



# D2.1

## BEST PRACTICE REPORT

**Project: Driving Rural Innovation  
through startup Villages across  
Europe**

**Acronym: DRIVE**



**Funded by  
the European Union**

Project Information

|                           |                                                                 |          |              |
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## 1. Executive Summary

This deliverable presents a compilation and analysis of the best practices and existing services that promote innovation, sustainability, and circular bioeconomy in rural regions. This document has been developed under the Horizon Europe DRIVE project (Driving Rural Innovation through Startup Villages across Europe) and is consistent with the European Union's policy priorities for rural innovation and the circular bioeconomy. The objective of deliverable 2.1 is to guide the creation of new or enhanced "startup village" business models by analyzing successful initiatives throughout Europe.

Principal discoveries and their ramifications encompass: Prevalence of EU-financed initiatives: A substantial segment of the documented best practices comprises EU-funded initiatives and interregional collaborations, highlighting the essential function of European funding instruments (e.g., Horizon Europe, LIFE) and cooperation in fostering rural innovation. This demonstrates conformity with EU priorities, including the European Green Deal and the Bioeconomy Strategy, which promote transnational cooperation for sustainable rural development. Development of innovation centers and educational initiatives: Numerous best practices emphasize accelerators, incubators, and training programs aimed at rural SMEs and startups.

This trend underscores the increasing focus on capacity-building and entrepreneurial support in rural regions, reflecting EU initiatives such as the Startup Village Forum that promote knowledge exchange and innovation driven by startups in these communities. The circular bioeconomy at the farm and community level demonstrates various bio-based innovations in agriculture and community initiatives. Small farms and cooperatives are implementing circular economy solutions, such as on-site composting systems and biobased product development, illustrating the adoption of sustainability in traditional rural sectors.

These grassroots innovations advance EU objectives for a climate-neutral and resource-efficient economy while enhancing local value chains. Significance of policy frameworks: Numerous best practices are facilitated by policy strategies (e.g., regional Smart Specialization Strategies, CAP Strategic Plans) and public initiatives that foster a conducive environment for rural innovation.

This emphasizes that alignment with EU and national policy frameworks, including the Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas and its "Prosperous Rural Areas" pillar, is essential for cultivating sustainable innovation ecosystems. Networks, platforms, and stakeholder collaboration: Nearly all success narratives emphasize the significance of multi-stakeholder partnerships and networks. Knowledge-sharing platforms, including regional innovation networks and the EU's Startup Village Forum, are crucial for scaling up.

## 2. Introduction and scope of the study

The DRIVE project (“Driving Rural Innovation through Startup Villages across Europe”) is a Horizon Europe initiative focused on enhancing innovation and sustainability in rural areas through the strengthening of the bio-based sector and rural entrepreneurship. The project aims to create vibrant startup villages by supporting local start-ups and SMEs with new technologies, circular business models, and robust innovation ecosystems. DRIVE’s approach is built on three interconnected pillars: (1) assessing local needs and identifying user requirements, (2) conducting regional roadshows and hackathons to co-create solutions, and (3) providing mentoring and acceleration support for technology and business development. These components work together to reinforce rural SMEs, facilitate knowledge exchange, and increase participation in innovation networks, ultimately contributing to resilient rural economies. Key expected outcomes of DRIVE include the development of a European-level rural business model, improved access to funding and investors for rural start-ups, and increased enrolment in accelerator programmes to drive commercialization of bio-based innovations.

The program consortium consists of 13 organizations (including two Associated Partners) and is led by Consorzio Italbiotec (ITB) in Italy, an organization that shapes a cutting-edge innovation ecosystem of start-ups, companies, universities on biotechnology where cooperation and knowledge exchange trigger growth and sustainable innovation. The other consortium members are the Center for Social Innovation in Cyprus, Kliynteh Bulgaria Fondatsiya (CTBG) in Bulgaria, European Chemical Regions Network (ECRN) and AB Corporation in Belgium, Dimos Emmanouel Pappa (MEP) in Greece, Obcina Bohinj in Slovenia, Anci Lombardia, and Network of European Rural Lakes (neulakes) in Italy, Network Ireland Limited (F6S) in Ireland, Chambéry-Grand Lac Economie (CGLE) in France, and two associated partners, Ayuntamiento de Manzanares El Real (MER) in Spain and Imatran Kaupunki in Finland.

This diverse partnership reflects a multidisciplinary approach, engaging stakeholders from the biotechnology sector, rural development agencies, municipalities, and financial organizations. Their collective expertise enables the project to tackle the multifaceted challenges facing rural innovation. In line with Horizon Europe’s emphasis on impact, the consortium has identified major threats, needs, and knowledge gaps in the rural bioeconomy through preliminary research and stakeholder engagement. These findings lay the groundwork for designing effective interventions – including the transition plans for selected startup villages, who will receive tailored technical and business advice later in the project.

The deliverable 2.1 is part of the Work Package 2 *Needs assessment and best-case scenarios*, specifically within the Task 2.1 *Smart villages sustainability cases and related go-to business scenario* of the DRIVE project that aims to identify, classify and analyse the inventory of existing services/products and best practices that contribute to sustainable innovation in rural areas. The task’s main objective is to create an inventory of services and products that serve as benchmarks for the development of new or improved go-to-market scenarios in start-up villages. These examples should demonstrate effective models of sustainable practices, and the promotion of circular bioeconomy and rural development.

As part of the project, several best practices, such as examples of successful initiatives, policies, or EU projects in stakeholder engagement, sustainability, and innovation promotion were gathered from all partner countries. In addition, an inventory of existing services/ products with the collection of information on existing services/products only in partner’s rural region (CTBG – Bulgaria, nEulakes – Italy, MEP -Greece, BOHINJ – Slovenia, AB Corporation – Belgium, CGLE – France) were collected to identify the best practices and benchmarks for developing new/improved go-to-market scenarios. In this document, the results of the research in DRIVE partner countries will be presented, with the scope to highlight actionable models for start-ups and SMEs operating in the bio-based sector in rural areas. The deliverable details the methodology used for data collection and analysis and provides an overview of the collected examples, key trends, and lessons learned. The report also includes insights on policy alignment, replicability, sustainability impact, and recommendations on how these best practices can inform future actions both within the DRIVE project and for the broader rural innovation agenda in Europe. This deliverable is to serve as a reference for municipalities, policymakers, and entrepreneurs aiming to foster sustainable business models in rural startup villages.

### 3. Methodology

A structured methodological approach was applied to ensure the collection of high-quality and comparable data on best practices across all partners. This methodology relies on the recommendations from the CRISP-DM model, emphasizing structured data mining methodologies and harmonized data collection to ensure quality and comparability across studies (Abasova et al., 2021). In line with a common methodological approach, Milestone 2 of the DRIVE project delivered a common template and guidelines for data collection (resulting in two different guidelines: Template 1 and Template 2), providing a harmonized framework for all partners to report their findings. Partners were given clear instructions on completing the templates and on the criteria for selecting relevant cases, ensuring consistency in what was reported from each country.

To explore and assess the state of the art of circular bio-based industries and to support startup villages in rural areas within the biobased sector, first an inventory of existing services/ products with the collection of information on existing services/products only in partner's rural region (CTBG – Bulgaria, nEulakes – Italy, MEP -Greece, BOHINJ – Slovenia, AB Corporation – Belgium, CGLE – France) were collected to identify the best practices and benchmarks for developing new/improved go-to-market scenarios (Template 1). This approach was implemented based on the project proposal for Task 2.1, which explicitly focuses on rural areas and their unique socio-economic and environmental contexts. As a result, some partners were not included in this initial data collection phase as their lands are primarily urban or peri-urban and do not align with the rural focus of the project. These partners operate in ecosystems and market dynamics that differ significantly from rural areas, making their inclusion in this initial inventory less important. By focusing exclusively on rural areas, the project ensures a more accurate and specific assessment of the best practices and success stories. The aim is to capture examples and lessons that can directly support rural innovation and the development of adapted business action scenarios for rural actors.

Second, several best practices were collected from each partner country, which consisted of examples of successful initiatives, policies, and EU projects in stakeholder engagement, sustainability, and innovation promotion in all partners countries in March 2025 (Template 2). This process mirrors frameworks developed for rural clinical trials, where identifying context-specific, community-driven innovations is key to success in underserved regions (Greer et al., 2023). The data collection process combined structured templates and partner contributions to ensure consistency and comparability across countries.

Specifically, the two templates used were:

- **Template 1: Inventory of existing services/products** (see **Annex 1**) – Designed to collect information on existing services/products in each partner's region to identify the best practices and benchmarks for developing new/improved go-to-market scenarios. (3-5 per partner).
- **Template 2: Best practices** (see **Annex 2**) – Used to collect examples of successful initiatives, policies, or EU projects in stakeholder engagement, sustainability, and innovation promotion. (5-10 per partner).

Partners were instructed to complete these templates with national or regional initiatives that are known to be effective or replicable. They also used examples from EU-funded or previous projects in the areas of bio-based and sustainability.

A total of 30 existing services/products were collected from rural partners contributions and a total of 82 best practices were selected with two common data collection templates used by all partners to ensure structured and comparable reporting across regions.

Data from the templates was aggregated and analyzed comparatively. Common indicators were used across both Template 1 and 2 entries (such as focus area, type of end user, investment level (low/ medium/high), sustainability impact, and challenges) to facilitate grouping and comparison. This process allowed for a diverse, bottom-up collection of practical examples from all partners involved in the project. This bottom-up, community-embedded data collection has been shown to yield higher-quality, contextually relevant best practices in rural sustainability studies (Ryan, 2004). The usage of standardized indicators for comparative analysis is a recognized best practice in informatics and rural development research to enable systematic

evaluation across diverse regions (Greer et al., 2022). Specifically, the coding of the best practices along these dimensions has allowed the team to identify patterns and cluster similar cases. For example, practices were categorized by type (e.g. policy-driven initiative, research project, business enterprise, community network, etc.), and by thematic focus (e.g. circular waste management, sustainable agriculture, bioenergy, startup incubation, etc.). This allowed for a structured analysis of trends (what types of innovation are most common, which focus areas are receiving attention, etc.) at the European level, rather than viewing each case in isolation.

To ensure the relevance and quality of the collected practices and benchmarks, a clear set of methodological criteria was applied. Each best practice, service, and product included in the inventory had to demonstrate a direct or indirect contribution to sustainable development, innovation, and rural economic resilience. Specifically, practices needed to address stakeholder engagement, bio-based sector growth, and policy – driven social innovation. The inclusion criteria also required that practices be relevant to the rural context and that they offer concrete, actionable insights to support the creation of new or improved go-to-business scenarios.

The selection of best practices was guided by a set of shared criteria to ensure relevance and quality, and each partner evaluated their national and regional cases against these common criteria. These criteria included:

- **Proven effectiveness:** The initiative or service/product has proven results in terms of sustainability, stakeholder engagement or initiative.
- **Relevance to rural and/or start-up environments:** Areas of rural development, bio-economy and circular economy.
- **Reproducibility:** High transferability and scalability to other regions.
- **Innovative approaches:** Use of new business models, co-creation and technological solutions.
- **Stakeholder involvement:** Active participation of citizens, entrepreneurs and public bodies.

To ensure consistency and comparability across the inventory, a set of common classification criteria was defined, which were adapted to the different types of data collected in Templates 1 and 2. For Template 1 (services/products), these criteria focused on identifying key characteristics such as the type of service or product, target end-users, the level of investment required and sustainability or innovation characteristics. Meanwhile, for Template 2 (best practices), indicators included stakeholder involvement, replicability, sustainability impacts, key innovations and challenges encountered during implementation. Together, these aligned but distinct sets of indicators facilitated a systematic, comparable and coherent classification of both services/products and best practices. By applying these customized classification metrics, the project was able to compare and cluster examples across participating countries, enabling a thematic clustering that captures common trends and highlights contextually relevant lessons learned for agricultural innovation and bio-based economic development. This methodological framework provides a strong basis for identifying, evaluating and presenting the most relevant and effective initiatives, thus supporting the overall objective of promoting innovation and sustainable economic development in the rural villages launched.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Template 1 – Inventory of existing services/products

#### 4.1.1 Filled Template 1

As important clarification, it should be noted that the data presented in this deliverable (derived from Templates 1 and 2) were collected exclusively from publicly available sources, such as internet searches, websites and other open access material. The reported stakeholders were not directly involved in providing or validating this information and its inclusion is based solely on publicly available data. This approach was deliberately adopted to respect privacy and ensure that any sensitive or personal information was excluded from the results presented here.

**Partner:** CTBG – Vratsa, Bulgaria (total 5)

1.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | Zero Waste Store                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Category:                 | Circular economy, bio-based food industry, zero-waste                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| End users:                | General citizens, consumers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Key features/innovations: | Zero Waste Store offers a wide range of products aimed at reducing waste, including reusable containers, sustainable personal care items, and eco-friendly cleaning products. The store focuses on offering items that promote a zero-waste lifestyle, reducing plastic consumption by providing alternatives that can be reused and refilled. |
| Investment level:         | Medium                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Operational timeline:     | 6 years since 2019                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Outcomes/impact:          | raising awareness about the importance of reducing single-use plastics and promoting a more sustainable way of living.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Challenges faced:         | Educating consumers on the benefits of a zero-waste lifestyle, establishing reliable supply chains for sustainable products, and convincing people to change established consumption patterns.                                                                                                                                                 |
| Website:                  | <a href="https://zerowaste.bg/">https://zerowaste.bg/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Additional notes:         | The store emphasizes local sourcing and providing alternatives for common household products. It actively promotes the zero-waste movement through blogs, workshops, and educational content.                                                                                                                                                  |

2.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | Texcycle                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Category:                 | Circular economy, bio-based food industry, zero-waste                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| End users:                | General citizens, consumers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Key features/innovations: | <b>Texcycle</b> is a textile recycling company that focuses on the collection and processing of used textiles. The company recycles old clothes and fabric materials, turning them into new products such as insulation materials, car upholstery, and other industrial goods. Texcycle aims to reduce textile waste and promote circularity in the textile industry. They use the collected textile disposed from citizens in their textile 'recycle bins' placed all over cities and towns. |
| Investment level:         | Medium to High                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Operational timeline: | 6 years since 2019                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Outcomes/impact:      | Contributes to reducing textile waste, which is one of the major waste streams in the world, and helps create more sustainable alternatives for textile-based products. Their work supports the transition to a circular economy by turning textile waste into new products. |
| Challenges faced:     | Overcoming the challenges of efficient textile waste collection, developing the necessary infrastructure, and increasing awareness of the importance of textile recycling.                                                                                                   |
| Website:              | <a href="https://texcycle.bg/">https://texcycle.bg/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Additional notes:     | Texcycle also provides education about textile waste reduction and supports various initiatives aimed at encouraging recycling and reuse of textiles in Bulgaria.                                                                                                            |

3.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | Golden snail                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Category:                 | bio-based cosmetic industry                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| End users:                | General citizens, consumers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Key features/innovations: | <b>Golden Snail</b> specializes in the production of high-quality snail products, including snail slime, which is used in cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and dietary supplements. They farm snails in an eco-friendly and sustainable way, focusing on high standards of animal welfare and organic farming practices. Their products are marketed for their regenerative and healing properties. |
| Investment level:         | Medium                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Operational timeline:     | 10 years since 2015                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Outcomes/impact:          | Provision of sustainable alternatives in the beauty and health industries and contribute to the growth of organic farming.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Challenges faced:         | maintaining eco-friendly farming practices, and expanding market presence globally.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Website:                  | <a href="http://golden-snail.com/">http://golden-snail.com/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Additional notes:         | Golden Snail has developed partnerships with international companies to supply snail-based products for the cosmetics and pharmaceutical industries.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

4.

| Fields                | Input                                    |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name: | Cupffee                                  |
| Category:             | Circular Economy, Sustainable Innovation |

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| End users:                | Businesses, eco-conscious consumers, coffee shops                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Key features/innovations: | The world's first edible coffee cup, made from a unique recipe that resists high temperatures, leak-proof, 100% vegan, and environmentally friendly. Uses sustainable, natural ingredients and promotes zero-waste production. |
| Investment level:         | Medium                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Operational timeline:     | 7 years since 2018                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Outcomes/impact:          | 277,000 kg of CO2 saved, international reach, thousands of users globally, promotes sustainable packaging- social awareness                                                                                                    |
| Challenges faced:         | Scaling production and meeting the increasing demand for eco-friendly alternatives.                                                                                                                                            |
| Website:                  | <a href="https://cupffee.me/en">https://cupffee.me/en</a>                                                                                                                                                                      |

5.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | Atlas Agro Science                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Category:                 | Circular Economy, Sustainable Agriculture                                                                                                                                               |
| End users:                | Agricultural businesses, municipalities, eco-conscious companies                                                                                                                        |
| Key features/innovations: | Organic biostimulants for soil restoration, zero-waste technology, sustainable agricultural solutions, upcycling waste from wastewater treatment plants.                                |
| Investment level:         | Medium                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Operational timeline:     | 5 years since 2019                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Outcomes/impact:          | Contribution to circular economy, sustainable agricultural practices, improved soil health, reduced emissions from agricultural waste.                                                  |
| Challenges faced:         | Scaling production, market competition                                                                                                                                                  |
| Website:                  | <a href="https://atlasagro.eu/">https://atlasagro.eu/</a>                                                                                                                               |
| Additional notes:         | Focus on green future and upcycling waste; aligns with EU sustainability goals. Promotes healthy ecosystems and sustainable farming practices. Participates in sustainable initiatives. |

The best practices contributed by CTBG in Bulgaria demonstrate a strong commitment to promoting the circular economy and sustainable production models. Initiatives such as the Zero Waste Store and Texcycle highlight Bulgaria's proactive approach to waste reduction and resource efficiency. Both initiatives target citizens as end-users and emphasise consumer education alongside product innovation. The Zero Waste Store offers a diverse range of reusable and refillable household products, focusing on reducing single-use plastics and promoting sustainable lifestyle choices. Meanwhile, Texcycle shows how textile waste can be turned into new materials such as insulation or car upholstery, enhancing the ability of the circular economy

to tackle large-scale waste streams. These initiatives not only provide direct environmental benefits, but also promote wider societal changes, encouraging behavioural changes towards sustainability.

Another important trend is Bulgaria's emphasis on innovations of organic origin in the cosmetics and agriculture sectors. Golden Snail is an example of this approach, producing high quality snail-based products for cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and food supplements. The company's commitment to environmentally friendly agricultural practices and organic farming standards demonstrates Bulgaria's potential to integrate bio-based solutions into rural development. Similarly, Atlas Agro Science focuses on the production of organic bio stimulants from by-products of wastewater treatment plants, supporting sustainable agriculture and waste recycling. These examples demonstrate Bulgaria's innovative ability to turn waste into valuable resources, while contributing to the bioeconomy and sustainable agriculture.

In all these initiatives, several common challenges are highlighted, such as the need to scale up production, educate end-users on sustainable alternatives and ensure reliable supply chains for sustainable materials. For example, both Zero Waste Store and Texcycle face barriers to raising consumer awareness and ensuring consistent product quality. In addition, initiatives such as Cupffee, an innovative edible coffee cup, demonstrate Bulgaria's strength in specialized sustainable innovations, but also highlight the challenges of scaling up and meeting international demand. Overall, Bulgaria's best practices reflect a dynamic landscape of circular economy initiatives and sustainable production models, providing a solid foundation for further innovation and replication across Europe.

**Partner:** nEULakes – Iseo, Italy (total 3)

1.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | Rete di Cooperative CAUTO                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Category:                 | Circular economy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| End users:                | Public entities (e.g., municipalities), citizens, schools and SMEs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Key features/innovations: | CAUTO offers environmental services through the implementations of projects that conjugate ecological and social action. Their mission is based on three pillars: quality (of interconnections), people (community involvement) and environmental (sustainable actions). In the last 25 years, CAUTO has developed both consultancy and operative services. In the environmental sector, it deals with waste management and renewable sources of energy; as for the social sector, it has built a network of reuse and recycle of various types of objects, from toys to clothes. Moreover, it offers environmental, diversity management, organisational and IT consultancy services. |
| Investment level:         | Medium/high                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Operational timeline:     | 25 years                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Outcomes/impact:          | 3,000 tons of food products, 25,000 regenerated goods every year.<br>150,000 citizens are made more aware of environmental topics every year.<br>The cooperative works in more than 130 municipalities in the Province of Brescia.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

|                   |                                                                                            |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Challenges faced: | Creating a network of reliable stakeholders to implement environmental and social projects |
| Website:          | <a href="https://www.cauto.it/english">https://www.cauto.it/english</a>                    |

2.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | Ecopans Srl                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Category:                 | Bioeconomy / circular economy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| End users:                | SMEs, municipalities, public entities (e.g., universities)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Key features/innovations: | <p>Ecopans offers an innovative, easy-to-use composting system that transforms organic waste into compost. The quality compost produced with Ecopans systems can be reused on land in full compliance with the circular economy.</p> <p>Ecopans' composters represent an intelligent solution for organic waste management in community and local composting.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Investment level:         | Medium                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Operational timeline:     | Since 2017                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Outcomes/impact:          | <p>The benefits are many, starting with the elimination of the costs of transporting and processing organic waste to large composting plants. This cost affects small municipalities and those far from composting plants the most. This is an important saving because the organic fraction in municipal waste is the largest component, in weight terms, of the waste produced and, due to the high collection frequency required, it represents the first cost item out of the different types of separate waste collection after the residual fraction.</p> <p>123 machines installed in Italy, 906 tons of CO2 emissions avoided, 9,065 tons of waste treated per year.</p> |
| Challenges faced:         | Increasing awareness of the importance of having such systems installed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Website:                  | <a href="https://www.ecopans.it/en/">https://www.ecopans.it/en/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

3.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | Davines Group                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Category:                 | Circular economy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| End users:                | Citizens                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Key features/innovations: | <p>Davines Group is an Italian family company based in Parma, operating on the international haircare and skincare markets. The company, founded by the Bollati family, started its journey in 1983 as a research lab specialized in the creation of haircare and skincare products. Its</p> |

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                       | <p>brands specialize in high sustainable quality products, formulated with an artisanal spirit, and created according to the most recent and advanced cosmetic research and techniques.</p> <p>Key and distinctive traits of the Davines Group approach are the meticulous attention to quality, the search for beauty and excellence, with a typical 'made in Italy' taste and culture; the global reach; and most of all the company's inspiring core values, which put people, planet, and community at the heart of every choice.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Investment level:     | Medium/high                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Operational timeline: | Since 1983                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Outcomes/impact:      | <p>The Davines Group is present today in over 90 countries. Other than its Parma headquarters, the Group boasts offices in New York, London, Paris, Mexico City, Deventer (The Netherlands), Düsseldorf and Hong Kong. In 2016, the company became a B Corporation, while in September 2019 it changed its statute to become a Benefit Corporation, pursuing, in addition to the economic objectives, purposes of common benefit.</p> <p>Figures – 823 tons of plastic waste collected from the environment. The group collects plastic waste equal to 100% of the amount of material that is brought into the market through their products. Optimisation of machine cleaning, thus reducing the litres of water needed (3,500 litres saved per wash).</p> |
| Challenges faced:     | Diversity and inclusion, local community impact, emission's neutralization and reduction of emissions generated by the value chain                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Website:              | <a href="https://davinesgroup.com/en">https://davinesgroup.com/en</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

The best practices from Italy contributed by nEULakes place a strong emphasis on circular economy principles, social innovation and sustainability. The Rete di Cooperative CAUTO exemplifies Italy's ability to **integrate waste management, renewable energy and social impact**, demonstrating the value of community-driven initiatives that combine environmental goals with social well-being.

Similarly, Ecopans Srl offers a decentralised composting solution, enabling local municipalities and institutions to manage organic waste sustainably. This local approach reflects Italy's strength in designing **user-friendly, community-based technology solutions** that address key environmental challenges while supporting rural development.

Davines Group shows how developing high-quality products can be aligned with corporate **social responsibility** and **sustainability**. Its global reach, plastic waste offset initiatives and water saving measures highlight Italy's leadership in integrating circular principles into business models. These practices collectively demonstrate Italy's potential to combine technological innovation, community involvement and high environmental standards within the DRIVE project.

**Partner:** MEP – Chryso Serron, Greece (total 8)

1.

| Fields | Input |
|--------|-------|
|--------|-------|

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | FYTOENERGEIA A.E - NEW ENERGY S.A.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Category:                 | Bioeconomy, Sustainable innovation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| End users:                | Refineries, domestic livestock market, dealers.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Key features/innovations: | Production of biodiesel, which is a renewable biofuel, a form of diesel fuel, derived from biological sources. Biodiesel remains a key component in the global strategy to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Joint production of animal feed with the production of biodiesel. Around 52% of the raw materials processed to produce biodiesel are being turned into animal feed. |
| Investment level:         | High.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Operational timeline:     | The company has been operational since December of 2018.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Outcomes/impact:          | 2000 Farmers are responsible for providing the needed raw materials (Helianthus, Rapeseed).<br>Annual sales include 14.000 tons of biodiesel and 13.000 tons of animal feed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Challenges faced:         | Restricting legislative framework, the EU guideline that states the cease of manufacturing of internal combustion engines by 2035 as a way of phasing-out of fossil fuel vehicles, varied climatic conditions.                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Website:                  | <a href="https://www.newenergy.gr">https://www.newenergy.gr</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Additional notes:         | Has active role on research programs for better and more efficient production.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

2.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | Ktima Karalis (Domaine Karalis)                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Category:                 | Bioeconomy.                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| End users:                | Restaurants, Hotels, citizens.                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Key features/innovations: | Production of certified Bio wines (red, white, rosé) from organic winegrape crops. Organic cultivation of the grape crops.                                                                                          |
| Investment level:         | Medium.                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Operational timeline:     | Since 2022.                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Outcomes/impact:          | Yearly sales include 15.000 cases of wines sold in Greek and Foreign markets.                                                                                                                                       |
| Challenges faced:         | Delay of implementation in approved co-funding projects that resulted in burdening higher costs of renovation and equipment acquisition, seasonal labor shortage, varied climatic conditions that damage the crops. |
| Website:                  | <a href="http://www.domainekarali.gr">http://www.domainekarali.gr</a>                                                                                                                                               |

|                   |                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Additional notes: | Participated in the 2025 Thessaloniki Wine and Spirits competition and achieved bronze medal for their Asyrtiko white wine. |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

3.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | AFOI PETROU                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Category:                 | bioeconomy, circular economy.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| End users:                | Farmers, producers, citizens.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Key features/innovations: | The company operates in the field of agricultural products and animal feed. It produces and packages all kinds of animal feed and raw materials originating from organic local products of the highest quality. It has state-of-the-art mechanical equipment that contributes to great production quantity and excellent quality. The company is also involved in the distribution of its products. Promotes circular economic values through the production of animal feed for the animals whose wastes are recycled back into the soil as fertilizer, creating a sustainable, closed-loop system. |
| Investment level:         | High.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Operational timeline:     | The company has been operational for 31 years.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Outcomes/impact:          | Promotes local growth, has approximately 300 local raw product suppliers and serves 150 animal breeders as clients. Handles around 20.000 tons of product/year.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Challenges faced:         | Skewed public interest in Bio products (products like bio peanuts and beans are getting less attention), handling of crop parasites, difficulties in reaching adept local contractors, bureaucracy and regulations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Website:                  | <a href="https://afoipetrouzootrofes.gr/">https://afoipetrouzootrofes.gr/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Additional notes:         | The company conducts regular chemical analysis on the crops and the quality of the soil.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

4.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | home-based industry                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Category:                 | Bioeconomy.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| End users:                | SMEs, citizens                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Key features/innovations: | Organic production of chokeberry rich in antioxidant ingredients which have shown various health benefits. Production involves manual labor and handpicking of each individual berry's stem. Processing of jams and involvement in production of Balsamic vinegar. |
| Investment level:         | Medium.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Operational timeline: | Is Bio certified since 2012.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Outcomes/impact:      | Debut appearance of Aronia in the 2012 Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF). Has participated in the Fair four additional times since.                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Challenges faced:     | Market competition, seasonal weather variations, lack of developmental programs, irregular distribution of government incentives, cost of Bio certification, additional cost of labeling for Bio products, adulteration of organic products from competitors, cost of transport, rising cost of taxes, inflation, rise of living costs. |
| Website:              | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Additional notes:     | Future plans of involvement in the production of Bio wine that contains Aronia.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

5.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | Pom my God!                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Category:                 | Bioeconomy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| End users:                | Dealers, SMEs, Delis, Hotels                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Key features/innovations: | Production of the “Wonderful” pomegranate. In collaboration with the DIO Certification and Inspection Organisation for Organic Products, following the rules of organic cultivation, using only organic fertilizers the company has received its certification for organic cultivation as well as for the production of organic juice. The small-scale approach of the oikotexnia ensures the high quality of the products. |
| Investment level:         | Medium.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Operational timeline:     | The business has been operational since 2009 and has been Bio certified for the last 5 years.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Outcomes/impact:          | Sales include 15.000 kilos per year                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Challenges faced:         | Weather conditions (i.e. extreme cold), highly competitive market, pricing conflict with larger competitors, adulteration of organic products from competitors, inadequate bio certifications of competitors, lack of quality control at supermarkets, need of support from local authorities, difficulty of reaching funding opportunities.                                                                                |
| Website:                  | <a href="https://pommygod.com/">https://pommygod.com/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Additional notes:         | Pomegranate is a potent antioxidant that has shown health benefits.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

6.

| Fields                | Input         |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Service/Product name: | Herbs Secrets |

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Category:                 | Bioeconomy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| End users:                | SMEs,citizens.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Key features/innovations: | Family business, cultivation of tea: Greek mountain tea, sage, lemon verbena, Lemon balm, wild mint, Echinacea, Chamomile, the cultivation is organic and is Bio certified, family profile of business ensures high regard of quality.                                                                                          |
| Investment level:         | Low.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Operational timeline:     | The business has been in operation since 2016.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Outcomes/impact:          | Supplies local coffee shops in Serres. During the winter, sales include around 150 items/month.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Challenges faced:         | Difficulties in storing the product, lack of funding opportunities and proper counseling, seasonal labor shortage, market competition, seasonal variations in demand (tea is mainly consumed during colder months), hard to sustainably match larger competitors pricing points while maintaining profit, rising cost of taxes. |
| Website:                  | <a href="https://herbssecrets.gr/">https://herbssecrets.gr/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Additional notes:         | The tea is Hand-picked and Naturally Dried. On its packaging, relevant information can be found regarding the proper preparation method.                                                                                                                                                                                        |

7.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | GR1                                                                                                                                            |
| Category:                 | Bioeconomy                                                                                                                                     |
| End users:                | Citizens                                                                                                                                       |
| Key features/innovations: | Local producer, cultivation of fruit trees (peach, cherry, nectarine, apricot, plum, pear, apple)                                              |
| Investment level:         | Medium                                                                                                                                         |
| Operational timeline:     | The business has been in operation since 2015.                                                                                                 |
| Outcomes/impact:          | The business participates in local weekly fresh food sale, serving the citizens of Serres.                                                     |
| Challenges faced:         | Varied weather and economic conditions that impact production and sales, and the need of farmers funding programs.                             |
| Website:                  | -                                                                                                                                              |
| Additional notes:         | Highlighted the importance of organizing local producers into groups to potentially enable their access to larger markets in Greece or abroad. |

8.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | GR2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Category:                 | Bioeconomy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| End users:                | SMEs (e.g. organic markets)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Key features/innovations: | Local farm, Bio certified, that blends animal husbandry with fungi cultivation. Produces organic eggs and cultivates multiple mushroom varieties (erinaceus, pleurotus, champignons etc.). The farm operates a 400-hen laying flock alongside a 200-bird broiler program, ensuring a consistent supply of organic eggs and fresh poultry. |
| Investment level:         | Medium                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Operational timeline:     | The business has been in operation since 2008.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Outcomes/impact:          | Current production averages 180 certified organic eggs per day, prospected to reach 350.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Challenges faced:         | Small contribution from funding programs, bureaucracy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Website:                  | Not provided                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Additional notes:         | Only farm in the area that handles poultry processing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

The best practices contributed by the MEP partner in Greece reveal a strong emphasis on the **bioeconomy** and the integration of **sustainable practices** in various sectors, from **agriculture** to **renewable energy**. Companies such as FYTOENERGEIA A.E - NEW ENERGY S.A. highlight Greece's potential to combine biofuel production with the agri-food sector, using local crops for both biodiesel and animal feed production. This model not only promotes energy transition but also supports local farmers, highlighting the interconnection between agriculture and energy innovation. Other examples, such as Ktima Karalis and AFOI PETROU, underline Greece's strength in organic agriculture and the production of high-quality local products that cater to both domestic and international markets.

A notable trend is the prevalence of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that emphasize quality, traditional production methods and organic certification. Companies such as Herbs Secrets, Pom my God! and home-based industry demonstrate how family businesses can maintain traditional farming methods while adopting organically certified practices. These SMEs are key drivers of agricultural innovation, yet they face common challenges such as securing finance, addressing climate variability and overcoming bureaucratic barriers that can hinder growth and scalability.

Another important feature is the incorporation of circular economy principles in businesses such as AFOI PETROU, which is an example of a closed-loop system in feed production, and GR2 which combines livestock farming with the cultivation of fungi. These practices highlight Greece's potential for innovative synergies that can strengthen rural economies while improving environmental sustainability. Despite these advantages, persistent challenges, such as limited access to development programs, price competition from larger players and the need for stronger producer networks, remain significant obstacles. Overall, Greece's contributions to the DRIVE project reflect a dynamic but fragmented landscape that requires targeted support to fully realize the potential of the bioeconomy.

**Partner:** BOHINJ – Bohinjska Bistrica, Slovenia (total

1.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | Bohinj Breakfast                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Category:                 | Circular economy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| End users:                | Tourists staying in accommodations in the Bohinj area                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Key features/innovations: | Bohinj Breakfast is a sustainable tourism initiative that offers guests a selection of locally sourced breakfasts—meat, fish, or vegetarian—delivered directly to their accommodations. The breakfasts are prepared using ingredients from local producers and are packaged in returnable containers, promoting a circular economy model.                |
| Investment level:         | Medium                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Operational timeline:     | Since 2020                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Outcomes/impact:          | The initiative has strengthened collaboration among local producers, reduced food miles, and minimized packaging waste. It has also enhanced the tourist experience by providing authentic local cuisine, thereby supporting the local economy and promoting sustainable practices.                                                                      |
| Challenges faced:         | Coordinating logistics among multiple small producers, ensuring consistent supply, and managing the return and sanitation of packaging materials are ongoing challenges. Additionally, adapting to seasonal variations in product availability requires flexibility and planning.                                                                        |
| Website:                  | <a href="https://www.bohinj.si/en/from-bohinj/bohinj-breakfast/">https://www.bohinj.si/en/from-bohinj/bohinj-breakfast/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Additional notes:         | Bohinj Breakfast is part of the "From Bohinj" (Bohinjsko) collective brand, which certifies products and services that meet specific quality and origin criteria. The initiative exemplifies how local gastronomy can be integrated into sustainable tourism offerings, providing guests with a unique and environmentally friendly culinary experience. |

2.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | Eco Breakfast – “Eco Corner” at Danica Inn                                                                                                                                                               |
| Category:                 | Circular economy / Sustainable innovation                                                                                                                                                                |
| End users:                | Hotel and campsite guests at Danica Bohinj, both local and international                                                                                                                                 |
| Key features/innovations: | Danica Inn has implemented a clearly marked “Eco Corner” as part of its breakfast area. The corner exclusively features certified organic products sourced from local farms in Bohinj, most notably from |

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                       | Ekološka kmetija pr Tonejovc. The offer includes organic yogurt, butter (cooked and raw), cottage cheese, oat flakes, salami, and traditional cheeses such as Mohant, all produced under ecological standards. The display is bilingual (Slovenian and English), and the location is certified with an official eco-certificate (EPR-10125/25), confirming Danica's commitment to sustainable hospitality and circular sourcing. |
| Investment level:     | Medium                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Operational timeline: | Since spring 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Outcomes/impact:      | The Eco Corner enhances visibility and accessibility of local organic food, builds stronger relationships with nearby organic farms, and increases guest awareness of sustainable eating. It also supports the broader ambition of developing the Bohinj area into an official Ecoregion under the BO JA initiative.                                                                                                             |
| Challenges faced:     | Ensuring consistent supply of certified organic products, logistical coordination with small producers, and the need to educate seasonal staff and guests about the value and certification of these products.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Website:              | <a href="https://www.camp-danica.si/">https://www.camp-danica.si/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Additional notes:     |  <p>The certificate and product descriptions are clearly displayed near the buffet. This eco breakfast concept aligns with Danica's broader circular strategy (EcoCamping certified) and complements other actions such as solar energy use, reusable containers, and low-waste kitchen practices.</p>                                        |

3.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | Planinska koča na Uskovnici (Uskovnica Mountain Hut)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Category:                 | Sustainable innovation / Circular economy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| End users:                | Hikers, mountaineers, nature enthusiasts, and tourists visiting the Julian Alps and Triglav National Park                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Key features/innovations: | The Uskovnica Mountain Hut, managed by the Mountaineering Association Srednja vas v Bohinju, is a model of sustainable alpine tourism. Reconstructed in 2022, the hut integrates eco-friendly materials and energy-efficient systems, including underfloor heating and a wastewater treatment plant. It holds the Green Key environmental certificate, reflecting its commitment to sustainable practices such as sourcing seasonal ingredients from local suppliers, |

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                       | promoting energy and water conservation, and engaging local stakeholders to minimize environmental impact.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Investment level:     | High                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Operational timeline: | Originally established in 1955; fully reconstructed and reopened in June 2022                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Outcomes/impact:      | The hut offers improved accommodation with 38 beds, including facilities accessible to guests with disabilities. It serves as a hub for sustainable tourism in the Julian Alps, enhancing visitor experience while preserving the natural environment. The reconstruction project was co-financed by the Republic of Slovenia and the European Union from the European Regional Development Fund. |
| Challenges faced:     | Maintaining consistent supply chains for local, seasonal ingredients; managing increased visitor numbers while preserving environmental standards; and ensuring ongoing staff training in sustainable practices.                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Website:              | <a href="https://www.pdsrednjas.si/planinske_koce/koca-na-uskovnici/">https://www.pdsrednjas.si/planinske_koce/koca-na-uskovnici/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Additional notes:     | The hut's sustainable initiatives align with the broader goals of the Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve, contributing to the region's reputation as a destination for eco-conscious travelers. Its practices serve as a replicable model for other mountain huts seeking to implement circular economy principles.                                                                                    |

The Slovenian examples contributed by Bohinj reflect a strong commitment to integrating **circular economy** principles into **sustainable tourism** and **hospitality**. The Bohinj Breakfast initiative is an example of this, connecting local food producers with tourists through an innovative breakfast service, promoting local gastronomy while reducing packaging waste through reusable containers. This practice strengthens community ties, supports local economies and aligns perfectly with DRIVE's focus on promoting innovative ecosystems in rural areas.

