

PR1- A2: Consultant Training Toolkit

Chapter no.:6 - PART B

***Partner: GrantXpert
Consulting, StoryTellME,
FPIMM***

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Contents

<i>1.0 Information about Chapter</i>	3
<i>2.0 Information about each individual subchapter</i>	6
<i>3.0 Detailed Instructions for the trainer</i>	16
<i>4.0 References</i>	16

1.0 Information about Chapter

Chapter's title: Digital and Green: economic sustainability depends on environmental sustainability: basics of sustainability and eco-friendliness planning

Duration: 5 hours

Short introduction to the chapter:

SMEs compose approximately 99% of all businesses in the EU. Therefore, they are a significant partner of the EU economy since they assist to steer the economy towards a circular model. The past few years, representatives from the European institutions, SME associations and SMEs, standardisation organisations, as well as other key stakeholders at national and European level make efforts to identify the different aspects of how the SMEs can contribute to the implementation of the European Green Deal?

An increasing awareness of the need to involve SMEs in the development of standards to achieve the objectives of the digital and green transitions can be seen. The updated Industrial strategy has announced the publication of a standardisation strategy for Q3 of this year. This strategy should fully consider the needs of SMEs and help to strengthen the European standardisation system to make SMEs more competitive and support the twin transition^{1,2,3,4}.

However, SMEs do not always have a strong voice in the standardisation process which may lead to standards not meeting SMEs' needs or even placing disproportionate burdens on them. Therefore, more resources should be dedicated to the development of practical guides to facilitate their uptake. In this framework, the work of Small Business Standards is important to make sure the interests of SMEs are represented in the standardisation process^{5,6,7,8}.

This chapter aims to familiarize the learners with the current policies of the EU related to SMEs transition to a more sustainable and greener environment including digitalization. Aside from these, this chapter focuses on the financial aids provided to the SMEs by the EU promoting their transition to a greener, more environmentally friendly status. The chapter focuses on different business models and how these can be applied to SMEs in order to provide them with a smooth transition to the green, circular and sustainable scope of EU while it explores the general landscape of green and sustainable SMEs across Europe and explores good practises¹⁻⁸.

Methods of instructions:

This module is going to utilize a ppt presentation as a method of instruction. Learners will be able to go through slides with information on the topic and be guided to specific useful links with further information and videos related to the topics covered.

Prerequisites of the students:

No basic knowledge is required by the learners, however a basic knowledge on terms such as business models, business plan etc is suggested.

Learning aims and Objectives:

The main aims and objectives of this module focus on:

- Helping learners understand the support system provided to the SMEs by the EU in order to become green, digital and sustainable.
- Providing all available information of the funding opportunities provided by the EU for the SMEs that want to acquire a green and sustainable mentality and business model.
- Informing the learners what options they have in terms of financing through EU or at national level, in relation to their green and sustainable advancement.
- Exploring the available support options that the EU provides to different SMEs in terms of organisation, promotion, help, communication and market access.
- Informing the learners about successful cases of sustainable business in EU

Learning Outcomes Covered:

After completion of this module, the learners will be able to:

- Find all the support bodies and schemes provided by the EU for SMEs that want to go green and sustainable
- Understand how and when they can apply for funding for their company
- Acquire knowledge of the major funding bodies from EU that are related to green and sustainable transition of SMEs
- Learn the different types of funding provision available from EU
- Acquire knowledge about the support system for SMEs in Europe
- Understand how they can utilize the bodies and schemes provided by the EU in order to promote their businesses in a more sustainable and greener environment.
- Understand how they could act to create a sustainable business

Skills and Competences:

Skills:

training about support funds, having a support network, funding availability, case studies, basic training on how to transform your business based on EU sustainable and green environment

The transferable skills related to this chapter aim to upskill and reskill SMEs employees, managers and adults with no specialized education on the matter in an attempt to facilitate employment, enhance SMEs through information on funding, networking and support systems provided by the EU in an effort to become greener and more sustainable. This information will facilitate the knowledge of learners in an attempt to be able to find out about all the support systems provided by the EU, the finding opportunities and schemes in order to transform their company and become green and sustainable. The knowledge provided in this chapter also aims to support SMEs to be able to build a more sustainable and green business model, learn about the benefits of turning green for the employees, employers and the company and study numerous good practices from other SMEs who have already made these transitions.

