Green Growth Community final event, site event of the EU Green Week (2022).

All the events were organised by involving the partnership with specific tasks and often the Modular Projects, in order to present and explain their results and tools. The GGC presented its main tool, the GGC platform, as a result of a big effort of collection, synthesis and promotion of its activities and experience, available for a free and easy use for anyone who would deepen its knowledge about the Green Growth and its main actors and tools.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND COMMUNICATION OF TRANSFERRING ACTIONS

During its six years of activities the project was monitored continuously in order to keep the attention on its main outputs and deliverables. A constant exchange between the lead partner and each project partner was granted in order to move on properly, according to each WP timetable and results. Each event, to which the partners took part or that was organised were promoted and disseminated through its main communication channels (social media and GGC platform). Each activity was reported and the ones which involved the mutual cooperation of the partners, as well as the Modular Projects, were shared. In addition, between 2021 and 2022 the overall experience of the Green Growth Community project brought to a common effort with the other Interreg Med Communities to create a comprehensive learning programme on the circular economy and sustainable development, with the aim of transferring the lessons learned to a wider, heterogeneous audience.

3.1 TOOLS AND KEY ACTIVITIES FOR TRANSFERRING: THE GREEN GROWTH EXPERIENCE

A series of “tools”, intended as structured actions, methodologies and approaches, have been developed and used by the Green Growth Community to put in place the transferring path described in the previous chapter.

STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOPS

In the context of the Green Growth Community, a series of local/regional stakeholder engagement workshops (SEWs) have been organised by each partner, with the aim to both maximise the replicability and transferability of the solutions deriving from the Community itself, but also to encourage a multi-stakeholder dialogue between quadruple helix stakeholders on identified sustainability problems. The organisation of the (SEWs) followed a standardised methodology developed by ERRIN, partner of the GGC. However, the methodology was adapted and modified according to specific local needs and constraints. Hence this approach can be applied in other fields and territorial context, based on the GG Community experience.

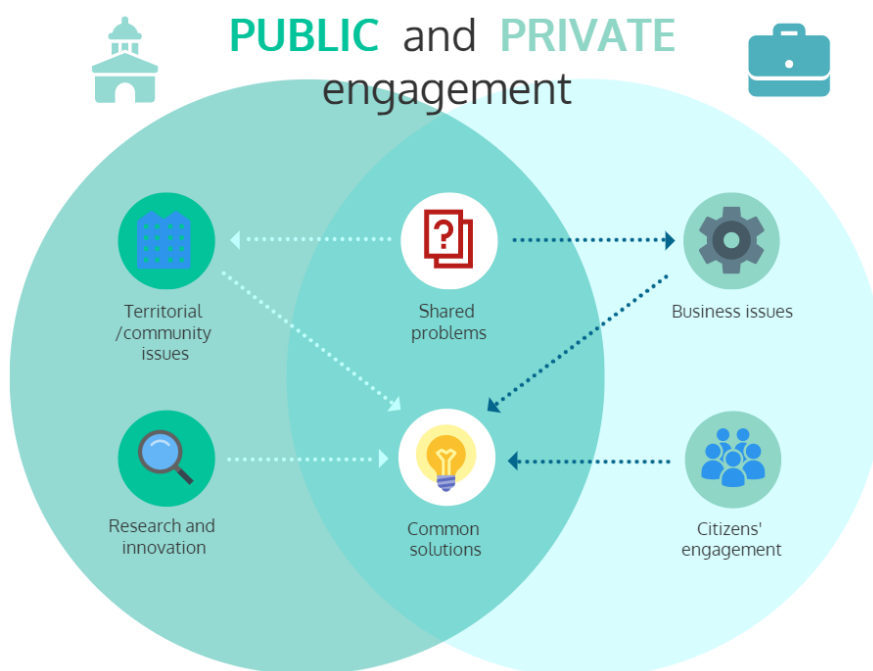


FIGURE 7 - A VANN DIAGRAM DESCRIBING IN SYNTHESIS THE INTERSECTION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE QUADRUPLE HELIX PLAY A ROLE IN THE LOOP OF IDENTIFICATION OF A SHARED PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF COMMON SOLUTIONS

The methodology foresaw a specific multi-step process starting from the selection of the main regional or national problem - related to sustainable development and green growth - (step 1), to deepen at local level together with the concerned regional or national quadruple helix stakeholders involved. This activity would have been split in two or more workshops in order to, first, analyse the main problem (step 2) and identify the different challenges and barriers associated with it (step 3) and then, work together in order to define potential solutions (step 4), select the best ones (step 5) and, through a multi-stakeholder approach, develop policy recommendations (step 6) able to address the problem and provide suggestions and advice on how to solve it through changes in regional or national policies.