The Eco Breakfast at Danica Inn further demonstrates how circular and sustainable principles can be integrated into the hospitality sector. By highlighting organic, locally sourced products, this initiative not only enhances guest experiences but also educates guests on the value of certified organic food. These efforts support the broader ambitions for Bohinj to become a recognized ecological region under the BO JA initiative, highlighting the importance of community-based approaches and stakeholder collaboration.

Planinska koča na Uskovnici is a flagship example of **sustainable infrastructure** development in a protected alpine area. By incorporating energy-efficient systems and sourcing local materials, the mountain hut is an example of how traditional tourist facilities can adopt **circular economy** practices. Collectively, these best practices demonstrate Slovenia's proactive approach to linking **environmental sustainability**, **community empowerment** and **tourism development**, offering valuable lessons for other European regions seeking to replicate similar models.

**Partner:** AB Corporation – Schaerbeek, Belgium (total 4)

1.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | La Ferme du Chant des Cailles                                                                                                                    |
| Category:                 | Urban agriculture, sustainable agriculture, community engagement                                                                                 |
| End users:                | Local residents, community members, educational institutions                                                                                     |
| Key features/innovations: | Organic farming, participatory gardening, educational workshops, eco-pasturing, community events, cooperative grocery store                      |
| Investment level:         | Medium.                                                                                                                                          |
| Operational timeline:     | Active since 2012                                                                                                                                |
| Outcomes/impact:          | Community cohesion, increased environmental awareness, promotion of sustainable living practices, support for local food systems                 |
| Challenges faced:         | Balancing community participation with operational needs, maintaining financial sustainability, competition with conventional food supply chains |
| Website:                  | <a href="https://www.chantdescailles.be/">https://www.chantdescailles.be/</a>                                                                    |
| Additional notes:         | This urban farm integrates agriculture with community participation, serving as a model for social and environmental sustainability in Brussels. |

2.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | BEES coop                                                                                                                                              |
| Category:                 | Bioeconomy, sustainable agriculture, cooperative supermarket                                                                                           |
| End users:                | Citizens, cooperative members, local producers                                                                                                         |
| Key features/innovations: | Organic and sustainable products, local and seasonal goods, zero-waste approach with bulk products, community engagement, cooperative management model |
| Investment level:         | Medium.                                                                                                                                                |
| Operational timeline:     | Active since 2017                                                                                                                                      |
| Outcomes/impact:          | Promotes sustainable consumption, strengthens social cohesion, supports local economy, raises environmental awareness                                  |
| Challenges faced:         | Competition with conventional supermarkets, maintaining member engagement, ensuring economic sustainability                                            |
| Website:                  | <a href="http://bees-coop.be/le-supermarche/valeurs-et-missions/">http://bees-coop.be/le-supermarche/valeurs-et-missions/</a>                          |

| Fields            | Input                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Additional notes: | BEES coop promotes an open cooperative model, sharing tools and knowledge with similar initiatives. It is an example of social innovation and urban sustainability. |

3.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | Le ferme NOS PILIFS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Category:                 | Social enterprise, Agriculture, Inclusive employment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| End users:                | Citizens, cooperative members, local producers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Key features/innovations: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides adapted employment for approximately 145 people with disabilities</li> <li>- Operates an eco-garden center specializing in edible, native, and sustainable plants</li> <li>- Produces and sells organic products through a bakery and grocery store</li> <li>- Organizes educational and recreational activities for children and schools</li> </ul> |
| Investment level:         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Operational timeline:     | Founded in 1984                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Outcomes/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides employment for 145 people with disabilities</li> <li>- Promotes ecological and sustainable practices within the local community</li> <li>- Educates children and schools on environmental topics</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                          |
| Challenges faced:         | Funding, societal perceptions of disability, and integrating sustainable practices.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Website:                  | <a href="https://www.fermenospilifs.be">https://www.fermenospilifs.be</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

4.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | Accueil Champetre en Wallonie                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Category:                 | Social enterprise, Agriculture, Sustainable farming, Agri-tourism, Rural innovation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| End users:                | Farmers, local communities, tourists, cooperative members, educational institutions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Key features/innovations: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotes sustainable agricultural practices</li> <li>- Supports rural development and farm diversification</li> <li>- Encourages farm stays and agri-tourism</li> <li>- Provides training and guidance for farmers</li> <li>- Fosters local food networks and direct sales</li> </ul> |
| Investment level:         | Varies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

| Fields                | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Operational timeline: | Founded in 2001                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Outcomes/impact:      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthens local economies</li> <li>- Encourages environmental sustainability</li> <li>- Promotes local food production</li> <li>- Enhances rural tourism</li> <li>- Supports farm diversification</li> </ul> |
| Challenges faced:     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Balancing profitability and sustainability</li> <li>- Raising awareness and participation</li> <li>- Competition with industrial food production</li> </ul>                                                    |
| Website:              | <a href="https://www.accueilchampetre-pro.be">https://www.accueilchampetre-pro.be</a>                                                                                                                                                                   |

The Belgian best practices provided by AB Corporation place a strong emphasis on **social entrepreneurship**, **sustainable agriculture** and **community engagement**, presenting innovative approaches to urban and rural sustainability. La Ferme du Chant des Cailles stands out as an iconic urban farm that combines organic production with participatory gardening and community events, promoting environmental awareness and social cohesion in an urban environment. This initiative highlights Belgium's strength in integrating agriculture with community development and education, demonstrating the potential for replicable models that combine ecological and social innovation.

Another example is BEES coop, a cooperative supermarket that emphasizes local, seasonal and organic products, while promoting a zero-waste philosophy. The cooperative management structure and emphasis on community participation underline Belgium's commitment to bottom-up, participatory models that empower citizens to engage in sustainable consumption practices. Similarly, Le ferme NOS PILIFS shows how **agriculture** can be combined with inclusive **employment opportunities**, providing adapted jobs for people with **disabilities** while promoting **ecological practices**. This approach highlights Belgium's leadership in integrating social inclusion with sustainability.

The Accueil Champetre en Wallonie initiative further demonstrates Belgium's commitment to supporting rural communities by promoting rural tourism, sustainable agriculture and local food networks. In all these examples, Belgium's best practices consistently demonstrate an integrated approach that combines **environmental sustainability**, **social innovation** and **community development**. Common challenges include maintaining economic sustainability, balancing operational requirements with community participation, and competing with conventional supply chains. These experiences offer valuable lessons for other European regions seeking to develop inclusive and sustainable rural innovation ecosystems.

**Partner:** CGLE – Le Bourget-du-Lac, France (total 4)

1.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | House Boat - offices spaces suitable for launching start-ups.<br>The House Boats of Savoie Technolac illustrate an innovative approach to building in flood-prone areas, combining flexibility, sustainability, and quality of work life.                                                                                                                                        |
| Category:                 | Bioeconomy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| End users:                | bioeconomy entrepreneurs and start-ups                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Key features/innovations: | The "House Boat" buildings located in Savoie Technolac, in Le Bourget-du-Lac, are an innovative set of structures designed to adapt to flood-prone areas. Designed by the Patriarche agency, these lightweight metal-frame buildings are built on stilts, allowing for harmonious integration with the natural environment while addressing the constraints of flood-prone land. |
| Investment level:         | High.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Operational timeline:     | From 2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Outcomes/impact:          | These buildings, arranged in a comb-like layout around a jetty, host high-tech companies and business incubators. Each structure offers around 250 m <sup>2</sup> of modular space, including a 50 m <sup>2</sup> service area and 200 m <sup>2</sup> of open space, which can be divided into 15 m <sup>2</sup> units according to tenants' needs.                              |
| Challenges faced:         | Built with a lightweight metal frame and elevated on stilts, this unique location combines modernity and environmental responsibility, offering a one-of-a-kind workspace for start-up at the heart of Savoie Technolac.                                                                                                                                                         |
| Website:                  | <a href="https://www.patriarche.fr/projets/house-boat/">https://www.patriarche.fr/projets/house-boat/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Additional notes:         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

2.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | The Entrepreneurship Hub of Savoie Technolac is a center dedicated to the creation and development of innovative businesses                                                                                                   |
| Category:                 | Bioeconomy, sustainable, circular economy, open innovation.                                                                                                                                                                   |
| End users:                | Entrepreneurs, Start-up, educational and innovative institutions.                                                                                                                                                             |
| Key features/innovations: | This hub aims to foster the emergence and support of business creation projects, as well as host innovative startups. It facilitates synergies and networking opportunities through the presence of partners such as industry |

| Fields                | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                       | clusters, competitiveness hubs, and the University of Savoie Mont Blanc. The key sectors supported include smart energy, outdoor industries, health and well-being, mountain engineering, digital technology, and tourism.                                                                                                  |
| Investment level:     | Medium.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Operational timeline: | Located within the Savoie Technolac technology park. Inaugurated in 2021, it spans 4,500 m <sup>2</sup> and brings together the region's key entrepreneurial support tools in one place, including the Savoie Technolac Incubator, the Village by CA accelerator, and a business hotel.                                     |
| Outcomes/impact:      | Since its creation, the Entrepreneurship Hub has contributed to the launch of over 350 businesses, generating more than 2,000 jobs. Around 80% of the 230 companies established at Savoie Technolac were originally incubated within this center.                                                                           |
| Challenges faced:     | The Entrepreneurship Hub offers an ideal environment for startup growth, with modern infrastructure and a network of experts specializing in the region's key industries. Located near Lake Bourget and just 45 minutes from mountain resorts, it provides an exceptional living and working environment for entrepreneurs. |
| Website:              | <a href="http://incubateur-savoietechnolac.com">incubateur-savoietechnolac.com</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Additional notes:     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

3.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | The Club des Mentors of the Savoie Technolac Incubator                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Category:                 | Bioeconomy, sustainable, circular economy, open innovation, mentoring                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| End users:                | Entrepreneurs, Start-up                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Key features/innovations: | The Club des Mentors of the Savoie Technolac Incubator is a valuable connection tool that links incubatees with experienced entrepreneurs, helping them unlock their potential and develop their startups. Launched in 2022, the club currently brings together 18 mentors who offer personalized support and expert guidance in key areas such as financing, business development, innovation, and management. |

| Fields                | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Investment level:     | Low.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Operational timeline: | Since 2022., organization of regular meetings between mentors and entrepreneurs in face-to-face format or co-development workshop                                                                                                                          |
| Outcomes/impact:      | This initiative is designed to help startup founders overcome challenges, refine their business models, and accelerate their growth.                                                                                                                       |
| Challenges faced:     | By fostering regular exchanges and networking opportunities, the club contributes significantly to the overall mission of the incubator, which is to support the creation of innovative enterprises and strengthen the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem. |
| Website:              | <a href="https://www.incubateur-savoietechnolac.com/mentors/">https://www.incubateur-savoietechnolac.com/mentors/</a>                                                                                                                                      |
| Additional notes:     | Creating a mentor club makes it possible to offer additional support to start-ups by mobilizing local business leaders                                                                                                                                     |

4.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | <b>Enfin! Réemploi Association : An Economic Driver for the Bioeconomy and Circular Economy</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Category:                 | Bioeconomy, sustainable, circular economy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| End users:                | Entrepreneurs, Start-up, local authorities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Key features/innovations: | <p><b>La Matériauthèque: A Local Economic Hub</b></p> <p>With a 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> facility, <b>La Matériauthèque</b> operates as a logistics center for reselling and transforming reclaimed materials. It generates revenue by offering reconditioned materials at lower costs for artisans, construction companies, and local authorities, while strengthening the local circular economy.</p> <p><b>A Business Model with High Social Impact</b></p> <p>Enfin! Réemploi also functions as a social and solidarity economy (SSE) player by offering integration jobs. This hybrid model, combining profitability with social impact, enhances local employability and strengthens the region's economy.</p> |
| Investment level:         | Médium                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Operational timeline:     | The <b>Enfin! Réemploi</b> association, based in Chambéry, was founded in 2020 with the mission of structuring a professional sector dedicated to the reuse of construction materials in Savoie. It is part of an environmental, social, and solidarity-based approach aimed at reducing waste generated by the construction industry and extending the lifespan of materials.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Outcomes/impact:          | Enfin! Réemploi is emerging as an economic engine for bioeconomy development in rural areas. By reducing costs, creating jobs, and structuring a market for material reuse, the association exemplifies the potential of a sustainable and competitive circular economy model.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Challenges faced:         | <p><b>Innovation and the Structuring of a Local Industry</b></p> <p>The association is developing processing hubs, particularly focused on wood, to standardize products and meet the needs of professionals. The "Scierie</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

| Fields   | Input                                                                                                                                   |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|          | Urbaine" project, dedicated to extracting and repurposing structural wood, aims to establish a sustainable and profitable supply chain. |
| Website: | <a href="https://www.enfin-reemploi.fr/">https://www.enfin-reemploi.fr/</a>                                                             |

The French examples from the CGLE in Le Bourget-du-Lac highlight the country's focus on promoting innovation ecosystems through integrated **support structures**, **sustainable architecture** and **circular economy initiatives**. The House Boat project is an example of this, providing flood-resistant, flexible office space for start-ups, combining contemporary design with environmental responsibility. This innovative infrastructure supports the growth of bioeconomy businesses, making it easier for entrepreneurs to thrive in challenging environmental conditions while contributing to local economic growth.

The Savoie Technolac Entrepreneurship Hub and its complementary Club des Mentors demonstrate France's commitment to nurturing start-ups through integrated support systems that include incubation, acceleration and mentoring. These initiatives have generated significant impact by creating thousands of jobs and launching hundreds of start-ups, highlighting the value of cluster-based approaches that bring together industry, academia and government to strengthen regional innovation capacity. This model is closely aligned with the DRIVE project's objective **of creating vibrant rural innovation ecosystems**.

Enfin! Reemploi showcases France's innovative approach to combine **circular economy principles** with **social impact** by transforming reclaimed materials into valuable products while creating **employment opportunities**. This initiative highlights the potential of local circular economy models to reduce waste and promote sustainable development in rural areas. Common challenges across these initiatives include balancing innovation with community needs, ensuring sustainable funding, and aligning stakeholder interests. These examples from France, collectively illustrate a mature ecosystem of support for **rural and urban innovation**, offering valuable lessons for replication across Europe.

**Partner:** IMATRAN KAUPUNKI, Imatra Finland (total 3)

1.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | BIG Biofuel                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Category:                 | bioeconomy                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| End users:                | citizens                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Key features/innovations: | Biowaste is collected and transported to biogas plant, where it is processed into biogas suitable for transport fuel.                                                                                                    |
| Investment level:         | High                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Operational timeline:     | 4 years                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Outcomes/impact:          | Annually, the biogas plant produces approximately 2.05 million normal cubic meters (Nm <sup>3</sup> ) of biogas and 1.2–1.3 million cubic meters of methane, which corresponds to 12,300 megawatt hours (MWh) of energy. |

|                   |                                                                                         |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Challenges faced: | To motivate all citizens to recycle their biowaste.                                     |
| Website:          | <a href="https://ekjh.fi/en_waste_management/">https://ekjh.fi/en_waste_management/</a> |

2.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | Imatran Lämpö Distric heating                                                                                                              |
| Category:                 | Bioeconomy                                                                                                                                 |
| End users:                | all companies, municipality, citizens                                                                                                      |
| Key features/innovations: | Heat production based on bioenergy sources<br>Imatran Lämpö Oy produces 100 percent of its district heating with bio-based energy sources. |
| Investment level:         | high                                                                                                                                       |
| Operational timeline:     | 2 years                                                                                                                                    |
| Outcomes/impact:          | the risk of receiving raw material (wood) from Russian has been eliminated and CO2 emissions are 0.                                        |
| Challenges faced:         | high investments needed.                                                                                                                   |
| Website:                  | <a href="https://imatranlampo.fi/">https://imatranlampo.fi/</a>                                                                            |

3.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                               |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | reuse of furniture                                                                                  |
| Category:                 | circular economy                                                                                    |
| End users:                | citizens                                                                                            |
| Key features/innovations: | workforce consists of persons who has difficulties to find employment                               |
| Investment level:         | low                                                                                                 |
| Operational timeline:     | 5 years                                                                                             |
| Outcomes/impact:          | Less waste and citizens have learned to buy reused furniture.                                       |
| Challenges faced:         | Change of thinking.                                                                                 |
| Website:                  | <a href="https://saimaanvirta.fi/kierratystoiminta/">https://saimaanvirta.fi/kierratystoiminta/</a> |

The examples from Finland contributed by IMATRAN partner, demonstrate a strong commitment to **bioeconomy solutions** and **circular economy principles**. BIG Biofuel is an exemplary initiative that transforms biowaste into biogas, producing substantial amounts of renewable energy annually. This project underscores Finland's strength in integrating waste management with renewable energy production, a key aspect of the DRIVE project's focus on sustainable rural innovation. However, motivating all citizens to participate in biowaste recycling remains a notable challenge, highlighting the importance of effective community engagement strategies.

Imatran Lämpö Distric heating reflects Finland's progress in decarbonizing heating systems through the exclusive use of bio-based energy sources. By eliminating reliance on fossil fuels and reducing CO2 emissions to zero, this project demonstrates the scalability and impact of sustainable energy solutions at the municipal level. The challenge of securing long-term investments highlights the need for robust financial mechanisms to support the widespread adoption of bio-based technologies in rural areas, a challenge that resonates across the DRIVE project partners.

The reuse of furniture initiative illustrates Finland's innovative approach to combining circular economy practices with social inclusion by employing people who face barriers to the labor market. This project not only reduces waste but also fosters a culture of reuse among citizens, reinforcing the social dimension of sustainability. The challenge of changing mindsets and encouraging the purchase of reused products points to the need for sustained education and awareness-raising efforts. Collectively, these Finnish examples highlight the country's leadership in aligning **technological innovation, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion**, offering valuable lessons for Europe's rural regions.

#### 4.1.2 Cross-case analysis

This section presents the structured mapping of the 30 services and products identified by the project partners from rural areas through the completion of **Template 1 - Inventory of existing services/products**. The mapping process categorizes each example according to its thematic relevance to the DRIVE project, focusing specifically on areas such as bioeconomy, circular economy, sustainable agriculture and social innovation. This categorization is in line with the project's objective to highlight existing solutions that can serve as reference points for modelling new or improved rural market scenarios.

Each template was enriched by the service or product information and was analyzed and classified based on its main thematic focus, as reported by project partners. The categorization was guided by the following key criteria: the thematic relevance (bioeconomy, circular economy, sustainable agriculture, social enterprise), the type (service or product), and sector fit with the DRIVE project's aims of fostering sustainable, innovative ecosystems in rural areas.

The outcomes of the completed templates reveal a dynamic and diverse landscape of circular economy initiatives and sustainable production models across the participating countries. Despite the varied local contexts and economic sectors, several common themes emerge. All partners demonstrate a strong commitment to circular economy principles, integrating waste reduction, reuse, and recycling into innovative business models. These practices span a range of industries, including textiles in Bulgaria, agriculture in Greece and Belgium, hospitality in Slovenia, and renewable energy in Finland. This widespread adoption of circular economy principles underscores the project's relevance in promoting sustainable rural innovation across Europe.

A significant common element is the integration of social innovation and community engagement within these circular economy initiatives. Many examples highlight the dual benefits of environmental sustainability and social impact. For instance, Belgium's La Ferme du Chant des Cailles and Finland's furniture reuse initiative combine ecological goals with social inclusion by creating employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups. Similarly, Slovenia's Bohinj Breakfast fosters local food networks and community identity, while France's ENfin! Reemploi and Italy's cooperative networks integrate social welfare considerations into their sustainability efforts. This consistent focus on social innovation illustrates a shared understanding of sustainability as a holistic concept that encompasses not only environmental but also social

dimensions.

Despite these shared strengths, several recurring challenges and weaknesses are evident across the partner's examples. Scaling up production and securing consistent supply chains emerge as significant barriers, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Initiatives in Bulgaria, Greece, and Finland, for example, report difficulties in meeting growing consumer demand while maintaining quality and sustainability standards. Limited access to development programs and financial challenges are also common obstacles, especially for community-based and rural initiatives. SMEs from Greece, cooperatives from Belgium, and biogas initiatives in Finland, all underscore the importance of supportive funding structures and policy frameworks to enable growth and long-term viability. Additionally, many partners identify the need to raise awareness and shift consumer behavior towards more sustainable practices.

The outcomes also reveal unique opportunities for cross-border learning and replication of best practices. Bulgaria's emphasis on organic-based innovations in the cosmetics and agriculture sectors demonstrates how bio-based solutions can support rural development and contribute to the bioeconomy. Italy's cooperative and decentralized waste management models provide valuable insights for integrating social innovation with environmental sustainability. France's structured innovation ecosystems, supported by incubation and mentoring programs, illustrate the potential of clustering and integrated support systems to drive entrepreneurship in rural areas. Similarly, Belgium's participatory urban agriculture initiatives and Finland's district heating systems highlight replicable models for combining ecological sustainability with social well-being and energy security.

Overall, the DRIVE project partners from rural areas collectively showcase a rich and varied set of experiences that reflect Europe's potential for building resilient, inclusive, and sustainable rural innovation ecosystems. The analysis of these inventory underscores the importance of fostering collaboration across regions, leveraging common strengths, and addressing shared weaknesses through targeted support and policy innovation. In particular, the emphasis on linking circular economy practices with community empowerment and social impact provides a robust foundation for scaling up these models and extending their benefits throughout Europe.

Table 1 presents the mapping of the 30 services/products into thematic categories. This structured overview serves as the basis for subsequent analysis.

**Table 1:** 30 services/products divided into thematic categories.

| Category                                         | Examples                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Circular Economy and Bio-based Food Industry     | Zero Waste Store, Texcycle, Cupffee., Ecopans srl, Davines Group, AFOI PETROU, Enfin! Réemploi Association                                                                                                   |
| Bioeconomy and Sustainable Agriculture           | Golden Snail, Atlas Agro Science, FYTOENERGEIA A.E. NEW ENERGY S.A., Ktima Karalis (Domaine Karalis), home-based industry, BEES Coop, Herbs Secrets, House Boat, BIG Biofuel, La Ferme du Chant des Cailles, |
| Social Enterprise and Rural Innovation           | La Ferme du Chant des Cailles, Le ferme NOS PILIFS, Accueil Champetre en Wallonie                                                                                                                            |
| Sustainable Agriculture and Community Engagement | Pom my God!, GR1, GR2                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Open Innovation and Entrepreneurship             | Entrepreneurial Hub of Savoie Technolac, The Club des Mentors of the Savoie Technolac Incubatro                                                                                                              |
| Bioenergy and Renewable Energy, Waste            | Imatran Lampo District Heating,BIG Biofuel                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Reuse and Upcycling                              | Reuse of furniture                                                                                                                                                                                           |

The analysis carried out under Work Package 2 has provided critical insights that underpin the identification

of inventory of existing services and products and innovation pathways in rural areas. By gathering and categorizing a broad set of services and products through partner's contributions, reveals a strong emphasis on the **circular economy** and **bio-based innovation**, with many examples focusing on waste reduction, sustainable packaging and resource-efficient production methods. Initiatives such as the Zero Waste Store, Cupffee and Texcycle highlight innovative approaches to waste reduction while creating new business opportunities for rural entrepreneurs. These initiatives demonstrate how circular economy principles can not only reduce environmental impact but also drive job creation and regional economic resilience.

The mapping also underscores the prominence of the **bioeconomy** as a driver of rural diversification and competitiveness. Initiatives such as Atlas Agro Science and Golden Snail, which highlight the diversification of traditional agriculture into high-value products such as cosmetics and biofuels. This evolution enhances the economic potential of rural areas while contributing to Europe's broader green transition goals. Importantly, the gathered data highlights how these initiatives build on local resources, knowledge, and capacities, reinforcing the relevance of place-based innovation strategies in rural development.

**Social entrepreneurship** and **community engagement** are also highlighted as key themes, with initiatives such as Le ferme NOS PILIFS and Accueil Champetre en Wallonie demonstrating how agriculture can be effectively combined with social inclusion, education and tourism to enhance rural resilience. These cases show that sustainable innovation in rural areas is not solely about technology, but also about strengthening social capital and fostering community participation. Likewise, **entrepreneurship** and **innovation hubs**, for example, the Savoie Technolac initiatives, demonstrate the importance of supporting rural start-ups with mentoring, networks and collaboration platforms.

Equally important are examples that integrate renewable energy and circular economy principles into local infrastructure and services. Projects like Imatran Lämpö district heating and furniture reuse show how rural areas are integrating **bioenergy** and **circular economy** principles to achieve sustainability goals while creating local economic value.

Overall, this mapping highlights the diversity and richness of existing services/products in the partner regions. It shows that rural innovation is not limited to agriculture, but covers bio-based industries, renewable energy and social innovation frameworks. The variety of models identified demonstrates the potential for cross-sectoral learning and the importance of tailored approaches to sustainability.

The identification of best practices within this Work Package 2 was guided by a multi-criteria approach, grounded in the information provided through the partners' Template 1 submissions. This approach ensured a rigorous and systematic selection of practices that exemplify excellence in driving sustainable innovation in rural areas. The criteria were carefully designed to reflect the overarching objectives of the DRIVE project, namely fostering circular economy principles, supporting the bio-based economy, promoting entrepreneurship, and enhancing community engagement.

One of the primary criteria was demonstrated impact—both in terms of tangible results and broader community benefits. Practices such as the Zero Waste Store in Bulgaria and BEES Coop in Belgium were classified as best practices because they not only introduced innovative business models but also achieved measurable outcomes, such as reducing single-use plastics or promoting sustainable consumption among citizens. This criterion ensured that selected practices were not only innovative but also effective in contributing to sustainability goals.

Another critical field examined was the end users targeted by each initiative. Successful best practices demonstrated a clear understanding of their audience, ranging from citizens and local communities to SMEs and municipalities, and tailored their offerings accordingly. The Bohinj Breakfast in Slovenia effectively engaged tourists by delivering authentic local cuisine using a circular packaging system, while the Savoie Technolac Entrepreneurship Hub in France catered specifically to bioeconomy entrepreneurs and start-ups, creating a vibrant ecosystem of innovation.

The investment level and operational timeline were additional factors that helped contextualize the maturity and scalability of the best practices. Projects like BIG Biofuel in Finland required significant investment to establish biogas plants processing municipal biowaste, whereas initiatives such as Herbs Secrets in Greece

demonstrated that even low- to medium-investment enterprises can generate meaningful impact over time through local organic cultivation.

Moreover, the outcomes and impacts field offered quantifiable evidence of success, such as reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, the creation of employment opportunities, and enhanced community engagement. Initiatives like Imatran Lämpö District Heating in Finland, which achieved 100% renewable energy heating with zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, exemplify the transformative potential of bioeconomy investments.

Lastly, the challenges faced by each practice were examined to understand barriers to implementation and growth. These ranged from logistical complexities in supply chain coordination to broader issues like policy barriers, funding constraints, and the need for continuous community engagement. By acknowledging these challenges, the best practices not only provide inspiration but also inform future support mechanisms for replication.

In conclusion, the inventory of existing services and products identified in this Work Package reflects a combination of innovation, impact, scalability, and resilience, guided by a thorough analysis of the fields detailed in Template 1. This comprehensive approach ensures that the highlighted practices are not only exemplary but also relevant to the diverse needs and contexts of Europe's rural innovation ecosystems.

The categorization and mapping of the above services/products provide a solid basis for identifying the best practices and developing market scenarios tailored to rural innovation ecosystems. This initial mapping phase will be complemented by the forthcoming analysis of 82 additional best practices from all partner countries, which will further enrich the project's knowledge base and support the creation of replicable business models in rural areas.

## 4.2 Template 2 – Best Practices

### 4.2.1 Filled Template 2

**Partner: P1-Lead, ITB - CONSORZIO ITALBIOTEC, Milan, Italy (total 10)**

1.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:    | <b>SYMBIO</b> (Shaping symbiosis in bio-based industrial ecosystems based on circular by-design supply chains)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Type                   | EU project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Focus area:            | computer and information sciences; business models; ecosystems; biological interactions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Stakeholders involved: | Coordinator: LOMBARDY GREEN CHEMISTRY ASSOCIATION<br>Participants:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ANTEJA ECG D.O.O.</li> <li>• FUNDACION CORPORACION TECNOLOGICA DE ANDALUCIA</li> <li>• ALCHEMIA-NOVA RESEARCH &amp; INNOVATION GEMEINNUTZIGE GMBH</li> <li>• KARNETNER BETRIEBSANSIEDLUNGS- UND BETEILIGUNGSGESELLSCHAFT M.B.H.</li> <li>• STARTUP EUROPE REGIONS NETWORK</li> <li>• TAJANA RADIC</li> </ul> Partners: CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY |
| Methodology:           | Accelerating industrial symbiosis guarantees local supply chains, minimizing the input of material resources and environmental impacts on soil, water and air quality, biodiversity and climate in all processes involved.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Results/impact:        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shapes 10 symbiotic business models with high-profitability sustainability replicable at the EU level</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SYMBIO methodology will be designed, tested and validated in 12 EU pilot regions (Lombardy, Piedmont, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Emilia-Romagna, Carinthia, Slovenia, Croatia, Andalusia, Bruxelles Capital, Wallonia, Flanders)</li> <li>• Continuously updated Dissemination and communication plan (CDP) and the first draft of the Exploitation Strategy Plan (ESP)</li> <li>• Regional Hub handbook for data collection and harmonization</li> <li>• Regional Data-Hub inventory and data map</li> </ul> |
| Replicability potential: | <p>Suggestions for Replication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• socio-economic indicators</li> <li>• networks and infrastructures</li> <li>• development of CBE close-to-market supply chains and current trends</li> <li>• involving all supply chain actors in a quadruplex approach</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Challenges faced:        | Integration of advanced digital tools; Engaging local stakeholders; Adapting to diverse regional contexts; Impact monitoring and evaluation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.symbiopproject.eu/">https://www.symbiopproject.eu/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

2.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:    | <b>RuralBioUp</b> (Empowering EU Rural Regions to scale-Up and adopt small scale Bio-based solutions: the transition toward a sustainable, regenerative, inclusive and just circular bioeconomy)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Type:                  | EU project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Focus area:            | Citizen engagement; bio-based sector promotion; social innovation, promotion of bioeconomy and circular economy; support for innovative startups and SMEs; building innovative ecosystems; development of commercialization tools                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Stakeholders involved: | <p>Coordinator: AGENZIA PER LA PROMOZIONE DELLA RICERCA EUROPEA</p> <p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GLOBAZ, S.A.</li> <li>• SPRING SUSTAINABLE PROCESSES AND RESOURCES FOR INNOVATION AND NATIONAL GROWTH</li> <li>• LOMBARDY GREEN CHEMISTRY ASSOCIATION</li> <li>• CIVITTA EESTI AS</li> <li>• ZENTRUM FÜR SOZIALE INNOVATION GMBH</li> <li>• ZEMEDELKY VYZKUM, SPOL SRO</li> <li>• IRISH BIOECONOMY FOUNDATION</li> <li>• VEGEPOLYS VALLEY</li> <li>• ROMANIAN ACADEMY NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC RESEARCH</li> <li>• ITABIA-ITALIAN BIOMASS ASSOCIATION</li> <li>• LATVIJAS VALSTS MEZZINATNES INSTITUTS SILAVA</li> </ul> |
| Methodology:           | Co-creation Workshops; Multi-Actor Platforms / Regional Hubs; Mentoring & Coaching Sessions; Knowledge Transfer & Training; Online and Hybrid Engagement Tools; Case Study Collection & Valorization                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establishment of Regional Hubs: By December 2023, 9 Regional Hubs were established across 6 EU countries, each comprising approximately 30 stakeholders, totaling around 270 participants.</li> <li>● Action Plans Developed: Each hub co-designed an Action Plan focusing on two value chains, resulting in 18 tailored strategies to enhance local bioeconomy initiatives.</li> <li>● Networking Events and Study Visits: Up to now, 26 networking events, including two EU-level matchmaking events, and 20 study visits have been organized, engaging over 1,400 participants.</li> <li>● Mentoring and Training: More than 3,000 individuals have received mentoring and training on various bioeconomy aspects, enhancing their capacity to implement bio-based solutions.</li> <li>● Enhanced Stakeholder Collaboration</li> <li>● Development of RuralSpot Platform</li> <li>● Empowerment of Regional Actors</li> </ul> |
| Replicability potential: | <p>Suggestions for Replication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Set Up a Local Multi-Actor Hub</li> <li>● Conduct a Regional Bioeconomy Mapping</li> <li>● Run Co-Creation Workshops</li> <li>● Leverage Existing Tools</li> <li>● Provide Capacity Building</li> <li>● Secure Regional and EU Funding</li> <li>● Document and Share Outcomes</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Challenges faced:        | Low Awareness and Understanding of the Bioeconomy; Fragmented Stakeholder Ecosystems; Regulatory and Policy Barriers; Access to Funding and Investment; Market Development and Commercialization; Geographical and Technological Constraints                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.ruralbioup.eu/">https://www.ruralbioup.eu/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

3.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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| Best practice name:    | <b>SYMBIA</b> (Securing local supply chains via the development of new methods to assess the circularity and symbiosis of the Bio-based industrial ecosystem enhancing the EU competitiveness and resource independence)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Type:                  | EU project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Focus area:            | environmental engineering; computer and information sciences; materials engineering; social sciences; sustainable economy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Stakeholders involved: | <p>Coordinator: ENCO SRL</p> <p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● FUNDACION CIRCE CENTRO DE INVESTIGACION DE RECURSOS Y CONSUMOS ENERGETICOS</li> <li>● CENTRE SCIENTIFIQUE &amp; TECHNIQUE DEL'INDUSTRIE TEXTILE BELGE ASBL</li> <li>● CLIMATE-KIC HOLDING BV</li> <li>● BIO BASE EUROPE PILOT PLANT VZW</li> <li>● AIMPLAS - ASOCIACION DE INVESTIGACION DE MATERIALES PLASTICOS Y CONEXAS</li> <li>● NOVAMONT SPA</li> </ul> |

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|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● FUNDACION CENTRO GALLEGO DE INVESTIGACIONES DEL AGUA</li> <li>● ICLEI EUROPEAN SECRETARIAT GMBH (ICLEI EUROPA SEKRETARIAT GMBH)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Methodology:             | Mapping & Collection of existing knowledge; classification and prioritization of IS solutions; development of new Circular Symbiosis Methodology; individuation of Regional Hubs; monitoring and validation; co-creation; knowledge sharing and stakeholder involvement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Network with key external stakeholders and geographical reach, bringing together 5 EU countries (IT, ES, BE, NL, DE) to consolidate the maximum outreach of the initiative. It consists of 9 partners with complementary competences: 4 RTD centers (CIRCE, CTB, AIMPLAS; CET); 1 large industry (NVMT); 1 pilot facility (BBEPP); 1 innovative SME (ENCO) and 2 networks (CKIC and ICLEI) with a valuable background in applying IS approach in the bio-based sector</li> <li>● The involvement of different industrial sectors: agri-food (NVMT); packaging (AIMPLAS); wastewater (CET); textile (CTB); waste valorisation (BBEPP)</li> <li>● Creation and validation of new IS methodology for the bio-based sector, starting from existing knowledge and lessons learned from SYMBA consortium partners.</li> <li>● Individuation of criteria to select regional hubs</li> <li>● AI database including Monitoring tools, waste relation matrix, networking and cooperation with ongoing EU and local networks.</li> </ul> |
| Replicability potential: | <p>Suggestions for Replication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● implement a user-friendly and accessible AI database;</li> <li>● ensuring more local supply chains;</li> <li>● a better distribution of economic and social benefits among the stakeholders;</li> <li>● increase in the economic value of final products</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Challenges faced:        | Limited access to resources; Challenges in cross-sector collaboration; Regulatory and legislative barriers; Development and adoption of digital tools                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.symbaproject.eu/">https://www.symbaproject.eu/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