Competences:

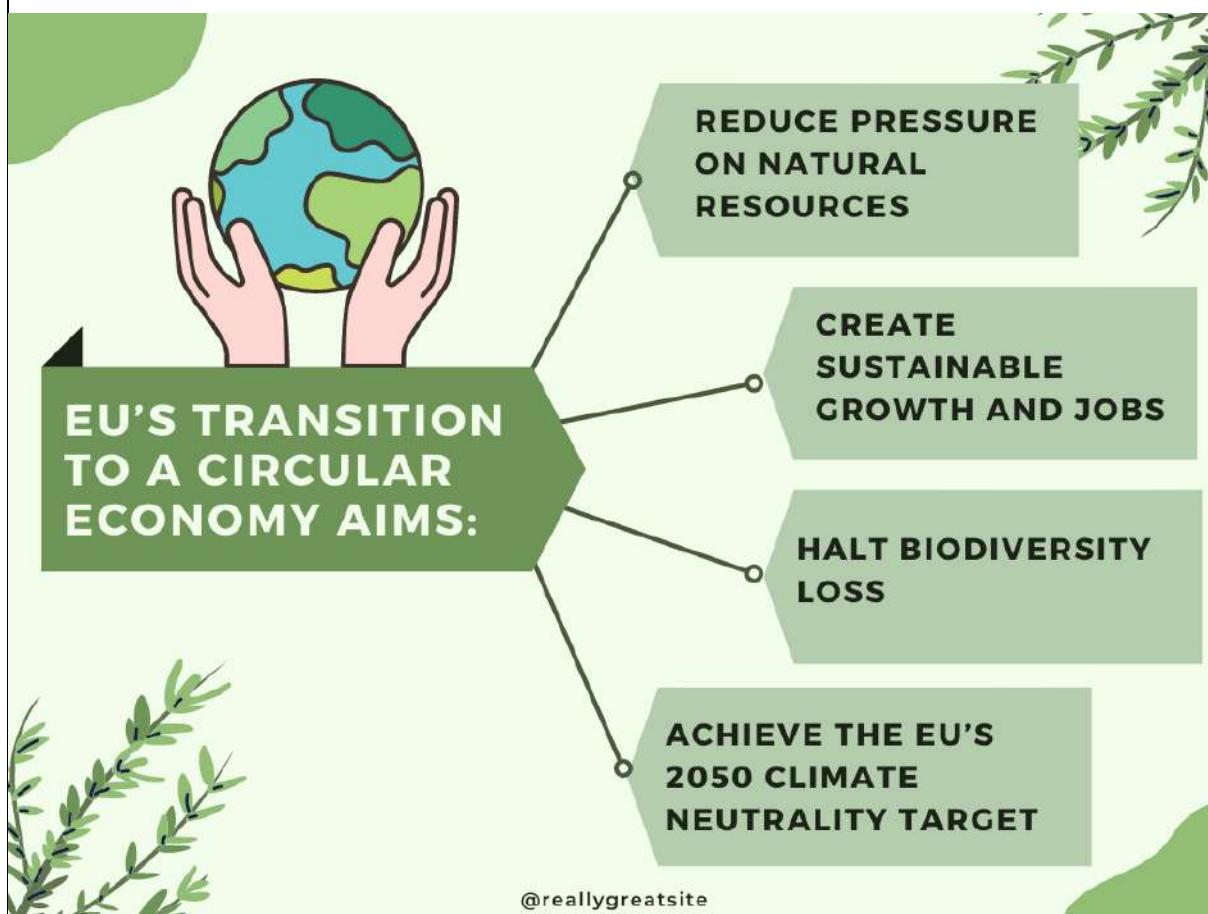
promote sustainability, measure company's sustainability performance, advise on corporate social responsibility, green bonds, advise on sustainability solutions, adopt ways to reduce negative impact of consumption, circular economy, bioeconomy, green bonds, inform on government funding, apply for government funding, funding methods, find grants, apply for research funding, microfinance, check grant applications, identify support mechanisms to develop your professional practice, organise supporters, find supporters, motivate supporters, decision support systems, utilise decision support system, expand the network of providers, network management system tools, develop professional network, network with store owners, implement a virtual network⁶

2.0 Information about each individual subchapter

Subchapter title: ***The Current policy of the EU for SMEs and the European Landscape***

Short introduction to the subchapter:

This subchapter explores the current policy of the EU applied to SMEs in order to promote a more sustainable and green business model and help them transform following the pillars set by the European Union.





