

CONCEPT GREEN INNOVATION FORUM



WP6	Pilot actions
ACTIVITY 6.1	Capacity Building Pilots
DELIVERABLE 6.1.3	Green Innovation Forum's concept

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1. Introduction

The following deliverable summarizes the concept for the Green Innovation Forum, the second capacity building pilot foreseen in WP6 of the Ecolnn project. Aim of the capacity building pilot is to improve the conditions for a successful transfer of ecoinnovative ideas into the market and to promote and spread the use of ecotechnologies in the daily live. While the first capacity building pilot – namely the Green Summer School - is focusing on building the skills of young ecoinnovators and equipping them with the right business and ecoinnovation knowledge in order to develop ecoinnovative products, the Green Innovation Forum on the other hand is more focused on later stage of ecoinnovators and in giving them opportunity to present their idea to a right audience of investors, business angels and technologies transfer offices in order to facilitate their access to the market.

Within this deliverable the overall aim of the Green Innovation Forum are presented and described. A first framework for the implementation of the pilot is provided to guide the two pilots in the Czech Republic and in Germany. As in the case of the Green Summer School, also for this second capacity building pilot the format developed sets a general standard that can anyway be adapted to regional needs and in particular to regional status of development of the ecoinnovation sector. The concept presented in this document provides furthermore organizational guidance to set up and run a successful Green Innovation Forum as well as some first reflection on the evaluation of results and the sustainability of this action.

2. Occasion

2.1 Regional environmental challenges

There are present several environmental challenges in the Danube Region - there is a presence of a high number of industrial risks sites which present a constant danger to the environment and citizens. Natural resources are overexploited. The environment infrastructure necessary is not yet well developed. The public awareness about environmental needs, the knowledge and use of best available practices in the eastern part of the region is not sufficient. Energy production and use is a significant source of pollution. Energy efficiency improvements and increased use of renewable energy are important for the whole Danube Region. The

Europe 2020 Strategy intends to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% compared to 1990 levels or by 30%, if the conditions are right; increase the share of renewable energy sources in final energy consumption to 20%; and a 20% increase in energy efficiency.

2.2 Low level of eco-innovations

Existing technologies are not enough adequate to safeguard sustainable development due to increasing world-wide pressure on natural resources. Improving resource efficiency would significantly help limit emissions, save money and boost economic growth. Based on the data from Eco-Innovation Observatory (2014) about the complex evaluation of eco-innovation performance a low level of eco-innovations in a major part of the

Danube Region can be recognized. Bulgaria, Slovakia, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Czech Republic, Slovenia are in this field behind the EU 28 average. Only Austria and Germany belongs to the EU 10 strong eco-innovators.

There are several obstacles that make the process of eco-innovation transfer to the praxis more difficult:

- Low level of research on eco-innovation;
- Weak linkages between research and market;
- Inadequate skills base;
- Market prices which do not adequately reflect environmental costs;
- Lack of appropriate and credible information on the performance of new environmental technologies;
- Governance problems related to EU eco-innovation support;
- Difficulty in accessing finance;
- Unfavorable global conditions for eco-innovation;
- Unused potential for eco-innovation in developed and developing countries

3. Aim of the Green Innovation Forum

Among the obstacles mentioned above, the Green Innovation Forum particularly aims to tackle the weak linkages between research and market and the difficulty in accessing finance for ecoinnovative products and services. The Forum wants to offer a platform for the presentation and visibility of ecoinnovative business ideas and for the exchange and networking among actors of the field.

The Green Innovation Forums responds in this sense to some of the challenges identified by the Ecolnn project in the ecoinnovation field. It is the translation in the physical space of the efforts put into the Ecolnn virtual lab (WP4) to match the demand and supply of ecoinnovation. By offering an event where innovators in the ecoinnovation fields can meet with policy makers, public institutions, investors and companies of the field, the Forum aims to increase the opportunity to match actors of this area and to raise the money need to enter the market. The aim of the Green Innovation Forum is in this sense dual: on one side, the event aims to raise awareness of the ecoinnovation challenges and situation in the Danube region; on the other side, it is a concrete platform to encourage the technology transfer from the research to the market and to match venture capital with innovators in the ecoinnovation sector. The forum is in itself a mix between a sectorial conference and a matchmaking event oriented to the acquisition of capital. By letting converge all relevant actors of the sector in the Danube region into one place, it aims to raise awareness on the existence of the ecoinnovation solutions and technologies in the Danube countries and to present these to business supporters as investors, business angels and technology transfer offices.