4.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
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| Best practice name:    | <b>BIO2REG</b> (Enabling transition toward circular and systemic BIOeconomy model regions by a Regions-to-Regions approach)                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Type:                  | EU project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Focus area:            | bioeconomy model region; multi-actor approach; sustainable bioeconomy                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Stakeholders involved: | <p>Coordinator: FORSCHUNGSZENTRUM JULICH GMBH</p> <p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● BIOCUM INTERRELATIONS GMBH</li> <li>● SENIOR EUROPA SOCIEDAD LIMITADA</li> <li>● EREVNITIKO PANEPISTIMIAKO INSTITOUTO ASTIKOU PERIVALLONTOS KAI ANTHROPINOU DYNAMIKOU</li> </ul> |

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|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BIOBASED INDUSTRIES CONSORTIUM</li> <li>• BIOEAST HUB CR, Z. U.</li> <li>• HOMO SILVESTRIS EUROPAE SARL</li> <li>• RISE RESEARCH INSTITUTES OF SWEDEN AB</li> <li>• MATIS OHF</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Methodology:             | multi-criteria assessment framework and guides for a self-assessment of bioeconomy model region potential; network of regions that promotes direct stakeholder interaction and mutual learning; interregional exchange programme that will foster partnerships, showcase experiences and build capacities through mentoring and training services.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• build on technological and societal innovation</li> <li>• recognise cross-sectoral linkages and focus on sustainable development in economic, environmental, and social terms</li> <li>• The Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA) framework will help regional stakeholders to quantitatively assess the bioeconomy potential of European regions</li> <li>• The project will produce a set of guides to help regional actors implement transition measures on the regional level</li> <li>• The interregional network will promote direct interaction between stakeholders and mutual learning</li> <li>• The interregional exchange programme will foster partnerships, will showcase experiences, and will build capacity through mentoring and training services</li> <li>• BIO2REG will formulate concrete recommendations for regional, national and EU policy makers in order to accelerate the transition towards bioeconomy model regions</li> </ul> |
| Replicability potential: | <p>Suggestions for Replication:</p> <p>regional stakeholders will be capacitated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provision of a regionalization concept for model regions</li> <li>• mapping best practices on circular and sustainable bioeconomy</li> <li>• guides for bioeconomy potential assessments</li> <li>• mentoring and training services</li> <li>• formation of transition alliances</li> <li>• policy recommendations to adapt strategies and funding</li> <li>• adoption of a multi-actor approach by co-creating tools and guides with regional stakeholders as well as engaging with regions by guided on-site exchanges with stakeholders from other regions.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Challenges faced:        | Transitioning Carbon-Intensive Economies; Stakeholder Engagement and Cooperation; Knowledge and Capacity Building; Policy and Funding Frameworks; Customization to Regional Specificities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://bio2reg.eu/">https://bio2reg.eu/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

5.

| Fields              | Input                                                                            |
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| Best practice name: | <b>BRILIAN</b> (Cooperative business models for bio-based chains in rural areas) |
| Type:               | EU project                                                                       |

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| Focus area:              | Ecosystems; bioeconomy; industrial biotechnology                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Stakeholders involved:   | <p>Coordinator: FUNDACION CIRCE CENTRO DE INVESTIGACION DE RECURSOS Y CONSUMOS ENERGETICOS</p> <p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NOVAMONT SPA</li> <li>• PROCESADOS DE PATATA PATURPAT S COOP</li> <li>• FUNDACION AITIIP</li> <li>• NUEVAS TECNOLOGIAS PARA EL DESARROLLO DE PACKAGING Y PRODUCTOS AGROALIMENTARIOS CON COMPONENTE PLASTICA SL</li> <li>• DANSK LANDBRUGS GROVVARESELSKAB AMBA</li> <li>• EKNOLOGISK INSTITUT</li> <li>• CHIMAR (HELLAS) AE - ANONYMI VIOMICHANIKI KAI EMPORIKI ETAIREIA CHIMIKON PROIONTON</li> <li>• ASOCIACION CLUSTER FOOD+I</li> <li>• FBCD AS</li> <li>• ENCO SRL</li> <li>• EUROPEAN BIOECONOMY BUREAU</li> <li>• BIOEAST HUB CR, Z. U.</li> </ul> |
| Methodology:             | Forging robust rural bio-communities; Integration of short supply chains and production of value-added bioproducts; business model design approaches; toolkit based on complex models                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enhance rural development, biodiversity preservation and climate-neutrality</li> <li>• implement a multi-actor approach for the validation of a group of Actions for the Bio Innovation (ABI) both at macro and micro level</li> <li>• allow primary producers to diversify their incomes while reducing risks</li> <li>• These ABI will be particularized for 3 pilots in Italy, Spain and Denmark.</li> <li>• a set of business models will be enhanced and tested for the validation of 10 value chains. 6 in Italy, 2 in Spain and 2 in Denmark</li> </ul>                                                                                                                |
| Replicability potential: | <p>Suggestions for Replication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increasing farmers income and to be fully aligned with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP);</li> <li>• addressing also Green Deal and Bioeconomy Strategy objectives;</li> <li>• support the adoption of sustainable cooperative business models in rural areas</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Challenges faced:        | Stakeholder Collaboration; Policy and Regulatory Alignment; Market Integration and Competitiveness; Economic Viability and Funding                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.fcirce.es/proyecto/brilian">https://www.fcirce.es/proyecto/brilian</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

6.

| Fields              | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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| Best practice name: | <b>BIOMODEL4REGIONS</b> (Supporting the establishment of the innovative governance models to achieve better-informed decision-making processes, social engagement and innovation in the bio-based economy) |

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| Type:                    | EU project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Focus area:              | Bioeconomy; agricultural biotechnology; bio-based economy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Stakeholders involved:   | <p>Coordinator: CIAOTECH Srl</p> <p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BIOECONOMY CLUSTER</li> <li>• BIOFUEL REGION BFR AB</li> <li>• CLUSTER VIOOIKONOMIAS KAI PERIVALLONTOS DYTIKIS MAKEDONIAS</li> <li>• ICLEI EUROPEAN SECRETARIAT GMBH (ICLEI EUROPASEKRETARIAT GMBH)</li> <li>• SPRING SUSTAINABLE PROCESSES AND RESOURCES FOR INNOVATION AND NATIONAL GROWTH</li> <li>• STOWARZYSZENIE ZACHODNIOPOMORSKI KLASTER CHEMICZNY ZIELONA CHEMIA</li> <li>• RISE PROCESSUM AB</li> <li>• STICHTING WAGENINGEN RESEARCH</li> <li>• AQUIMER</li> <li>• AGENZIA PER LA PROMOZIONE DELLA RICERCA EUROPEA</li> <li>• STICHTING HOLLAND CIRCULAR HOTSPOT</li> </ul> |
| Methodology:             | creation of regional and local strategies that leverage local potentials and innovations, integrating opportunities within the bio-based economy; develops novel business models to encourage environmentally responsible behavior and creates best practice guidelines for local operators to support climate-neutral and low environmental footprint improvements of bio-based products and services                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support six pilot regions, each representing different European areas (Northern, Southern, Eastern, and Central-Western EU) and primary sectors (forestry, agri-food, aquatic biomass, and organic fraction of municipal solid waste)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Replicability potential: | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Challenges faced:        | ensuring active participation from diverse stakeholders; adapting strategies to different regulatory and cultural environments; securing long-term commitment and resources for implementation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.biomodel4regions.eu/">https://www.biomodel4regions.eu/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

7.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                           |
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| Best practice name:    | <b>BioRural</b> (Accelerating circular bio-based solutions integration in European rural areas) |
| Type:                  | EU project                                                                                      |
| Focus area:            | innovation management; bioeconomy                                                               |
| Stakeholders involved: | <p>Coordinator: ETHNIKO KENTRO EREVNAS KAI TECHNOLOGIKIS ANAPTYXIS</p> <p>Participants:</p>     |

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|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DELPHY BV</li> <li>• ASSOCIATION DU POLE DE COMPETIVITE VALORIAL</li> <li>• NATUREPLAST</li> <li>• IZES GGMBH</li> <li>• AARHUS UNIVERSITET</li> <li>• INSTYTUT UPRAWY NAWOZENIA I GLEBOZNAWSTWA, PANSTWOWY INSTYTUT BADAWCZY</li> <li>• VYTAUTO DIDZIOJO UNIVERSITETAS</li> <li>• LATVIJAS BIOZINATNU UN TEHNOLOGIJU UNIVERSITATE</li> <li>• ASOCIACION ESPANOLA DE LA VALORIZACION ENERGETICA DE LA BIOMASA</li> <li>• UNIVERSIDADE DE COIMBRA</li> <li>• CENTRO DA BIOMASSA PARA A ENERGIA</li> <li>• AIEL ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA ENERGIE AGROFORESTALI</li> <li>• REFRAME FOOD ASTIKI MI KERDOSKOPIKI ETAIRIA</li> <li>• INCOMMON NON-PROFIT CIVIL LAW COMPANY</li> <li>• UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI</li> <li>• ALGEN, CENTER ZA ALGNE TEHNOLOGIJE, DOO</li> <li>• ASOCIATIA GREEN ENERGY</li> <li>• ZDRUZENIE PLATFORMA ZA ZELEN RAZVOJ SKOPJE</li> </ul> |
| Methodology:             | organized national multi-actor innovation workshops focusing on various topics such as inland raw material production, aquatic biological feedstock, and bio-based industries and services enhancing capacity building and facilitate the implementation of small-scale bio-based solutions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The workshops successfully engaged stakeholders from academia, industry, government, and NGOs</li> <li>• practical exercises that generated grassroots-level ideas and inventions for small-scale bio-based solutions</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Replicability potential: | <p>Suggestions for Replication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organizing similar events tailored to local contexts</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Challenges faced:        | engaging a diverse range of stakeholders; addressing region-specific bioeconomic conditions; ensuring the sustainability of the initiatives developed during the workshops.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101060166">https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101060166</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

8.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
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| Best practice name:    | <b>MAINSTREAMBIO</b> (MAINSTREAMing small-scale BIO-based solutions across rural Europe via regional Multi-actor Innovation Platforms and tailored innovation support)                                                                                        |
| Type:                  | EU project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Focus area:            | waste treatment processes; bioeconomy; Small-scale bio-based solutions; multi-actor innovation platforms                                                                                                                                                      |
| Stakeholders involved: | <p>Coordinator: Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL ADVISORS PC</p> <p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MUNSTER TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY</li> <li>• STICHTING WAGENINGEN RESEARCH</li> <li>• INSTYTUT UPRAWY NAWOZENIA I GLEBOZNAWSTWA,</li> </ul> |

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|                          | <p>PANSTWOWY INSTYTUT BADAWCZY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● RISE PROCESSUM AB</li> <li>● AGRAREN UNIVERSITET – PLOVDIV</li> <li>● FBCD AS</li> <li>● EURIZON SL</li> <li>● DRAXIS ENVIRONMENTAL SA</li> <li>● WHITE RESEARCH SRL</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Methodology:             | established Multi-actor Innovation Platforms (MIPs) in seven EU countries (Poland, Denmark, Sweden, Bulgaria, Spain, Ireland, and the Netherlands); enhance cooperation among key rural players; The platforms co-created sustainable business model pathways aligned with regional potentials and policy initiatives; developed a digital toolkit, including a catalogue of small-scale bio-based technologies, business models, and social innovations, as well as a decision support system to match available biomass with appropriate technologies |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● established MIPs</li> <li>● conducted co-creation workshops</li> <li>● developed educational materials to raise awareness about the bioeconomy</li> <li>● initiated an open call for innovation support services, identifying cases to receive tailored assistance</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Replicability potential: | <p>Suggestions for Replication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The MIP model and digital toolkit can be adapted to other regions by establishing similar platforms and customizing the toolkit to local contexts</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Challenges faced:        | ensuring active and sustained participation from stakeholders; adapting the digital tools to region-specific needs; overcoming barriers to market uptake of bio-based innovations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101059420">https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101059420</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

9.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
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| Best practice name:    | <b>SCALE-UP</b> (Concepts, tools, and applications for community-driven bioeconomy development in European rural areas)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Type:                  | EU Project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Focus area:            | innovation management; bioeconomy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Stakeholders involved: | <p>Coordinator: ECOLOGIC INSTITUT GEMEINNUTZIGE GMBH</p> <p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ASSOCIATION DES CHAMBRES D'AGRICULTURE DE L'ARC ATLANTIQUE</li> <li>● FUNDACION CORPORACION TECNOLOGICA DE ANDALUCIA</li> <li>● MEDUNARODNI CENTAR ZA ODRZIVI RAZVOJ ENERGETIKE VODA I OKOLISA UDRUGE</li> <li>● FUNDACJA UNIMOS</li> <li>● BUSINESS UPPER AUSTRIA - OO WIRTSCHAFTSAGENTUR GMBH</li> <li>● B.T.G. BIOMASS TECHNOLOGY GROUP BV</li> <li>● WIRTSCHAFT UND INFRASTRUKTUR GMBH &amp; CO PLANUNGS KG</li> <li>● BIOFUEL REGION BFR AB</li> </ul> |

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| Methodology:             | SCALE-UP extended existing infrastructures in six regions (Northern Sweden, Mazovia in Poland, the Atlantic Arc of France, Strumica in North Macedonia, Upper Austria, and Andalusia in Spain) by establishing regional platforms for innovation support; platforms aimed to engage the entire spectrum of bioeconomy stakeholders, facilitate knowledge exchange, and oversee the implementation of targeted innovation support services. |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project established regional platforms linked to existing infrastructures, focusing on promising bio-based solutions in agriculture and forestry sectors</li> <li>• These platforms facilitated stakeholder engagement and supported the development of bio-based innovations tailored to regional contexts.</li> </ul>                                                                       |
| Replicability potential: | <p>Suggestions for Replication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leveraging existing infrastructures and engaging local stakeholders</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Challenges faced:        | aligning the platforms with local policies and strategies; ensuring long-term sustainability; addressing specific regional barriers to bioeconomy development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.scaleup-bioeconomy.eu/en/home/">https://www.scaleup-bioeconomy.eu/en/home/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

10.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:    | <b>ROBIN</b> (Deploying circular BIOecoNomies at Regional level with a territorial approach)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Type:                  | EU project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Focus area:            | Ecosystems; Circular Bioeconomy; Sustainable territorial development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Stakeholders involved: | <p>Coordinator: Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL ADVISORS PC</p> <p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FUNDACION CORPORACION TECNOLOGICA DE ANDALUCIA</li> <li>• WHITE RESEARCH SRL</li> <li>• PEDAL CONSULTING SRO</li> <li>• STEINBEIS 2I GMBH</li> <li>• ROZVOJOVA AGENTURA ZILINSKEHO SAMOSPRAVNEHO KRAJA NO</li> <li>• MUNSTER TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY</li> <li>• ARISTOTELIO PANEPISTIMIO THESSALONIKIS</li> <li>• REGION OF CENTRAL MACEDONIA</li> <li>• CONSEJERIA DE AGRICULTURA, PESCA, AGUA Y DESARROLLO RURAL</li> <li>• INSTITUTO ANDALUZ DE INVESTIGACIONY FORMACION AGRARIA PESQUERA ALIMENTARIA Y DE LA PRODUCCION ECOLOGICA</li> <li>• SOUTHERN REGIONAL ASSEMBLY</li> </ul> |
| Methodology:           | Multi-Actor Regional Constellations (MARC)s; Digital Toolbox Development; Co-Creation Workshops                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Results/impact:        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of MARCs: Mobilized 47 members representing all stakeholder groups, driving the creation and adaptation of governance models throughout the project.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Baseline Analyses: Conducted assessments of bioeconomy policy mixes, barriers, and opportunities in each region, informed by 21 in-depth interviews.</li> <li>● Governance Models and Good Practices: Developed a typology of 20 circular bioeconomy governance models and an inventory of 75 good practices supporting local operators and innovation developers.</li> <li>● Regional Action Plans: Each region created detailed action plans with 10 dedicated support actions, contributing to the realization of their governance models.</li> </ul> |
| Replicability potential: | <p>Suggestions for Replication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The MARC framework and digital toolbox offer adaptable models for other regions aiming to enhance their circular bioeconomy governance.</li> <li>● The project's emphasis on co-creation and stakeholder engagement provides a replicable approach for developing governance structures tailored to specific regional contexts.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Challenges faced:        | Stakeholder Engagement; Customization of Tools; Sustainability of Initiatives                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://robin-project.eu/">https://robin-project.eu/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

Italy's contributions to the DRIVE project reflect a strong alignment with European cooperation initiatives, highlighting a diverse portfolio of EU-funded projects that prioritize the **circular economy**, the **bioeconomy** and **multi-stakeholder innovation**. Italy's best practices highlight a commitment to promoting industrial symbiosis and scaling up bio-based solutions, as highlighted by projects such as SYMBIO and RuralBioUp. These initiatives focus on strengthening stakeholder engagement, creating regional hubs and co-developing methodologies to assess and scale-up sustainable business models. For example, SYMBIO aims to create 10 symbiotic business models that can be replicated at EU level, while developing pilot actions in 12 EU regions, including several in Italy. This approach highlights Italy's strategic focus on linking local supply chains with European policy frameworks to promote a just and sustainable transition to the bioeconomy.

Another key feature of Italy's best practices is the emphasis on capacity building and knowledge sharing between regions. RuralBioUp stands out with its co-creation workshops and the creation of nine regional hubs that promote innovation at the grassroots level. With the participation of around 270 stakeholders across multiple value chains, the project demonstrates Italy's leadership in promoting stakeholder collaboration and developing tailored action plans for local bioeconomy ecosystems. These efforts are complemented by initiatives such as SYMBIA, which brings together different industrial sectors - such as agri-food, packaging and wastewater - to pilot new circular symbiosis methodologies, reinforcing Italy's commitment to integrate sustainable practices in different industrial sectors.

Italy's best practices also reveal a sophisticated approach to tackling common challenges such as stakeholder coordination, digital adoption and regulatory alignment. Projects such as BIO2REG and BRILIAN highlight Italy's role in developing frameworks for cross-sectoral learning and promoting cooperative business models in rural areas. These initiatives do not only focus on technological innovation but also emphasize social inclusion and the need for economic resilience. Overall, Italy's contributions demonstrate a dynamic interaction between EU-level cooperation and regional implementation, ensuring that innovative solutions developed through projects such as BIOMODEL4REGIONS and ROBIN are both scalable and responsive to local needs.

**Partner: P2, CTBG - KLIYNTEH BULGARIA FONDATSIYA, Vratsa, Bulgaria (total 7)**

1.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | Strategy for Development of the Bioeconomy in Stara Zagora Region                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Type of initiative       | Project/ policy proposal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Focus area:              | Bioeconomy development, sustainable resource management, innovation promotion                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Stakeholders involved:   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce</b> (Business/NGO): Led the development of the strategy.</li> <li>- <b>Trakia University</b> (Academic institution): Provided academic research and analysis.</li> <li>- <b>Local stakeholders</b> (Local government/SMEs): Participated in working groups to ensure regional needs were addressed.</li> </ul> |
| Methodology:             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategic planning: Developed in alignment with EU, national, and regional standards.</li> <li>- Stakeholder engagement: Local stakeholders engaged in working groups.</li> <li>- Regional resource analysis: Identified opportunities for bioeconomy development based on local resources.</li> </ul>                                          |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Created a clear roadmap for bioeconomy development in the region.</li> <li>- Identified economic opportunities, especially in small-scale bio-based industries (e.g., essential oils).</li> <li>- Promoted environmental sustainability through efficient resource management and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.</li> </ul>                  |
| Replicability potential: | <p>Yes, the strategy could be replicated in other regions by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engaging local businesses, academic institutions, and government bodies.</li> <li>- Assessing regional biological resources.</li> <li>- Aligning the strategy with national and EU policies for support and funding.</li> </ul>                                               |
| Challenges faced:        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SYMBIO: The strategy requires further political backing for full implementation.</li> <li>- Public awareness: Limited knowledge about bioeconomy concepts may hinder engagement and support.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                         |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://be-rural.eu/region/bulgaria/">https://be-rural.eu/region/bulgaria/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Additional notes:        | The initiative is part of the BE-Rural project, which works on bioeconomy strategies to enhance rural and regional development across Europe.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

2.

| Fields              | Input                                                                            |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name: | MainstreamBIO: Mainstreaming Small-Scale Bio-Based Solutions Across Rural Europe |
| Type of initiative: | Project                                                                          |

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Focus area:              | Bioeconomy, circular economy, sustainable resource management, small-scale bio-based solutions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL (SME), Munster Technological University (Education), Food & Bio Cluster Denmark (Cluster Organization), Innovarum (SME), Wageningen University & Research (Education/Research), Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation (Research Institute), White Research SRL (SME), Draxis Environmental SA (SME), Agricultural University Plovdiv (Education), Rise Processum AB (Research Institute). |
| Methodology:             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of digital tools to assess biomass and waste streams for bio-based solutions.</li> <li>- Hosting networking events and workshops to encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing.</li> <li>- Creating a BioForum to foster exchange of ideas and good practices.</li> </ul>                                                                                        |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhanced adoption of bio-based solutions across rural Europe.</li> <li>- Developed a Decision Support System to help stakeholders select appropriate technologies and business models.</li> <li>- Established a Bioeconomy Repository to share educational resources and promote awareness.</li> </ul>                                                                          |
| Replicability potential: | <p>The project can be replicated in other regions by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organizing networking events and workshops in new regions.</li> <li>- Developing digital tools tailored to local biomass resources.</li> <li>- Collaborating with SMEs, local governments, and academia for regional adaptation.</li> </ul>                                                                           |
| Challenges faced:        | Limited awareness of bio-based technologies in rural areas.; Ensuring long-term sustainability and scaling of small-scale bio-based solutions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://mainstreambio-project.eu/">https://mainstreambio-project.eu/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Additional notes:        | The project was funded by Horizon Europe and focuses on scaling small-scale bio-based solutions to promote sustainable development and enhance circular bioeconomy practices across rural Europe.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

3.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:    | Strategy for Transition to Circular Economy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Type of initiative:    | National Strategy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Focus area:            | Circular economy, sustainable resource management, waste reduction, recycling                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Stakeholders involved: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ministry of Environment and Water (MOEW) (Government): Lead strategy development and policy implementation.</li> <li>- SMEs (Private sector): Implement circular economy practices and innovations.</li> <li>- NGOs (Non-governmental organizations): Promote public awareness and contribute to the development of green initiatives.</li> </ul> |
| Methodology:           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creation of a comprehensive national circular economy strategy.</li> <li>- Setting clear objectives for waste reduction, resource efficiency, and sustainable business models.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                         |

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                          | - Development of specific actions for each strategic goal to facilitate the transition towards a circular economy.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Results/impact:          | - Development of a strategic framework to promote circular economy practices in various sectors.<br>- Expected increase in recycling rates and reduction in waste production.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Replicability potential: | This strategy can be replicated in other regions by:<br>- Developing local circular economy strategies based on regional needs.<br>- Collaborating with SMEs, governmental bodies, and NGOs for effective implementation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Challenges faced:        | Ensuring coordination across sectors and stakeholders.; Overcoming resistance to change from traditional linear economy models.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.moew.government.bg/">https://www.moew.government.bg/</a><br><a href="https://www.moew.government.bg/static/media/ups/tiny/%D0%A3%D0%9E%D0%9E%D0%9F/%D0%A1%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%B3%D0%B8%D1%8F%20%D0%BA%D1%80%D1%8A%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%20%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%BC%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B0/fin_StrategiyaFinal.pdf">https://www.moew.government.bg/static/media/ups/tiny/%D0%A3%D0%9E%D0%9E%D0%9F/%D0%A1%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%B3%D0%B8%D1%8F%20%D0%BA%D1%80%D1%8A%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%20%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%BC%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B0/fin_StrategiyaFinal.pdf</a> |
| Additional notes:        | This strategy is part of Bulgaria's commitment to the EU Green Deal and aims to align with broader European and global circular economy policies.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

4.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization 2021-2027                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Type of initiative:      | National Strategy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Focus area:              | Innovation, smart specialization, bioeconomy, clean technologies, ICT, and health industries                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Stakeholders involved:   | - Bulgarian Ministry of Economy (Government): Lead policy development and implementation.<br>- Academia and Research Institutions (Academic institutions): Support innovation and technological development.<br>- SMEs and Industries (Private sector): Develop and apply new technologies in the bioeconomy, clean technologies, and health sectors. |
| Methodology:             | - The development of a national innovation strategy focusing on specific industries, including bioeconomy and clean technologies.<br>- Identifying and fostering clusters of innovation within key sectors to support sustainable and competitive growth.                                                                                             |
| Results/impact:          | - Created a targeted strategy to enhance Bulgaria's competitiveness in the global market by supporting innovation in key sectors.<br>- Expected increase in investments in clean technologies, bioeconomy, and ICT.                                                                                                                                   |
| Replicability potential: | This strategy can be replicated by:<br>- Identifying regional strengths and focusing on innovation in specific sectors that align with regional needs.<br>- Collaborating with local SMEs, research institutions, and                                                                                                                                 |

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                   | governmental bodies for effective implementation.                                                                                                                     |
| Challenges faced: | Coordination across different regions and sectors; Ensuring consistent long-term investments in innovation and infrastructure.                                        |
| Website:          | <a href="https://www.strategy.bg/StrategicDocuments/View.aspx?lang=bg-BG&amp;Id=1569">https://www.strategy.bg/StrategicDocuments/View.aspx?lang=bg-BG&amp;Id=1569</a> |
| Additional notes: | This strategy aims to align with EU goals and the European Green Deal, supporting sustainable development and regional growth.                                        |

5.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | Bulgaria Hub BIOEAST – Central and Eastern European Initiative for Knowledge-based Agriculture, Forestry, and Aquaculture in the Bioeconomy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Type of initiative:      | Hub                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Focus area:              | Bioeconomy, sustainable agriculture, forestry, aquaculture, circular economy, regional development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Stakeholders involved:   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agricultural University – Plovdiv (Academic institution): Plays a key role in educational and research initiatives related to bioeconomy.</li> <li>- Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry of the Republic of Bulgaria (Government): Leads national bioeconomy policy development.</li> <li>- Agricultural Academy of Bulgaria (Research institution): Contributes to bioeconomy research and innovation in Bulgaria.</li> </ul>           |
| Methodology:             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishment of Regional Bioeconomy Hubs: Focus on collaboration among public and private sectors to foster bioeconomy practices in regions like Plovdiv.</li> <li>- Educational and Research Initiatives: Involvement of academic institutions to promote bioeconomy knowledge.</li> <li>- National Bioeconomy Strategy Development: The Ministry is developing a national strategy to promote bioeconomy in line with EU policies.</li> </ul> |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhanced Regional Cooperation: Collaboration has strengthened bioeconomy development, especially in Plovdiv.</li> <li>- Educational Advancements: The Agricultural University – Plovdiv is contributing to the bioeconomy education field.</li> <li>- Strategic Policy Development: National policies aimed at promoting sustainable bioeconomy practices are being formulated.</li> </ul>                                                       |
| Replicability potential: | <p>The Bulgarian experience can be replicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishing Regional Hubs: Create collaborative platforms for bioeconomy stakeholders.</li> <li>- Strengthening Educational Programs: Integrate bioeconomy into academic curricula to build expertise.</li> <li>- Developing National Strategies: Align national bioeconomy strategies with EU goals to ensure comprehensive development.</li> </ul>                                      |
| Challenges faced:        | Coordination Among Diverse Stakeholders: Ensuring effective collaboration among academia, government, and the private sector.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://bioeast.eu/">https://bioeast.eu/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Additional notes: | The Bulgarian hub of BIOEAST is working on establishing stronger connections between national and regional actors to promote sustainable bioeconomy development. |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

6.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | Clean&Circle                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Type of initiative:      | Project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Focus area:              | Circular economy, sustainability, clean technologies, innovation promotion                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Sofia University St. Climent Ohridski [Education], University of Architecture Civil Engineering and Geodesy [Education], University Dr. Assen Zlatarov Burgas [Education], Institute of Physical Chemistry “Rostislav Kosichew” [Research Institute], University of Forestry [Education], Foundation Cleantech Bulgaria [NGO], Institute of Microbiology “Stefan Anguelov” [Research Institute], Institute of Organic Chemistry with Center for Phytochemistry [Research Institute]. |
| Methodology:             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaborative research: Focuses on innovative circular economy solutions in areas like water, waste, and energy.</li> <li>- Stakeholder engagement: Involves local authorities, businesses, and citizens in the design and implementation of circular economy strategies.</li> <li>- Policy alignment: Ensures that project outputs align with EU sustainability and environmental policies.</li> </ul>                                     |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advanced circular economy solutions for water, waste, and energy sectors.</li> <li>- Enhanced local capacity for sustainable practices and resource management.</li> <li>- Contributed to EU's goals on climate neutrality and resource efficiency.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Replicability potential: | <p>The project’s framework could be replicated in other regions by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engaging local and regional stakeholders in clean technology and circular economy projects.</li> <li>- Adapting the model to the local environmental and economic context.</li> <li>- Aligning with EU policies for circular economy and sustainability funding.</li> </ul>                                                                                         |
| Challenges faced:        | - Implementation barriers: Scaling innovative solutions from pilot phases to larger regions requires overcoming financial, technological, and institutional barriers.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.clean-circle.eu/">https://www.clean-circle.eu/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Additional notes:        | The initiative aims to build a sustainable and circular economy in EU regions through clean technologies, stakeholder engagement, and innovation promotion.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

7.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | Project RISE – Resilient Innovation Ecosystems for EU Value Chains                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Type of initiative:      | Project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Focus area:              | Innovation for less developed regions, sustainable investments, bioeconomy, SMEs support, interregional cooperation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Stakeholders involved:   | <b>Foundation CleanTech Bulgaria</b> [NGO], <b>N-ABLE</b> [SME], <b>ACPMR – Cluster Portugal Mineral Resources</b> [Cluster/Business Association], <b>Fundación ICAMCyL – International Center in Advanced Materials and Raw Materials</b> [Research Institute], <b>LE2C – Lombardy Energy Cleantech Cluster</b> [Cluster/Business Association], <b>DIGIPOLIS – Kemin Digipolis Oy</b> [Public Organization/Technology Park], <b>The PAPER PROVINCE Ekonomisk Foerening</b> [Business Association], <b>TECOS – Razvojni Center Orodjarstva Slovenije</b> [Research and Development Center]. |
| Methodology:             | Interregional cooperation, stakeholder engagement, local ecosystem assessments, innovation deployment, investment planning                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Results/impact:          | Enhanced capacity for innovation in underdeveloped regions; established roadmaps for interregional cooperation; fostered innovation in SMEs; contributed to the growth of bioeconomy and sustainable practices                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Replicability potential: | It can be replicated in other less-developed regions through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaboration between local authorities, businesses, and academic institutions, and local networks of innovative companies.</li> <li>- Supporting innovation ecosystems tailored to local resources and needs.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Challenges faced:        | Overcoming regional disparities in innovation readiness and capacity; overcoming doubt in participants due to lack of information about participation in projects                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.rise-project.eu/">https://www.rise-project.eu/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

Bulgaria's best practices focus on bioeconomy strategy development, circular solutions and policy-driven social innovation. The country's initiatives underline the importance of involving local stakeholders, including chambers of commerce, academic institutions and local authorities. Projects such as the strategy for the development of the bioeconomy in the Stara Zagora region underline the need to integrate regional needs with national and EU priorities. However, challenges include limited political support, fragmentation of stakeholders and gaps in public awareness. Bulgaria's experiences reinforce the importance of developing integrated strategies that link local actors to broader policy frameworks to ensure sustainable implementation.

A notable strength is Bulgaria's focus on integrating policy frameworks, and regional development plans, which facilitate the effective replication of successful models. However, challenges remain, such as securing long-term political support, maintaining stakeholder commitment and navigating complex regulatory environments. Bulgaria's experiences can inspire other regions, in particular with approaches that promote collaboration between public authorities, SMEs and the research community.