We only have **one Earth** but by **2050**, we will be consuming
as if we have **three planets**.

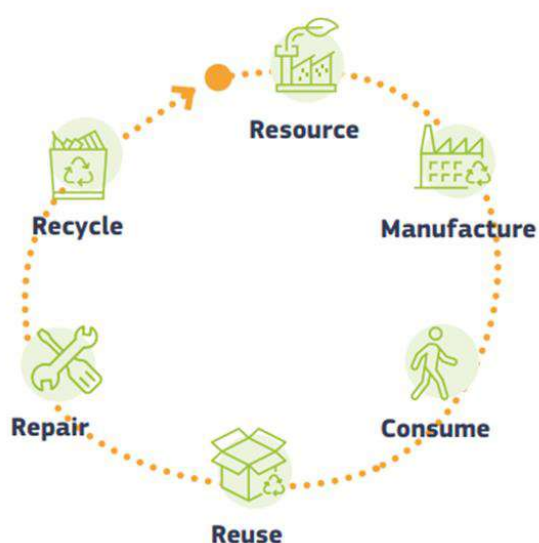
Resource extraction and processing are responsible for **50 %** of
greenhouse gas emissions and **90 %** of biodiversity loss.

... for resilient growth

A more circular economy could create at least
1 million new jobs.

It would create **local jobs at all skills levels**,
opportunities for social integration and a higher gross
domestic product in all EU Member States.

- Circular supply chains and repair and reuse of
products, for example, sustain local jobs and can
keep value in the EU economy.



Adapted from: Investing in the circular economy. Blueprint for a green recovery- EU:
<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2779/562432>

To accelerate the EU's transition to a circular economy, the European Commission adopted the new circular economy action plan in March 2020.

Objectives:

The circular economy will help us decouple economic growth from resource use, protecting Europe's natural resources while boosting sustainable growth. It will help the European Union to strive to reduce its consumption footprint and double its circular material use rate in the coming decade.

The circular economy will:

- enable a healthier planet and reduce pollution
- reduce pressure on natural resources such as water and land use
- reduce emissions to help the EU become the first climate-neutral continent
- create new business opportunities and local quality jobs enable more resilient value chains

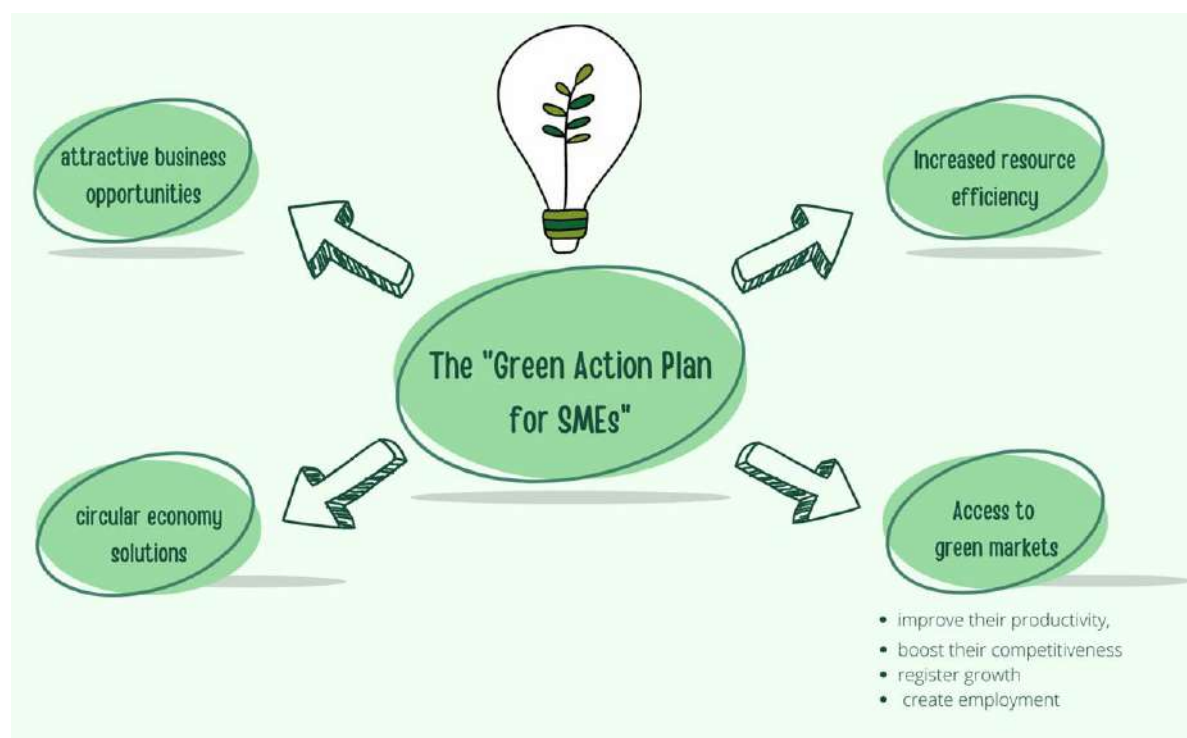
EU has taken actions to facilitate SMEs to become greener and more sustainable.