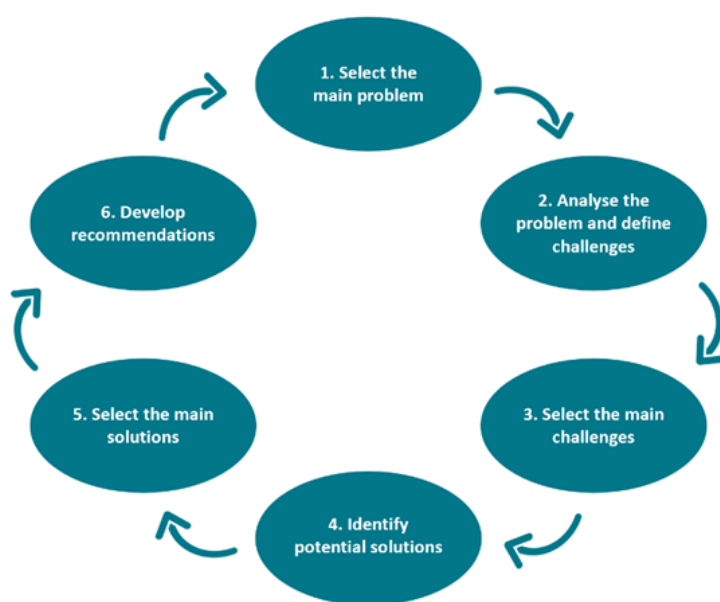


FIGURE 8 - THE LOOP OF THE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS IN DETAIL

The main difficulty of involving all the quadruple helix representatives was faced by realizing the workshops online or in presence according to the specific needs detected at local level (also taking into account the Pandemic) and with short meetings (less than 3 hours). It was fundamental the choice of a specific topic able to get the attention of diverse actors and consistent with the current activities carried on at policy level (i.e. S3). In particular, it was necessary to realize a proper dissemination activity in order to reach the civil society target, shortening the distance with the public authorities. The idea of involving the modular projects representatives (also contributing to the Community Building goals – CUEIM) offered the chance to put in touch the local stakeholders with companies dealing with international projects, which main tools and results revealed to be inspiring for further debates and cooperation opportunities.

The best result of these activities was to create a link between diverse actors on common topics, to reveal the international relevance of local issues (different but also very similar among the regions involved) and to find proper strategies and solutions on the basis of the Green Growth Community experience applied to the resources, background and experience of local actors.

MATCHMAKING BUSINESS FOR A CIRCLE THE MED BUSINESS FORUM (ONLINE, 2020)

In 2020, the Green Growth Community organised an on-line Business Forum, with the aim to exchange good practices and expertise in the field of green growth and to establish relationships that could help spread the transition towards the Circular Economy around the Mediterranean. SMEs & Companies had the occasion to present themselves and their experiences from participating in Interreg MED Modular Projects (MPs) through virtual talks and B2B meetings between the participating private stakeholders, start-ups, large enterprises and SMEs, policy makers, EU funds and programs' national managers, financial institutions, academic and research institutions.

The Green Growth partners decided to make the Business Forum hybrid combining online and physical presence due to the sanitary crisis. Apart from the B2B meetings, the Forum provided a dedicated session for funding and financing opportunities, a theme that is always of primary relevance for SMEs. The methodological approach was the following: the partnership identified and reached relevant SMEs operating in the Green Growth (GG) market and located across the Mediterranean area, inviting them to participate in the Business Forum presenting their business and the technologies they are developing. The identification of the "right" SMEs is crucial for this type of events: they must represent a good mix of enough aware enterprises but with the need of improving their knowledge/capacities, but a good representation of more advanced companies in the field of green growth and innovation is needed as well. These latter can function as case studies and best practices to follow.

In the specific case, the partnership decided to ask SMEs and enterprises which were actively involved in the activities of the Green Growth Community's projects, such as participating in pilot actions, being trained by the project, being member of a Living Lab, etc., to ensure a proper level of starting knowledge. In general terms, ensuring a good mix of skills and knowledge/awareness level is always a good solution to foster a fruitful dialogue and to obtain a successful exchange.