**Partner P3: ECRN - EUROPEAN CHEMICAL REGIONS NETWORK, Brussels, Belgium (total 5)**

1.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | ACE-EX – Expert at Applying Circular Economy Processes in Agriculture                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Type of initiative:      | EU project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Focus area:              | Circular economy in agriculture, vocational education, citizen engagement, digital and green skills, bio-based sector promotion                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Stakeholders involved:   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NGOs and educational institutions (e.g., OpenCom, EUROMASC, WIAB)</li> <li>- Local and regional government agencies (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, UTH - Department of Agriculture)</li> <li>- SMEs and industry partners (e.g., AINIA, Coldiretti, CKR)</li> <li>- National Qualification Agencies and universities</li> </ul> |
| Methodology:             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Co-creation workshops and stakeholder consultations</li> <li>- Development of training modules and VR tools</li> <li>- Validation of prior learning (RPL) procedures</li> <li>- Use of serious games and MOOCs for training and certification</li> </ul>                                                                     |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At least 440 MOOC certifications and 200 face-to-face certificates</li> <li>- Development of 15+ modules and serious game</li> <li>- Engagement of 20 consortium partners across 9 countries</li> <li>- Involvement of 200,000+ agricultural firms</li> <li>- Strengthened green/digital skills</li> </ul>                   |
| Replicability potential: | <p>Yes – can be replicated in other regions by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adapting the training modules to local agricultural practices</li> <li>- Collaborating with national accreditation bodies</li> <li>- Utilizing the digital platform and VR components for scalable delivery</li> </ul>                                                   |
| Challenges faced:        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Risk of insufficient partner engagement</li> <li>- Potential delays in developing training materials</li> <li>- Low initial participation rates</li> <li>- Technical challenges with MOOC platforms</li> </ul>                                                                                                               |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://ace-ex.eu/en/">https://ace-ex.eu/en/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Additional notes:        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alignment with EU Green Deal, CEAP, and Agenda 2030</li> <li>- Designed for EQF levels 4–6 with long-term sustainability through a stakeholder expert community</li> <li>- Includes tools like Skillsbank and Canvas for content delivery and recognition</li> </ul>                                                         |

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | SYSCHEMIQ – Demonstrator of systemic solutions for the circular economy in the Trilateral Chemical Region                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Type of initiative:      | EU project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Focus area:              | Stakeholder engagement, circular economy, sustainability, innovation in plastic waste management                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Stakeholders involved:   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Regional &amp; local governments:</b> Provincie Limburg, gemeente Sittard-Geleen (NL), Provinciale Ontwikkelingsmaatschappij Limburg (BE)</li> <li>- <b>Industry &amp; clusters:</b> SABIC, Morssinkhof Plastics, Sitech, Siegwark, PlastiQ, LEC Lombardy</li> <li>- <b>Research &amp; academia:</b> TNO, UGent, Zuyd University, Fraunhofer, FHNW, CHILL labs</li> <li>- <b>NGOs and networks:</b> Plastics Recyclers Europe (PRE), European Chemical Regions Network (ECRN)</li> <li>- <b>Waste &amp; logistics companies:</b> Source One GmbH, Vereniging Afvalsamenwerking Limburg</li> <li>- <b>Citizens and civil society via CityLabs initiatives</b></li> </ul> |
| Methodology:             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of a <b>dual-track multistakeholder governance model</b></li> <li>- Use of <b>AI-driven tools</b> (PRISM &amp; CIMS) for decision-making</li> <li>- <b>Community-based innovation</b> via Circular City Labs and Citylabs</li> <li>- Engagement through <b>incentive schemes</b> and <b>learning labs</b> (CHILL)</li> <li>- <b>Cross-border collaboration</b> and twinning with 5+ European regions</li> <li>- Standardization of sorting &amp; collection practices for plastic packaging waste</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                   |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthened stakeholder cooperation across NL-BE-DE regions</li> <li>- Demonstrated technical and governance solutions for circularity of 30 Mt of EU MPW</li> <li>- Estimated <b>11.4 Mt CO<sub>2</sub> eq savings</b> and <b>190 kT/a virgin polyolefin substitution</b> potential</li> <li>- Enabled investment plans for <b>150 M€ pilot recycling facility</b></li> <li>- Increased citizen awareness and participation in sustainable practices through local CityLabs and educational outreach</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                          |
| Replicability potential: | <p>High. Designed with <b>structured twinning</b>, the project supports replication via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policy and technology transfer toolkits</li> <li>- Open access to PRISM scenario tool and Circular Governance model</li> <li>- Engagement of replication partners (e.g., Flanders, Lombardy) from the start</li> <li>- Support from European platforms such as <b>ECRN</b> and <b>PRE</b></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Challenges faced:        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alignment across <b>diverse stakeholder interests</b></li> <li>- Complexity in implementing new <b>sorting technologies and standards</b></li> <li>- Ensuring <b>sustained citizen engagement</b></li> <li>- <b>Cross-border regulatory and infrastructure differences</b></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.syschemiq.eu/">https://www.syschemiq.eu/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Additional notes:        | SYSCHEMIQ demonstrates <b>integrated technological and societal innovation</b> . It combines <b>hard infrastructure (sorting, recycling)</b> with                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

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|  | <b>soft systems (governance, co-creation)</b> . Its governance model and local labs serve as templates for sustainable transformation elsewhere in Europe. |
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| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
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| Best practice name:    | S3Chem – Smart Chemistry Specialisation Strategy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Type of initiative:    | Regional Partnership                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Focus area:            | sustainability, innovation promotion, chemical industry, smart specialization strategies (RIS3)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Stakeholders involved: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Public Authorities:</b> Ministries and regional development agencies from seven European chemical regions, including Saxony-Anhalt (Germany), Lombardy (Italy), Catalonia (Spain), and others.</li> <li>- <b>Industry Representatives:</b> Chemical companies and industry associations actively participating in regional innovation stakeholder groups (RISGs).</li> <li>- <b>Research Institutions:</b> Universities and research centers specializing in chemical research and innovation.</li> <li>- <b>Clusters and Networks:</b> Triple helix clusters facilitating collaboration between academia, industry, and government.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Methodology:           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Interregional Working Groups (IWGs):</b> Conducted 12 meetings to facilitate exchange of experiences and mutual learning among partner regions.</li> <li>- <b>Site Visits:</b> Organized 8 visits to observe and learn from successful implementations in partner regions.</li> <li>- <b>Peer Review Workshops:</b> Held 6 workshops focusing on RIS3 development, stakeholder involvement, project generation, financing instruments, and monitoring.</li> <li>- <b>Regional Innovation Stakeholder Groups (RISGs):</b> Convened 40 meetings to engage local stakeholders in the innovation process.</li> <li>- <b>Thematic Studies:</b> Developed 5 studies addressing key aspects of RIS3 implementation and improvement.</li> <li>- <b>Action Plans:</b> Formulated 7 action plans outlining concrete steps to enhance policy instruments, with implementation monitored over two years.</li> </ul> |
| Results/impact:        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Policy Improvement:</b> Enhanced implementation of regional innovation strategies (RIS3) with a focus on chemical-related sectors.</li> <li>- <b>Stakeholder Engagement:</b> Strengthened cooperation among public authorities, industry, and research institutions across seven European chemical regions.</li> <li>- <b>Knowledge Exchange:</b> Facilitated mutual learning through interregional activities, leading to the identification and adoption of good practices.</li> <li>- <b>Innovation Promotion:</b> Supported chemical companies and research entities in accessing ERDF innovation funding, fostering</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

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|                          | research and development initiatives.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Replicability potential: | High. The structured approach of interregional cooperation, stakeholder engagement, and development of tailored action plans provides a replicable model for other regions aiming to enhance their smart specialization strategies in the chemical sector.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Challenges faced:        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Diverse Regional Contexts:</b> Aligning strategies across regions with varying economic, political, and industrial landscapes.</li> <li>- <b>Stakeholder Coordination:</b> Ensuring effective collaboration among a wide range of stakeholders with different interests and priorities.</li> <li>- <b>Sustaining Engagement:</b> Maintaining active participation of stakeholders throughout the project duration and beyond.</li> </ul> |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://projects2014-2020.interregeurope.eu/s3chem/">https://projects2014-2020.interregeurope.eu/s3chem/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Additional notes:        | The S3Chem project exemplifies successful stakeholder engagement and innovation promotion in the chemical industry by enhancing regional innovation strategies through interregional cooperation and mutual learning.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
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| Best practice name:    | POWER4BIO – Empowering regional stakeholders to boost bioeconomy deployment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Type of initiative:    | EU project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Focus area:            | Promotion of the bio-based sector, citizen and stakeholder engagement, regional strategy development, interregional cooperation, sustainability.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Stakeholders involved: | <p><b>Project Beneficiaries (Formal Partners)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>FUNDACION CIRCE</b> (Spain) – Coordinator, training and bioeconomy promotion</li> <li>2. <b>DBFZ</b> – Deutsches Biomasseforschungszentrum (Germany) – Technical expertise</li> <li>3. <b>Wageningen Research (WR)</b> (Netherlands) – Research on bioeconomy</li> <li>4. <b>META Group</b> (Italy) – Innovation and entrepreneurship</li> <li>5. <b>AKI</b> – Agricultural Economics Research Institute (Hungary) – Policy development, BioEast liaison</li> <li>6. <b>EPC</b> – Communication and branding</li> <li>7. <b>DRAXIS</b> (Greece) – Environmental solutions and GIS tools</li> <li>8. <b>Bay Zoltán Nonprofit Ltd. (BZN)</b> (Hungary) – Applied research</li> <li>9. <b>Ukrainian National Forestry University (UNFU)</b> – Forestry bioeconomy</li> <li>10. <b>CAPDER</b> – Andalusia's Ministry of Agriculture (Spain) – Public authority</li> <li>11. <b>MAE</b> – Mazovia Energy Agency (Poland) – Energy and sustainability</li> <li>12. <b>USB</b> – University of South Bohemia (Czech Republic) – Research and education</li> </ol> |

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|                          | <p>13. <b>CCB</b> – Chemie Cluster Bayern (Germany) – Industry and cluster engagement</p> <p>14. <b>SPRING</b> (Italy) – National cluster for green chemistry</p> <p>15. <b>EWI</b> – Department of Economy, Science and Innovation, Flanders (Belgium) – Public body</p> <p><b>Regional Stakeholders (via Regional Bioeconomy Hubs - RBHs)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministries of Agriculture</li> <li>• Regional development agencies</li> <li>• Industry clusters (e.g., green chemistry, agriculture, biomass)</li> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• NGOs and civil society organizations</li> <li>• Research and academic institutions (e.g., SUA, USB, UNFU, DBFZ, WR)</li> <li>• Local and regional authorities from 10 EU regions</li> <li>• Participants from the Community of Interest (Col), including stakeholders from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Romania (e.g., Romanian Green Energy Biomass Cluster)</li> <li>○ Croatia (Green Energy Cooperative)</li> <li>○ France (AILE)</li> <li>○ Poland (Warmirisko-Mazurskie Voivodeship)</li> <li>○ Netherlands (TKI BBE)</li> <li>○ Turkey (Hatay Metropolitan Municipality)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Support and Networking Bodies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>BioEast Initiative</b> – Central and Eastern European bioeconomy policy platform</li> <li>• <b>ECRN</b> – European Chemical Regions Network</li> <li>• <b>ERDN</b> – European Rural Development Network</li> </ul> |
| Methodology:             | Regional Bioeconomy Hubs (RBHs) for stakeholder mobilization; Co-creation and capacity-building workshops; Cross-visits for knowledge exchange; Use of analytical tools (e.g., S2Biom, BERST); Development of policy toolkits and catalogues; Integration of recommendations into regional strategies; WP structure with specific tasks for analysis, stakeholder engagement, and training dissemination                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5 new and 5 updated regional bioeconomy strategies</li> <li>- 1 Bioregional Strategy Accelerator Toolkit (BSAT)</li> <li>- 25 bio-based solutions catalogued, including 15 real-case examples</li> <li>- 15 funding instruments identified</li> <li>- Increased regional cooperation and knowledge</li> <li>- Stakeholder capacity built across 10 regions involving over 200 organizations</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Replicability potential: | Yes. The toolkit and methodologies were designed for use beyond the participating regions. Recommendations and catalogues can guide strategy replication. Interregional cooperation models and funding strategies can be adopted elsewhere. Examples and case studies help inspire application in other contexts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Challenges faced:        | Aligning strategies with diverse regional contexts and stakeholder needs; Ensuring long-term commitment beyond project lifespan; Integrating existing policy frameworks with new models;                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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|                   | Maintaining stakeholder engagement across regions; Adapting tools like BSAT to different institutional capacities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Website:          | <a href="http://www.power4bio.eu">www.power4bio.eu</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Additional notes: | The project emphasized open access, stakeholder co-design, and transferability. It also leveraged existing networks (e.g., ECRN, ERRIN) to amplify dissemination and policy impact. Materials developed include training kits, policy briefs, and funding guides. The BSAT and catalogues are central outputs intended for long-term use by regions and policy makers. |

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| Best practice name:    | ChemMultimodal – Promotion of Multimodal Transport in Chemical Logistics                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Type of initiative:    | EU Project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Focus area:            | Stakeholder engagement, sustainable transportation, innovation in chemical logistics, multimodal transport solutions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Stakeholders involved: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Regional Authorities:</b> Ministry of Economy, Science and Digitalisation Saxony-Anhalt (Lead Partner), Ministry of Transport and Regional Development Saxony-Anhalt</li> <li>- <b>Industry Associations:</b> Polish Chamber of Chemical Industry, Association of Chemical Industry of the Czech Republic, Association of Chemical and Pharmaceutical Industry of the Slovak Republic</li> <li>- <b>Academic Institutions:</b> Otto-von-Guericke University Magdeburg, Warsaw School of Economics, FH OÖ Forschungs &amp; Entwicklungs GmbH/Logistikum</li> <li>- <b>Logistics Service Providers (LSPs):</b> Various regional and international LSPs involved in pilot actions</li> <li>- <b>Terminal Operators:</b> Engaged in facilitating multimodal transport solutions</li> <li>- <b>Public Authorities:</b> Regional governments and policy advisory groups</li> <li>- <b>Chemical Companies:</b> 58 companies across seven central European countries participated in pilot projects</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Methodology:           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Development of a Toolbox:</b> Created a comprehensive set of tools to support chemical companies and LSPs in planning and implementing multimodal transport solutions. The toolbox includes:</li> <li>- <b>Consulting Services:</b> Framework for workshops and bilateral meetings to discuss potential shifts from unimodal to multimodal transport.</li> <li>- <b>Planning Guidelines:</b> Checklist with 29 questions to evaluate the feasibility of multimodal transport.</li> <li>- <b>Intermodal Links Platform:</b> Visualization of existing intermodal transport routes, including information on frequency, availability of LSPs, and terminal operators.</li> <li>- <b>CO<sub>2</sub> Calculator:</b> Activity-based tool providing calculations of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for intermodal connections.</li> <li>- <b>Pilot Actions:</b> Tested the toolbox in seven regions with 58 chemical companies to facilitate real modal shifts.</li> <li>- <b>Training Seminars:</b> Conducted six seminars to transfer knowledge and build capacity among additional companies and LSPs.</li> <li>- <b>Strategy and Action Plans:</b> Developed a joint transnational strategy and seven regional action plans to promote multimodal transport of chemical goods.</li> </ul> |
| Results/impact:        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Increased Multimodal Transport:</b> Achieved a shift of 11.89% from unimodal road transport to multimodal transport on identified routes.</li> <li>- <b>CO<sub>2</sub> Emission Reduction:</b> Reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 10.5% on the selected routes.</li> <li>- <b>Stakeholder Collaboration:</b> Enhanced cooperation among chemical companies, LSPs, terminal operators, and public authorities across</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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|                          | <p>central Europe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Capacity Building:</b> Trained over 120 companies in utilizing the toolbox and implementing multimodal transport solutions.</li> <li>- <b>Policy Development:</b> Established a Policy Advisory Group that met three times in Brussels to engage with stakeholders at the European level.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Replicability potential: | High. The project's structured approach, including the development of a comprehensive toolbox and the implementation of pilot actions, provides a replicable model for other regions aiming to promote multimodal transport in chemical logistics. The availability of detailed planning guidelines, consulting services, and training seminars facilitates adaptation to different regional contexts.                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Challenges faced:        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Information Transparency:</b> Limited access to information on existing multimodal routes and services.</li> <li>- <b>Economic Considerations:</b> Cost-effectiveness remains a critical factor for companies when deciding on transport modes.</li> <li>- <b>Infrastructure Limitations:</b> Need for improved infrastructure to support multimodal transport solutions.</li> <li>- <b>Stakeholder Engagement:</b> Coordinating diverse interests among various stakeholders, including companies, LSPs, and public authorities.</li> </ul> |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://programme2014-20.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/ChemMultimodal.html">https://programme2014-20.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/ChemMultimodal.html</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Additional notes:        | The ChemMultimodal project exemplifies successful stakeholder engagement and innovation promotion in sustainable transportation. By developing practical tools and fostering collaboration among key players in the chemical logistics sector, the project has contributed to reducing environmental impact and enhancing the efficiency of chemical goods transport in central Europe.                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

The ECRN partner based in Belgium, presents an impressive portfolio of EU projects and collaborative initiatives promoting the circular economy and bio-based innovation in the chemicals sector. ECRN initiatives consistently emphasise stakeholder engagement, technological innovation and capacity building. The ACE-EX project, for example, is an excellent illustration of vocational education and training aligned with the priorities of the EU Green Deal, delivering over 440 MOOC certifications and engaging a wide range of stakeholders in nine countries. The use of VR tools and serious games in the project highlights ECRN's commitment to modern learning methodologies tailored to the agricultural sector, even when facing challenges such as partner engagement and technical barriers.

In addition, ECRN demonstrates a strong focus on systemic innovation in sustainable logistics through the ChemMultimodal project. This initiative stands out for its holistic approach to promoting multimodal transport in the chemicals sector, achieving an 11.89% shift from unimodal to multimodal transport and a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of over 10%. Its comprehensive toolkit, which includes consultancy services, planning guidelines and a CO<sub>2</sub> calculator, highlights ECRN's commitment to providing practical solutions that are largely replicable in other regions. In addition, ChemMultimodal is an example of effective collaboration between stakeholders, bringing together chemical companies, logistics service providers, terminal operators and public authorities to address challenges such as infrastructure constraints and economic considerations. This project complements ECRN's broader goal of integrating sustainable practices into key industrial processes, while ensuring that logistical and environmental challenges are overcome collaboratively.

Projects such as SYSCHEMIQ and S3Chem further demonstrate ECRN's integrated approach to sustainability, combining technological and managerial innovations with local community engagement. SYSCHEMIQ's two-way governance model and AI-based decision-making tools demonstrate how complex, cross-border challenges in plastic waste management can be effectively addressed. Meanwhile, S3Chem's focus on smart specialisation strategies facilitated knowledge sharing and policy improvement in seven European chemical regions. Taken together, these initiatives demonstrate how the ECRN is leveraging inter-regional cooperation and stakeholder networks to create resilient innovation-driven ecosystems. The synergy between policy development, industry collaboration and community engagement across the ECRN portfolio underlines its central role in transforming Europe's chemical regions into models of sustainability and circular economy excellence.

**Partner: P4, CSI - CENTER FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION LTD, Nicosia, Cyprus (total 8)**

1.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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| Best practice name:    | LEVERS -Learning Ventures for Climate Action HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ERA-01-70                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Type:                  | EU-funded project under the Horizon program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Focus area:            | The focus area of LEVERS includes climate justice, social innovation, citizen engagement, and climate resilience. The project empowers individuals and communities across Europe to collaboratively engage in climate action through inclusive learning and transformative initiatives.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Stakeholders involved: | LEVERS brings together a diverse range of stakeholders, including local communities, NGOs, research institutions, SMEs, local governments, formal and non-formal educational institutions, and voluntary sector organizations. These groups collaborate to develop climate adaptation strategies and foster inclusive, community-driven climate action.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Methodology:           | LEVERS employs a systemic design approach to develop climate action opportunities by creating inclusive, multi-stakeholder partnerships known as Learning Ventures. These ventures promote networking, sharing, and the application of science and technology research in lifelong learning settings. The project emphasizes critical pedagogy and lifelong learning to drive transformative change, utilizing co-creation workshops, participatory decision-making, digital platforms/tools for citizen engagement, and educational campaigns to foster collaboration and empower communities.                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Results/impact:        | <p>Increase community resilience to climate change, enhance public awareness and participation, create locally tailored climate solutions and strengthen collaboration between stakeholders. Foster positive change within communities.</p> <p>LEVERS has developed a range of open resources to support its initiatives, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The Learning Framework</a>: A guide for designing pedagogical approaches and learning activities that emphasize social justice and equity in climate action education.</li> <li>• <a href="#">The Field Guide</a>: Insights from the development of cross-sectoral collaborations for climate action.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy Brief</a>: Policy recommendations for open schooling and</li> </ul> |

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|                          | learning for sustainability.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Replicability potential: | This model can be adapted to different regions, tailoring citizen engagement strategies to local cultures and environmental conditions. Building strong local partnerships is crucial for successful replication. LEVERS is designed to be adaptable across various European regions. With nine partner Learning Venture demonstrator regions in countries such as Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Switzerland, and the UK, the project's framework can be tailored to different local contexts, making it highly replicable. |
| Challenges faced:        | The project addresses the challenge that many individuals feel powerless to take climate action in their daily lives. By providing collaborative opportunities and fostering inclusive learning, LEVERS seeks to overcome this sense of powerlessness and empower individuals to engage in meaningful climate action. However, maintaining long-term community engagement, managing resource constraints, balancing the different needs of stakeholders, and ensuring the scalability of locally developed solutions remain key challenges.                 |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://leversforclimate.eu/">https://leversforclimate.eu/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Additional notes:        | LEVERS for Climate is recognised for its community-based approach to climate resilience, emphasising co-creative and inclusive decision-making processes. The project serves as a model for integrating social innovation into climate change adaptation strategies.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

2.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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| Best practice name:      | Val's Place                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Type:                    | Café                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Focus area:              | Sustainable tourism, community engagement, eco-friendly hospitality, rural development, community hub                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Local entrepreneurs, rural community members, eco-conscious tourists, SMEs, general public.                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Methodology:             | Developed as a self-sustaining eco-tourism business integrating local traditions, organic farming, and community-driven hospitality. Focus on sustainability through locally sourced food, eco-conscious accommodations, and cultural experiences.                                         |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides authentic rural experiences, attracting eco-tourists</li> <li>- Encourages sustainability in hospitality sector</li> </ul>                                                                                                               |
| Replicability potential: | This model can be replicated in other rural European regions by creating eco-tourism hubs that integrate local traditions, organic food production, and sustainable business models. Key factors include strong community involvement, sustainable infrastructure, and local partnerships. |
| Challenges faced:        | Val's place faces several challenges, such as maintaining sustainability while maintaining profitability. The seasonal nature of the business, with a sharp decline in visitors during the winter months, creates cash                                                                     |

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|                   | flow problems. Moreover, balancing the demands of modern tourism with the preservation of local traditions is a constant challenge, as there is a need to promote rural ecotourism without compromising the authenticity of the experience. Raising awareness of sustainable agricultural practices and ecotourism remains a priority, alongside the difficulty of transitioning local farmers to more sustainable methods. Despite these obstacles, Val's Place continues to highlight the potential of combining ecotourism with sustainable agriculture to support both the environment and the local economy. |
| Website:          | <a href="https://www.valsplacecyprus.com/">https://www.valsplacecyprus.com/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Additional notes: | Val's place serves as a model for sustainable rural tourism by promoting eco-conscious travel, economic growth, and community engagement.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

3.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
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| Best practice name:      | Mavronero Farm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Type:                    | Farm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Focus area:              | Sustainable bio-based sector, circular economy, stakeholder engagement, sustainable agriculture, soil and compost, agricultural engineering, smart farming.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Local farmers, eco-tourists, sustainability experts, SMEs, universities, agricultural researchers, NGOs, and government bodies promoting rural sustainability.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Methodology:             | Mavronero Farm integrates regenerative agriculture with eco-tourism, using sustainable farming practices to improve biodiversity and soil health while reducing water consumption. The farm promotes local produce and educates visitors about sustainable farming practices through interactive tours and activities, fostering a deeper understanding of the importance of sustainability in agriculture.                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Results/impact:          | The Mavronero farm has achieved significant environmental and economic impacts. These include increasing biodiversity, improving soil health and reducing water consumption through the use of efficient irrigation techniques and soil moisture retention methods. The farm has also boosted the rural economy by attracting ecotourists and promoting locally produced products. In addition, it has helped to raise awareness of sustainable agriculture among visitors and stakeholders. The farm has created employment opportunities in rural areas, promoting local economic development. |
| Replicability potential: | This model can be replicated in other rural European regions by creating eco-tourism hubs that integrate local traditions, organic food production, and sustainable business models. In addition, integrating regenerative agriculture with ecotourism practiced by the farm could be applied in other regions by encouraging local farms to adopt sustainable practices, developing community-led ecotourism initiatives, and creating partnerships between farmers, businesses and policy makers to promote sustainability. These approaches could                                             |

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|                   | be tailored to the unique needs and resources of different rural areas.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Challenges faced: | The Mavronero farm faces challenges such as the effects of climate change and extreme weather conditions that can affect crop production yields. In addition, securing financing for scaling up operations is a major obstacle. Raising awareness and persuading conventional farmers to switch to sustainable practices remains an ongoing challenge. Another issue is maintaining a steady flow of ecotourists throughout the year, which requires continuous marketing efforts and the creation of a diverse set of attractive offers. |
| Website:          | <a href="https://mavronero.cy/en/">https://mavronero.cy/en/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Additional notes: | Mavronero farm serves as a model for sustainable rural tourism by promoting eco-conscious travel, economic growth, and community engagement.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

4.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | Cyprus Circular Economy Platform (CCEP)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Type:                    | Online platform                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Focus area:              | Promotion of circular economy practices, stakeholder engagement, sustainability, and innovation                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Businesses, industries, local authorities, public bodies, associations, NGOs, and the general public                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Methodology:             | The platform collects and disseminates good practices related to the circular economy from various stakeholders across Cyprus. It encourages submission of successful initiatives, organizes events, and facilitates networking among stakeholders to promote sustainable practices and innovation.                      |
| Results/impact:          | The platform raised awareness and understanding of circular economy principles among Cypriot businesses and organizations. It facilitated the exchange of best practices, leading to increased adoption of sustainable and circular processes, thus contributing to environmental conservation and economic efficiency.  |
| Replicability potential: | High. The platform model for gathering and sharing best practices can be replicated in other regions or countries aiming to promote circular economy principles. By adapting the platform to the local context, other regions can promote stakeholder engagement and accelerate the transition to sustainable practices. |
| Challenges faced:        | Encourage wide participation of different stakeholders, ensure that content is kept up to date and that engagement is maintained over time. In addition, measuring the direct impact of common practices on actual business operations can be difficult.                                                                 |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://cypruscircular.org.cy/cyprus-circular-economy-platform/">https://cypruscircular.org.cy/cyprus-circular-economy-platform/</a>                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Additional notes:        | The platform was funded by the European Commission Representation in Cyprus and co-created with the Cyprus Federation of Employers & Industrialists (OEB) and was registered to the EU Green Week 2018 partners' events.                                                                                                 |

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|  | CCEP continues to play a key role in Cyprus' efforts to transition to a circular economy, acting as a central hub for knowledge sharing, networking and promoting sustainable practices. |
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5.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| Best practice name:      | IDEA Innovation Center                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Type:                    | Accelerator - Incubator programme                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Focus area:              | Startup incubation, business acceleration, and innovation promotion with a focus on entrepreneurship, sustainability, and digital transformation.                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Bank of Cyprus (founding partner), corporate sponsors, industry experts, government bodies, and startup mentors.                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Methodology:             | It provides an intensive incubation and acceleration program, offering start-ups funding, office space, mentoring, networking and business development training. It fosters collaboration between entrepreneurs, investors and industry leaders.                                                                               |
| Results/impact:          | It supported over 82 start-ups and helped create more than 150 jobs in Cyprus. Successfully secured funding for many start-ups, contributing to the development of the business ecosystem in Cyprus. Strengthened the start-up and innovation landscape in Cyprus through mentoring and financial support.                     |
| Replicability potential: | High. This start-up incubation model supported by companies can be applied to other regions by working with financial institutions, universities and local businesses to create an innovation hub.                                                                                                                             |
| Challenges faced:        | Ensure stable long-term financing, adapt to the changing needs of start-ups and ensure sustainable growth after the incubation phase. Attracting more start-ups with a focus on the bioeconomy and sustainability remains a challenge.                                                                                         |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.ideacy.net/en-gb/Idea/">https://www.ideacy.net/en-gb/Idea/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Additional notes:        | The IDEA Innovation Centre is aligned with the objectives of the DRIVE project by providing a structured environment to mentor and support start-ups in the field of sustainability, circular economy and biology-based innovation. It could serve as a strategic partner for regional accelerators and roadshows under DRIVE. |

6.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:    | Cyprus – CAP Strategic Plan                                                                                          |
| Type:                  | Strategy Plan                                                                                                        |
| Focus area:            | Sustainable agriculture, rural development, climate resilience, and biodiversity conservation                        |
| Stakeholders involved: | Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, farmers, SMEs. Local authorities, and environmental NGOs |

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| Methodology:             | The plan incorporates direct payments for farmers, eco-schemes for sustainable practices, rural development funding and advisory services for the modernization of the sector. The measures support innovation, organic farming, water management and biodiversity-friendly practices.                                                                                                  |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial support for Cypriot farmers to ensure economic viability</li> <li>- Expansion of organic and regenerative agriculture practices</li> <li>- Strengthening rural communities through economic incentives</li> </ul>                                                                                                                    |
| Replicability potential: | High. Similar strategic approaches can be adapted to other EU regions, integrating financial support with sustainability objectives and rural development incentives.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Challenges faced:        | Climate change and extreme weather affecting local agriculture<br>Ensuring fair distribution of subsidies and eco-scheme adoption                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/cap-my-country/cap-strategic-plans/cyprus_en">https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/cap-my-country/cap-strategic-plans/cyprus_en</a> & <a href="https://www.gov.cy/moa/">https://www.gov.cy/moa/</a> & <a href="https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy_en">https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy_en</a> |
| Additional notes:        | The CAP Strategic Plan for Cyprus is aligned with the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy, aiming for a resilient, sustainable and competitive agricultural sector.                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

7.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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| Best practice name:      | Island Sustainable Tourism Action through Resilient SMEs (I – STARS) project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Type:                    | EU project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Focus area:              | Sustainable tourism, circular economy, SME resilience, rural development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Local tourism businesses, SMEs, policymakers, sustainability experts, community organizations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Methodology:             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supporting SMEs in the tourism sector to adopt sustainable and resilient business practices</li> <li>- Finance their sustainability transition journey through grants worth up to €5,600 per applicant.</li> <li>- Providing training, mentorship and financial assistance to encourage circular economy models</li> <li>- Developing best practices for eco-friendly tourism in island regions</li> <li>- Fostering collaborations between businesses, local communities, and authorities to promote sustainability</li> </ul> |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhanced sustainability practices in tourism-related SMEs</li> <li>- Improved resilience of small businesses in the face of environmental and economic challenges</li> <li>- Increased awareness of circular economy principles in the tourism sector</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Replicability potential: | High, the I-STARS project can be adapted in other island and coastal regions across the EU by integrating tourism sustainability frameworks, SME support programs, and stakeholder engagement initiatives.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

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| Challenges faced: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Resistance to changing business models towards sustainability</li> <li>- Limited financial resources for small tourism enterprises to invest in ecofriendly solutions</li> </ul>                                                                         |
| Website:          | <a href="https://ccci.org.cy/island-sustainable-tourism-action-through-resilient-smes/">https://ccci.org.cy/island-sustainable-tourism-action-through-resilient-smes/</a>                                                                                                                         |
| Additional notes: | The project demonstrates how sustainability can be integrated into the tourism sector while supporting economic growth and environmental conservation. The project offers valuable information for policy makers and businesses wishing to enhance the resilience of tourism-dependent economies. |

8.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
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| Best practice name:      | Kot-Kot A Circular Economy Solution for Food Waste Management & Sustainable olive groves                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Type:                    | Initiative                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Focus area:              | The initiative focuses on circular economy practices by turning food waste into valuable resources, promoting sustainable agriculture and reducing environmental impacts. It integrates waste management with sustainable olive cultivation, demonstrating an innovative approach to resource efficiency. |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Kot-Kot involves local farmers, food producers, environmental organizations and research institutions. The initiative also works with policymakers and sustainability advocates to promote circular economy principles in agriculture.                                                                    |
| Methodology:             | The initiative collects food waste and processes it into organic compost, which is then used to enrich the soil in olive groves. By replacing chemical fertilizers with nutrient-rich compost, the initiative improves soil health and boosts oil production, while reducing landfill waste.              |
| Results/impact:          | Kot-Kot has contributed to reducing food waste, improving soil fertility and increasing the sustainability of olive cultivation in Cyprus. The initiative supports biodiversity, reduces carbon emissions and promotes environmentally friendly agricultural practices.                                   |
| Replicability potential: | The model can be easily replicated in other agricultural sectors and regions facing similar challenges in terms of waste management and soil degradation. By encouraging local partnerships and policy support, the initiative can extend its impact beyond olive growing.                                |
| Challenges faced:        | Key challenges include ensuring a stable supply of food waste, raising awareness of the benefits of composting and addressing the upfront costs of composting infrastructure. In addition, changing traditional farming practices to adopt sustainable methods requires education and incentives.         |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://kotkot.my.canva.site/about">https://kotkot.my.canva.site/about</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Additional notes:        | Kot-Kot serves as an example of how circular economy principles can be effectively integrated into agriculture, demonstrating a sustainable solution to food waste while enhancing rural economies and environmental resilience.                                                                          |

The Cypriot partner demonstrates an integrated approach to promoting sustainability, circular economy and climate action, with a particular focus on empowering communities and promoting multi-stakeholder collaboration. It highlights the LEVERS project, an EU-funded project under the Horizon program that adopts a systems planning approach to engage communities in climate justice and resilience through participatory decision-making and lifelong learning. By integrating co-creation workshops, digital platforms and inclusive learning frameworks, LEVERS enhances citizen participation, raises climate awareness and empowers local communities to develop tailored solutions for climate change adaptation. This approach exemplifies CSI Cyprus' commitment to bottom-up innovation and fostering local partnerships that are vital for replicability across Europe.

The analysis also highlights Val's Place and Mavronero Farm, which combine **sustainable tourism** with local community development. Val's Place leverages its café and hospitality services to offer authentic rural experiences while promoting organic farming and eco-tourism. It demonstrates how sustainable hospitality can be rooted in local traditions and community collaboration. Mavronero Farm, on the other hand, combines regenerative agriculture with eco-tourism, demonstrating how soil health, biodiversity and water efficiency can be integrated into a rewarding and educational experience for visitors. Both models emphasize community engagement and knowledge sharing, making them replicable in other rural areas seeking to develop sustainable tourism ecosystems.

In addition, Cyprus' portfolio includes the Cyprus Circular Economy Platform (CCEP) and Kot-Kot, which are examples of the circular economy in action. CCEP acts as a hub for the exchange of best practices between businesses, local authorities and NGOs, thus increasing stakeholder participation and promoting innovation in waste management and sustainable production. Kot-Kot, meanwhile, effectively closes the cycle by turning food waste into organic fertilizer for olive groves, enhancing both soil fertility and agricultural sustainability. These initiatives highlight the importance of digital platforms, stakeholder education and policy alignment to promote the transition to a circular economy at the regional level.

Overall, Cyprus' best practices reveal a dynamic ecosystem of innovation that bridges climate action, sustainable tourism, agriculture and community-driven development. Initiatives often combine social innovation with technological and ecological solutions, demonstrating how rural areas can leverage local resources and partnerships to address global challenges. This holistic approach aligns with the goals of the EU Green Deal and sets a blueprint for other regions aiming to integrate circularity and sustainability into their local economies.