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In 2014, the "[Green Action Plan for SMEs](#)" has been established in order to offer to SMES a wide variety of advantages



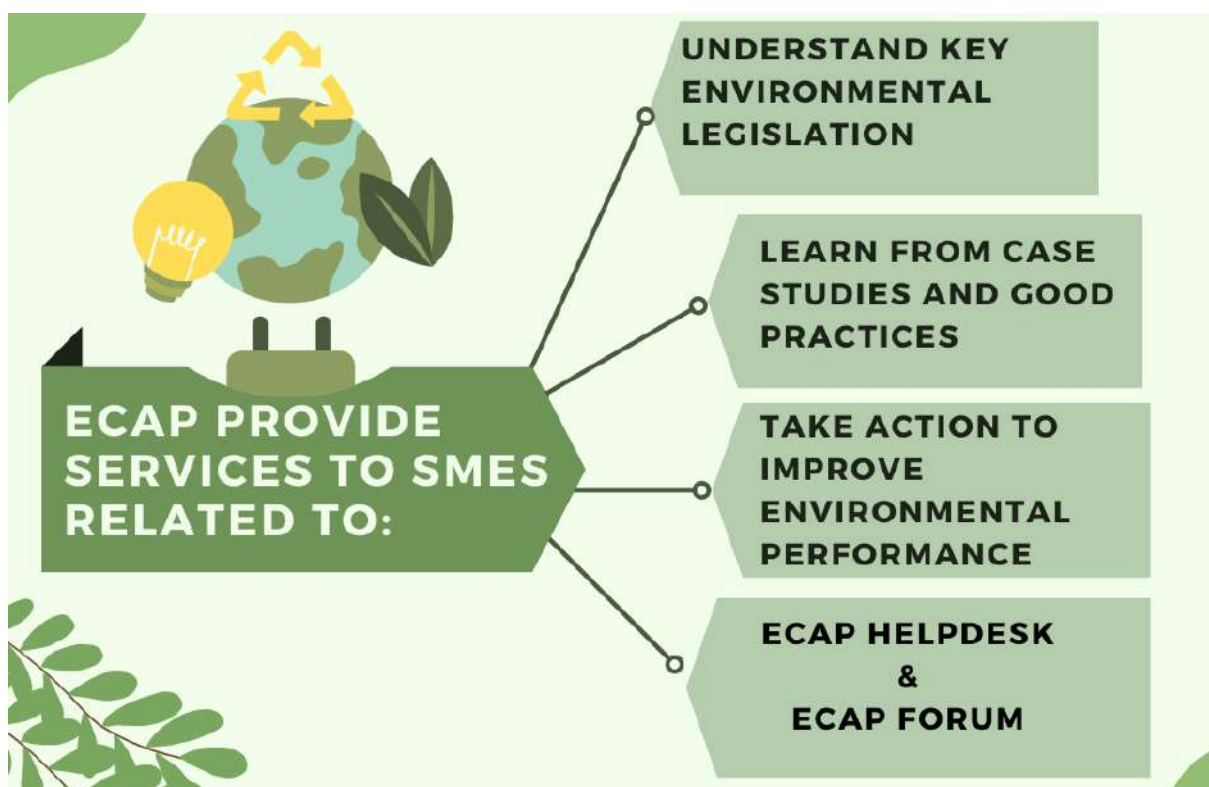
[Small and medium-sized enterprises](#) (SMEs) find it harder to comply with environmental legislation than larger companies. In general, the smaller the company, the more difficult it is. Often SMEs are not aware of their environmental obligations - but they are also unaware of the benefits of being green: new market opportunities and cost savings.