Much communication took place prior to the event in order to explore participants' needs so as to better exploit their participation and offer them a satisfying experience. A template and further guidance on the development of the presentation was provided to the participants, to ensure the maximum results for everyone.

The follow-up is a crucial and fundamental aspect of this kind of activity: for one month after the event, 1-on-1 online meetings were organized and the enterprises had the chance to interact with each other and other enterprises/bodies/entities/funding schemes who participated or attended the Forum.


SMEs & Companies present themselves and their experience from participating in Interreg MED Modular Projects (MPs)
13:00 - 14:00 CET

Introduction: "The Interreg MED Green Growth Community" - Merce Boy Roura

- **ALIA Agricultural transformation society** (RE-LIVE WASTE project) - Manuel Moreno
- **Sereco Biotech snc** (RE-LIVE WASTE project) - Luca Poletti
- **DNV GL BUSINESS ASSURANCE ESPAÑA S.L.** (PEFMED project) - Ricardo Álvarez Muíña
- **ARISTOLEO** (ARISTOIL project) - Athan Gadanidis
- **Meazon SA** (ESMARTCITY project) - Stelios Koutroubinas
- **InSyBio** (ESMARTCITY project) - Ioannis Thanos
- **Crossing Srl** (EMBRACE project) - Valentina Beghetto
- **HELB Ltd.** (GREENOMED project) - Geceg Tomislav

Q/A

// Moderator

 **Konstantina Marousi**
Senior Project Manager and Project Development Consultant - University of Patras - Dynamic Vision

// Speakers










 Manuel Moreno Nicolás External Expert in Interreg MED RE-LIVE WAST project.	 Ioannis Thanos Scientific Programmer & Backend Engineer, InSyBio Inc
 Luca Poletti Environmental biologist, Sereco BIOTEST	 Valentina Beghetto Senior Assistant Professor at the University Ca' Foscari Venice
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 Athan Gadanidis ARISTOLEO	 Merce Boy Roura EU Project Manager - Interreg MED Green Growth coordinator at BETA Technological Center / UVic-UCC, Spain
 Stelios Koutroubinas MEAZON AE	

FIGURE 9 - AGENDA OF THE "CIRCLE THE MED" 2020 ONLINE BUSINESS FORUM

MEDITERRANEAN FORUM (Marseille, 2022)

The Community actively participated in the “Forum des Mondes Méditerranéens”, launched by the French President Emmanuel Macron, held in Marseille the 7th and 9th of February 2022. The objective was to put the civil society at the core of the dynamization of development initiatives and solutions for the Mediterranean basin¹. The Mediterranean Forum focused on the following topics: Environment and Biodiversity; Education, training and mobilities; Inclusion and solidarities; Employment, innovation, and entrepreneurship; Culture and patrimony; Territorial and sustainable development. With around 4000 registered participants and 500 speakers, the Forum has been a great opportunity to connect, reconnect and share projects and ideas among the many organisations and institutions who were present during the event.

A dedicated all-day conference was co-organised by the partner ANIMA-GGC, under the dimension “EMPLOYMENT, INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP”. During this conference, 23 speakers representing economic institutions and civil society representatives discussed the opportunities arising for a greater integration and economic relocation of supply chains in the Mediterranean basin, as a consequence of the climate change, the sanitary crisis and the transport difficulties. The conference was also the occasion of the signature of a partnership between two economic development agencies, Provence Promotion and the Regional Center of Investment of Agadir-Souss Massa. The main conclusions are summarized below.

Potential for relocation of value chains around the Mediterranean

The potential for regionalisation of value chains exists. There is a break in the globalised value chains that leads to a de facto dependence on Asia. Companies have realised that they have not diversified the risk. Studies show that there is a capacity to produce in the region because there are between 400 and 500 products identified as still being imported by the EU. For this, it is necessary to 1) Improve infrastructure, transport, logistics and trade rules; 2) Encourage co-investment and invest in several countries.

Costs are lower in the Mediterranean than in China, and technological know-how is more developed in the North of the Mediterranean. It is therefore necessary to combine the needs of the North with the potential of the South (youth, labour force). To do this, it is necessary to adapt the training of young people (from the South) to the needs of companies.