**Partner: P5, nEULakes - Network of European Rural Lakes, Iseo, Italy (total 5)**

1.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
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| Best practice name:      | H2 Val Camonica                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Type:                    | public initiative (Municipalities) co-funded by the EU, Province of Brescia and Regione Lombardia                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Focus area:              | Sustainable innovation for citizens                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Stakeholders involved:   | A2A Life Company, Transport Companies, Municipalities of the Camonica Valley (Province of Brescia), citizens, companies related to the hydrogen industry                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Methodology:             | <p>H2 Valcamonica is a project that aims to create the first integrated supply chain for the production, storage, distribution and marketing of green hydrogen and contribute to the achievement of the Net Zero target. The sectors involved will be mobility and energy-intensive industries (EI).</p> <p>The ambitious measures that will be put into practice will concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the implementation of an electrolyser for hydrogen production</li> <li>• the installation of a compression system</li> <li>• the development of a dual storage system (fixed and mobile) useful for storage</li> </ul> <p>Hydrogen will be produced from the certified share of renewable electricity generated by the Brescia waste-to-energy plant.</p> |
| Results/impact:          | <p>The site will produce a forecasted 830 tons per year of hydrogen, based on 43.870 MWh of electricity and 16.600 m<sup>3</sup> of water.</p> <p>The project will avoid 42.295 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> net absolute emissions during the first 10 years of operation, representing almost 100% of GHG emitted by a conventional technology.</p> <p>At the moment, the first hydrogen train has arrived in the area.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Replicability potential: | The project appears as difficult to replicate as infrastructure interventions might be needed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Challenges faced:        | Poor infrastructure, e.g. old tunnels that has to be adapted to the new trains.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.h2valcamonica.eu/en">https://www.h2valcamonica.eu/en</a><br><a href="https://www.gruppoa2a.it/en/projects/partnership/green-hydrogen-valley-valcamonica#the-project">https://www.gruppoa2a.it/en/projects/partnership/green-hydrogen-valley-valcamonica#the-project</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Additional notes:        | H2 Valcamonica is co-founded by the European Union through the Innovation Fund Programme.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | CWD CIRCLE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Type:                    | Co-funded by the EU within the LIFE Programme                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Focus area:              | Circular economy, waste management, environmental sustainability                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Stakeholders involved:   | SMEs, University of Brescia, Lombardy Region                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Methodology:             | <p>CDW Circle has the ambitious goal of achieving total recycling of construction and demolition waste (CDW) through the production of value-added secondary raw materials to be reused in the construction sector. The project will therefore combine economic sustainability with environmental sustainability.</p> <p>To achieve this goal, the project aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a new stationary pilot plant at the Gatti Group site in Lograto (BS) for the selective separation of concrete aggregates from bricks and other waste materials (metals, wood, plastic, etc.)</li> <li>• Improve the selection of CDW using the most innovative technologies such as advanced optical sorting techniques provided by Binder+Co</li> <li>• Develop and test new concrete mixtures using an appropriate fraction of recycled aggregates with performance comparable to conventional products in terms of costs and quality</li> <li>• Create some market niches for inert materials by trying to enhance the economic value of these products. Existing tools will be used, such as the “Inert Market” exchange platform implemented by the Lombardy Region</li> </ul> |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in raw materials’ consumption</li> <li>• Less landfill sites</li> <li>• Less CO2 emissions</li> <li>• 90,000 tons of materials that the project is set to reuse</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Replicability potential: | Yes, the project could be replicated in other European industrial regions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Challenges faced:        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Distrust” towards the quality of recycled materials</li> <li>• Legal problems</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Website:                 | More details about the 7 WPs: <a href="https://www.eseb.it/cdwcircle/en/home-page-en/">https://www.eseb.it/cdwcircle/en/home-page-en/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Additional notes:        | University project co-funded by the EU and Regione Lombardia                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| Best practice name:      | ATG Around The Ground – Smart Agriculture                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Type:                    | private project funded by the EU                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Focus area:              | Environmental sustainability, Artificial Intelligence                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Stakeholders involved:   | SMEs, agricultural stakeholders (associations, companies, etc.)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Methodology:             | <p>The aim of the project is to initially define and create a new advanced monitoring and strategic data processing system in the viticulture and oenological sector. To combine the latest and sophisticated 4.0 information technologies (Internet of Things, Cloud Computing, Artificial Intelligence) to have an extremely positive impact on the sector and generate significant benefits in terms of improvement in the prevention and control of plant diseases with eco-sustainable techniques, efficiency and sustainability of crops in the context of environmental sustainability, yield and low-impact production quality. The funded project involves the creation of the first prototype of an advanced monitoring and data processing system. The prototype will be characterised by three technological components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hardware sensor part: it must be able to receive the raw data that must then be reprocessed and analysed</li> <li>• data transmission technology: it must be able to integrate with the sensors in order to put them in communication with the software platform and allow the flow of data through the connections and tools identified in the previous activities</li> <li>• software part: it will consist of an artificial intelligence system capable of processing data, examining information and comparing it with any historical data residing in the same database.</li> </ul> <p>The objective of the activity is to make the artificial intelligence system increasingly autonomous over time and capable of automatically determining the appropriate interventions.</p> |
| Results/impact:          | <p>Around the Ground started with a “Pilot phase”, during which three wineries were identified - Perla del Garda, Francesco Averoldi and Uberti - and thanks to the technical service of Condifesa Lombardia N-E, a cadastral mapping in GIS was prepared which allowed to study in advance the pedoclimatic-morphological characteristics of the companies involved and identify the critical issues to be monitored with the various company technicians. The subsequent study of the information allowed to design a company sensor network, using the LORA.WAN transmission technology (through the partner A2A Smart City), identify the most suitable type of sensor and position the detection in specific areas representative of the plots. The sensors were then installed in the field, supported by technicians from the wineries in the use and calibration of the data read by the installed sensors based on the native VISIOGREEN applications of the technological tools adopted in the Beta test.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Replicability potential: | Yes, it could be replicated in other wine regions in Italy or in Europe.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

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| Challenges faced: | Thanks to the synergy created between the partners and the different skills put into common factor, the first phase was concluded with excellent results.                    |
| Website:          | <a href="https://www.csmt.it/it/progetti/atg-around-the-ground-smart-agriculture#">https://www.csmt.it/it/progetti/atg-around-the-ground-smart-agriculture#</a> (in IT only) |
| Additional notes: | Funded within the European Programme for Rural Development 2014-2020                                                                                                         |

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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| Best practice name:    | The sustainability compass                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Type:                  | Private initiative                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Focus area:            | Circular economy, environmental sustainability                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Stakeholders involved: | SMEs, startups, bigger companies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Methodology:           | <p>The Sustainability Compass is an operational tool for companies. It provides specific indicators to evaluate the impact of one's decisions in terms of economic, environmental and social sustainability of a project, of an investment, or of the entire company.</p> <p>It is a tool that monitors the effects of an initiative on the company and its stakeholders: shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, environment and territory, providing the manager with a global vision of the related benefits.</p> <p>Stakeholders involved in the analysis: Shareholders, Employees, Customers, Suppliers, Territory.</p> <p>Each of them is associated with a KPI thanks to which the impact in terms of sustainability can be assessed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shareholders – ROI (Return On Investment)</li> <li>• Employees - PSI (People Satisfaction index)</li> <li>• Employees - HSI (Health and Safety index)</li> <li>• Customers – CSI (Customer Service index)</li> <li>• Suppliers – LS (Loyal Suppliers)</li> <li>• Territory – CF (Carbon Footprint)</li> <li>• Territory – SII (Social and Innovation index).</li> </ul> <p>The individual scores obtained by each KPI will be the result of a self-assessment that the manager must do with the help of a checklist and, in the case of quantitative indicators such as ROI, an automatic conversion of the result obtained into a percentage value is expected. The result of each KPI contributes to forming the Global Score, therefore given by the sum in hundredths of each KPI. Adding the scores of the different indicators is not enough, as it is essential that an initiative and consequently a company is sustainable in a homogeneous way: it is important to evaluate how the different KPIs are distributed among them. For the different values of the dispersion, a multiplication factor is assigned to evaluate when the KPI scores are distributed in a homogeneous way, used to calculate the Sustainability Index.</p> <p>The result of this index provides us with an indication of the sustainability of an initiative, assessed under different aspects, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0-20 Low sustainability</li> <li>• 20-40 Medium-low sustainability</li> <li>• 40-60 Medium sustainability</li> <li>• 60-80 Medium-high sustainability</li> <li>• 80-100 High sustainability</li> </ul> |

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| Results/impact:          | The method of the Sustainability Compass has been used to assess sustainability of the manufacturing sector in the Province of Brescia. Further info here: <a href="https://www.csmt.it/it/progetti/sostenibilita-nel-settore-manifatturiero">https://www.csmt.it/it/progetti/sostenibilita-nel-settore-manifatturiero</a> |
| Replicability potential: | In theory, it could be replicated. However, the methods has been developed CSMT, and it is a registered trademark. Therefore, cooperation with CSMT innovation hub would be necessary.                                                                                                                                     |
| Challenges faced:        | Difficulties in putting the evaluated projects into practice.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.csmt.it/it/progetti/la-bussola-della-sostenibilita">https://www.csmt.it/it/progetti/la-bussola-della-sostenibilita</a> (in IT only)                                                                                                                                                                   |

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:    | Green Academy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Type:                  | private initiative co-funded by Civil Society Organisations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Focus area:            | Citizen engagement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Stakeholders involved: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NEET i.e. young people under 30 who are not studying and not working</li> <li>• Women with care responsibilities whose employment gap remains large</li> <li>• Unemployed people over 50 outside the labour market</li> <li>• Local associations, foundations, and cooperatives</li> </ul> <p>Green Academy is aimed at specific categories of beneficiaries resident in Lake Garda's area.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Methodology:           | <p>The challenge of Green Academy consists in setting up a public/social/private network capable of intercepting and involving the beneficiaries in a free professional growth pathway aimed at the acquisition of skills in the environmental field, are the possibility of stable employment.</p> <p>The project actions want to test an intervention model, based on broad interception criteria and on the provision of various types of interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• training interventions on professionalising themes</li> <li>• courses focusing on issues related to sustainability in its many environmental, social and economic facets</li> <li>• capacity-building interventions for paid internships</li> <li>• full payment of courses to obtain a B, C, CQC driving licence and possible accompaniment to the exam</li> <li>• projects for finding and accompanying work in the ecological-environmental field</li> </ul> <p>Through Green Academy it will be possible to experiment a model that promotes the autonomy of people in fragile situations, avoiding the onset of a future dimension of economic and social hardship.</p> <p>At the same time, the project gives rise to a synergic and lasting intervention and the establishment of a Network of subjects that will feature public services, third sector organisations, educational</p> |

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|                          | institutions, and for-profit enterprises.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Results/impact:          | To date, 61 people have been involved, including 43 young people. 16 boys and girls are already doing a paid internship on Lake Garda and 21 have participated in group training on sustainability issues. During 2023, 8 of them have already obtained job stability, while one has resumed his studies. In 2024, the first 6 young people will also benefit from the free path to acquire a driving license.                          |
| Replicability potential: | Yes, in rural areas.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Challenges faced:        | Attract young people.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.cauto.it/social-cooperative-brescia/innovative-projects/green-academy:-pathways-for-vocational-training,-growth-and-empowerment-in-the-ecological-environmental-field-to-prevent-in-work-poverty">https://www.cauto.it/social-cooperative-brescia/innovative-projects/green-academy:-pathways-for-vocational-training,-growth-and-empowerment-in-the-ecological-environmental-field-to-prevent-in-work-poverty</a> |
| Additional notes:        | With the contribution of Fondazione Cariplo, Fondazione Peppino Vismara, Fondo Beneficenza Intesa Sanpaolo.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

The best practices collected from the nEULakes reveal a strong commitment to promoting sustainable development in rural areas, through **innovation in energy, waste management, agriculture and social inclusion**. For example, H2 Val Camonica demonstrates the region's strategic focus on decarbonizing mobility and industry through green hydrogen. This large-scale public initiative integrates production, storage and distribution infrastructure, with the participation of local authorities and private companies such as A2A Life Company. The project's ability to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by almost 100% compared to conventional technologies and incorporate renewable electricity from a waste-to-energy plant, highlights how circular economy principles can be aligned with Net Zero targets. However, replication faces significant challenges due to required infrastructure adaptations (e.g. old tunnels for new hydrogen trains), highlighting the complexity of deploying large-scale green technologies in rural environments.

Equally exciting is the CDW Circle project, which addresses the recycling of construction and demolition waste through innovative sorting and reprocessing technologies. Utilizing advanced optical sorting and the development of pilot plants, this initiative reduces raw material consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, while promoting the use of recycled aggregates in the construction industry. Its collaboration with the University of Brescia and SMEs demonstrates the power of partnerships between academia and industry in circular economy projects. However, the project also reveals that social confidence in recycled materials and regulatory barriers remain key obstacles to scaling up similar solutions in other regions.

Further reflecting the region's innovation ecosystem, projects such as ATG Around the Ground highlight how smart agriculture is being promoted through AI-based monitoring and data processing systems, initially in viticulture, but with possible expansion to other crops and geographical areas. In addition, private initiatives such as the Sustainability Compass provide operational frameworks for companies to measure their sustainability performance across economic, environmental and social dimensions - a critical step in promoting corporate responsibility in rural economies. Meanwhile, the Green Academy project demonstrates a strong social innovation dimension by engaging NEET youth, women with caring responsibilities and the long-term unemployed in green skills training and paid internships, bridging the gap between social inclusion and green transition.

Collectively, the gathered best practices from nEULakes demonstrate how rural areas in Italy are combining technology, community engagement and institutional collaboration to foster sustainable innovation. They highlight the importance of cross-sector partnerships, pilot projects and tailored solutions to address challenges such as stakeholder trust, regulatory barriers and social equity. These initiatives provide valuable

lessons for other rural areas seeking to implement circular economy and bioeconomy solutions while promoting social inclusion and economic resilience.

**Partner: P6, MEP - DIMOS EMMANOUEL PAPPA, Chryso Serron, Greece (total 10)**

1.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | GLYC2BIOD                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Type:                    | Funded Research study                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Focus area:              | bio-based sector research and promotion, circular economy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Three R&D organization (NREE/SPERI/CERTH, INAB/CERTH, VRI/HAO) and three vegetable oils and biodiesel companies (FITOENERGEIA S.A. EKSELIGMENA VIOKAUSIMA P.C., VIODIESEL L.T.D.).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Methodology:             | <p>Improving the bio-lipid production efficiency of the oil-producing microorganism <i>Yarrowia lipolytica</i> using advanced control techniques and changing their metabolic profile (genetic engineering).</p> <p>Determination of the optimal culture conditions of <i>Yarrowia lipolytica</i> strains to maximize the bio-lipid production efficiency in continuous culture and non-aseptic conditions in an innovative laboratory-scale membrane bioreactor.</p> <p>Characterization of the produced bio-lipids in terms of their chemical composition and of the proteinaceous residue in terms of its nutritional content.</p> <p>Scale-up and demonstration of the operation of a pilot membrane bioreactor system for the cultivation of <i>Yarrowia lipolytica</i> strains and the production of bio-lipids.</p> <p>Demonstration tests of 2nd generation biodiesel production from recovered bio-lipids and incorporation of the protein residue into animal diets.</p> <p>Techno-economic evaluation of the process.</p> |
| Results/impact:          | Expected results of scientific research consist of potential economic benefits in the case of businesses and strengthening of research potential and expertise acquisition in the case of research organizations. Further environmental benefits can be also expected.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Replicability potential: | This type of research can be replicated in other regions with similar businesses.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Challenges faced:        | Unexpected research results, high research costs, need for co-financing, need for assistance from European programs to boost innovation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.newenergy.gr/">https://www.newenergy.gr/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Additional notes:        | The GLYC2BIOD project has been included in the Action "RESEARCH-CREATE-INNOVATE"                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

2.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | PropErDiesel                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Type:                    | Funded Research study                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Focus area:              | bio-based sector research and promotion, sustainability                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Research organizations (LEFH/CPERI, Aristotle university of Thessaloniki, Internation Hellenic University) and biodiesel companies (FITOENERGEIA S.A. EKSELIGMENA VIOKAUSIMA P.C.)                                                                                                                                                    |
| Methodology:             | The main objective of the PropErDiesel project is to improve the competitiveness of biodiesel compared to conventional diesel, aiming to improve the production processes and properties of biodiesel, find alternative feedstocks for its production and appropriately utilize by-products for the synthesis of high value products. |
| Results/impact:          | PropErDiesel is fully consistent with the principles of the circular economy and industrial symbiosis, ensuring the sustainability of the use of raw materials and creating new synergies between industries operating in different sectors.                                                                                          |
| Replicability potential: | Similar projects can be replicated in other regions where biodiesel production is prominent.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Challenges faced:        | Unforeseen outcomes in research, significant financial investments required, necessity for co-funding, and reliance on European programs to drive and support innovation.                                                                                                                                                             |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.newenergy.gr/">https://www.newenergy.gr/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Additional notes:        | The PropErDiesel project has been included in the Action "RESEARCH-CREATE-INNOVATE"                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

3.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:    | Bio(Cat)Diesel                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Type:                  | Funded Research study                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Focus area:            | Citizen engagement, bio-based sector research and promotion, sustainability, Knowledge sharing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Stakeholders involved: | Biodiesel companies (FITOENERGEIA S.A. EKSELIGMENA VIOKAUSIMA P.C.), CERTH and chemistry department of University of Crete.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Methodology:           | The research involves sustainable biocatalytic production of advanced biodiesel using novel biocatalysts produced from conventional biodiesel industrial byproducts.<br>A Bio(Cat)Diesel workshop entitled: "Novel biotechnological and biocatalytic solution towards sustainable development" was organized to present the main outcome of the project and about the role of microbes in sustainable food production, the enzymatic CO <sub>2</sub> capture, the production of PLA out of food, and microbial communities at extremes environments. |

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Results/impact:          | Environmental benefits, economic benefits, knowledge sharing and highlighting of innovative biological methods.                                                           |
| Replicability potential: | Similar projects and workshops can be replicated in other regions and can be joined by cross-border partners.                                                             |
| Challenges faced:        | Unforeseen outcomes in research, significant financial investments required, necessity for co-funding, and reliance on European programs to drive and support innovation. |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.newenergy.gr/">https://www.newenergy.gr/</a>                                                                                                         |
| Additional notes:        | The Bio(Cat)Diesel project has been included in the Action "RESEARCH-CREATE-INNOVATE"                                                                                     |

4.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | Development program<br>(Stakeholder) AFOI PAPOUTSI IKE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Type                     | Development program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Focus area:              | Bio-based sector promotion, Sustainable innovation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Stakeholders involved:   | local government, SMEs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Methodology:             | The objective of the program is to support the construction of an olive mill that promotes sustainable organic olive oil production and boosts the local economy utilizing advanced technological equipment and methods. Provides funding for the cost of equipment and the cost of construction.                                 |
| Results/impact:          | Clientele consists of 200 small and larger local producers. It's the first modern olive mill in the area. The strategic location of the olive mill in the area offers numerous advantages, such as significantly reducing transportation costs and saving producers valuable time by minimizing delays and logistical challenges. |
| Replicability potential: | With strong collaboration among stakeholders and access to funding and technical expertise the model of establishing a locally situated, state-of-the-art olive mill can be replicated in other regions.                                                                                                                          |
| Challenges faced:        | Varied weather conditions, difficulty in accessing larger markets, hard to establish product identity, high cost of marketing, market competition.                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Website:                 | (email) gpapoutzis1@gmail.com                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Additional notes:        | The olive mill is able to process 5 tons per hour.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

5.

| Fields              | Input                                                            |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name: | Modernizing a cow farm facility.<br>(stakeholder) Liaras Giorgos |
| Type                | Individual initiative                                            |

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Focus area:              | bio-based sector promotion, sustainable innovation, investment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Stakeholders involved:   | The investment planning and research for innovative solutions were conducted by the owner of the facility Giorgos Liaras.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Methodology:             | <p>Steps for Modernization using the Lely Astronaut A5 Milking Robot</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assessment and Planning<br/>Evaluation of the current facility layout and herd size to determine the number of robots needed. Plan for infrastructure upgrades, such as electrical systems, ventilation, and data connectivity.</li> <li>2. Installation and Integration<br/>Install the Lely Astronaut A5 robots depending on herd size and barn. Train staff on operating and maintaining the robots.</li> <li>3. Cow Training<br/>Gradually introduce cows to the robotic milking system, allowing them to adapt to the new process. Use feed incentives to encourage cows to visit the robot voluntarily.</li> <li>4. Optimization and Monitoring<br/>Continuously monitor cow behavior, milk production, and robot performance using the system's analytics. Adjust feeding, milking schedules, and barn layout as needed to maximize efficiency and cow comfort.</li> </ol> |
| Results/impact:          | Increased Efficiency, improved animal welfare, early detection of health issues, enhanced milk quality, reduced risk of contamination.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Replicability potential: | Modernizing cow farm facilities with technologies like the Lely Astronaut A5 milking robot can be replicated in other regions by adapting to local conditions, securing funding and providing training.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Challenges faced:        | Lack of access to co-funding projects, absence of consulting services, high cost of equipment, animal health control, damages from natural disasters, need for animal control services to manage stray animals that pose health risks to cows                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Website:                 | (facebook) LIARAS FARM                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Additional notes:        | LIARAS FARM has been operating since 2019 and has been supplying KRI KRI S.A. with 2000 tons of milk/year. The animal feed fed to the cows is mainly sourced from local producers thus boosting the local economy.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

6.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:    | Framework for the implementation of Actions 4.1.1 "Implementation of investments that contribute to the competitiveness of the farm" of the Rural Development Programme of Greece 2014-2020  |
| Type                   | Rural Development Programme                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Focus area:            | bio-based sector promotion, investment                                                                                                                                                       |
| Stakeholders involved: | local government, SMEs, farmers                                                                                                                                                              |
| Methodology:           | The program supports infrastructure improvements such as construction or modernization of farm buildings and storage facilities and equipment upgrades such as purchase of modern machinery. |

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|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                          | Applicants submit detailed proposals, which are evaluated based on eligibility criteria. If approved Beneficiaries receive co-funding and carry out the approved investments within a specified timeframe.                                |
| Results/impact:          | Increased productivity, economic growth, environmental benefits                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Replicability potential: | The framework can be replicated in other regions by tailoring it to local needs.                                                                                                                                                          |
| Challenges faced:        | High initial costs, administrative burden (need of guidance for application procedures), difficulties approaching capable contractors that handle the construction.                                                                       |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.agrotikianaptixi.gr/thesmiko_plaisio/plaisio-efarmogis-draseon-4-1-1-kai-4-1-3-schedia-veltiosis/">https://www.agrotikianaptixi.gr/thesmiko_plaisio/plaisio-efarmogis-draseon-4-1-1-kai-4-1-3-schedia-veltiosis/</a> |
| Additional notes:        | This action contributes to the long-term viability of Greek agriculture and rural development.                                                                                                                                            |

7.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | LEADER programme                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Type                     | EU proramme                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Focus area:              | bio-based sector promotion, investment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Stakeholders involved:   | local government, SMEs, farmers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Methodology:             | <p>Key Features of the LEADER Programme:</p> <p>Local Development Strategy – Rural communities create their own development plans tailored to their specific needs.</p> <p>Bottom-Up Approach – Decisions are made by local groups which include representatives from businesses, public authorities, and civil society.</p> <p>Funding – Local groups submit proposals, and approved projects receive grants.</p> <p>Innovation &amp; Cooperation</p> <p>Supports projects in areas like:</p> <p>Rural tourism, Agri-business &amp; food production, Renewable energy, Digital innovation in rural areas.</p> |
| Results/impact:          | <p>Increased productivity, economic growth, environmental benefits, promotion of sustainability.</p> <p>In the Serres region, the LEADER programme has provided funding to support the construction, renovation, and equipment acquisition for two key local businesses:</p> <p>Oinopoieio Neratzi – A winery that benefited from modernization efforts, enhancing its production capacity and quality.</p> <p>Afoi Petrou – A company specializing in agricultural products and animal feed, which used the funds to upgrade facilities and improve efficiency.</p>                                           |
| Replicability potential: | The LEADER-funded upgrades to Oinopoieio Neratzi winery and Afoi Petrou company demonstrate a replicable model for rural business development that combines infrastructure investment and EU funding accessibility.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

|                   |                                                                                                           |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Challenges faced: | Complex bureaucratic procedures, awareness gaps, lack of consulting services                              |
| Website:          | <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/enrd/leader-clld_en.html">https://ec.europa.eu/enrd/leader-clld_en.html</a> |
| Additional notes: | In Greece, the LEADER programme focuses on empowering rural communities through local initiatives.        |

8.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | "Promotion of Wines in Third Countries" in the Agriculture sector of the Strategic Plan for the Common Agricultural Policy of Greece                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Type                     | Funding program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Focus area:              | Bio-based sector promotion                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Local Government, SMEs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Methodology:             | Proposed Actions:<br>Participation in International Trade Fairs to showcase Greek wines.<br>Targeted Digital Marketing Campaigns (Google Ads, social media) in key markets.<br>Wine Tasting Events & B2B Meetings in collaboration with Greek embassies/importers.<br>Educational Workshops for sommeliers and distributors on Greek indigenous wine varieties (e.g., Assyrtiko). |
| Results/impact:          | Support local vineyards/wineries, promotion of Greek gastronomy abroad, potential increase to exports.<br>Local winery Oinopoieio Neratzi through this action participated in three expos/Trade Fairs in Germany and UK                                                                                                                                                           |
| Replicability potential: | Successful strategies (e.g., digital campaigns) can be replicated for other agri-food products.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Challenges faced:        | Logistics (e.g. cost of transport), market competition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.agrotikianaptixi.gr/thesmiko_plaisio/odigies-gia-tin-efarmogi-tis-yp-ar-571-199875-9-07-2024-schetika-me-tin-paremvasi-p2-58-4/">https://www.agrotikianaptixi.gr/thesmiko_plaisio/odigies-gia-tin-efarmogi-tis-yp-ar-571-199875-9-07-2024-schetika-me-tin-paremvasi-p2-58-4/</a>                                                                             |
| Additional notes:        | This action strengthens Greece's reputation as a premium wine producer.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

9.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                               |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:    | Action "Technology Vouchers for small and very small businesses in the Region of Central Macedonia" |
| Type                   | Funding program                                                                                     |
| Focus area:            | Bio-based sector promotion, innovation                                                              |
| Stakeholders involved: | Local Government, SMEs                                                                              |

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Methodology:             | <p>The purpose of this action is to support very small and small businesses, through the purchase of innovative ICT applications, to achieve improvements in terms of productivity and promotional actions.</p> <p>Approved expenditures are equipment(hardware) costs (servers, computers, network equipment, projectors etc.) and software costs (antivirus, websites, e-shops etc.), digital marketing and data handling.</p>                        |
| Results/impact:          | <p>Enhanced Digitalization, market expansion</p> <p>Thanks to the "Technology Vouchers for Small and Very Small Businesses in Central Macedonia" program, Oinopoieio Neratzi, a local winery in the region, has successfully enhanced its digital footprint by launching a professional website.</p>                                                                                                                                                    |
| Replicability potential: | The voucher model can be replicated in other Greek regions or EU regions with similar SMEs structures.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Challenges faced:        | Voucher amounts may not cover high-end innovations. Complex application processes could deter very small businesses from participating. Post-funding, some SMEs may struggle to maintain or upgrade digital tools.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://kepa-anem.gr/%CE%BA%CE%BF%CF%85%CF%80%CF%8C%CE%BD%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CF%84%CE%B5%CF%87%CE%BD%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%BF%CE%B3%CE%AF%CE%B1%CF%82-%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CF%84%CE%B9%CF%82-%CE%BC%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%81%CE%AD%CF%82/">https://kepa-anem.gr/%CE%BA%CE%BF%CF%85%CF%80%CF%8C%CE%BD%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CF%84%CE%B5%CF%87%CE%BD%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%BF%CE%B3%CE%AF%CE%B1%CF%82-%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CF%84%CE%B9%CF%82-%CE%BC%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%81%CE%AD%CF%82/</a> |
| Additional notes:        | This action demonstrates a strong model for regional digital growth.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

10.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | Hydroponic system for cultivating Piperakia Mpakalika (Stakeholder) Petros Atsalos                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Type                     | Individual Initiative                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Focus area:              | Bio-based sector promotion, Sustainable innovation                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Stakeholders involved:   | The investment planning and research for innovative solutions were conducted by the SME owner of the facility Petros Atsalos.                                                                                                                                               |
| Methodology:             | <p>Phase 1: Planning &amp; Budgeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>System Design Choice</li> <li>Space &amp; Location.</li> </ul> <p>Phase 2: System Assembly</p> <p>Phase 3: Planting &amp; Growth Management</p> <p>Phase 4: Harvesting &amp; Scaling Up</p> |
| Results/impact:          | Faster growth, higher yields (production), water use efficiency, consistent quality. Despite the increase in fertilization costs, the annual production cost can be reduced due to the zero use of herbicides and pesticides.                                               |
| Replicability potential: | Hydroponic farming is highly replicable in diverse settings if knowledge, funding, and infrastructure barriers are addressed                                                                                                                                                |

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Challenges faced: | Cost of investment, seasonal labor shortage, manual labor, weather variations, Inability to produce all year, variable demand, bureaucracy, Adulteration with a similar product that does not meet the specifications required for the certified cultivation of a product bearing Global G.A.P. certification. |
| Website:          | (facebook) <a href="https://www.facebook.com/Piperakiaatsalou">https://www.facebook.com/Piperakiaatsalou</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Additional notes: | To overcome seasonal limitations and enable continuous harvesting, Petros Atsalos' next step is integrating a hydroponic system inside a greenhouse that provides climate control, extended growing seasons, and higher yields, in collaboration with a combined heat and power (CHP) unit using natural gas.  |

Greece's best practices have a strong focus on promoting the **organic sector, sustainable agriculture** and **supporting SMEs**. A notable example is the "Promoting Wines to Third Countries" initiative, which combines international trade fairs, digital marketing and B2B events to support Greek wineries, boosting their exports and enhancing the country's gastronomic identity abroad. The inclusion of targeted training for sommeliers and distributors reflects a holistic approach to market development that goes beyond product promotion, promoting knowledge and competence among key players in the industry.

Another key element of Greece's approach is the use of EU financial instruments, such as the LEADER Program and the Action "Technology Vouchers for small and very small businesses in the Region of Central Macedonia" to strengthen local businesses and promote innovation. The LEADER program, for example, has funded modernization efforts for local SMEs, including wineries and agricultural companies, helping them to increase their productivity and competitiveness. This bottom-up, community-driven development model aligns well with the objectives of the DRIVE project and provides a replicable blueprint to support rural innovation and business development.

However, challenges remain in areas such as complex bureaucratic procedures, fragmented stakeholder ecosystems and access to financial resources, which can hinder scaling-up efforts. In addition, the need for better coordination between local government, SMEs and research institutions to streamline project implementation and maximize impact is recognized. It is worth noting that, although some best practices mention cooperation with universities (e.g. PropErDiesel involving Aristotle University and others), there is no systematic integration of academic expertise in agribusiness innovation on a large scale. Therefore, future initiatives could strengthen partnerships between academia and business to enhance knowledge transfer and support more technology-oriented sustainable solutions.

**Partner: P7, BOHINJ - OBCINA BOHINJ, Bohinjska Bistrica, Slovenia**

1.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | From Bohinj – Regional Collective Brand ("Bohinjsko")                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Focus area:              | Place-based branding, support for local production, stakeholder cooperation, sustainable rural development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Tourism Bohinj (brand coordinator), local producers (farmers, artisans, food processors), hospitality providers, Triglav National Park, Municipality of Bohinj, local development NGOs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Methodology:             | The brand was co-created through a participatory process involving public institutions and local producers. Criteria were established for quality, origin, sustainability, and traceability. Producers can voluntarily apply for certification under the "Bohinjsko" brand. Certified products and services receive visual identity materials and are promoted across digital and physical platforms. Tourism Bohinj coordinates ongoing promotion and supports producers with education, events, and logistical tools. |
| Results/impact:          | Over 80 products and services certified, including food, crafts, and tourism offers. The brand strengthened local pride, helped SMEs differentiate their offer, and contributed to the visibility of circular and sustainable practices in the area. It has become a key reference point for visitors seeking authentic experiences.                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Replicability potential: | High. The model can be transferred to other regions with strong territorial identity and engaged stakeholders. Key success factors include a coordinating body (like a DMO), shared criteria, and long-term commitment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Challenges faced:        | Maintaining consistent standards and verification, ensuring ongoing participation from producers, managing internal expectations, and limited staff capacity for brand coordination. Some producers need support in marketing and storytelling to fully benefit from the label.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.bohinj.si/en/from-bohinj/">https://www.bohinj.si/en/from-bohinj/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Additional notes:        | The brand supports other circular initiatives such as the Bohinj Breakfast and Eco Corner in Danica Inn. It is aligned with the objectives of the Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve and the transition toward a regional eco-region under the BO JA initiative.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

2.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | Triglav National Park Quality Label (ZKTNP)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Focus area:              | Sustainable certification, environmental conservation, promotion of local products and services                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Triglav National Park Public Institute (certification body), local producers, artisans, tourism providers, educational institutions within the Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Methodology:             | The Triglav National Park Quality Label is awarded to products, services, and activities that align with the park's mission of preserving natural and cultural heritage. The certification process involves evaluating applicants based on criteria such as environmental sustainability, authenticity, and quality. Eligible participants include local food producers, artisans, tourism providers, and educational institutions. The certification is voluntary and free of charge, encouraging widespread participation. |
| Results/impact:          | The label has enhanced the visibility and credibility of certified products and services, promoting sustainable practices and supporting the local economy. It fosters a sense of pride among local communities and contributes to the conservation goals of the park. The initiative also strengthens the connection between consumers and the unique cultural and natural heritage of the Julian Alps.                                                                                                                     |
| Replicability potential: | High. This model can be adapted by other protected areas aiming to promote sustainable development and conservation through certification programs that recognize and support local stakeholders committed to environmental stewardship.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Challenges faced:        | Ensuring continuous engagement and compliance among certificate holders, maintaining rigorous and transparent certification standards, and providing adequate resources for monitoring and support.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.tnp-kakovost.si/en/">https://www.tnp-kakovost.si/en/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Additional notes:        | The Quality Label is part of a broader strategy to integrate sustainable development within the Triglav National Park and the Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve. It complements other initiatives aimed at environmental education, community engagement, and the promotion of sustainable tourism.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

3.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
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| Best practice name:      | Project: Vzpostavitev pogojev za Eko regijo BO JA (Establishing the Foundations for the BO JA Eco-Region)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Focus area:              | Multi-stakeholder cooperation, sustainable territorial development, organic transition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Stakeholders involved:   | The project brought together a wide range of regional stakeholders. It was led by Posoški razvojni center (LAS Dolina Soče) and co-implemented with LAS Gorenjska košarica. Participating municipalities included Tolmin, Kobarid, Bovec, Kanal ob Soči, Bohinj, and Jesenice. Public institutions such as the Triglav National Park Public Institute, Tourism Bohinj, and the Agricultural and Forestry Institute of Kranj contributed their expertise, while local educational institutions—such as Dušan Muniha Primary School in Most na Soči and Bohinj Primary School—helped integrate the initiative into youth learning. Key local producers and support organisations included Mlekarna Planika d.o.o. Kobarid, Kmetijska zadruga Tolmin z.o.o., the Northern Primorska Organic Farmers Association, and the Upper Soča Valley Sheep Breeders Association. The initiative also engaged social enterprises like Invalidsko podjetje Posočje d.o.o., as well as private organic producers such as Kenda Marko and Črv Viktorija. International cooperation was ensured through the partnership with the Ente Parco Naturale delle Prealpi Giulie from Italy |
| Methodology:             | The project focused on creating participatory, structural, and strategic conditions for the establishment of a regional organic territory, called BO JA, within the Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve. It followed the principles of the international Eco-Region model (as defined by IFOAM), aiming to integrate sustainable agriculture, short supply chains, and circular solutions into regional development. The methodology included stakeholder mapping, analysis of potentials and obstacles, thematic workshops, and pilot initiatives—such as the introduction of local organic breakfasts in schools and tourism accommodations. The project emphasised long-term capacity building and co-creation among diverse actors.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Results/impact:          | The initiative successfully developed a shared vision for sustainable regional development, rooted in organic and local agri-food systems. It built trust among partners, initiated cross-sectoral cooperation, and laid the groundwork for transitioning toward an official eco-region. Practical impacts included piloting short supply chains for public institutions and tourism, greater recognition of local organic producers, and strategic positioning of the Julian Alps as a model for climate-resilient and circular regional development.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Replicability potential: | The project offers a high potential for replication, especially in protected areas, rural mountain regions, and biosphere reserves seeking systemic transitions toward sustainability. Its structure, based on participatory planning, cross-municipal cooperation, and alignment with international Eco-Region standards, makes it adaptable to similar contexts in Europe.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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| Challenges faced: | The project had to reconcile diverse interests among public authorities, producers, and tourism actors. Operational fragmentation—such as logistical complexity, low volume production, and lack of unified certification—posed additional barriers. Ensuring sustainable funding and coordination beyond the project’s duration remains a key challenge for full implementation. |
| Website:          | <a href="https://www.las-gorenjskakosarica.si/vzpostavitev-pogojev-za-eko-regijo-bo-ja/">https://www.las-gorenjskakosarica.si/vzpostavitev-pogojev-za-eko-regijo-bo-ja/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

4.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:    | BO JA 100% Local – Local Food Procurement Initiative                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Focus area:            | Local food systems, sustainable public procurement, education and tourism integration                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Stakeholders involved: | The partnership brings together a broad range of actors from the Julian Alps region. It includes local farmers and food producers, of which more than 50% operate under certified organic standards. The initiative also engages stakeholders from the HORECA sector—particularly local restaurants and accommodation providers who integrate local ingredients into their menus. Public institutions form a strategic part of the partnership, including Tourism Bohinj, the Triglav National Park Public Institute (TNP), the Agricultural and Forestry Institute of Kranj (KGZS), and the social enterprise IP Posočje. This cross-sectoral coalition supports the implementation of short supply chains by connecting producers, public institutions, and consumers, all with the shared goal of creating a circular and climate-resilient eco-region. |
| Methodology:           | BO JA 100% Local was developed as a practical strategy for connecting local food production with public consumption, especially in schools and tourism. The project included detailed mapping of producers and their seasonal availability, menu design aligned with school nutrition standards, and direct collaboration between chefs and producers. The project is not only about sourcing local food but also about transforming mindsets, increasing understanding of food origin, and supporting circular food systems. Parallel awareness campaigns and supplier capacity-building complemented the supply-side development.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Results/impact:        | The project will enable support by strong logistics, seasonal adaptation, and cooperation. It improved visibility of local producers, introduced new collaboration models between farmers and institutions, and strengthened food literacy among youth and parents. The experience also served as a demonstration model for the tourism sector and was included in regional discussions on public procurement policy.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

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| Replicability potential: | High. The approach is replicable in other rural municipalities with available producers, political will, and community engagement. The model integrates well with public procurement systems, education strategies, and eco-regional development goals.                                                                     |
| Challenges faced:        | Logistical complexity, limited supplier capacities, legal uncertainties in public procurement procedures, and the need for regular coordination among producers and school kitchens were major operational challenges. There was also a need to manage expectations regarding availability of products throughout the year. |
| Website:                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Additional notes:        | BO JA 100% Local complements other practices such as the Bohinj Breakfast and the collective brand From Bohinj. It reinforces Bohinj's commitment to becoming a true eco-region by rooting circular economy principles in everyday community life, starting with children.                                                  |

5.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:    | Lokalno GOR – strengthening local food self-sufficiency in Gorenjska                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Focus area:            | Local food systems, public procurement, cultural heritage, education, and community engagement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Stakeholders involved: | The project is coordinated by the Development Agency of Upper Gorenjska (Razvojna agencija Zgornje Gorenjske) and involves a diverse partnership, including the Agricultural and Forestry Institute of Kranj (KGZS – Zavod Kranj), Biotechnical Center Naklo, Agricultural Cooperatives Sloga Kranj and Sava Lesce, the Municipality of Kranj, and Optifarm d.o.o. . The initiative also collaborates with local farmers, educational institutions, and consumers to enhance local food production and consumption.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Methodology:           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lokalno GOR seeks to increase the region's self-sufficiency in food by supporting farmers in transitioning toward more sustainable and organic practices, improving their knowledge and access to local markets, and enhancing public procurement in schools and kindergartens. Through educational workshops, culinary events, and promotional campaigns, the project builds awareness among children, parents, and vulnerable groups. It also develops digital tools, such as a local producer catalog and mobile application, to support direct links between producers and consumers. The integration of traditional food, seasonal menus, and culinary heritage into public meals is a key component of the methodology..</li> </ul> |
| Results/impact:        | The project improved local supply chains, empowered farmers, and promoted cooperation across agricultural and educational sectors. Public institutions began incorporating more local products into their                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

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|                          | menus, while children and parents became more aware of the origins and value of food. The project also fostered a renewed appreciation for traditional recipes and sustainable living, contributing to stronger regional identity and economic resilience in Gorenjska.                                              |
| Replicability potential: | The initiative demonstrates strong potential for replication in other rural or mountainous areas with local agricultural activity and a desire to reconnect food production with public services and cultural traditions. Its comprehensive and participatory approach is adaptable to various territorial contexts. |
| Challenges faced:        | The main challenges included fragmented production among small farmers, ensuring year-round availability of diverse products, and securing long-term commitment from public institutions. Logistical coordination and investment in distribution infrastructure also emerged as key barriers to scale-up.            |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.las-gorenjskakosarica.si/lokalno-gor/">https://www.las-gorenjskakosarica.si/lokalno-gor/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Additional notes:        | Lokalno GOR is part of a broader regional effort to restore food sovereignty, reduce environmental impact, and promote health and cultural identity through local food systems. It is co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) under the LEADER approach.                         |

6.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:    | Kulinarično popotovanje – Okusi Gorenjske                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Focus area:            | Local food systems, culinary tourism, sustainable gastronomy, cultural heritage                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Stakeholders involved: | The project was coordinated by BSC, Business Support Center, Kranj, and involved partners such as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia – Regional Chamber for Gorenjska, the Agricultural and Forestry Institute of Kranj (KGZS – Zavod Kranj), Tourism Bohinj, the Institute for Tourism and Culture Kranj, the Institute for Tourism Preddvor, and the Municipality of Jesenice. The initiative also engaged local food producers, hospitality providers, and tourism stakeholders across the Gorenjska region.                                                                              |
| Methodology:           | Kulinarično popotovanje aimed to enhance the quality and visibility of Gorenjska's culinary offerings by integrating locally produced food into traditional dishes prepared innovatively. The project established quality standards for local food and dishes, connected suppliers with hospitality providers, and increased the recognition, competitiveness, and demand for quality-produced food and prepared dishes. Activities included project management and coordination, promotion through the creation of a joint culinary brochure, evaluation of hospitality establishments and local food and |

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|                          | dish providers, training and education to raise competencies in local food and dishes, pilot testing of the culinary journey, and the development of local culinary guides.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Results/impact:          | The project led to the establishment of minimum standards for restaurateurs and local food producers, improved the quality of culinary offerings by considering standards for the use of locally produced food and innovative preparation of dishes, and enhanced the connection between suppliers and hospitality providers, enabling a more diverse Gorenjska culinary experience. It also increased the recognition, competitiveness, and demand for quality-produced food and prepared dishes. |
| Replicability potential: | High. The approach of integrating local food into traditional dishes with innovative preparation, establishing quality standards, and connecting suppliers with hospitality providers can be replicated in other regions aiming to enhance their culinary tourism and local food systems.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Challenges faced:        | The project faced challenges in coordinating various stakeholders, ensuring consistent quality standards across different establishments, and promoting the newly developed culinary offerings to a broader audience.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.las-gorenjskakosarica.si/kulinaricno-popotovanje/">https://www.las-gorenjskakosarica.si/kulinaricno-popotovanje/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Additional notes:        | The project was co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) under the LEADER approach, focusing on community-led local development.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

7.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:    | Empowering rural women through traditional knowledge and community networks – the case of the Bohinj Rural Women Association                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Focus area:            | Women's entrepreneurship, rural heritage, food culture, community empowerment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Stakeholders involved: | The initiative is led by the Bohinj Association of Farm Women and Girls, a grassroots organisation bringing together women from farming households in the Bohinj region. The association collaborates with local producers, schools, kindergartens, municipal institutions such as the Municipality of Bohinj and Tourism Bohinj, and development partners involved in the BO JA eco-region initiative. Their role has become especially relevant in projects that link traditional culinary knowledge with local food systems and education. |
| Methodology:           | The association organises and implements activities that preserve and transmit traditional Bohinj cuisine, crafts, and customs. Women                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

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|                          | share their knowledge through cooking workshops, events, school presentations, and food tastings, often using seasonal and locally sourced ingredients. They participate in local fairs, regional branding initiatives (such as the "From Bohinj" collective brand), and eco-regional events to promote the values of self-sufficiency, sustainability, and cultural continuity. Their approach is based on volunteering, intergenerational learning, and community-based knowledge transfer.                   |
| Results/impact:          | The association plays a vital role in sustaining local culinary traditions and empowering women as bearers of rural knowledge. Their involvement has strengthened the inclusion of traditional food and farming practices in educational and tourism programs. They also serve as a bridge between generations, helping connect younger residents with the region's agricultural heritage. Through their contribution, many local events have integrated authentic food experiences based on regional identity. |
| Replicability potential: | The model of rural women's associations rooted in traditional knowledge and volunteerism is highly replicable across rural regions. It requires strong local leadership, trust within the community, and support from public and development partners. Their role can be especially valuable in eco-regions, LEADER areas, and biosphere reserves.                                                                                                                                                              |
| Challenges faced:        | As a volunteer-based organisation, sustaining long-term engagement and transferring knowledge to younger generations remains a challenge. Limited financial resources and occasional undervaluing of women's work in rural development also pose structural barriers. Coordination with institutional stakeholders requires continuous relationship building.                                                                                                                                                   |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.bohinj.si/en/provider/the-rural-womens-association/">https://www.bohinj.si/en/provider/the-rural-womens-association/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Additional notes:        | The association's contribution to the Julian Alps -region and to food literacy in schools has been widely recognised. Their engagement proves that cultural heritage and community ties are essential elements of circular and resilient food systems.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

The Slovenian contributions, in particular from Bohinj, show a strong focus on territorial branding, sustainable tourism and local food systems. Initiatives such as the "From Bohinj" brand and the Triglav National Park quality label highlight the region's emphasis on certification and quality assurance to promote local products and services. The BO JA ecoregion project underlines Slovenia's commitment to a systemic transition towards sustainability, supported by cross-sectoral cooperation and community engagement. The challenges in Slovenia revolve around maintaining consistent standards, ensuring stakeholder participation and addressing operational fragmentation in complex multi-stakeholder environments.