The European Commission proposed an [Environmental Compliance Assistance Programme \(ECAP\)](#) to make it easier for SMEs to comply with their obligations and improve their environmental performances.

There are a number of areas where action is being taken:

- Minimizing the administrative burden on companies
- Helping SMEs integrate environmental concerns into their businesses
- Supporting regional and national networks
- Building up local know-how
- Improving communication

➤ Providing funding



Subchapter title: ***The supporting instruments of EU for SMEs***

Short introduction to the subchapter:

This subchapter describes in detail all the available opportunities that SMEs have in funding in order to transit based on the green and sustainable guidelines set by the EU. This subchapter also focuses on projects that are currently running and aim to support SMEs, employees and employers to become aware, train and become green and sustainable. Lastly, this subchapter aims to inform the learners about all the available options in the EU that are related to the actions they need to take in order to become resilient through green and circular economy and sustainability.

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A number of Europe-wide sources of funding are available to help businesses comply with environmental legislation. The European Commission administers some sources of funding directly, but more often they are channelled through national or local authorities

Financially, as part of the wider effort by the European Innovation Council to promote disruptive innovation especially by SMEs, the EU allocated EUR 300 million to deliver breakthrough Green Deal innovations for SMEs in 2020.

Different funding bodies are available in the EU. The most widely used are found on the diagram below:



Adapted from: studiogstock-Freepik: https://www.freepik.com/free-vector/save-world-design-flat-style_6630796.htm#query=green%20economy&position=28&from_view=search&track=sph



EU provides different [initiatives in different sectors](#) related to funding opportunities to SMEs.

Sustainable finance refers to the process of taking environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations into account when making investment decisions in the financial sector, in order to secure a more sustainable economy.

In the context of sustainable finance, the Commission took several initiatives:

- the [action plan to finance sustainable growth](#) (see [communication on EUR-Lex](#))
- the [renewed sustainable finance strategy](#)



Subchapter title: **Successful Cases in EU**

Short introduction to the subchapter:

Small businesses are very important in the global economy. They create lots of jobs and help to grow businesses. Small businesses are important to economies all over the world. An SME is a small business with fewer than 250 employees and a yearly revenue of less than €50 million.

Small businesses need to start receiving more sustainable practices in order to ensure a better future for generations to come. Sustainability can be achieved by employing a variety of strategies, including economic, environmental, and social measures. It is important to consider all three factors in order to create a successful, sustainable system.

For a better understanding of sustainable SME, we bring you some examples of successful sustainable business across Europe

Successful Cases in EU

DAVID LUKE and HSBC

David Luke, a UK-based school uniform provider, installed a 1,000-panel solar PV system with the help of an HSBC Green Loan. The system was a success, helping to reduce David Luke's energy costs and help the company reduce its environmental impact. The bank provided a six-figure loan to a small business that is working to improve its sustainability practices. The bank's sustainable finance initiative is designed to help businesses of all sizes achieve success in this area. The 295kW rooftop solar PV system installed by Environmental Roofing Services is expected to save 3,600 tons of carbon emissions over its 25-year lifespan. That's equivalent to the emissions from over 200 cars.

GUCCI and INTESA SANPAOLO

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Gucci has teamed up with Intesa Sanpaolo to help its supply chain partners access money to improve their sustainability practices. This will help to support the companies' efforts to reduce their environmental impact and protect the environment. Together, Gucci and the lending institutions are helping smaller businesses in their supply chain access loans with better terms and conditions if they can prove they are doing their part to improve their sustainability. This plan focuses on things like energy efficiency, green transportation, renewable energy, and more gender equality.