¹References:

<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/civil-society/summit-of-the-two-shores-mediterranean-forum-23-and-24-june-2019-62888/>
<https://www.france24.com/en/video/20220207-france-mediterranean-forum-bringing-together-countries-surrounding-mediterranean>
<https://anima.coop/en/mediterranean-forum/>

Entrepreneurs agree that it is necessary to bring the production centres closer together, to work with the closest countries in order to supply or sell elsewhere, because the costs, particularly the logistical costs imposed by China or other Asian countries, are considerable. It is therefore necessary to consider a) a rapprochement with Europe; b) giving priority to Near shoring practices; c) bringing markets closer together. The contribution of digital technology and robotics in industry will accelerate these aspects.

Price considerations are essential but there is more to it than that. We have to consider the logistical footprint, the knowledge of the markets and the needs and tastes of the consumers. It is not about competing with China, just about improving the situation. The EU's external policy has resources. These should be used to renew free trade agreements, particularly the association agreements between the EU and the Maghreb, but also to review the rules of origin, tariff cost policies, etc. All this must be reviewed.

Repatriating industrial tools from China is an illusion, according to them. On the other hand, we must see things differently. It is up to us to find ways to reassure our African partners. The EU and the institutions must help us in this. The circular economy has great potential, as does renewable energy. On the European carbon market, we need to integrate actors from the South to initiate projects for the next COP27 (Egypt).

Impact of these new value chains on the attractiveness of the region

To be able to export, an entrepreneur is looking for proximity, a virtuous carbon impact, operational agility (digital, connected), and meaning. The Mediterranean basin must therefore offer them an ecosystem that can provide this. The people who are investing today are those already present and not newcomers, they are the EU of course but also Turkey, China and the United States. But let's not forget that the first world market is Europe and this is a strong selling point for the whole basin.

The new innovative and sustainable sectors arising from the context

We can see that the technologically supported sectors have developed with the crisis. These include education, logistics, the "last mile" of the supply chain, but also digitalization in general, insurance, and fintech, which are exploding under the impetus of successful companies. The materials industry is also booming, especially in research laboratories, but there is still a problem with the marketing chain. As an example of the evolution, Egypt is the 3rd African country which receives the most foreign investments. The sectors receiving the most are fintech, followed by logistics, education and ecommerce. It is interesting to see that before the Covid crisis it was mainly Ecommerce. The topic of circular economy seems to be the one where we could all work together.

How transport and logistics should evolve to facilitate the integration on the basin

Relocation is clearly driven by low carbon approach. According to shipping companies, the more transport offers will be developed, the more relocations will happen. This new balance between Europe and Africa requires enormous financial resources. Even if the demand is there, the question of operational capacity arises and is currently completely paralysed by the inflation of raw materials... It will be necessary to "become African", to share the value, to really establish oneself. All this also requires major financial resources (investment aid in particular).

TAILOR MADE BUSINESS MEETINGS

During its 6-years path, the Green Growth Community organised B2B meetings on many occasions. The main goal is to match SMEs, Public Institutions and policy makers, Academia and research, fostering the dialogue around common problems and finding shared win-win solutions.

The first example of B2B meetings organised by the GG Community was the Business Forum organised in September 2018 in Crete (Greece). The Business Forum offered a tailored made program reinforcing knowledge exchange between EU officials and policymakers, EU funds and programs' national managers, financial institutions, large enterprises and SMEs, academic and research institutions and EU co-financing instruments.

The main target was to learn from good practices and transform ideas into business opportunities, supported by innovative funding - financing tools fostering Circular Economy business models and eco-innovation. The Business Forum served as a meeting point for SMEs and enterprises operating in the MED area, where they could seek common actions, reach relevant partners and find out more about financing opportunities. The expected result was for the SMEs to reach stakeholders for future collaborations with the support of the Green Growth Community. After the success of the first B2B meetings in Crete, more opportunities have been created to match the needs and the solutions in the Green Growth field.