However, the collaborative nature of these initiatives - rooted in participatory planning and alignment with international ecological site frameworks - shows high potential for replicability and serves as inspiration for other mountain and protected areas seeking to enhance regional identity and sustainable development.

The region also demonstrates how protected areas can drive sustainable development through certifications like the Triglav National Park Quality Label. This label not only enhances the visibility of sustainable products and services but also reinforces conservation goals within the Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve. Complementary to this are large-scale, multi-actor projects like Vzpostavitev pogojev za Eko regijo BO JA, which unite municipalities, educational institutions, and local producers to build structural and strategic foundations for an eco-region. These initiatives emphasize the importance of participatory planning, stakeholder cooperation, and alignment with international sustainability standards, demonstrating how biosphere reserves can act as laboratories for innovative regional transitions toward circular and regenerative development.

Finally, Bohinj's commitment to local food systems—evident in initiatives like BO JA 100% Local and Lokalno GOR—highlights the region's dedication to fostering short supply chains, food literacy, and economic resilience. These projects connect farmers with public institutions and tourism providers, embedding circular practices into daily community life. Complemented by social innovation initiatives like the Bohinj Rural Women Association, which bridges generational knowledge gaps and sustains cultural heritage, Bohinj's best practices collectively show that community empowerment, place-based branding, and integrated stakeholder partnerships are key drivers of sustainable rural transformation.

#### Partner: P8, ANCI LOMBARDIA, Milan, Italy (total 4)

1.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| Best practice name:    | <b>LIFE GreenFEST</b> - Green Festivals and Events through sustainable tenders.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Type:                  | EU-funded project under the LIFE program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Focus area:            | Regarding the focus areas of intervention, GreenFEST intervened, in particular, on the following cultural activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Festivals;</li> <li>– Cultural Reviews;</li> <li>– Musical Events;</li> <li>– Exhibitions.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Stakeholders involved: | <p><b>ANCI Lombardia</b> was the main coordinator of the project, responsible for the entire project. The other partners of the project were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Municipality of Bergamo</b>, local authority located in northern Italy;</li> <li>– <b>Municipality of Cremona</b>, a local public body, the governing body of the city;</li> <li>– <b>Fondazione Ecosistemi</b>, a non-profit organization specializing in strategies, programs, actions and tools for sustainable development;</li> <li>– <b>Federculture</b>, the National Federation of Local Public Service Companies, Regions, Local Authorities, and all public and private entities that manage services related to culture, tourism, sport and free time.</li> <li>– <b>Municipality of Fano</b>, first Italian municipality, in the 50-100 thousand inhabitants category, with the best performance in terms of waste collection, recycling and saving of CO2 emissions;</li> <li>– <b>TECLA</b>, an association for Transregional Local and European Cooperation;</li> <li>– <b>Time in Jazz</b>, a non-profit cultural association;</li> </ul> |

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|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Villa Reale e Parco di Monza</b>, a Consortium established in 2009 to enhance the Reggia di Monza, with its Royal Villa and Park, by carrying out its restoration and planned conservation.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Methodology:             | <p>The practice was implemented with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Working group,</li> <li>– Targeted training,</li> <li>– Involvement of cultural stakeholders and production chains,</li> <li>– Seminars,</li> <li>– Conference for the return of results.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Results/impact:          | <p>The project produces benefits in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Employment and <b>human resources</b> qualification.</li> <li>– <b>Improvement of infrastructures</b> related to the organization of sustainable events; energy-related to allow the event organizer to use energy from renewable energy sources, the second for sustainable collective transport and the presence, in the event location, of infrastructures that allow access to the events through cycle paths (bike parking spaces) and pedestrian paths.</li> <li>– <b>Push towards the local economy</b> is also strong: the average number of suppliers per event found in the Green Fest project was 22, applying the percentage of local suppliers found during the project (82.5 per cent) to the 179,560 events that will have to apply CAM.</li> </ul> |
| Replicability potential: | <p>This project can be replicated, and it was one of the main objectives, to define new Minimum Environmental Criteria in public procurement and in the Regulations, actions for the diffusion and improvement of the sustainable management of cultural events and transfer the Good Practices of Green Public Procurement existing in Italy in the sector of cultural events to the high Public Authorities.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Challenges faced:        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Website:                 | <a href="http://www.greenfest.eu">www.greenfest.eu</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Additional notes:        | <p>It is important to note that there are many Stakeholders that benefitted from this project: Cultural operators, Ministry of the Environment MATTM, GPP experts and environmental experts, Public bodies, Companies supplying goods and services, Members of ANCI Lombardia, TECLA, FEDERCULTURE, MIBACT, Cultural businesses, National LIFE Focal Point.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

2.

| Fields              | Input                                                                                                                                                                                            |
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| Best practice name: | <b>Sustainable Development Workshops</b>                                                                                                                                                         |
| Type:               | Agenda Onu 2030 - Initiative                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Focus area:         | This initiative explored technological and organizational areas, with a focus on local communities and the challenge of Sustainable Development in Lombardy (communicate, involve, participate), |

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|                          | Renewable Energy Communities, the European perspective.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Stakeholders involved:   | The main entity that organized and is responsible for this initiative is <b>AnciLab s.r.l.</b> , the service company founded in 1999 by Ancitel S.p.A and ANCI Lombardia that collaborated in the organization of the laboratories.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Methodology:             | The Laboratory is developed through <b>operational meetings</b> supported by experts, with moments of study and open discussion between local administrators, PA officials, sector experts and innovative companies.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Results/impact:          | This initiative explored opportunities for collaboration between bodies, use of data for planning sustainability policies, access to funding, best practices, innovative methods of communication and involvement of territorial stakeholders. Strategic themes for the development of innovation in local public administration.<br>Moreover, it was an opportunity of discussion to bring out experiences and good practices that concern the Sustainable and inclusive Development of cities and territories. |
| Replicability potential: | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Challenges faced:        | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Website:                 | Provide the contact information for further inquiries.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Additional notes:        | Local governments can certainly play an active and proactive role that cannot ignore the involvement of local stakeholders. Businesses, associations and citizens must be included in a process of co-designing and creating sustainable cities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

3.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
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| Best practice name:    | <b>Interreg GovernaTI-VA</b> - strengthening cross-border governance through the development of local governance capacities and models.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Type:                  | Interreg it-ch project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Focus area:            | Citizen engagement, bio-based sector promotion, social innovation, etc.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Stakeholders involved: | <p>The partners involved in this project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Municipality of Varese</b> (Italian leader)</li> <li>- <b>University of Italian Switzerland</b> (Swiss leader)</li> <li>- <b>Anci Lombardia</b> (Italian partner)</li> <li>- <b>SEL</b> (Swiss partner)</li> <li>- <b>Associazione Industrie Ticinesi</b> (Swiss partner)</li> <li>- <b>Associazione PPP</b> (Swiss partner)</li> </ul> <p>The Steering Committee was composed of the top managers (or their delegates) of the lead institutions and project partners, while the Management Team was composed of managers or officials of the same institutions.</p> |

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| Methodology:             | <p>The practice was implemented with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– context analysis,</li> <li>– knowledge infrastructures,</li> <li>– sharing of good practices,</li> <li>– accompaniment of mobility and innovation governance processes.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Results/impact:          | <p>The outcomes of this project can be summarized with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the <b>promotion and monitoring of smart mobility</b> capable of improving the quality of life;</li> <li>• the formulation of <b>joint strategies, policies and pilot initiatives</b> for sustainable mobility with the active participation of citizens;</li> <li>• the possibility of <b>activating capacity building</b> and inter-institutional collaboration paths for the Public Bodies of the territory on mobility issues.</li> </ul> <p>By increasing mutual understanding and cooperation between institutional actors from Ticino and Varese, it was possible to share and compare administrative practices and know-how to pave the way for regulatory reforms and pilot projects. Sharing knowledge therefore becomes the basis for the actors on the Italian and Swiss sides, so that they can become aware of the unexpressed potential and redesign their role around the centrality of the citizen, inter-institutional collaboration and the participation of a plurality of actors in the formation of public policies, i.e. territorial government.</p> |
| Replicability potential: | This project can be easily replicated due to its simple steps, applicable to very diverse situations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Challenges faced:        | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Website:                 | <a href="#">GOVERNATI-VA</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

4.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| Best practice name:    | Development and implementation of the regional strategy for inner areas - <i>Counter-Exodus Agenda</i> . Capacity building and mentorship for public administration                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Type:                  | Counter-Exodus Agenda - Project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Focus area:            | Inner areas' development; Empowerment of small municipalities; Citizen engagement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Stakeholders involved: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Regional government (Regione Lombardia)</b> – Coordinator of the <i>Counter-Exodus Agenda</i>;</li> <li>• <b>Local inter-municipal government bodies</b> – In most cases, coordinators of each local strategy's development and implementation;</li> <li>• <b>Inner areas' Municipalities</b> – Members of each area's core team for the development and implementation of the local strategy; Recipients of each strategy's actions; in a limited number of cases, Coordinators of the local strategy;</li> </ul> |

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|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Municipalities' in-house companies</b> – Support for designing and implementing each local strategy;</li> <li>● <b>Non-profit associations</b> – Consultation role in designing and implementing each local strategy;</li> <li>● <b>Private small and medium enterprises</b> – Consultation role in designing and implementing each local strategy.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Methodology:             | <p>The methodology that has constituted the basis for the project included meetings with inner areas' key stakeholders and tailor-made tutorship aimed at the coordinators of each area. In particular, the main activities involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meetings with every area's core team;</li> <li>● One-to-one Meetings with each area's coordinating authority (e.g. an intermunicipal body or a single municipality);</li> <li>● Tailor-made tutorship dedicated to the coordinators;</li> <li>● On site visits to better understand the context of the interventions comprised in the local strategies.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Results/impact:          | <p><b>Qualitative results:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● incremented collaboration between the key stakeholders in every inner area (e.g. between single municipalities; between municipalities and intermunicipal bodies; between public and private actors);</li> <li>● increased municipalities' competences in drafting strategies for local development;</li> <li>● increased administrative capacity among the public actors involved in designing and implementing local strategies (Intermunicipal bodies and municipalities).</li> </ul> <p><b>Quantitative results:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 14 local strategies drafted and presented to the regional government (1 per area).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                     |
| Replicability potential: | <p>The project has a high replicability potential, first place in other Italian regions, but not only. The focus on inner areas' development is, in fact, nationwide: every Region has identified its own inner areas, to be supported through governmental funding (based on ESF and ERDF), and in many cases they defined also other inner areas, supported, this time, by regional funding. In consideration of this, other Italian regions could support local government bodies and municipalities by putting in place similar projects, in which the local ANCI is identified to design a dedicated tutorship path. The fact that ANCI Lombardia is part of a national network is a key factor in determining the replicability of the project: as stated above, local ANCI in each region could play the same role in guiding the municipalities involved in the respective inner areas.</p> |
| Challenges faced:        | <p>The main challenge was the limited administrative capacity of public actors in inner areas, such as municipalities and intermunicipal bodies, which hindered the project's launch. Not all local actors had the same level of competence or the ability to draft a complex development strategy. To address this, ANCI Lombardia organized meetings with municipalities and intergovernmental bodies, supported by territorial pivots, to empower local authorities. They also provided a support service, functioning as a tutorship, to address specific needs. This led to the development of 14 local strategies, reviewed by the ANCI team</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Website:                 | <p><a href="https://anci.lombardia.it/archivio-dipartimento/dipartimento/piccoli-comuni-%E2%80%93-montagna-%E2%80%93-aree-">https://anci.lombardia.it/archivio-dipartimento/dipartimento/piccoli-comuni-%E2%80%93-montagna-%E2%80%93-aree-</a></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

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|                   | <a href="#">interne-%E2%80%93-forme-associative/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Additional notes: | The 14 local development strategies are currently being reviewed by the regional authority (Lombardy Region). After receiving the green light by the regional government, the 14 inner areas located in Lombardy will start the implementation phase, during which the support by ANCI Lombardia will continue. |

Italy's best practices demonstrate the importance of placed-based approaches and the role of local governance in facilitating rural innovation. The initiatives brought together to emphasize empowering local authorities to design and implement sustainable development strategies tailored to the unique needs of their territories. A prime example is the strategy for inland areas, which supports municipalities and inter-municipal actors in developing integrated development plans that link bioeconomy opportunities with broader social and economic objectives.

Italy is also showing leadership in promoting sustainable events through the LIFE GreenFEST programme, which applies green procurement principles to cultural and tourism events. A unique strength in Italy's examples is their attention to cross-municipal cooperation and territorial governance. The emphasis on creating shared visions and collaborative frameworks helps overcome fragmentation and ensures that rural innovation strategies are both inclusive and regionally integrated. These insights underscore the need for long-term support structures, policy coherence, and continuous capacity building to foster resilient innovation ecosystems in rural areas.

Italy's best practices also highlight the value of fostering innovation through collaboration between local authorities, cultural operators, and communities, demonstrated notably in the LIFE GreenFEST project. This initiative applied green public procurement principles to cultural events, showing how sustainable management can extend beyond typical industrial or agricultural activities into the realm of tourism and the arts. By involving a wide range of stakeholders, municipalities, cultural associations, and environmental experts, the project successfully integrated sustainability into cultural programming. Its emphasis on shared learning, targeted training, and stakeholder engagement has made green practices more accessible and replicable across regions, demonstrating the power of culture as a driver for sustainable innovation in local governance.

**Partner: P9, AB CORPORATION, Schaerbeek, Belgium (total 8)**

1.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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| Best practice name:      | INNO4CFIs (Innovative Solutions for Carbon Farming Initiatives)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Type:                    | EU-Funded project under the I3 Program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Focus area:              | INNO4CFIs focuses on developing innovative models for carbon farming, integrating nature-based solutions, biomonitoring, advanced remote sensing technologies, and sustainable business models. The project aims to make carbon farming an economically viable option for farmers, businesses, and public institutions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Stakeholders involved:   | The project brings together a wide range of stakeholders, including farmers, agricultural cooperatives, research institutions, innovative SMEs, public authorities, industry associations, environmental monitoring experts, and sustainable finance actors. These stakeholders collaborate to test and implement practical solutions for carbon removal certification and monetization.                                                                                                                                                        |
| Methodology:             | INNO4CFIs employs a multi-actor, open innovation approach. The Living Labs in different European countries serve as experimentation platforms where technological solutions and business models for carbon farming are tested and implemented. The use of remote sensing, artificial intelligence, and GIS technologies enables monitoring of carbon sequestration in soils and biomass. The project also integrates agroforestry and regenerative agriculture practices to enhance climate resilience and biodiversity.                        |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved carbon sequestration capacity in European farms.</li> <li>- Creation of new business models for carbon farming, ensuring economic sustainability.</li> <li>- Development of tools for carbon removal certification based on scientifically validated metrics.</li> <li>- Adoption of agroecological practices to increase ecosystem resilience.</li> <li>- Greater engagement of farmers in carbon farming initiatives through financial incentives and recognized certifications.</li> </ul> |
| Replicability potential: | The model developed by INNO4CFIs can be replicated in different European regions thanks to digital tools and a scalable methodology. The practices tested in the Living Labs in Italy, Spain, Belgium, and Greece provide concrete implementation examples adaptable to various agro-climatic contexts. Additionally, the involvement of European institutions and the private sector facilitates the model's dissemination across EU Member States.                                                                                            |
| Challenges faced:        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Difficulty in balancing farmers' needs with carbon certification requirements.</li> <li>- Need for appropriate financing models to ensure the economic sustainability of carbon farming practices.</li> <li>- Complexity in implementing monitoring technologies in diverse agroecological contexts.</li> <li>- Need for greater awareness and training for farmers on carbon sequestration practices.</li> </ul>                                                                                      |

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| Website:          | <a href="https://inno4cfis.eu">https://inno4cfis.eu</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Additional notes: | <p>INNO4CFIs represents a significant step forward in integrating carbon farming into European agricultural systems by combining technological innovation, sustainable business models, and agroecological practices. The project aims to develop regulatory and financial tools to support the transition towards low-carbon agriculture.</p> <p>Resources developed within the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carbon Farming Toolbox: A collection of tools for farmers and policymakers.</li> <li>- Living Labs Reports: Documentation on the outcomes of pilot site experiments.</li> <li>- Policy Recommendations: Guidelines to improve the European regulatory framework for carbon farming.</li> </ul> |

2.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | BioRural (Accelerating circular bio-based solutions integration in European rural areas)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Type:                    | EU-funded project under the Horizon Europe program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Focus area:              | BioRural focuses on integrating small-scale circular bio-based solutions in European rural areas, promoting the bioeconomy and strengthening rural communities through the adoption of sustainable practices.                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Stakeholders involved:   | The project involves a pan-European network of stakeholders, including research institutions, agricultural advisory services, associations, SMEs, innovators, and rural communities. These stakeholders collaborate to promote bio-based solutions and facilitate knowledge exchange in rural areas.                                                                                                  |
| Methodology:             | BioRural adopts a collaborative approach, creating a European network for the rural bioeconomy. Activities include assessing the current state of the bioeconomy, identifying factors influencing the adoption of innovations, promoting success stories, and developing open-access online tools to support stakeholders.                                                                            |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishment of a pan-European network for the rural bioeconomy.</li> <li>- Promotion of successful bio-based solutions in rural areas.</li> <li>- Facilitation of knowledge exchange and capacity building in the rural bioeconomy sector.</li> <li>- Development of rural development models for the adoption of circular bio-based solutions.</li> </ul> |
| Replicability potential: | The BioRural model is designed to be replicable across different European regions, adapting to local specificities. The creation of networks and the use of online tools facilitate the dissemination and adoption of bio-based solutions in various rural contexts.                                                                                                                                  |
| Challenges faced:        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overcoming barriers to the adoption of innovations in rural communities.</li> <li>- Ensuring the economic sustainability of small-scale bio-based solutions.</li> <li>- Coordinating a wide range of stakeholders with diverse interests and needs.</li> <li>- Maintaining long-term engagement of rural communities in bioeconomy</li> </ul>                |

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|                   | initiatives.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Website:          | <a href="https://biorural.eu">https://biorural.eu</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Additional notes: | BioRural is an EU-funded project under the Horizon Europe program, running for 36 months from September 1, 2022. The project aims to create a transition framework toward a sustainable, regenerative, inclusive, and fair circular bioeconomy in European rural areas. |

3.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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| Best practice name:      | SCALE-UP (Concepts, tools and applications for community-driven bioeconomy development in European rural areas)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Type:                    | EU-funded project under the Horizon Europe program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Focus area:              | SCALE-UP focuses on developing concepts, tools, and applications to promote a community-driven bioeconomy in European rural areas. The goal is to identify and scale up innovative and sustainable bio-based value chains by leveraging regional resources.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Stakeholders involved:   | The project engages multi-actor regional partnerships, including private companies, policymakers, government authorities, civil society organizations, and researchers. These actors collaborate to overcome barriers and fully unlock the potential of the bioeconomy in their regions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Methodology:             | SCALE-UP follows a four-phase methodology: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assessing existing knowledge and creating six regional platforms with local stakeholders.</li> <li>2. Facilitating interregional knowledge transfer and capacity building, supporting multi-actor partnerships in market assessment and business model development.</li> <li>3. Establishing a pan-European "Community of Practice" to share best practices and lessons learned between European regions.</li> <li>4. Disseminating and exploiting project results in collaboration with key stakeholders.</li> </ol> |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased capacity and knowledge of multi-actor partnerships to accelerate the development of bio-based products and services in the market.</li> <li>- Enhanced awareness and understanding of the bioeconomy and its impacts among local communities.</li> <li>- Strengthened collaboration between primary producers, SMEs, clusters, social actors, and policymakers.</li> <li>- Promotion of the transition towards a sustainable, regenerative, inclusive, and fair circular bioeconomy across European regions.</li> </ul>                                 |
| Replicability potential: | The SCALE-UP model is designed to be replicable across different European regions, adapting to local specificities. The creation of regional platforms and the use of collaborative tools facilitate the dissemination and adoption of bio-based solutions in various rural contexts.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Challenges faced:        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overcoming barriers to the adoption of bio-based innovations in rural communities.</li> <li>- Ensuring the economic sustainability of small-scale bio-based solutions.</li> <li>- Coordinating a diverse range of stakeholders with different interests and needs.</li> <li>- Maintaining long-term community engagement in bioeconomy initiatives.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.scaleup-bioeconomy.eu/en/home/">https://www.scaleup-bioeconomy.eu/en/home/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

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| Additional notes: | SCALE-UP is an EU-funded project under the Horizon Europe program, running until August 30, 2025. The project aims to create a functional framework linking bio-based solutions to rural development goals and sustainability principles, enabling rural communities to identify, compare, and implement alternative development pathways based on the bioeconomy. |
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| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
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| Best practice name:      | ROBIN (Deploying circular bioeconomies at the regional level with a territorial approach)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Type:                    | EU-funded project under the Horizon Europe program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Focus area:              | ROBIN aims to empower European regions to adapt their governance models and structures, accelerating the achievement of circular bioeconomy goals and promoting social innovation while considering different territorial contexts.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Stakeholders involved:   | The project engages a variety of actors, including regional governments, research institutions, civil society organizations, and industry partners. These stakeholders collaborate to develop and implement innovative governance models that facilitate the transition to a circular bioeconomy in their regions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Methodology:             | ROBIN adopts a territorial approach to deploying circular bioeconomies at the regional level. The main activities include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyzing existing bioeconomy governance practices and models across Europe.</li> <li>2. Developing a knowledge platform (ROBIN Toolbox) that collects regional governance models and best practices.</li> <li>3. Implementing pilot projects in different European regions to test and adapt proposed governance models.</li> <li>4. Promoting social innovation and community engagement in the transition to a circular bioeconomy.</li> </ol> |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved understanding of existing bioeconomy governance practices and models in Europe.</li> <li>- Development of tools and guidelines to support regions in adapting their governance models toward a circular bioeconomy.</li> <li>- Successful implementation of pilot projects in different regions, demonstrating the effectiveness of new governance models.</li> <li>- Increased awareness and engagement of local communities in circular bioeconomy transition processes.</li> </ul>                                                                                |
| Replicability potential: | The ROBIN model is designed to be adaptable and replicable across various European regions, taking into account territorial specificities and local governance structures. The availability of the ROBIN Toolbox facilitates knowledge sharing and the implementation of best practices in different regional contexts.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Challenges faced:        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adapting existing governance models to support the transition to a circular bioeconomy.</li> <li>- Effectively engaging a wide range of stakeholders with different interests and priorities.</li> <li>- Overcoming socio-economic and cultural barriers that may hinder the adoption of circular bioeconomy practices.</li> <li>- Ensuring that proposed solutions are sustainable and applicable in the long term across different regions.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                      |

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| Website:          | <a href="https://robin-project.eu">https://robin-project.eu</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Additional notes: | ROBIN is an EU-funded project that involves several pilot regions, including Andalusia (Spain), Baden-Württemberg (Germany), Zilina (Slovakia), Central Macedonia (Greece), and the Southern Region (Ireland). These regions serve as case studies to test and refine proposed governance models, providing practical examples of how to transition to a circular bioeconomy at the regional level. |

5.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
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| Best practice name:      | ShapingBio (Shaping the bioeconomy of the future)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Type:                    | EU-funded project under the Horizon Europe program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Focus area:              | ShapingBio focuses on promoting innovation in the European bioeconomy at different levels—sectoral, governmental, and geographical—by providing evidence-based insights and recommendations to enhance policy alignment and support stakeholders in the bio-based sectors.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Stakeholders involved:   | The project brings together a network of 10 organizations from 9 countries, including research institutions, government bodies, industry associations, and technology clusters. These stakeholders collaborate to map and analyze initiatives, policy frameworks, and governance structures, identifying key gaps in the bioeconomy innovation ecosystem.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Methodology:             | ShapingBio follows an integrated approach that includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assessing stakeholders' knowledge needs and collecting their insights on identified challenges.</li> <li>2. Mapping governance structures, initiatives, and policy tools covering key aspects such as funding, collaboration, and technology transfer across EU macro-regions.</li> <li>3. Developing integrated knowledge on key bioeconomy implementation issues within the EU.</li> <li>4. Formulating targeted policy recommendations at different governance levels to maximize the potential of the bioeconomy.</li> </ol> |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhanced understanding of the bioeconomy innovation ecosystem.</li> <li>- Reduced fragmentation between bio-based sectors, food systems, and policies at different governance levels.</li> <li>- Contribution to more effective governance within the bioeconomy innovation ecosystem.</li> <li>- Improved policy recommendations and guidelines for better collaboration and innovation valorization in the bioeconomy sector.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                 |
| Replicability potential: | The models and recommendations developed by ShapingBio are designed to be applicable across various European regions, adapting to local contexts. The project's comprehensive mapping and analysis provide a foundation for replicating successful initiatives and fostering bioeconomy innovation across different regional settings.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Challenges faced:        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overcoming fragmentation between sectors and policies at different governance levels.</li> <li>- Effectively engaging a diverse range of stakeholders with different interests and priorities.</li> <li>- Ensuring that policy recommendations are adopted and implemented at various levels.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                   | - Maintaining a continuous flow of evidence-based information to support innovation and policy alignment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Website:          | <a href="https://www.shapingbio.eu">https://www.shapingbio.eu</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Additional notes: | ShapingBio is an EU-funded project under the Horizon Europe program, running for 36 months from September 2022. The project significantly contributes to major EU initiatives and strategies, including the EU Bioeconomy Strategy, the Farm to Fork Strategy, the European Green Deal priorities, and the EU's 2030 and 2050 climate goals. |

6.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
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| Best practice name:      | MainstreamBIO (Mainstreaming small-scale bio-based solutions across rural Europe)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Type:                    | EU-funded project under the Horizon Europe program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Focus area:              | MainstreamBIO aims to integrate small-scale bio-based solutions into rural European practices, promoting the bioeconomy and strengthening rural communities through the adoption of sustainable practices.                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Stakeholders involved:   | The project involves a European network of stakeholders, including research institutions, agricultural advisory services, associations, SMEs, innovators, and rural communities. These stakeholders collaborate to promote bio-based solutions and facilitate knowledge exchange in rural areas                                                                                                                        |
| Methodology:             | MainstreamBIO adopts a collaborative approach, creating multi-actor innovation platforms (MIPs) in seven rural EU regions (Netherlands, Poland, Denmark, Sweden, Bulgaria, Spain, Ireland). Activities include assessing the current state of the bioeconomy, identifying factors influencing the adoption of innovations, promoting success stories, and developing open-access online tools to support stakeholders. |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creation of multi-actor innovation platforms in key regions.</li> <li>- Promotion of successful bio-based solutions in rural areas.</li> <li>- Facilitation of knowledge exchange and capacity building in the rural bioeconomy sector.</li> <li>- Development of rural development models for the adoption of circular bio-based solutions.</li> </ul>                       |
| Replicability potential: | The MainstreamBIO model is designed to be replicable across different European regions, adapting to local specificities. The creation of networks and the use of online tools facilitate the dissemination and adoption of bio-based solutions in various rural contexts.                                                                                                                                              |
| Challenges faced:        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overcoming barriers to the adoption of innovations in rural communities.</li> <li>- Ensuring the economic sustainability of small-scale bio-based solutions.</li> <li>- Coordinating a wide range of stakeholders with diverse interests and needs.</li> <li>- Maintaining long-term engagement of rural communities in bioeconomy initiatives.</li> </ul>                    |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://mainstreambio-project.eu/consortium/">https://mainstreambio-project.eu/consortium/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Additional notes:        | MainstreamBIO is an EU-funded project under the Horizon Europe program, running for 36 months from September 1, 2022. The project aims to create a transition framework toward a sustainable, regenerative, inclusive, and fair                                                                                                                                                                                        |

|  |                                              |
|--|----------------------------------------------|
|  | circular bioeconomy in European rural areas. |
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7.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
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| Best practice name:      | SCALE UP (Supporting concentration and robustness of SMEs within the renewed EU industrial policy)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Type:                    | EU-funded project under the Interreg Europe program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Focus area:              | SCALE UP aims to improve policy instruments that support SMEs' capacity to grow in national and international markets, contributing to European competitiveness and accelerating regional economic growth.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Stakeholders involved:   | The project involves six EU regions (plus an advisory partner) with different levels of development in SME scaling, but with common needs. Stakeholders include regional authorities, development agencies, chambers of commerce, and other key actors supporting SMEs.                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Methodology:             | SCALE UP follows an integrated approach starting with an analysis of the local situations of partner regions to identify valuable practices. These practices are then reviewed for transferability and adaptation, leading to the design and implementation of six regional action plans. Activities include interregional learning events, open innovation workshops, and the establishment of stakeholder action groups in each region. |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improvement of policy instruments supporting SME growth.</li> <li>- Strengthened collaboration between businesses, research institutions, and key stakeholders.</li> <li>- Implementation of regional action plans to support SME scalability.</li> <li>- Increased competitiveness of SMEs in national and international markets.</li> </ul>                                                    |
| Replicability potential: | The SCALE UP model is designed to be replicable across different European regions, adapting to local specificities. The sharing of best practices and interregional learning facilitates the adoption of effective solutions in various regional contexts.                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Challenges faced:        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overcoming barriers to collaboration between SMEs and other stakeholders.</li> <li>- Adapting regional policies to effectively support SME growth.</li> <li>- Ensuring the sustainability of implemented initiatives.</li> <li>- Actively engaging stakeholders in the SME scaling process.</li> </ul>                                                                                           |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://projects2014-2020.interregeurope.eu/scaleup/">https://projects2014-2020.interregeurope.eu/scaleup/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Additional notes:        | The project was officially launched in August 2019 with an initial duration of 36 months, later extended to 42 months. The project was divided into two phases: phase 1 lasted 30 months, and phase 2 lasted 12 months                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

8.

| Fields              | Input                                                            |
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| Best practice name: | Scale-up Champions: Scale up innovative businesses across the EU |

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| Type:                    | EU-funded project under the Horizon Europe program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Focus area:              | Scale-up Champions aimed to accelerate the growth of deep-tech startups in Europe by connecting startup ecosystems across the EU, providing access to customer networks, talent, capital, corporate partners, and opportunities for cross-border scaling.                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Stakeholders involved:   | The project involved European incubators, startups, investors, corporates, and other key actors in the startup ecosystem, fostering collaboration to support the scaling of innovative businesses.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Methodology:             | Scale-up Champions implemented actions such as experience-sharing among project partners, fostering startup-corporate cooperation, and building fundraising capacity through investment readiness programs. The project also organized matchmaking events and demo days to connect startups with investors and corporates.                                                                                                                    |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Connected different European deep-tech startup ecosystems and supported cross-border activities.</li> <li>- Improved investment readiness and market reach of participating startups.</li> <li>-Strengthened collaboration between startups and corporates, leading to sustainable partnerships.</li> <li>- Increased the number of cross-border investments in deep-tech digital sectors.</li> </ul> |
| Replicability potential: | The standardized services and frameworks developed by Scale-up Champions can be adopted by other incubators and regions across Europe, facilitating the replication of the project's success in different contexts.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Challenges faced:        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Bridging the gap between different European startup ecosystems.</li> <li>- Overcoming language and cultural barriers in cross-border collaborations.</li> <li>- Ensuring the sustainability of partnerships between startups and corporates.</li> <li>- Enhancing the fundraising capacity of deep-tech startups.</li> </ul>                                                                          |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/871877">https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/871877</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

**Belgium's** contributions reflect its focus on **innovation ecosystems, bioeconomy initiatives and cross-sectoral cooperation**. Projects such as INNO4CFIs demonstrate how carbon farming can be integrated into circular bioeconomy models, combining technological solutions with stakeholder collaboration. Belgium's approach highlights the importance of living labs, pilot initiatives and structured stakeholder engagement to test and validate innovative models. However, ensuring sustained commitment and integrating solutions into real rural conditions remain key challenges. Belgium's practices highlight the value of experimentation and collaborative governance to promote sustainable transitions.