Overall aim of the Ecolnn project is to establish the Green Innovation Forum as a recurring event in the ecoinnovation field in the Danube area and to make it an event of reference for the relevant stakeholders of the sectors. In this respect, some consideration on the sustainability of this action are presented as well in this document.

4. Target group

The Green Innovation Forum targets specifically a more mature audience of startups, companies and stakeholders who already possess knowledge of the ecoinnovation field and that wants to disclose their knowledge, research and technologies to a wider audience in order to disseminate this and at the same time to look for competent business and financial support.

The most relevant target group are innovators and researchers from the higher education and research sphere as well as from the private area (SMEs), startups, who perform R&D activities in environmentalism, searching for environmentally friendly solutions leading to energy efficiency mostly in production sphere. They have the chance to present their unique solutions to business support organizations, investors and also public authorities and 3rd sector who can be interested in ecosolutions which can be used for general purposes.

The Innovation forum is targeted also on beginning innovators, however these events will also involve experienced representatives from eco business in the area of energy saving, policy makers, NGOs, researchers, experts of ecoinnovation support to share their ideas and experiences.

Provider

- Start-ups searches for investors
- Researchers with applied research results prior to company founding
- Innovators with technology-driven business idea
- Early-stage investments

Investors

- Business Support Organisation
- Public authorities
- Business Angels
- Venture Capital Manager
- Equity Investors
- Corporate Venture Manager

5. Format

The Ecolnn project aims to tackle the diffusion of innovation and the exploitation of the economic potential of new technologies, applications and solutions through a punctual transfer of knowledge and dedicated matchmaking events between interesting start-ups/ growth companies and investors (VC, equity, business angels). The format of the Green Innovation Forum is conceived to address these goals. The Forum is at the same time:

- a conference that deal with the transfer of knowledge among experts, research institutions, universities, companies and public authorities
- a matchmaking platform for startups and advance companies where to meet investors, business angels and potential cooperation partners

These two parts are the essential structure of the Forum: these can anyway be combined by local partners adapting it to the local needs and to the maturity of the local ecoinnovation environment. The Forum will be in fact implement in its pilot phase in two countries:

- In the Czech Republic in 2017
- In Germany in 2018

These two countries presents a different level of diffusion of ecoinnovation and a different policy setting in support of this field. Events targeting Green technologies and ecoinnovation have also had a different penetration in both pilot countries. It is therefore clear that the specific objectives that each country wish to achieve through the implementation of the Green Innovation Forum might vary. The Ecolnn consortium has therefore decide to create a structure for the pilot that give a general framework of reference to the partners but that can be still adapted to the regional needs and to the specific scope the event will be designed to pursue. In this document, different building blocks of the pilot are therefore presented. Task of each local organizer of the pilot is in first instance to analyze and understand the local needs in the ecoinnovation field and thus to adapt the pilot to the local circumstances. This preliminary activity is supported by different studies conducted within the Ecolnn project in WP3 in order to analyze the status quo of ecoinnovation in each partner country. Based on the data collected within the survey of needs, partners are able to identify the characteristics of their regional ecosystem and to understand which are the most urgent needs and challenges that need to be addressed. Ideally, once this have been identified, the aims and program of the Green Innovation Forum can be adapted accordingly in order to have activities tailored to address specific wishes of the local stakeholders.



Figure 1 Format of the Ecolnn Green Innovation Forum

5.1 Spectrum of subjects

The Green Innovation Forum will widely focus on the ecoinnovation thematic, deepening some of these aspects. Ecoinnovation is commonly understood as the development of products and processes that contribute to sustainable development. These is done by using technologies and know-how to create

commercial and non-commercial application that might have a direct or indirect positive ecological impact. All sustainable engineering that can reduce damage to ecosystems, adopt ecology as a fundamental basis, and ensure conservation of biodiversity and sustainable development may be considered as forms of eco-technology.