FIGURE 10 - PICTURE OF THE BUSINESS FORUM AND B2B MEETINGS ORGANISED IN CRETE IN 2018



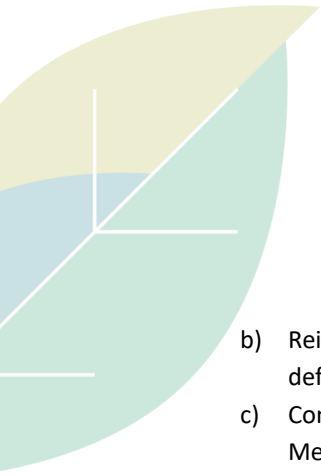
FIGURE 11 - PICTURES OF THE BUSINESS FORUM AND B2B MEETINGS ORGANISED IN CRETE IN 2018

MAINSTREAMING EXPERIMENTATION

Along the path of capitalisation within the Green Growth Community, the collaboration with the PANORAMED project - the governance platform that supports the process of strengthening and developing multilateral cooperation frameworks - as well as the other Horizontal and Strategic Projects of the Interreg MED Programme has played a significant role for the mainstreaming work. Although it is not always easy to obtain sufficient support of such a structured platform as PANORAMED, gathering together many regional Public Authorities across the Mediterranean, the methodology developed by the project and the sharing of best practices and experiences between the different projects had a positive impact on the Green Growth mainstreaming activities.

PANORAMED shares relevant objectives that can be considered as complementary with the Green Growth ones:

- a) Enhancement of the institutional capacity of Public Authorities to ensure the maximum impact of MED project results through efficient implementation of EU/national public funds and mainstreaming actions;



- b) Reinforcement of the institutional capacity of Public Authorities in transnational and national policy definition and strategic planning;
- c) Contribution to coordinated synergies and dynamics among initiatives and strategies active in the Mediterranean;
- d) Contribution to the improvement of a reinforced cooperation with the South shore of the Mediterranean.

The Green Growth project adopted the mainstreaming methodology developed by PANORAMED for the project's mainstreaming work. PANORAMED set up a series of collective mainstreaming meetings between the PANORAMED project and their experts and the Interreg MED Horizontal and Strategic Projects to enable the sharing of best practices and experiences and discussions around challenges and potential solutions.

BEST PRACTICES, TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE TRANSFERRING

Awareness raising and knowledge sharing

Awareness raising and knowledge sharing can improve multi-stakeholder dialogue and public debate, by carrying out effective, inclusive and smart communication activities and events on green growth and circular economy. Fostering discussion about common territorial problems with quadruple-helix's actors. The lessons learnt of the stakeholder engagement meetings.

Engage decision-makers and civil society

In order to establish a cooperation that can lead to effective solutions, for SMEs and/or for territories, it is crucial to engage from the beginning both civil society and decision makers. The civil society engagement allows to ensure the final users/customers/citizens' perspective in the discussion, and this can be helpful not only to customise or adjust the solutions to their needs, but to maximise the impact of the actions as well.

Dialogue and debate

Social and institutional dialogue, at regional, national and European level, plays a key role in shaping green growth policies and recommendations, can promote the upward convergence of innovative solutions, as well as responding to new challenges and crisis, such as the Covid-19 pandemic. The Green Growth Community both participated to several public EU consultations, providing the insights and point of view of the Community, as well fostered the dialogue and debate at Mediterranean level through many forums, events and transnational meetings that have been held during the project's lifespan.

Empowering regional stakeholders

Circular Economy happens at regional and local level, mainly. Obviously, main strategies and directions must be given at higher, European and national level, but the opportunities that arises from territories are those that enable actors to make the difference, with environmental, social and economic sustainability. For this reason, a strong cooperation and collaboration must pass through the empowerment and engagement of regional stakeholders of the quadruple helix. The most powerful action put in place by the Community in this direction has been the organisation of several Regional Stakeholders Engagement Meetings, as already described in the previous chapter. Local problems can be addressed with a bottom-up approach, firstly discussing about critical issues, then proposing solutions that can be later transformed into policies and strategies. Afterwards, replication in other regional contexts with similar problems and framework close the loop of capitalization, as we wanted to describe in this report.

Other transversal tips

Following the experience of the Green Growth Community, it is possible to suggest a series of transversal activities to ensure the proper transferring of results, products and best practices:

- Regular updating of the website and social media of the project/company with new information about achievements, results and products, as well as relevant policies that might foster and encourage the adoption at local regional scale of the proposed solutions;
- Participation in national and international conferences related to the field of interest, as well as business forum and business networks' events;
- Development of new cooperation in national and international projects and initiatives on relevant issues of interest;
- Support of the application and the monitoring within the targeted area and other regions and analysis of the potential incorporation of results, products and best practices in future local/regional primarily and even national innovation strategies;
- Identification of other funding and institutional opportunities in the area of interest for continuation of support towards the utilization and integration of outcomes;
- Identification and cultivation of connections with other projects, initiatives and organisations working in the same field for exchanging experiences and furthering concepts;
- Selection of SMEs or sectorial association that will attend the seminars and continuation of their support even after the conclusion of the project through activities such as personal assistance/contact for networking with other organisations, etc.
- Elaboration of sectorial papers and articles for publication in national and international journals related to the field of interest.