Belgium's emphasis on cooperation with stakeholders is evident in the structure of its projects, which often involve cooperation between SMEs, research institutions, industrial groups and public authorities. This multi-stakeholder approach ensures that innovation is both market-relevant and aligned with societal objectives, in particular about the green transition. The country's practices highlight the importance of technology transfer and knowledge exchange to facilitate sustainable transition in rural areas.

However, the Belgian partners also faced challenges in securing long-term commitment from different actors, in particular in the transition from the pilot stages to full-scale implementation. Integrating innovative solutions into operational contexts requires continuous efforts in communication, policy alignment and

stakeholder motivation. Despite these challenges, Belgium's experiences highlight the potential of collaborative governance models to promote rural innovation with impact, offering valuable lessons for other regions seeking to build resilient innovation ecosystems.

**Partner: P10, F6S - NETWORK IRELAND LIMITED, Dublin, Ireland (total 6)**

1.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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| Best practice name:      | Bioeconomy Ventures Pitching and Matchmaking within the Bioeconomy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Type                     | Horizon Europe project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Focus area:              | Innovation promotion and matchmaking with investors and corporations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Startups, investors, corporations, event organizers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Methodology:             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a cohort of startups / innovators with pitch decks. <i>(Entertain the idea of having industry focused cohorts as its easier to communicate to industry focused investors / corporations)</i></li> <li>2. Establish a pool of corporations with challenges / problems</li> <li>3. Establish a pool of investors seeking deal flow</li> <li>4. Establish Pitching days (online or in person)</li> <li>5. Run the program. Continually provide value and engage stakeholders</li> <li>6. Monitor results</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 446 Number of startups pitching</li> <li>• 51 Corporate Innovation Challenges established</li> <li>• 94 Number of accelerated startups</li> <li>• 4 Physical brokerage events</li> <li>• 1.131 Meetings facilitated</li> <li>• 446 Number of startups pitching</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Replicability potential: | Yes. However, consortiums of organizations are needed to fully mobilize the ecosystem. Bioeconomy is a quite niche ecosystem of various industries, and full engagement of all stakeholders is of importance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Challenges faced:        | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engaging the community – Investors and corporations that are seeking startups and their innovations are hard to reach. Personal connections are the key. Cold emailing does not work.</li> <li>2. Nurturing of bioeconomy open innovation mindset and ecosystem as not everyone is open to or knowledgeable of open innovation concept</li> <li>3. Online pitching is not as effective as in person one. BioeconomyVentures partnered with various ongoing events to reach the desired mass effect. (<a href="#">World Bio Markets</a> being one of these)</li> <li>4. Intermediaries are the key to mass scaling.</li> <li>5. Investor – startup matchmaking does not happen overnight Relationships and trust take time to be build</li> <li>6. Post pitching impact and deal tracking is difficult to track as people are reluctant to complete surveys</li> </ol> |

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|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website: | <a href="https://www.bioeconomyventures.eu/">https://www.bioeconomyventures.eu/</a> |
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2.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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| Best practice name:      | CLIMOS project: <i>Climate Monitoring and Decision Support Framework for Sand Fly-borne Diseases Detection and Mitigation with COst-benefit and Climate-policy MeasureS</i><br><br>Stakeholder engagement and clustering activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Type                     | Horizon Europe project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Focus area:              | To address the climate change-induced emergence and spread of Sand Fly-Borne disease (SFBDS) through Early Warning Systems (EWS)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Public health authorities, veterinarians, researchers, policymakers, and local communities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Methodology:             | <p>Co-creation workshops, information sessions, and training modules in 10 countries.</p> <p>The first part of the session focuses on scenario elaboration for the adoption of CLIMOS Early Warning System. The team prepare a set of slides and text to provide a short introduction on the topic of foresight scenarios. Participants are introduced to 4 different scenarios regarding the possible use of an Early Warning System and the need for risk mitigation or avoidance when it comes dealing with sand fly borne diseases, namely Leishmaniasis.</p> <p>After reading each scenario, participants are asked some questions, for instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which other social, technological, environmental, economic, political, ethical or demographic factors can increase the spread of Leishmaniasis in Europe?</li> <li>• What could drive the introduction of an EWS as a means to manage Leishmaniasis in Europe?</li> <li>• What would be a catchy title for this scenario?</li> </ul> <p>The second part of the session focuses on the functionalities and usability of the EWS. Various mockups are presented, and participants are asked which mockups they prefer, why, and which functionalities they find most relevant for the platform.</p> |
| Results/impact:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To collect feedback on the scenario's development regarding social, technological, ethical, environmental, demographic, economic and political factors associated with the EWS usage</li> <li>- To assess the usability and acceptance, as well as gather feedback on the Early Warning system functionalities, and its impact on the daily lives of its future users.</li> <li>- To refine the EWS system, based on the user needs, limitations and constraints identified by the participants and the project team.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Replicability potential: | Yes, we have already done it in Portugal, Turkey, Italy, Serbia, Spain, Israel, Croatia, Slovenia, and France. It can be done in any country                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

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| Challenges faced: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Find enough participants</li> <li>- Create tailor-made trainings in each country</li> <li>- Involve researchers to organize the co-creation workshops, for some it was the first time</li> <li>- Effectively communicate the benefits of co-creation</li> </ul> |
| Website:          | <a href="https://climos-project.eu/">https://climos-project.eu/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

3.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| Best practice name:      | COPILLOT Open Calls (OC1, OC2)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Type                     | Horizon Europe project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Focus area:              | <p>COPILLOT project (via its OC opportunities) is to establish a reference database and network of open access pilot and demo infrastructures for the European bioeconomy, facilitating the rapid market introduction of biobased innovations. The project seeks to unite Infrastructures, Innovators (users of the infrastructures), and Enablers (investors, finance actors, market actors, clusters &amp; incubators, public authorities, and large companies) into a dynamic community.</p> <p>The selected applicants in both OC are required to perform set of mandatory actions identified in Guidelines for Applicants that are going to facilitate future platform performance.</p> |
| Stakeholders involved:   | <p><b>Open Call 1: Call4BioPlants</b> (OC1) targets Open Access Pilot and Demo Infrastructure active within the bioeconomy implemented by SMEs or RTOs.</p> <p><b>Open Call 2: Call4BioInnovators</b> (OC2) targets bioeconomy innovators defined as startups, spin-offs and SMEs owning and developing innovative biobased technologies with the aim of commercialization.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Methodology:             | <p>Set of co-creation workshops have been conducted with partners to establish relevant rules for applicants.</p> <p>The selected innovators (OC2) will participate in the Innovators programs (Scale&amp;Growth program and the Connect&amp;Exchange program). Those mentioned program on the other hand will be designed by OC1 selected applicant. This combination will make the created program adequate in terms of the content</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Results/impact:          | <p><b>Open Call 1: Call4BioPlants</b> (OC1) 9 PDIs selected. They started introducing the program and shared plans for the implementation with the project consortium.</p> <p><b>Open Call 2: Call4BioInnovators</b> (OC2) 14 innovators selected. They started introducing the program and shared plans for the implementation with the project consortium. Main activities will be carried out starting from May 2025 onwards.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Replicability potential: | Yes, projects that involved FSTP to motivate and onboard those actors relevant for the project topic, that might not be involved differently                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

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|                   | (e.g. By submitting proposal themselves).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Challenges faced: | Probably offered budget could be seen as challenge as OC applicants have been offered 6.000 euro each. Nevertheless, this amount is difficult to compare considering different applicants receiving it (from one hand big PDIs facilities and on the other small startups). |
| Website:          | <a href="https://copilot-project.eu/">https://copilot-project.eu/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Additional notes: | Email: <a href="mailto:copilot@f6s.com">copilot@f6s.com</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

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| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| Best practice name:    | Treesury                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Type                   | Startup                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Focus area:            | Citizen engagement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Stakeholders involved: | <b>Stakeholders Involved</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Local Governments</b><br/> <i>Role:</i> Facilitate regulatory approvals, provide access to public land for afforestation, support local outreach and community engagement, and ensure integration with municipal sustainability goals.         </li> <li> <b>NGOs (Environmental and Climate-Focused)</b><br/> <i>Role:</i> Collaborate on biodiversity preservation, contribute to community education programs, assist in monitoring impact, and promote environmental awareness through their networks.         </li> <li> <b>SMEs (AgriTech, EcoTech, and Sustainability Startups)</b><br/> <i>Role:</i> Provide innovative technologies for monitoring tree growth, carbon sequestration, and health using remote sensing, AI, and IoT tools. Support implementation with scalable, locally tailored solutions.         </li> <li> <b>Academic and Research Institutions</b><br/> <i>Role:</i> Support data analysis, impact measurement (e.g., carbon capture), and ecological modeling. Ensure scientific rigor and continuous improvement of the Treesury methodology.         </li> <li> <b>Corporate Partners / CSR Investors</b><br/> <i>Role:</i> Provide funding through CSR or sustainability programs in exchange for verified environmental impact reports and carbon credits. Help scale the initiative through co-branded campaigns.         </li> <li> <b>Local Communities and Landowners</b><br/> <i>Role:</i> Act as custodians of newly planted areas, participate in tree care and maintenance, and benefit from potential         </li> </ol> |

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|                          | <p>ecosystem services and economic opportunities created by the Treesury program.</p> <p><b>7. International Development Organizations / Donors</b><br/> <i>Role:</i> Provide financial support, align Treesury with broader climate adaptation and mitigation goals, and help ensure long-term sustainability and policy alignment.</p>                                                                                                                         |
| Methodology:             | Direct sales to customers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Results/impact:          | The solution was applied to 100 hectares of hazelnut orchards, which will lead to savings in pesticide/fertilizer application, a healthier and more efficient production and a significant co2 sequestration.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Replicability potential: | Treesury's solution is highly scalable and adaptable, with plans to tokenize third-party farms beyond the initial 100 ha pilot. By leveraging satellite data and AI, the model can be applied to various crop types and geographies, enabling widespread adoption of carbon tracking and sustainable investment through a transparent and decentralized platform.                                                                                                |
| Challenges faced:        | The main challenges included marketing and promoting the Treesury solution to a wider audience, as the concept of tokenized carbon assets from farms is still emerging. Reaching the right stakeholders—especially environmentally conscious investors and farm owners—required targeted communication and trust-building. Additionally, securing investment for scaling proved complex due to the niche intersection of agtech, blockchain, and carbon markets. |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://hazelnut.treesury.com/">https://hazelnut.treesury.com/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

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| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
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| Best practice name:    | <b>REGILIENCE: citizen survey</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Type                   | Horizon Europe project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Focus area:            | <b>Citizen engagement</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Stakeholders involved: | <p>Key stakeholders and their roles (e.g., NGOs, local government, SMEs).</p> <p>Citizens from Central Macedonia Region</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Methodology:           | <p>How the practice was implemented (e.g., co-creation workshops, hackathons).</p> <p>The <a href="#">REGILIENCE</a> project team conducted the survey online. The target audience comprised individuals aged 18 or over living in Central Macedonia fluent in Greek or English. The 218 valid responses revealed that social media, the internet, and television are the main sources of information about the environment and climate change in Central Macedonia. These findings highlight effective channels for reaching a broad audience with climate change adaptation campaigns. Central Macedonia's Regional Development Fund facilitated conducting the survey. The region encouraged the local</p> |

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|                          | citizens to participate in the survey and the project team promoted the survey through social media, local organisations and direct email invitations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Results/impact:          | Quantitative and qualitative outcomes.<br>216 answers gathered, second batch aiming for 400 answers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Replicability potential: | Could this be replicated in other regions? If yes, provide suggestions.<br>Yes – questionnaire can be replicated in different regions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Challenges faced:        | Describe any obstacles.<br>Gathering enough answers from the region                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Website:                 | Provide the contact information for further inquiries.<br><a href="https://regilience.eu/contact/">https://regilience.eu/contact/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Additional notes:        | Any other relevant information;<br><a href="https://regilience.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/REGILIENCE_Citizen_Survey_Report-V_1.0_Final-1.pdf">https://regilience.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/REGILIENCE_Citizen_Survey_Report-V_1.0_Final-1.pdf</a><br><br>Use case description: <a href="https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/mission/solutions/mission-stories/citizen-survey-central-macedonia-story30">https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/mission/solutions/mission-stories/citizen-survey-central-macedonia-story30</a> |

6.

| Fields                        | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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| <b>Best practice name:</b>    | EcoScape - Bridging Agriculture and Biodiversity with Augmented Reality                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Type                          | Horizon Europe project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Focus area:</b>            | Education, Bio-Diversity Conservation, Rural Development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Stakeholders involved:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Farming Organizations (e.g., IFA Regional Offices, Teagasc, Agricultural Consultants Association (ACA)): involved in the local piloting phase of the project. Their primary role is to test and adapt the BioCheck App to suit specific land conditions and agricultural practices, ensuring its practical applicability and effectiveness for farmers.</li> <li>· Schools and vocational education centers, Universities specializing in agricultural and biological sciences (e.g., Ballyhaise College, College of Amenity Horticulture, Clonakilty Agricultural College): will contribute to the project by testing and co-developing the educational materials. They will work collaboratively to ensure the training content is accurate, relevant, and effective for the target audience.</li> <li>· Sustainability NGO (e.g., Ballyhoura Development, Síol Sustainability Solutions): bridge to the farmers, facilitating communication, engagement, and knowledge transfer between the project and the farming community.</li> </ul> |

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| <b>Methodology:</b>    | <p>The project employs a systematic stakeholder engagement approach:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gathering target group needs: Local research involving surveys, and analysis of national/international data is conducted to identify the specific needs of farmers and other stakeholders in relation to biodiversity conservation in agriculture.</li> <li>2. Product development: Based on needs assessment, the project develops the core products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· An e-learning platform for farmers focusing on farmland biodiversity management.</li> <li>· The Bio Check App, an augmented reality tool for environmental impact analysis in agricultural fields.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Local piloting and co-development: The e-learning platform and Bio Check App are piloted locally with farmers. User feedback is gathered and used to refine the products, ensuring they are tailored to the practical needs and user experience of the target group.</li> <li>4. Final product and local launch: The refined e-learning platform and BioCheck App are finalized and launched locally, with support and training provided to farmers to ensure effective integration into their practices.</li> </ol> |
| <b>Results/impact:</b> | <p>The project aims to achieve the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To equip farmers and educators with the necessary technical knowledge for effective biodiversity conservation, enabling informed agricultural practices.</li> <li>● Stakeholder engagement will be comprehensive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Each participating country will involve 15 farming stakeholders (farms, associations, NGOs, etc.) and 5 teaching and learning stakeholders (universities, schools, training centers, city councils, etc.).</li> <li>○ Furthermore, the project will collaborate with researchers, professors, and organizations focused on biodiversity, agriculture, environmental conservation, and education.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● The project's methodology is being implemented across Poland, Italy, Croatia, Ireland, and Serbia.</li> <li>● To maximize accessibility, the e-learning platform and BioCheck App will be available in the languages of these countries: Polish, Italian, Croatian, Irish, and Serbian.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                          |

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| <b>Replicability potential:</b> | <p>The replicability of the EcoScape project was facilitated through three strategic actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The project's methodology was implemented across diverse contexts – Poland, Italy, Croatia, Ireland, and Serbia – with the project's outputs and approach tailored to each country's unique environmental conditions, agricultural practices, and stakeholder needs.</li> <li>2. To enable wider adoption, detailed guidelines outlining the process will be openly accessible on the project website.</li> <li>3. To ensure accessibility and maximize impact, all project materials, including the e-learning platform and BioCheck App, will be available in the languages of the implementing countries: Polish, Italian, Croatian, English, and Serbian.</li> </ol> |
| <b>Challenges faced:</b>        | An expected challenge is the varying levels of digital experience and digital presence among farmers, which the project will address by prioritizing locally sourced support to ensure effective engagement.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Website:</b>                 | <a href="https://ecoscape-project.eu/">https://ecoscape-project.eu/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

Ireland's best practices are strongly focused on facilitating the development of the **bioeconomy** by promoting **innovation** and **networking**. The Bioeconomy Ventures project stands out as a Horizon Europe initiative that supports start-ups through pitching and matchmaking with investors and businesses. With over 446 startups pitched and 94 startups accelerated, the initiative has created significant impact by connecting innovators with industry players and investors. This reflects Ireland's commitment to fostering a collaborative ecosystem to grow the bioeconomy.

The CLIMOS project highlights Ireland's efforts to address the challenges of climate change, in particular the spread of sand fly-borne diseases. The project uses a participatory approach with local communities and public health authorities, using scenario workshops to promote risk awareness and early warning systems. This demonstrates Ireland's emphasis on stakeholder engagement and public education as a means of enhancing climate change resilience and public health.

Despite these advantages, challenges remain, in particular regarding the limited scope of outreach efforts to attract investors and businesses to partner with start-ups. Moreover, fostering a culture of open innovation in the bioeconomy is an ongoing process that requires continuous support and confidence building. These factors underline the need for consistent community engagement and effective communication strategies to maximise impact and promote long-term growth.

**Partner: P11, CGLE - CHAMBERY-GRAND LAC ECONOMIE, Le Bourget-du-Lac, France (total 7)**

1.

| Fields              | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
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| Best practice name: | The <b>Traversée</b> program by the Savoie Technolac Incubator is an intensive six-month journey designed to secure and accelerate the growth of innovative startups. This program helps entrepreneurs structure, implement, and launch their startup, equipping them with essential entrepreneurial skills and enhancing their value proposition. |

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| Type:                    | Training Program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Focus area:              | Entrepreneurship                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Savoie Technolac incubator, Ther club of mentors and experts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Methodology:             | <p><b>Personalized Support:</b> Individualized guidance to refine the business model, structure the offering, and develop an effective growth strategy.</p> <p><b>A Network of Experts and Mentors:</b> Connections with experienced entrepreneurs, investors, and specialists to share insights and advice.</p> <p><b>Access to Local Infrastructure:</b> Coworking spaces, fab labs, and technological resources to develop and test products or services.</p> <p><b>Targeted Training and Workshops:</b> Covering innovation management, funding strategies, and rural market commercialization, led by industry professionals.</p> <p><b>Strong Regional Integration:</b> Facilitating the integration of start-ups into the local ecosystem and driving economic growth in rural areas.</p> |
| Results/impact:          | <p>Benefits for Participants:</p> <p>Individual and group coaching sessions.</p> <p>Strong cohort spirit, fostering collaboration among fellow entrepreneurs.</p> <p>A mix of strategic workshops and hands-on practical sessions.</p> <p>Access to industry experts for guidance and mentorship.</p> <p>Continuous project monitoring by a dedicated support team.</p> <p>Increased visibility for your startup.</p> <p>The La Traversée program welcomes two cohorts per year ( 20 entrepreneurs).</p> <p>By the end of the six-month journey, entrepreneurs are fully prepared to launch their startup into the market.</p>                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Replicability potential: | yes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Challenges faced:        | <b>La Traversée</b> contributes to building a dynamic and sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem. This program can contribute to transform rural areas into attractive innovation hubs while providing entrepreneurs with favorable conditions for success.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.incubateur-savoietechnolac.com/accueil/notre-offre/">https://www.incubateur-savoietechnolac.com/accueil/notre-offre/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Additional notes:        | Supporting entrepreneurs through group coaching programs is an important element in building a start-up village.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

2.

| Fields              | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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| Best practice name: | <p><b>Pass Talents Énergies: A Support Program by Savoie Technolac Incubator</b></p> <p>The <b>Pass Talents Énergies</b> program is an initiative led by the <b>Savoie Technolac Incubator</b> and <b>La French Tech Alpes – Chambéry</b>. It aims to identify and support young talents committed to tackling tomorrow's energy challenges by helping them define and structure their innovative projects.</p> |
| Type:               | Bootcamp                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Focus area:         | Entrepreneurship, energy, decarbonation,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

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| Stakeholders involved:   | Savoie Technolac incubator, Ther club of mentors and experts, SMEs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Methodology:             | <p>The <b>four-month program</b> is divided into <b>two immersive bootcamps</b> that include:</p> <p><b>Expert-led workshops</b> to address global and project-specific energy challenges, offering tailored expertise.</p> <p><b>Group coaching sessions</b> to help participants develop their entrepreneurial mindset, strategic vision, and commercial approach.</p> <p><b>Business networking events</b> where participants present their innovations to industry professionals and potential market players.</p> <p>Additionally, participants benefit from <b>personalized mentorship</b> and ongoing individual support to ensure a well-structured and sustainable business model. Pass Talents Énergies provides an ideal framework for bioeconomy start-ups looking to establish themselves in rural areas by offering them the tools, knowledge, and network needed to transform their ideas into viable and impactful businesses.</p> |
| Results/impact:          | <p>The <b>Pass Talents Énergies</b> program is particularly well-suited for bioeconomy start-ups looking to develop in rural areas. The program focuses on sectors such as <b>biomass and biogas</b>, which are inherently linked to rural resources.</p> <p>Entrepreneurs in these fields receive <b>specialized support</b> tailored to the challenges of rural areas, including resource availability, logistics, and local market needs.</p> <p>Furthermore, networking opportunities with <b>industry experts and key regional players</b> help start-ups integrate their innovations into rural ecosystems effectively.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Replicability potential: | yes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Challenges faced:        | <b>The program allows us to communicate and attract entrepreneurs in the field and to mobilize partners in the region.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://passtalentsenergies.com/">https://passtalentsenergies.com/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Additional notes:        | This program helps transform rural areas into attractive innovation hubs while providing entrepreneurs with favorable conditions for success.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

3.

| Fields              | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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| Best practice name: | <p>SAVOIE MONT BLANC ANGELS</p> <p>The mission of SAMBA (Savoie Mont Blanc Angels) is to stimulate innovation and boost the regional economy by :</p> <p>Investing in innovative projects and early-stage startups,</p> <p>Providing personalized support through mentoring, sharing expertise, and access to a network of contacts,</p> |
| Type:               | Investor Club                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Focus area:         | Finance, business angels, start-up                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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| Stakeholders involved:   | investors, banks, venture capital, SMEs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Methodology:             | <p><b>The Role of Local Investors in Startup Development in Rural Areas</b></p> <p>Local investors, often called Business Angels, are individuals who invest their own money in young, innovative companies in their early stages. They provide not only funding but also their experience, network, and strategic advice to entrepreneurs.</p> <p>The Savoie Mont Blanc Angels association, active in the Savoie and Haute-Savoie regions, brings together these investors who are committed to supporting local startups.</p> <p>Why are they essential for startups?</p> <p>Startups in their creation or early growth phases often struggle to secure bank financing due to the high level of risk they represent. Local investors step in to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Provide venture capital, essential for initial development.</b></li> <li>- <b>Guide entrepreneurs in structuring their projects.</b></li> <li>- <b>Open doors through their business network.</b></li> </ul> <p>In rural areas, these investors play an even more crucial role because local startups have less access to major financial centers and traditional investor networks.</p> |
| Results/impact:          | <p><b>A positive impact on the local economy</b></p> <p>Investing in local startups creates a <b>ripple effect</b> that benefits the regional economy:</p> <p><b>Job creation:</b> Funded startups grow and hire locally.</p> <p><b>Boosting the region's attractiveness:</b> Innovation attracts other economic players (incubators, researchers, service providers).</p> <p><b>Retaining talent:</b> Entrepreneurs and skilled workers stay in the region instead of moving to large cities.</p> <p><b>Leverage effect on other funding sources:</b> Initial private investment reassures other investors and public institutions, encouraging co-financing.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Replicability potential: | yes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Challenges faced:        | <p>Be able to mobilize active or retired business leaders to help launch start-ups in early stage.</p> <p>Savoie Mont Blanc Angels : A Key Player in Local Financing</p> <p>The association plays a leading role in connecting investors and local startups, fostering innovation, and contributing to sustainable economic development. Their support goes beyond just financing they actively participate in mentoring and ensuring the success of businesses.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://samba-investisseurs.fr/">https://samba-investisseurs.fr/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Additional notes:        | This program helps transform rural areas into attractive innovation hubs while providing entrepreneurs with favorable conditions for success.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

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| Fields              | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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| Best practice name: | <p><b>SoluCir: A Key Player in the Circular Economy</b></p> <p>SoluCir is an association that brings together businesses, local authorities, and entrepreneurs committed to <b>the circular economy</b>, an economic model focused on reducing waste and optimizing resource use.</p> <p>By facilitating the transition to more sustainable practices, SoluCir plays a</p> |

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|                          | strategic role in the <b>local economic development</b> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Type:                    | Bioeconomy association                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Focus area:              | Circular economy, materials, bioeconomy, energy, climate, decarbonation, entrepreneurship,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Stakeholders involved:   | SMEs, local government, local communities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Methodology:             | <p><b>A Major Impact on Innovation and Entrepreneurship</b></p> <p>SoluCir supports businesses and project leaders through:</p> <p>Entrepreneurial support: Helping startups involved in the circular economy.</p> <p>The development of collaborative ecosystems: Connecting economic players.</p> <p>Awareness and training: Promoting best practices and skill development.</p> <p>This support fosters responsible innovation, which is crucial for the competitiveness of territories.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Results/impact:          | <p><b>Revitalizing the Territory through Local Value Creation</b></p> <p>Through its efforts, SoluCir contributes to:</p> <p><b>Creating sustainable local jobs</b> in growing sectors.</p> <p><b>Encouraging businesses to anchor themselves</b> in rural areas by offering tailored solutions.</p> <p><b>Attracting funding and talent</b> by highlighting a territory committed to green innovation.</p> <p>By structuring a dynamic and engaged network, SoluCir promotes more resilient, sustainable, and attractive economic development for local startups and businesses.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Replicability potential: | medium                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Challenges faced:        | <p>In this way, SoluCir acts as a catalyst to accelerate the transition toward a more responsible and circular economy</p> <p><b>Identifies and supports circular solutions:</b> SoluCir identifies and supports local initiatives that promote recycling, reuse, and resource recovery.</p> <p><b>Brings together actors in the ecological transition:</b> The association organizes events—such as conferences, workshops, and professional trade shows, businesses, associations, and citizens to exchange ideas, collaborate, and implement joint projects.</p> <p><b>Raises awareness and assists economic transformation:</b> By democratizing the principles of the circular economy, it helps shift economic practices toward a more sustainable development model, both economically and environmentally.</p> |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://solucir.org/">https://solucir.org/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Additional notes:        | 160 members in 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

5.

| Fields              | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| Best practice name: | <p><b>Fab Lab La Dynamo: A Catalyst for Creation</b></p> <p>Fab Lab La Dynamo is a digital fabrication workshop based in Chambéry. It provides a collaborative space equipped with advanced technologies such as 3D</p> |

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|                          | <p>printers, laser cutters, CNC milling machines, and more. This lab is dedicated to experimentation, creation, and innovation, allowing project holders to design and prototype their ideas in a short time, thus transforming concepts into tangible products.</p> <p>Fab Lab supports <b>startups, artisans, students, and researchers</b> in developing prototypes, products, or solutions. It also helps <b>strengthen the technical skills</b> of creators through hands-on training and personalized support.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Type:                    | Prototyping Lab                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Focus area:              | Innovation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Entrepreneurs, SMEs, local government, local communities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Methodology:             | <p><b>An Innovative Approach to Business Creation</b></p> <p>La Dynamo goes beyond being just a fabrication tool; it becomes a true <b>business creation support hub</b>. It provides an environment where entrepreneurs can quickly test their ideas at a lower cost without the need for significant initial investment in expensive equipment.</p> <p>Key benefits of this approach for business creators include:</p> <p><b>Reduced startup costs:</b> Access to high-tech equipment minimizes initial investments.</p> <p><b>Networking and collaboration:</b> The Fab Lab offers a community of entrepreneurs, experts, and mentors, fostering exchanges and collaborative development.</p> <p><b>Agile innovation:</b> Creators can test, adjust, and iterate their products with immediate feedback, accelerating time-to-market.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Results/impact:          | <p><b>Encouraging local entrepreneurship:</b> by setting up a Fab Lab in a rural area, local entrepreneurs can access cutting-edge fabrication tools, thus stimulating the creation of innovative businesses. This would be especially relevant in sectors such as agriculture, clean technologies, and local craftsmanship.</p> <p><b>Reducing talent migration:</b> by providing resources and spaces to innovate locally, a Fab Lab can retain young talent and prevent them from migrating to larger cities in search of opportunities.</p> <p><b>Creating collaborative ecosystems:</b> Bringing together creators, artisans, students, and professionals, a Fab Lab fosters the emergence of dynamic local networks, providing opportunities for partnerships and shared innovation.</p> <p><b>Enhancing the territory:</b> Projects created in the Fab Lab can be anchored in local specificities, whether they are handmade products, ecological solutions adapted to the rural environment, or technologies linked to local resources.</p> |
| Replicability potential: | medium                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Challenges faced:        | <p>The Fab Lab model, like that of La Dynamo in Chambéry, represents a <b>unique opportunity to energize rural areas</b>. By facilitating access to innovation, creation, and digital fabrication, it becomes a lever for local economic development. The initiative can be a cornerstone for supporting <b>the emergence of sustainable, innovative, and locally tailored projects</b>, while fostering employment, training, and collaboration within rural communities.</p> <p>This model could transform rural areas into <b>innovation hubs</b>, where entrepreneurs have access to the same resources and opportunities as those in urban areas, while contributing to the region's attractiveness. economic</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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|                   | practices toward a more sustainable development model, both economically and environmentally.                                                                                                                       |
| Website:          | <a href="https://ladynamo.chambery.fr/">https://ladynamo.chambery.fr/</a>                                                                                                                                           |
| Additional notes: | <b>Transposing the Fab Lab Model to Rural Areas</b><br>The Fab Lab model from La Dynamo can be <b>transferred to rural areas</b> , offering numerous benefits for local economic development and business creation. |

6.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
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| Best practice name:    | <p><b>ESST'EAM: A Key Player in the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) in Savoie</b></p> <p>The <b>ESS'TEAM</b> association works in the field of <b>social and solidarity economy (SSE)</b>, a sector focused on creating social and environmental value while addressing the needs of local communities. It supports project leaders and businesses that adopt responsible economic models centered on social inclusion, solidarity, and sustainability.</p> <p>ESS'TEAM stands out by providing support for social entrepreneurs, offering not only financial resources but also strategic and operational guidance. The association fosters the emergence of innovative projects that provide concrete solutions to social and environmental challenges.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Type:                  | Bioeconomy association                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Focus area:            | social and solidarity economy, social innovation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Stakeholders involved: | Entrepreneurs, SMEs, local government, local communities, the citizens.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Methodology:           | <p>ESS'TEAM supports the creation of projects and businesses in SSE through several key actions:</p> <p><b>Personalized support:</b> Project leaders benefit from advice and mentoring to structure, fund, and grow their social enterprises.</p> <p><b>Networking:</b> The association connects SSE stakeholders, funders, experts, and partners to enrich the local ecosystem.</p> <p><b>Training and workshops:</b> ESSTEAM offers hands-on training to strengthen the skills of social entrepreneurs, especially in areas such as management, communication, and crowdfunding.</p> <p><b>Access to financing:</b> The association facilitates access to tailored funding, including project calls, solidarity investors, and public grants.</p> <p>Through these actions, ESSTEAM creates a conducive environment for the emergence of sustainable projects that meet the needs of local communities while remaining financially viable.</p> |
| Results/impact:        | <p>The <b>ESS'TEAM model</b> can be transferred to rural areas, where the need for social innovation is just as crucial as in urban areas. Here's how this initiative can support the economic and social development of rural territories:</p> <p><b>Supporting local social entrepreneurship:</b> By setting up a support structure similar to ESSTEAM in rural areas, local social entrepreneurs can benefit from <b>resources and expertise</b> specific to their context, thus fostering the creation of businesses adapted to local needs and realities.</p> <p><b>Bridging the gap between territories:</b> Rural areas often suffer from a <b>lack of access to funding and support networks</b>. By transferring ESSTEAM's expertise, rural project leaders can connect with solidarity investors, mentors, and partners,</p>                                                                                                           |

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                          | <p>receiving tailored support to develop local solutions.</p> <p><b>Creating synergies between local stakeholders:</b> Support from an organization like ESS'TEAM would allow for the <b>building of local partnerships</b> between businesses, local authorities, associations, and citizens, thus creating a thriving ecosystem for social innovation and sustainable development in rural areas.</p> <p><b>Encouraging sustainable social innovation:</b> Projects in rural areas can focus on <b>ecological, social, and responsible solutions</b>, linked to the specificities of the region (sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, short supply chains, professional integration). This helps strengthen the economic resilience of rural territories.</p> |
| Replicability potential: | medium                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Challenges faced:        | <p>The ESS'TEAM model, centered on <b>social and solidarity economy</b>, represents an <b>opportunity to energize rural areas</b>. By supporting the creation of businesses with strong social and environmental value, this model can <b>address specific challenges in rural territories</b>, such as access to employment, ecological transition, and maintaining local services.</p> <p>Adapting this model to rural areas will help <b>reinforce the autonomy and sustainability of territories</b>, creating a local economic ecosystem that is solidary, innovative, and future-oriented.</p>                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.ess.team/?Association">https://www.ess.team/?Association</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

7.

| Fields                 | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:    | <p><b>PITON by USMB: A Program Supporting Entrepreneurship</b></p> <p>The <b>PITON</b> program (Pole of Innovation and Transfer of Organizations and New Products) at the <b>University of Savoie Mont-Blanc</b> aims to support entrepreneurship by fostering innovation and business creation. It targets project leaders and startups, particularly those emerging from the academic world, and offers an environment conducive to connecting with financial, industrial, and academic partners.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Type:                  | Foundation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Focus area:            | Innovation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Stakeholders involved: | Entrepreneurs, SMEs, University, students                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Methodology:           | <p>One of the program's key features is its <b>personalized support</b>, which goes beyond just funding, focusing on <b>technology transfer, project acceleration, and access to strategic resources</b>. PITON's goal is to turn innovative ideas into concrete projects and ensure their development in local territories.</p> <p>PITON supports project creation and business development through several key actions:</p> <p><b>Personalized support:</b> Each project receives specific guidance, offering technical and strategic advice as well as support in management, marketing, and commercialization.</p> <p><b>Training and workshops:</b> Practical training is offered to strengthen the skills of entrepreneurs and teams, particularly in areas such as business management, innovation, financing, and commercial strategy.</p> <p><b>Networking and partnerships:</b> The program connects entrepreneurs with a</p> |

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                          | <b>network of experts</b> , mentors, and industry, financial, and academic partners to facilitate collaboration and business development.<br><b>Access to funding:</b> PITON helps entrepreneurs <b>identify tailored funding sources</b> , including public funds, private investors, and specialized incubation programs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Results/impact:          | The <b>PITON model</b> , well-established in urban areas, has significant potential for <b>transfer to rural areas</b> , where local entrepreneurship faces unique challenges such as access to funding, skilled human resources, or business networks. The PITON program, by fostering innovation and business creation, represents a strategic lever for rural development. Its personalized support, network of partnerships, and financial assistance can be invaluable tools for stimulating local entrepreneurship, particularly in sectors specific to these regions. By transferring this model to rural areas, PITON <i>can</i> transform these territories into innovation hubs, attract talent, create <i>local</i> jobs, and strengthen the economic resilience of rural communities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Replicability potential: | medium                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Challenges faced:        | Here's how the PITON program could act as a key driver for rural development:<br><b>Encouraging local entrepreneurship in rural areas:</b> By implementing a PITON-like structure in rural areas, local entrepreneurs could benefit from <b>tailored support</b> even in remote regions, facilitating the creation and sustainability of innovative businesses adapted to local needs.<br><b>Supporting rural innovation projects:</b> Rural projects can focus on <b>specific sectors</b> such as <b>sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, or responsible tourism</b> , and PITON could provide the necessary tools to help these projects grow, combining <b>innovative technologies</b> with <b>local needs</b> .<br><b>Strengthening the competitiveness of rural businesses:</b> With the <b>management and strategy support</b> provided by PITON, rural businesses could improve their competitiveness, become more structured, and better position themselves in the market, even against larger urban-based enterprises.<br><b>Creating synergies with local actors:</b> By adapting the PITON model to the specific needs of rural areas, <b>synergies can be created between local economic actors</b> , including businesses, local authorities, universities, and citizens, thus contributing to a <b>dynamic local economic development</b> .<br><b>Reducing the isolation of rural entrepreneurs:</b> Transferring the PITON program to rural areas would help <b>reduce the isolation of project leaders</b> by connecting them to a broader network of experts, mentors, and industry or financial partners, thus better addressing their needs and challenges. |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.piton.univ-smb.fr/">https://www.piton.univ-smb.fr/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Additional notes:        | Through these actions, PITON creates an environment that fosters the emergence of sustainable projects, meeting local community needs while remaining financially viable.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

In France, best practices often revolve around support for **entrepreneurship, training programmes** and **innovation ecosystems**. Initiatives such as La Traversée emphasise personalised mentoring, cohort-based support and integration into local ecosystems. The emphasis on structured support frameworks and stakeholder networks is a hallmark of the French approach. Key challenges include ensuring consistent engagement of different stakeholders, addressing the complexity of implementing new standards and maintaining participation in innovative ecosystems beyond the lifetime of projects. Nevertheless, the French examples illustrate the potential of strategic mentoring and local clustering to support start-ups and SMEs.