Vintage for a cause

Vintage for a Cause is a socially committed circular economy brand that focuses on repurposing textile waste through upcycling while benefiting unemployed women over 50.

The company creates limited editions of timeless designs within a collaborative platform framework, gathering, engaging, and persuading many stakeholders throughout the value chain toward more sustainable production and consumption.

Helena Antonia founded the company in 2012, and the bulk of limited-edition collections are designed and manufactured in Portugal or overseas by responsible manufacturing partners utilizing sustainable methods and materials. Vintage for a cause use deadstock and sustainable textiles, as well as superior supply chain procedures, to create attractive vintage-inspired fashions at a fraction of the environmental effect of traditional fashion. It is our ambition to lead and inspire a more sustainable fashion industry.

Helena, a former lawyer, entered the field of sustainable design in 2012, pitching her idea and vision at a Social Innovation bootcamp where she realized how businesses can be a beneficial force.

Helena sees garments and the people who produce them through distinct eyes as the daughter of a seamstress who grew up wearing modified clothes. Being surrounded by good examples of what is now called a responsible and conscientious lifestyle, Helena views sustainable fashion as more than just a means of personal expression, but as a reflection of the changes, we wish to see in the world. She has been trying to empower women and repurpose textile waste since 2013. She has gathered a large collection of designers, businesses, and individuals to harness social and environmental impact. Vintage's design objective is to provide cheap ethical and sustainable vintage-inspired clothes. They strive to make clothes of high quality that feel antique and one-of-a-kind, and that withstand and preserve their character through time.

Know more about Helena Antonia, Vintage for a cause's founder:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYtwmstcYWM>

REFOOD

The goal of REFOOD is to feed people, rescue food, and include the local community in building a more equal, sustainable, and cooperative society.

The REFOOD Movement is autonomous, environmentally friendly, democratic, citizen-driven, and locally organized. Through the involvement of the community, it is committed to rescuing food in good shape and feeding the ones in need. REFOOD is a legally recognized non-profit organization with IPSS status in Portugal.

The project started back in 2011 when Hunter Halder made the first food collection from cafes and restaurants on a bicycle. His vision when he first started this project was to make Lisbon the first city without food waste and hunger.

Refood was rescuing 2,250,000 meals annually at the end of 2019 with 60 Centers running, 7,700 volunteers, 7,000 recipients, and 2,500 food source partners (preventing 1,125 tons of bio waste from entering the waste cycle).

Today, they also have teams operating in Madrid (Spain), teams developing in Milan (Italy), Richmond, Virginia (USA), and Salvador de Baia (Brazil), as well as new tools prepared to extend our global reach and offer the Refood Movement's well-documented advantages to communities everywhere.

Fruta Feia

Fruta Feia started as a cooperative project in November of 2013 with the aim to bridge the gap between farmers and consumers, therefore, reduce the food waste.

Fruta Feia says it has already avoided the waste of 3.685 tons of food by helping farmers around the country to sell the fruit and vegetables that, because they don't look the way they want, they can't sell to supermarkets.

The project was created by Isabel Soares, the initiative started almost a year after the Study and Reflection on Food Waste Project (PERDA) revealed that Portugal wasted one million tons of food every year.

Fruta Feia now works with 312 farmers, has 7960 customers, and 15 delivery locations, 11 of which are in the Lisbon metropolitan region and four of which are in Oporto.

Gardens Of the Future:



Gardens of the Future is a grassroots organisation transforming an abandoned area in Cyprus' politically divided capital Nicosia, into a community garden. The aim is to revive people's sense of belonging and connection, in the process of bringing a no man's land back to life. Gardens of the future is the leader of a growing network to develop sustainable change elsewhere in Cyprus, while preserving its unique cultural, social and environmental identities and values.

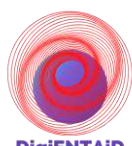
The key objectives include the generation of impact across:

#Sustainable Development: The space of the Garden is completed to the level of being able to be welcoming for hosting any type of activity towards well-being.

#Circular Economy: A big part of the strategic planning was dedicated to the research & development of Garden Modules to be constructed using a 'building from waste' philosophy.

#Enable Locals Become Agro-entrepreneurs: Continued and sustained impact over time and especially in supporting others in developing green and social entrepreneurship endeavours.