FIG. 12 – GGC TIPS FOR A PROPER TRANSFERRING

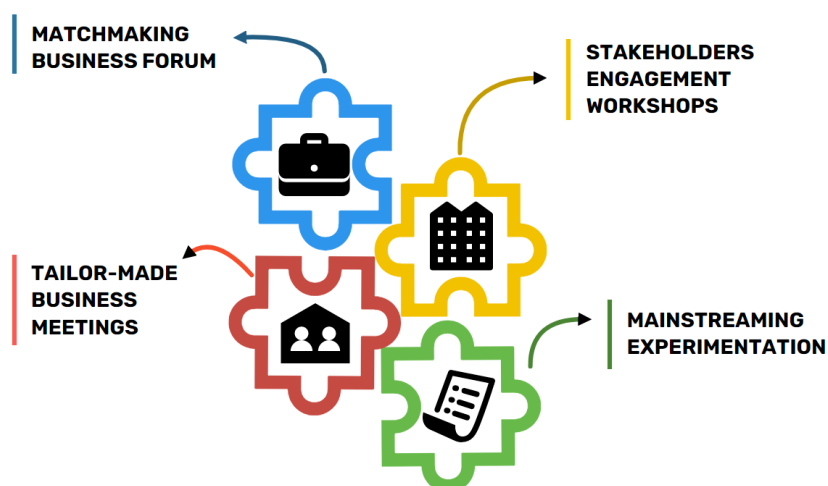


FIG. 13 – GGC TOOLS AND KEY ACTIVITIES FOR TRANSFERRING

4. LESSONS LEARNT, CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS

The Green Growth Community's path not always has been an easy journey and challenges have been faced. The aim of this section is to provide a series of examples of the barriers of/when and how these can be overcome or prevented, based on the partners' experiences and lessons learnt.

Transferring activities

Several webinars and workshops were organised, which are fundamental tools for filling the knowledge gap and for building trust among actors. However, it is difficult to engage the audience and continue the collaboration after the event, especially if those ones are performed online. Most of the transferring events ended up in being dissemination events, where all the speakers and projects presented their studies, but there was little engagement from the participants or very limited number of participants that would be willing to uptake the tools presented. These issues were improved when participatory activities were organised within the webinars (interactive survey or exercises, open questions, etc.) or when webinars were more targeted to specific type of stakeholders (i.e. UfM workshops). Moreover, considering that a standard approach cannot be applied across diverse regions, it is important to identify archetypes and best practices that must be necessarily adapted to different contexts.

The engagement of Public Authorities

One of the main barriers encountered during the cooperation has been obtaining an active engagement and collaboration of regional institutions and Public Authorities. This issue led to insufficient support to bottom-up approaches and co-creation of shared solutions, hence tools and successful practices but be consolidated and made available, even though adapted for each case. In more than one Region involved in this activity, Community's partners faced several problems in engaging Public Authorities, mainly due to bureaucracy and slow internal procedures to obtain authorisation.

In **Italy**, the organisation of the stakeholders' engagement meetings was delayed due to the lack of response from the highest levels of the regional authorities. The operative departments and technical referent people were very active and interested in being involved, but then the collaboration stopped when the official authorisation was needed. The Italian partner CUEIM first contacted the Veneto Region, thanks to a previous connection obtained during an event. The operative department was absolutely willing to collaborate from the very beginning, but their involvement was stopped due to contextual changes in the top management of the institution, with subsequent delay and final need to change the regional authority to involve.

The second region contacted was the Emilia-Romagna and a similar pattern happened: the technical department was fully active, but the official approval of the Region's participation took almost two months to be obtained. A significant burst of speed was given by the involvement of a PANORAMED representative. This is a clear example of how the active engagement of networks and platforms can help in the dialogue with stakeholders, especially when they are institutional and public.

In **Catalonia**, the initial idea was to link the stakeholder engagement workshops with the Rural Agenda that was developed at that moment in the region. However, a mismatch between the timing of the workshops and public consultation of the agenda, as well as, difficulties in entering to the process of the development of the Rural Agenda made this collaboration impossible. Therefore, more local workshops were organised in collaboration with the country public administration of the Osona region, which facilitated the mapping and involvement of different type of stakeholders.