Another key element in the French examples is the strategic role of local investor networks, as illustrated by Savoie Mont Blanc Angels. This association demonstrates how regional business angels can bridge the funding gap often faced by early-stage startups in rural areas, offering not just capital but also mentorship, networks, and strategic guidance. The impact of such networks extends beyond individual businesses, stimulating regional economies through job creation, talent retention, and by attracting complementary innovation actors like incubators and researchers. SoluCir, meanwhile, acts as a catalyst for the circular economy by connecting SMEs, local authorities, and entrepreneurs in collaborative ecosystems that drive sustainable local development. This approach fosters cross-sectoral partnerships and encourages businesses to innovate responsibly, supporting a circular and decarbonized economy that enhances the resilience of rural communities. Together, these best practices underscore the importance of integrated support structures and the active involvement of local actors in driving innovation-led rural development.

What emerges from the French examples is a model of rural innovation that is both structured and adaptable, combining personalized support with the creation of collaborative, place-based ecosystems. Challenges remain, including ensuring consistent stakeholder engagement and addressing the complexities of translating innovative ideas into long-term sustainable businesses. Nevertheless, initiatives like La Traversée, Pass Talents Énergies, and Savoie Mont Blanc Angels show how France leverages local networks, technical infrastructure, and targeted mentoring to foster entrepreneurship and innovation in rural areas. These efforts are further amplified by programs like Fab Lab La Dynamo, which democratize access to prototyping and technical skills, and ESS'TEAM, which supports social entrepreneurship and community-driven projects. Collectively, these initiatives highlight the potential for strategic place-based approaches to transform rural territories into vibrant innovation hubs, aligned with broader sustainability goals and regional economic development.

**Partner: P13, IMATRAN - IMATRAN KAUPUNKI, Imatra, Finland (Associated partner) (total 5)**

1.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | CLIBUS/ Runway to carbon neutrality – Involvement of business communities in climate strategies                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Type:                    | EU-funding Interreg Europe                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Focus area:              | Citizen engagement, bio-based sector promotion, social innovation, etc. The project CLIBUS aims to improve current policy instruments to better support the preconditions of SMEs and business communities to implement energy efficiency and GHG reduction activities. |
| Stakeholders involved:   | CLIBUS aims to improve public authorities' capability to facilitate and support business sector's, especially SMEs', contribution in implementation of climate strategies.                                                                                              |
| Methodology:             | Regional and interregional workshops and trainings.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Results/impact:          | ongoing process: facilitate local authorities to facilitate SMzE's to energy efficiency.                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Replicability potential: | This practice is replicated in 4 other European countries and municipalities. (NL, GK, GR, Ukrain, FI)                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Challenges faced:        | Just beginning the process.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Website:                 | website under creation<br><a href="https://lab.fi/fi/projekti/clibus-runway-carbon-neutrality-involvement-business-communities-climate-strategies">https://lab.fi/fi/projekti/clibus-runway-carbon-neutrality-involvement-business-communities-climate-strategies</a>   |

2.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | ENSEMBLE: Europe as a Nation for Sustainability, Equality, Mobility, Better Life and Environment                                                                          |
| Focus area:              | Citizen engagement to better understanding of European values and sustainability.                                                                                         |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Local governments, decisionmakers and citizens.                                                                                                                           |
| Methodology:             | Discussions, workshops, seminars and meetings.                                                                                                                            |
| Results/impact:          | Increase of understanding of individuals possibilities to influence.                                                                                                      |
| Replicability potential: | Yes, this project is common with 5 Eu countries. (IT, ES, AU, SI ja FI).                                                                                                  |
| Challenges faced:        | No obstacles for the moment but activities should be continued after this project.                                                                                        |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.imatra.fi/en/work-and-vitality/vitality-projects/ensemble-project">https://www.imatra.fi/en/work-and-vitality/vitality-projects/ensemble-project</a> |

3.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | Greenreality (Greenreality is ecological thinking, knowledge, responsible choices and, above all, actions towards a sustainable tomorrow. To build the future together with citizens, communities and companies.) |
| Type:                    | EU funding CERV                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Focus area:              | Bio-based sector promotion (biomaterials, new energy solutions)                                                                                                                                                   |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Citizens, communities and companies.                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Methodology:             | Advisory services, workshops, hackathons, co-operation in schools.                                                                                                                                                |
| Results/impact:          | Creation of Greenreality network (a business-oriented network). Less emissions, and energyuse.                                                                                                                    |
| Replicability potential: | yes                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Challenges faced:        | To motivate SME's to participate on network.                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.greenreality.fi/en">https://www.greenreality.fi/en</a>                                                                                                                                       |

4.

| Fields              | Input                             |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Best practice name: | Waste management in South Karelia |

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Focus area:              | Citizen engagement, bio-based sector promotion, social innovation, etc. According to the Waste Act, preventive actions must be taken to minimize the generation of waste, and any waste generated must be recycled adequately.                                                                                         |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Local government is responsible, SMEs and citizens have to follow the Act.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Methodology:             | Biodegradable waste is separated from other waste and placed in a designated waste bin or composted. Separately collected biowaste is transported to biogas plant, where it is processed into biogas suitable for transport fuel. This has been done by own innovations of the service provider. Pilots and workshops. |
| Results/impact:          | Rubbish seen as a raw material. Increased recycling. Every housing cooperative has adequate possibilities to sort their waste.                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Replicability potential: | YES, but needs investments.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Challenges faced:        | Needs long term education for citizens.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://ekjh.fi/en_waste_management/">https://ekjh.fi/en_waste_management/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

5.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | Trial of collecting waste textiles                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Type:                    | National funding and local initiative                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Focus area:              | Citizen engagement and circular economy.                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Local government and citizens                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Methodology:             | During the trial period 0,5 year, it was accepted waste textiles at the certain collection point free of charge                                                                                                                                 |
| Results/impact:          | 1400 kgs of waste textiles. This was not enough in order to create a continuous model for recycling.                                                                                                                                            |
| Replicability potential: | YES, wide information for the public is needed. I would encourage this kind of pilots in all countries.                                                                                                                                         |
| Challenges faced:        | Citizens need more time to get used to this kind of recycling, different types of materials should be sorted.                                                                                                                                   |
| Website:                 | <a href="https://www.imatra.fi/asuminen-ja-ymparisto/imatran-ilmastoteot/ilmastomittari/kiertotalous-ja-kestava-kulutus-0">https://www.imatra.fi/asuminen-ja-ymparisto/imatran-ilmastoteot/ilmastomittari/kiertotalous-ja-kestava-kulutus-0</a> |

Finland's contribution is characterised by its focus on **climate strategies** and **civic engagement** through initiatives such as the CLIBUS project, which aims to improve the capacity of local authorities to support SMEs in energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emission reduction. The project's regional workshops and training sessions demonstrate a practical, participatory approach to engaging business communities in climate strategies. This aligns well with Finland's commitment to sustainability and green transition.

The ENSEMBLE project further enhances citizen engagement by promoting debates and workshops to better understand European values and sustainability. By involving local governments, decision-makers and citizens, the project promotes inclusiveness and empowers communities to actively participate in shaping sustainable

policies and practices. The participatory nature of these projects enhances their replicability in different regions with similar governance structures and socio-cultural contexts.

However, these projects face challenges related to maintaining ongoing commitment and ensuring the continuation of activities beyond the official project schedule. In addition, the diversity of stakeholders - from public authorities to private sector actors - requires tailored communication and continuous coordination to maintain momentum and maximise the benefits of these initiatives.

#### 4.2.2 Cross-case analysis

This section presents a comprehensive mapping, categorization, and analysis of 82 examples of good practice collected from all partner countries in the framework of WP 2.1. These practices highlight successful initiatives, projects and services that contribute to the sustainable development of rural areas and the bio-based economy. This inventory serves as a reference for inspiring new or improved market promotion scenarios for start-ups and SMEs in rural areas. The purpose of this mapping is to highlight the existing successful initiatives that can serve as benchmarks and inspirations for developing new or improved go-to-business scenarios in startup villages, in alignment with the aims of Task 2.1.

The data for this mapping was collected using **Template 2- Best Practices**, a common template provided to all partners, ensuring a consistent approach to capturing key indicators such as focus area, stakeholders, methodology, results and impact, replicability and challenges faced. Each partner was responsible for identifying the relevant best practices from their respective regions.

To enable meaningful analysis, good practices are categorized according to their type, including EU projects, policy proposals, regional partnership, hub, accelerator – incubator programs, bio economy association, initiatives, start-ups and bootcamp.

This analysis highlights several key trends and lessons learned from good practice:

1. EU projects and regional partnerships emerge as dominant categories, reflecting the strong reliance on EU funding mechanisms and interregional cooperation to promote innovation in rural areas.
2. there is an increasing emphasis on accelerators/incubators and training programs, suggesting the importance of capacity building for SMEs and start-ups.
3. farms and bioeconomy initiatives demonstrate how agricultural stakeholders are embracing innovation, particularly in terms of sustainable production and circular economy practices.
4. policy frameworks and strategies (e.g. smart specialization strategies, regional development plans) are recognised as key factors that shape the innovative landscape and facilitate stakeholder engagement.
5. several platforms and networks show that collaboration and knowledge sharing are essential to scale up successful practices across rural areas.

Through all practices, partners reported common challenges including:

- Access to finance and sustainable funding mechanisms
- Engaging diverse stakeholders and ensuring consistent participation
- Bridging the gap between technological innovation and real-world application in rural contexts.

The mapping of the above good practices reveals a rich landscape of models and innovation strategies that support rural development and the bioeconomy. By analysing these examples, the DRIVE project is gaining valuable insights into successful implementation strategies, which will inform the development of tailored business action scenarios and support the creation of resilient rural innovation ecosystems. The analysis of the practices shows a high concentration in the areas of sustainable agriculture, circular economy, and community-based innovation. Many practices incorporate multiple dimensions of sustainability, reflecting the growing importance of holistic approaches to rural development. Circular economy initiatives often intersect with bio-based product development and waste management strategies, demonstrating how

resource efficiency drives local economies. Community-based practices often emphasize stakeholder engagement, local ownership and co-creation methodologies, aligning with EU social innovation objectives.

Practices from Mediterranean **countries** (Cyprus, Greece, Italy), often present agrotourism and sustainable agricultural practices, highlighting the importance of local food systems and regional branding. Northern and Western European practices often include stronger policy frameworks, and formal partnerships, with strong support from regional development agencies, clusters and innovation hubs. Stakeholder involvement is a consistent success factor in all practices, with multi-stakeholder partnerships, combining farmers, SMEs, local authorities, NGOs and research institutions, proving vital to achieving sustainability goals.

The analysis shows that most practices exhibit medium to high **replicability potential**, particularly those with clear business models and proven demand, strong community engagement frameworks, and alignment with existing EU policies and funding opportunities.

In addition, the analysis reveals a wide range of challenges that underline the complexity of implementing sustainable, organic and innovative solutions in rural areas. A recurring barrier is the integration of advanced digital tools, which often requires significant technical expertise and capacity building among local actors. Many initiatives highlight the difficulties in effectively engaging stakeholders, particularly in ensuring consistent participation over time and addressing initial resistance to change. Adapting practices and tools to different regional contexts is also a challenge, as local policy contexts, economic conditions and cultural attitudes differ significantly between regions, requiring tailored approaches for successful implementation.

Low awareness and understanding of bioeconomy concepts further complicate efforts, especially in rural areas where traditional agricultural models prevail. This knowledge gap is further illustrated by segmented stakeholder ecosystems that hinder cross-sectoral collaboration and slow down the adoption of bio-based innovations. Regulatory and policy barriers, including inconsistencies in national and EU-level frameworks, add complexity to project implementation, often delaying progress and creating administrative workload. Securing access to finance and investment is a critical challenge, particularly for small-scale enterprises seeking to scale up innovative solutions beyond the pilot stages.

In addition, market development and commercialization remain barriers, as many initiatives find it difficult to reach new markets, establish product identity and compete effectively with conventional offerings. Geographical constraints, such as remote locations and difficult weather conditions, further limit the scalability of some practices, particularly in the agriculture and tourism sectors. Challenges also arise in terms of aligning initiatives with local policies and strategies, as well as ensuring long-term sustainability and stakeholder commitment beyond the life of the project.

Furthermore, some initiatives highlight challenges in overcoming segmentation between sectors and policies at different governance levels, which can slow the integration of circular bioeconomy solutions. Effective coordination among academia, government, and the private sector is often needed to align strategies and ensure policy recommendations are adopted and implemented at various levels. Lastly, ensuring that local actors, especially public authorities, possess the administrative capacity to design and implement complex development strategies remains an ongoing challenge, particularly in inner rural areas with limited institutional resources.

These challenges collectively demonstrate the diverse nature of fostering innovation in rural areas. They emphasize the importance of collaborative, context-sensitive, and well-resourced approaches to ensure successful implementation and sustained impact.

### 4.3 Overview of Collected Practices

The DRIVE consortium's data collection resulted in a broad portfolio of **112 cases** (combining **30 local services/products** and **82 best practices**) covering a diverse range of innovation types, thematic areas, and geographic contexts. These cases collectively illustrate how rural regions across Europe are pursuing innovation in the bioeconomy and sustainable development. They range from high-level European projects to grassroots community solutions, offering a 360-degree view of the rural innovation ecosystem. For clarity, the analysis often refers to all entries as "good practices" or "cases," distinguishing specific subsets where

relevant.

Key attributes of the collected practices include geographical spread, sectoral and thematic focus, and types of initiatives. Regarding geographical spread, all major European regions are represented. Partners contributed cases from Mediterranean regions (e.g. Cyprus, Greece, Italy), Central and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Slovenia), Western Europe (Belgium, France, Ireland), and Northern Europe (Finland). This geographical diversity is important, as it brings out differences in rural innovation contexts. For instance, practices from Mediterranean countries often involve agri-food innovation and agrotourism, while those from Northern/Western countries frequently involve structured policy support.

In terms of sectoral and thematic focus, the cases cover various sectors of the circular bioeconomy and rural development. Prominent themes include sustainable agriculture and agri-food value chains (e.g. organic farming networks, farm-to-fork initiatives), circular waste management (e.g. composting systems like Ecopans that turn organic waste into fertilizer on-site), bio-based products and materials (e.g. a start-up converting textile waste into insulation materials), renewable energy and bioenergy, ecosystem services (e.g. nature-based tourism), and social innovation in rural services (e.g. zero-waste shops, community co-operatives). This variety reflects the multifaceted nature of rural innovation, touching environmental, economic, and social aspects of sustainability.

Concerning types of initiatives, as visualized in **Figure 1**, the collected practices were categorised into several types: EU-funded projects and formal partnerships (the largest category, approximately 37% of cases), accelerator/incubator programs and training initiatives (approximately 20%), local business ventures and bioeconomy initiatives (approximately 20%), policy or strategy frameworks (approximately 15%), and networks/platforms (approximately 10%). Examples of each include EU Projects/Partnerships, such as large-scale collaborative projects often funded by Horizon Europe or similar initiatives, for example, ShapingBio (Horizon Europe, focused on bioeconomy policy alignment), MainstreamBIO (an EU project to mainstream bio-based solutions in rural Europe), or interregional partnerships like the ROBIN project on circular bioeconomy governance. These typically involve multiple countries and address systemic challenges.

Accelerators and training programs are structured support programs for start-ups and SMEs, such as the IDEA Innovation Center in Cyprus, which offers incubation, mentoring, and funding to new ventures, or rural accelerator programs in Slovenia or Bulgaria (e.g. a hub combining co-working space with an agritech accelerator). These initiatives build entrepreneurial capacity in rural areas, reflecting a response to the need for business support outside urban centres.

Local initiatives and start-ups include grassroots solutions or enterprises born in rural communities, like Ecopans (Italy), an easy-to-use composting technology deployed in small municipalities; a zero-waste store in Bulgaria promoting refillable products to reduce plastic waste; or a social cooperative for recycling in Italy (Rete CAUTO) that combines waste management with social inclusion by rehiring vulnerable people. These initiatives often originate from local needs and demonstrate innovation on a smaller scale with immediate community impact.

Policy frameworks and strategies encompass public-sector-led strategies or plans that have driven innovation. For example, Cyprus' CAP Strategic Plan (Common Agricultural Policy plan) is included as a best practice illustrating how a national policy can encourage sustainable agriculture and rural development through funding eco-schemes and advisory services. Another example is a regional Smart Specialisation Strategy focusing on bioeconomy in regions of France or Italy, aligning investments and research with rural innovation goals. Such frameworks set the enabling conditions for other initiatives to flourish. Networks and platforms represent collaborative networks that facilitate knowledge sharing and partnerships, such as bioeconomy clusters or associations (e.g. a regional bioeconomy association connecting SMEs with research, or the European Startup Village Forum at the EU level); these networks function as the backbone for disseminating best practices and connecting rural innovators to resources and each other.

This overview shows that the collection encompasses both tangible projects on the ground and the institutional support mechanisms that enable them. Together, they form a rich 'library approaches for driving rural innovation.



**Figure 1** Types of initiatives.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Key Trends and Lessons Learned

Analyzing the compiled practices reveals five key trends and lessons learned for rural innovation policy and practice:

1. Reliance on EU funding and interregional cooperation;
2. Growth of rural accelerators and innovation support;
3. Adoption of circular and sustainable practices in agriculture;
4. Influence of policy and strategic planning;
5. Critical role of networks and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

These trends align closely with broader European objectives in the circular economy and innovation for rural areas, indicating that the DRIVE project's findings are well situated within the EU's strategic context.

A key trend observed is the reliance on EU funding and interregional cooperation. Notably, many projects were initiated or supported through EU funding programs (Horizon Europe, Horizon 2020, LIFE, INTERREG, etc.) and regional partnerships, constituting the largest category of best practices. This underscores that EU financial instruments and cross-border collaboration are central to rural innovation efforts. Rural regions often leverage EU projects to compensate for limited local funding and to bring in external expertise. The strong representation of EU-funded initiatives reflects Europe's policy push for inclusive innovation; for example, the CBE JU (Circular Bio-Based Europe Joint Undertaking) objective to involve regions with untapped potential. For DRIVE and similar projects, this implies that building on past EU project results and linking into EU networks can accelerate innovation diffusion in rural areas. It also highlights the importance of continued EU support to maintain momentum in these regions.

Another notable trend is the growth of rural accelerators and innovation support. The data points to an increasing emphasis on accelerators, incubators, and training programs tailored to rural innovators. In several countries, new rural innovation hubs have emerged, often with public or EU support, providing mentorship, business development services, and networking for start-ups. This trend indicates a shift from ad-hoc projects towards more structured capacity-building infrastructures in rural areas. It aligns with the European Commission's Startup Village initiative, which calls for improved systemic support for start-ups in rural

regions. A critical lesson is that capacity building—equipping rural entrepreneurs with skills, knowledge, and networks—is just as essential as funding. Successful accelerators, such as the IDEA centre, often involve multi-actor partnerships (including banks, companies, universities, and governments), demonstrating that a collaborative approach is key to sustaining such programs in the long run.

The adoption of circular and sustainable practices in agriculture is also prominent. Many examples show traditional rural sectors (agriculture, forestry, food production) embracing innovation and circular economy principles. For instance, cases include farms adopting precision agriculture or agro-ecological methods, cooperatives turning agricultural residues into bioenergy, or rural SMEs creating value from waste (such as turning winery waste into bio-products). These examples illustrate a cultural and economic shift towards sustainability at the grassroots level. Particularly in Mediterranean partner regions, innovations in agrotourism and local food systems were common, blending economic development with conservation of local heritage. This trend resonates with the EU's Farm-to-Fork Strategy and Bioeconomy Strategy, which encourage sustainable food production and new bio-based value chains in rural areas. The key lesson is that rural communities can be significant drivers of the green transition when provided with knowledge and incentives—they are not merely passive recipients of innovation from cities. Supporting demonstration farms, living labs, and knowledge exchange among farmers (e.g. via EIP-AGRI Operational Groups or similar initiatives) can further accelerate this trend.

The influence of policy and strategic planning also clearly emerged. Regions with strong Smart Specialization Strategies (S3) or dedicated bioeconomy strategies tend to have more coordinated innovation activities. Several best practices were either direct outcomes of policy (e.g. funded measures under Rural Development Programs) or were strongly shaped by supportive policies (such as tax incentives for bio-based businesses and regional grants). A notable practice from Belgium involved a regional circular economy action plan, which created an enabling environment for circular business models through public-private collaboration. Additionally, national strategies like CAP Strategic Plans (as exemplified by the Cyprus case) integrate innovation and sustainability incentives into mainstream agricultural funding. The presence of such frameworks acts as a catalyst for innovation, providing vision, stakeholder alignment, and resources. This highlights the importance of aligning local initiatives with higher-level strategies amplifies their impact and sustainability. For project evaluators, this confirms that DRIVE's work is connected to and supports the implementation of EU and national policies (e.g., contributing evidence to improve such policies or utilizing policy support measures to aid pilot initiatives).

Finally, the critical role of networks and multi-stakeholder collaboration was a recurring theme. Successful practices typically involve networks or partnerships bringing together diverse stakeholder groups—for example, farmers collaborating with researchers and technology providers to implement new solutions, or local governments partnering with start-ups and NGOs to run innovation hubs. Collaborative platforms, whether formal (clusters, associations) or informal (communities of practice), are fundamental for knowledge transfer and scaling. One best practice described a knowledge platform for bioeconomy start-ups linking rural entrepreneurs across regions to mentors and investors. Another highlighted a network of smart villages sharing digital solutions for community services. These networks often transcend regional boundaries and align with the EU principle of "networking rural areas," as seen in initiatives like the Startup Village Forum and the Rural Innovation Partnership. A crucial lesson here is that peer learning and partnerships greatly enhance replicability—when a good idea is shared through networks, it can be adapted and multiplied in new settings. Therefore, strengthening networks through events, forums, and digital platforms is a high-impact, low-cost strategy for disseminating innovation.

Collectively, these trends paint an optimistic picture: there is abundant innovative activity in Europe's rural areas, much of it coherent with EU-level goals for a greener, more inclusive economy. However, they also underscore that continued support and alignment remain essential; that is, EU programs, supportive policies, and collaboration platforms continue to be crucial for nurturing and spreading these innovations.

## **5.2 Common Challenges and Barriers**

Despite the successes observed, partners reported a number of persistent challenges that rural innovators face. These challenges are instructive, as they highlight areas where policy intervention or additional support

is required.

1. access to finance;

Difficulty in securing sustained financing was nearly universal. Many rural start-ups and projects struggle with limited funding options once initial grants end. Private investment in remote rural innovation is often scarce, and accessing EU funds can be complex for small entities. This underscores the need for simpler funding instruments, rural-focused investment funds, or micro-financing schemes to support scaling up of good practices

2. stakeholder engagement and human capital;

The development of an ecosystem with a diverse range of local stakeholders and maintaining their long-term commitment proved challenging. Some initiatives noted initial resistance to change or 'innovation fatigue' in communities. Others faced difficulties in attracting young entrepreneurs or skilled personnel to rural areas. This points to a need for awareness-raising, education, and incentives to involve local communities – aligning with EU rural vision goals to empower rural people. It also highlights the importance of training and capacity-building (e.g. digital skills programmes in rural areas, as digital literacy was sometimes lacking).

3. bridging the digital and technological gap;

Many innovative solutions (e.g. precision farming, digital platforms for marketing local products) require a certain level of technological infrastructure and know-how. Rural areas often lag in digital connectivity (broadband) and technical expertise. Partners reported that integrating advanced tools in low-tech environments is a recurring barrier. This aligns with the EU's observation that the urban-rural digital divide persists. It calls for continued investment in rural broadband (as under EU connectivity targets) and support for digital innovation hubs that can bring expertise to rural SMEs.

4. regulatory and administrative hurdles;

Differences in regulations across regions and cumbersome administrative procedures were noted, especially for projects dealing with novel bio-based products or cross-sector collaboration. In some cases, innovators had to navigate complex permits or inconsistent policies (for example, waste regulation not keeping pace with circular practices). Additionally, limited administrative capacity in small municipalities can hamper project implementation. This suggests that policy coherence and simplification – ensuring that EU and national regulations facilitate rather than hinder circular innovation – is an important area for action. It also highlights the benefit of providing template policies or guidelines for rural authorities to support innovation (which could be a recommendation for policymakers).

5. market access and scalability and

Market access and scalability present further challenges as reaching beyond the local market was difficult for many rural innovations. Whether it's a local product trying to enter larger value chains or a pilot project aiming to scale regionally, market integration is tough. Contributing factors include remoteness (higher transport costs, difficulty meeting volume demands), lack of branding or certification that appeals to wider consumers, and strong competition from established (often non-sustainable) products. This indicates a need for initiatives to help rural innovators with marketing, branding (e.g. EU quality schemes or ecolabels), and forming cooperatives or clusters to achieve scale.

6. sustainability of initiatives.

Warranting that a project or service remains active and impactful beyond its initial funding period is difficult. Some best practices risk fading out if key individuals leave or if funding isn't renewed. Keeping stakeholders engaged for the long run (especially public bodies or funders) requires demonstrating ongoing value. This reinforces that business model development (one of DRIVE's objectives) is vital: initiatives need viable models to continue delivering services sustainably (be it through generating revenue, integrating into public services, or other means). It also emphasizes the importance of policy support for continuity, e.g. mainstreaming successful pilots into regular rural development programs.

Understanding these challenges is crucial for interpreting the best practices: it provides context that even

successful cases had to overcome hurdles and that success is often fragile without the right support environment. For the DRIVE project, these insights will inform risk mitigation in its pilot actions (for example, ensuring robust stakeholder engagement strategies and exploring blended funding to address finance gaps). For Horizon Europe evaluators and policymakers, these findings highlight where additional policy impact can be sought – such as refining funding schemes to be more accessible to rural innovators, investing in rural education and digital infrastructure, and streamlining regulations for circular economy solutions. As the European Commission’s Long-Term Rural Vision notes, tackling these systemic barriers is part of creating stronger, more resilient rural areas by 2040.

### 5.3 Regional Patterns and Differences

An interesting observation from the data is the influence of regional context on the type of innovation observed. While the drive for rural innovation is Europe-wide, different regions display distinct patterns reflecting their socio-economic and cultural contexts.

Southern and Mediterranean regions, including countries like Italy, Greece, Cyprus, and Spain (represented via partners in the DRIVE consortium), tend to have best practices highlighting agro-food, tourism, and community-based innovation. For example, Mediterranean cases often involve agritourism initiatives, promotion of local gastronomy and organic food, short supply chains connecting farmers directly with consumers, and cooperatives for traditional products (olive oil, wine, etc.) that incorporate sustainable methods. These practices emphasize leveraging local identity and natural resources for sustainable rural growth. They also frequently stress community engagement, with local families and small businesses at the core. This aligns with the importance of local food systems and regional branding noted in Mediterranean contexts. Additionally, some of these regions (e.g. islands or remote villages) focus on self-sufficiency and circularity out of necessity, pioneering solutions in water saving, renewable energy, or waste recycling on a small scale.

In contrast, northern and western regions represented by partners from North-West Europe (e.g. Belgium, France, Ireland, Finland) often contributed practices that have a more institutional or high-tech character. These include strong policy-driven initiatives (such as regional innovation strategies, climate action plans in rural districts, or public-private innovation clusters) and a high incidence of technological innovation (such as digital platforms for rural services, smart village ICT solutions, bio-refineries for advanced bio-materials). These practices are frequently supported by regional development agencies or clusters and benefit from more developed innovation infrastructure. For instance, a French case highlighted a rural innovation hub supported by a competitiveness cluster linking urban and rural stakeholders. Additionally, northern European cases tend to be well-integrated with formal education and research, for example, a living lab in Finland where a university and a rural municipality collaborate on bioeconomy pilots. Stakeholder involvement remains crucial, but it often takes the form of structured partnerships (e.g. memoranda of understanding between local authorities and companies) as opposed to informal community groups.

These regional differences suggest that a one-size-fits-all approach to fostering rural innovation would be ineffective; strategies should be tailored. Mediterranean rural areas might thrive with support that builds on cultural assets and community networks (e.g. marketing of sustainable local products, cultural tourism innovation), whereas northern and western rural areas might benefit from enhanced research linkages and high-tech experimentation (e.g. testbeds for bio-products, rural digital hubs). The DRIVE project, with partners in both clusters, can facilitate cross-pollination by bringing some of the structured approaches to the south and some of the grassroots vitality to the north. Recognizing these patterns also helps ensure that policy measures (at EU or national level) are flexible enough to account for regional specificity. For instance, the EU Rural Action Plan under the rural vision encourages place-based innovation solutions; the findings here reinforce that principle by showing how varied innovation looks across Europe, even as it serves common objectives.

## 6. Conclusions & Recommendations

In conclusion, Deliverable D2.1 has compiled a Best Practice Report that catalogues successful examples of rural innovation and circular bioeconomy across Europe and extracts insights highly relevant to Horizon

Europe's goals. The findings demonstrate clear alignment with EU policy frameworks – including the Green Deal, Bioeconomy Strategy, and Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas – and showcase how local actions can drive progress on major objectives such as climate neutrality, sustainable food systems, and inclusive growth. The report highlights the significant policy impact potential of empowering rural innovators: when provided with the right support (funding, knowledge, networks), even small villages can produce models that contribute to Europe's transitions in climate, energy, and circular economy.

The summary of key findings identifies several critical insights. EU-supported projects and partnerships are pivotal in the current rural innovation landscape, suggesting that continued and even expanded EU investment in rural innovation (through instruments like Horizon Europe Cluster 6, CBE JU, and EIP-AGRI) will be critical to sustain momentum. There is a notable rise in accelerators and incubators targeting rural areas, indicating that building entrepreneurial ecosystems has become a central strategy for rural development. This trend is as evidence that initiatives such as the Startup Village Forum are effective. The adoption of circular practices by farms and rural SMEs demonstrates grassroots alignment with EU environmental goals, although technical assistance and market development are necessary to fully realize these opportunities. Strong policy frameworks at regional and national levels amplify innovation, reaffirming that policy coherence (CAP, cohesion policy, smart specialization) with innovation goals yields tangible results on the ground. Networking and multi-actor collaboration emerged as essential for scaling good practices, underscoring the importance of EU-level networking platforms and events to connect rural innovators, a role that DRIVE can actively support in dissemination activities.

Regarding replicability and transferability, most documented practices have medium-to-high replicability potential under the right conditions. This is encouraging because it indicates that solutions can be adapted to different regions. For example, a community biogas initiative in one region can inspire similar approaches in areas with agricultural waste, provided there is knowledge transfer and feasibility analysis. The report recommends leveraging the DRIVE project's network to facilitate such transfers, for instance through webinars or exchange visits between originators of best practices and other interested rural communities. The project can also incorporate elements of these best practices into its pilot "startup villages" interventions. Importantly, replicability requires careful adaptation, as differences in local contexts (regulations, cultural acceptance, resource availability) must be accounted for, as highlighted in the challenges section. It is therefore recommended that the DRIVE consortium develops "implementation blueprints" for selected best practices, outlining how they can be deployed in different environments and what enabling factors are necessary. Additionally, including transferable practices in EU-level knowledge bases (such as the ENRD Rural Inspiration Awards repository or the Horizon Results Platform) could increase their visibility and uptake beyond the project.

Sustainability and long-term impact are central to promoting these best practices, with the goal of achieving lasting economic (jobs, income), social (vibrant communities, reduced inequalities), and environmental (climate mitigation, resource efficiency) benefits in rural areas. The cases studied demonstrate significant contributions across these dimensions, including job creation through green start-ups, improved resource management (reduced waste, cleaner production), and enhanced social capital from community-led initiatives. To maintain and multiply these impacts over time, the report emphasizes institutionalizing successful initiatives. This may involve integrating them into policy (such as turning proven pilot projects into permanent programs funded by regional governments) or developing innovative business models to achieve financial self-sufficiency. The DRIVE project is well-positioned to advocate for such institutional uptake, sharing this report with policy audiences and stakeholders at regional and EU levels. Furthermore, monitoring and evaluation of the implemented best practices should continue beyond this deliverable. Tracking performance overtime will provide evidence of impact and inform future policy adjustments, aligning with Horizon Europe's emphasis on impact evaluation.

Based on these findings, five recommendations are proposed for consideration as the next steps. Firstly, policymakers should enhance policy support for rural innovators through simplified funding streams and technical assistance programs focused specifically on rural innovation. Expanding mentorship and grant schemes under the EU Rural Action Plan, or dedicating portions of regional development funds to small-scale rural innovation projects, can address identified finance and capacity gaps. Aligning CAP instruments to

reward innovation beyond traditional farming can incentivize farmers to adopt sustainable practices.

Secondly, strengthening networking and knowledge exchange is recommended. Platforms like the Startup Village Forum should be enhanced, creating links between related projects (such as DRIVE and similar Horizon Europe initiatives) for systematic knowledge exchange. Annual rural innovation forums or dedicated knowledge hubs could widely disseminate best practices. At the project level, DRIVE should actively disseminate this report's findings through workshops with local authorities and rural development networks to encourage uptake.

Thirdly, capacity building and education should receive greater focus to address human capital challenges. Investments in rural education and training are needed, including digital skills training for rural youth, integrating bioeconomy and entrepreneurship modules into agricultural education, and providing community workshops on new technologies. The report's findings suggest community engagement significantly contributes to innovation success, therefore incorporating community engagement plans in rural innovation initiatives is highly recommended. For DRIVE, this means designing inclusive and educational hackathons and roadshows tailored to local residents.

Fourthly, mechanisms facilitating market access should be enhanced to help rural innovators reach broader markets. This could include promoting e-commerce platforms for rural products, developing regional branding schemes for sustainable products (leveraging EU quality schemes), and connecting start-ups with urban markets through intermediaries. EU initiatives such as the Smart Specialization Platform on Agri-Food could connect rural producers to larger industry players.

Finally, environmental and social sustainability should remain a primary focus. Successful practices balanced economic viability with environmental stewardship and social inclusion. New initiatives should be evaluated against sustainability criteria across these three pillars. Introducing sustainability indicators (carbon reduction, job creation for vulnerable groups, etc.) into project monitoring processes can align activities with EU climate and social targets. DRIVE can adopt such indicators in its pilot actions, reinforcing the importance of sustainability for evaluators.

Implementing these recommendations will help stakeholders address identified challenges and amplify the impact of best practices across rural Europe. DRIVE will integrate these insights as it progresses into implementation phases, including roadshows, hackathons, and mentoring, thereby directly applying the lessons learned in D2.1. Ultimately, this report serves as a foundation for replicable innovation models capable of scaling up, contributing to a more innovative, sustainable, and connected rural Europe.

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## Annex 1 – Template 1

**Objective:** Collect information on existing services/products in each partner's region to identify the best practices and benchmarks for developing new/improved go-to-market scenarios.

**Responsible partners:** CTBG – Bulgaria, nEULakes – Italy, MEP -Greece, BOHINJ – Slovenia, AB Corporation – Belgium, CGLE – France

Partners should complete the inventory with 3-5 of existing services/products.

| Fields                    | Input                                                                                 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service/Product name:     | Name of the service/product.                                                          |
| Category:                 | Indicate if it falls under bioeconomy, circular economy, sustainable innovation, etc. |
| End users:                | Target audience (e.g., SMEs, startups, municipalities, citizens).                     |
| Key features/innovations: | Brief description of what makes it unique or successful.                              |
| Investment level:         | Approximate investment required (low, medium, high).                                  |
| Operational timeline:     | Indicate how long the service/product has been operational.                           |
| Outcomes/impact:          | Key outcomes or measurable impact (e.g., number of users, economic growth).           |
| Challenges faced:         | Any significant challenges encountered.                                               |
| Website:                  | Provide the contact information for further inquiries.                                |
| Additional notes:         | Any other relevant information                                                        |

## Annex 2 – Template 2

**Objective:** Collect examples of successful initiatives, policies, or EU projects in stakeholder engagement, sustainability, and innovation promotion.

**Responsible partners:** all partners

Each partner should deliver 5-10 best practices.

| Fields                   | Input                                                                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best practice name:      | Name/title of the initiative or project.                                    |
| Focus area:              | Citizen engagement, bio-based sector promotion, social innovation, etc.     |
| Stakeholders involved:   | Key stakeholders and their roles (e.g., NGOs, local government, SMEs).      |
| Methodology:             | How the practice was implemented (e.g., co-creation workshops, hackathons). |
| Results/impact:          | Quantitative and qualitative outcomes.                                      |
| Replicability potential: | Could this be replicated in other regions? If yes, provide suggestions.     |
| Challenges faced:        | Describe any obstacles.                                                     |
| Website:                 | Provide the contact information for further inquiries.                      |
| Additional notes:        | Any other relevant information                                              |