#Scalable Impact: The Gardens of the Future modules are designed to scale and replicate. Currently consulting interested parties in responsible food production and zero-waste management.



Digital First Aid Kit ENTrepreneur's for
recovering from COVID-19 pandemic

Digital First Aid Kit ENTrepreneur's for recovering
from COVID-19 pandemic
Project Number: 2021-1-RO01-KA220-VET-
000033300



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Genesis Biopartner – Waste to Energy Energy to Life

Genesis Biopartner brings significant benefits to the environment and the community in Romania. The company recycles more than 150 tons of organic waste from the food, HoReCa and retail industries daily, thus reducing the carbon footprint in the atmosphere.

The process has major benefits for reducing greenhouse gasses and supports the implementation of the upcoming EU "Waste to Energy" Directive. It also prevents soil, water and air pollution.

From recycling, biogas and Green Energy are obtained in cogeneration, with a capacity of 2 MWh electric and 2 MWh thermal, which equates to the daily consumption of 6,000 households.

At the end of the fermentation process to obtain biogas, the digestate results, an organic fertilizer rich in nutrients. With its help, a valuable product for agricultural land is returned to nature, thus respecting the basic principles of the Circular Economy.

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Green Point



Green Point is a company that implements the Extended Producer Responsibility Obligation (EPO), taking over the obligations for the management of packaging placed on the market in Romania and achieving recycling/recovery targets for its customers.

The company allocates funds for sustainability projects in partnership (23 partners in 2020), constantly promoting projects to raise awareness of the importance of separate collection, through campaigns, training sessions, conferences and debates.

Thus, it launched, together with the Auchan chain stores, the “PET Recycle and Win” campaign, which stimulated the collection of PETs using smart recipients and offered prizes with Auchan shopping vouchers. It also installed, in one of Bucharest's districts, smart Big Belly waste collection systems and collected PET waste from the Bucharest Christmas Fair with an Eco trailer.

In this way, the company contributed to the proper management of more than 250,000 tonnes of packaging waste in 2020, according to the sustainability report published on its website.

Subchapter title: **References**

- <https://genesisbiopartner.ro/tehnologie/>
- <https://www.greenpoints.ro/despre-noi>

Short introduction to the subchapter:

References and bibliography related to the subject of the chapter.

3.0 Detailed Instructions for the trainer

Chapter 6-PART B

Step 1: Trainer must first become familiar with the introduction, aims and objectives and learning outcomes of the chapter

Step 2: Trainer must teach the ppt file related to the topic of Chapter 6

Resources:

PPT:

Readings: /

Exercises:

Videos:

Additional materials: /

4.0 References

1. What is the EU Doing to Help SMEs to Achieve Green Transition? :
<https://www.seam.earth/eu/what-is-the-eu-doing-to-help-smes-to-achieve-green-transition/>
2. Circular economy: https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/circular-economy_en

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3. *Just and sustainable economy: Commission lays down rules for companies to respect human rights and environment in global value chains:*

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_1145

4. *Investing in the circular economy. Blueprint for a green recovery- EU:*

<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2779/562432>

5. *Green Action Plan for SMEs - Turning environmental challenges into business opportunities EU:*

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/pl/IP_14_766

6. *Environment ECAP:* https://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/sme/index_en.htm

7. *EU Science Hub:* https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/scientific-activities-z/sustainable-finance_en

8. *Environment Project:* https://ec.europa.eu/environment/sme/circular_economy_boost_en.htm

9. *Sustainability Practices and Performance in European Small-and-Medium Enterprises: Insights from Multiple Case Studies:* <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s43615-022-00224-3>

10. *Success stories:* <https://smeclimatehub.org/success-stories/>

11. *15 empresas sustentáveis portuguesas que precisas de conhecer:*

<https://www.beecircular.org/post/empresas-sustentaveis-portuguesas>

12. *Refood:* <https://re-food.org/>

13. *Os primeiros passos da Refood:* <https://ensina.rtp.pt/artigo/os-primeiros-passos-da-refood/>

14. *Há quase uma década que “gente bonita come fruta feia”:*

<https://www.publico.pt/2022/05/03/azul/fotogaleria/fruta-feia-sao-ja-15-postos-venda-cooperativa-combate-desperdicio-alimentar-407910>