In **France**, the difficulty to associate the Region Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur was mostly linked to the separation between the directorate in charge of environment issues and the one dealing with economic activities. It was finally overpassed by using a geographic and transversal approach, associating the teams involved in the Mediterranean questions. Despite the strong commitment of this region on its climate plan, which is supposed to irrigate all its policy, we see that green issues are not yet managed as a cross cutting policy, but rather sectoral and focused on environmental considerations rather than economic opportunities.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, public authority participation was on very high level, and during all four stakeholder engagement workshops (two workshops per two entities – Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska), public authority stakeholders were the most numerous. Issue that was faced during workshops was engagement of private sector in both entities. According to CENER 21's experience so far, the private sector hardly gets involved in the similar activities for the reason that they do not see the benefits they can have. Additional challenge is the fact that private sector does not have enough staff to conduct activities related to development, since they are primarily focused on profit making. Therefore, the workshops that were organised passed without almost any involvement of the private sector, and without their valuable input that could be obtained with the aim of creating suitable proposals for public policy changes. Online format of the second workshop for Federation of BiH attracted several private sector representatives, hence one of the lessons learned for CENER 21 is that physical workshops lasting for a whole day or more are not suitable for the private sector.

In **Greece** the regional stakeholders, including the public authorities, were very interested in participating in the engagement workshop organised by DV. This was mainly due to the selection of the topic dealt in the workshop, namely *"How can greenhouses be part of crops' restructuring in the era of climate change?"*. The economy of the Thessaly region depends significantly on the agriculture sector and thus the involved stakeholders have to keep up with the technological developments and innovative sustainable practices in the

sector. Thus the first lesson learnt for the successful organisation of stakeholder involvement activities is the very careful selection of the topic after consulting the regional stakeholders themselves. Secondly, DV involved the University of Thessaly as facilitator in the process. In such participatory processes, universities and research centres can play the role of valuable facilitators, since they provide the “neutral arena” where other types of stakeholders can meet and exchange. Also, it was important that in all forms of Workshop’s communication, DV highlighted the participatory nature of the event and the wish to bring together stakeholders from different target groups facilitating an unbiased exchange of opinions which will result to useful policy recommendations for the sector. Then, it is important to listen the wishes and the preferences of the interested stakeholders concerning the structure and the logistics of the event. This means that even if there is a methodology with specific steps to be followed, the responsible partner has to be flexible to adapt the methodology if this is preferable for the stakeholders. Another lesson learnt is the involvement of some key-note speakers that attract stakeholders’ attention. Finally, the fact that the Workshop was organised with physical presence of the participants was proved successful, since people were overwhelmed by the numerous online events that take place during the Covid-19 period.

Mainstreaming activities

Through the mainstreaming activities, the Green Growth project encountered many challenges and barriers that required the project partners to think outside the box and adopt solutions that eventually helped the project overcome these challenges.

The mainstreaming process requires the active participation of the stakeholders involved in the process, that is the taker - the actor adopting an outcome for the integration into policy frameworks, and the giver – the actor “owning” the outcome. However, due to the set-up of the mainstreaming activity, this engagement proved to be challenging. As the taker participates in the mainstreaming activity without any compensation for the human resources and time spent on this work, the project had to develop other “selling points” that would encourage the taker to participate and dedicate time to the activity. Some of these included the promise that they would be invited as a speaker to the project’s final event and have their expenses covered by the project for their participation, that the project could cover some costs for workshops and other activities connected to the mainstreaming activity, and that most activities would take place online to avoid travel expenses.

Another challenge that the project faced in the mainstreaming work was the fact that most results deriving from the Green Growth Community’s Modular Project are directed towards SMEs and companies, rather than public administrations. The results are often very technical and are not directly suited for policy purposes. This required the project partners to translate the technical results into formats that made it clear to public authorities how they could benefit from them and how they could be integrated into policy frameworks. The project performed different exercises that supported this work, such as a mapping of competences of regional authorities in some of the MED countries (Spain, Italy, Greece and France).



Finally, the language barrier posed a significant challenge as many of the people working in public administrations have limited skills in the English language. To overcome this barrier, the project tried to ensure that resources were, whenever possible, shared with the taker in their local language and tried to engage project partners fluent in the local language in the meetings with the taker. Finding a taker and giver with the same native language also greatly facilitated the mainstreaming process.