The spectrum of subjects that will be deepened during the Green Innovation Forum spans from Green technologies to smart production. In particular, especially startups coming from these fields will be considered for the selection:

- Environmental Engineering
- Green IT
- Resource and Energy Efficiency
- Smart Grid
- Material Efficiency
- Smart Production

5.2 Constitutive building blocks

As previously highlighted, the Green Innovation Forum aims to promote the use of ecoinnovation technologies, to foster the transfer of knowledge and to connect actors of this field in order to create positive synergies for the sector. Main Building blocks of this pilot are therefore:

CONSTITUTIVE BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE GREEN INNOVATION FORUM



Conference



**Matchmaking and
Pitching**



Training and Coaching

Figure 2 Constitutive Building Blocks of the Green Innovation Forum

Conference

The Forum wants to provide an overview of the best practices in the ecoinnovation field and showcase good examples of countries and companies that have successfully implemented ecoinnovative solutions. In a conference style, a part of the Forum is therefore dedicated to raise awareness on this topic and to enable the transfer of knowledge between regions along the Danube. Deeping the difference facets of ecoinnovation, the Forum wants at the same time to provide also information on how to successfully finance and bring to the market ecoinnovative products, services and technologies. Funding opportunities as well as supporting instruments are therefore integral part of the program. Experts are invited to give keynotes and successful companies present their story and achievements.



New Trends in the Energy, Resources, Smart Cities topic via keynote



Funding opportunities for green business ideas

Figure 3 Content of the conference part of the Green Innovation Forum

Matchmaking

The Forum is anyway more than a traditional conference. Its core is in fact represented by the vivid exchange among all relevant actors of the sector with the final aim of creating a platform where business opportunities for ecoinnovative products and services are generated. For this purpose, startups and companies coming from the sectors mentioned above are accurately selected in preparation of the forum. The selection process can be done in two main ways:

- By a call for applications to attract a wide number of candidates
- By a scouting process performed by the organizers of the Forum to identify suitable candidates

The startups and companies are then invited to present their products and services in a pitch format that might vary between the 5 and 15 minutes. Aim of the matchmaking is to present these companies to an expert audience of investors, business angels and business support initiatives in order to generate investment opportunities as well as to more generally find cooperation partners and connect on an international level. According to the panel of companies that has been put together in preparation for the event and to the objectives pursued by the local organizer, the Green Innovation Forum might assume the connotation of an Investment Forum and provide effective opportunities of meeting business partners and possibly closing deals. The matchmaking is anyway not only restricted to finding investment opportunities through a pitch competition. More general opportunities of networking on an international level are provided to participants in a setting that might vary from a networking evening to a more structure speed dating. Also in this case, the

final decision on how to structure this format is left to the local organizer that have previously identified the needs of their local stakeholders.



Pitches organized in Early and Late Stage



Networking opportunities: Time to meet talents, start-ups, stakeholders, corporate, investors



Award Ceremony for the best ideas

Figure 4 Content of the matchmaking part of the Green Innovation Forum

Training and Coaching

Finally, another suggested building block for the Green Innovation Forum comprehends tailored training and coaching for the startups and companies selected for the matchmaking. According to the local structure of the event and to the characteristics of the invited companies, the local organizer might identify in advance some area and topics that need to be deepened by the companies in order to strengthen their business skills and get prepared to access the market. The training and coaching might focus on different areas, according to the need of the companies. Suggested topics are:

- Intellectual property right
- Business model validation
- Access to finance
- Investment readiness
- Pitching training
- Green check of the business idea

The training and coaching can be provided in a dedicated slot in preparation for the pitch competition and represents an additional offer for the companies in order to facilitate their access to the market and their internationalization. These can be provided in form of class training or in more focus one-to-one coaching in which each company is able to meet an expert and receive tailored feedback.



Bilateral Meeting with experts from the sectors and coaches



Personalized feedback on business idea given to each participant



Time to simulate and improve the pitch



One-to-one coaching on: business model, access to market, presentations skills, IPR, Team and Financial plan

Abbildung 5 Content of the training part of the Green Innovation Forum

These three main building blocks represents the constitutive elements of the Green Innovation Forum. In the two pilot countries, the Forum will be implemented with two slightly different format in order to test different aspects and identify which elements bring the most benefit to the participating companies but also, more in general, to all participants. According to the evaluation performed after each Forum, it will be possible for the Ecolnn consortium to identify the most valuable and effective activities and to finally validate the format of the Forum for future replication.

5.3 Selection process of companies for the pitching competition

As previously highlighted, the selection of companies for the pitching competition might be done in two main ways:

- 1) By a scouting process run by the organizer
- 2) By a call for applications

Both model will be tested within the two pilots. In particular, in the first Green Innovation Forum in Brno will adopt this first model, while the second pilot in Stuttgart will test an open application format. This distinction is connected to the level of development of the local ecoinnovation scene and to the possibilities of growing the second pilot in an even more transnational event through an open call and dedicated marketing and communication activities all over the Danube regions.

For the first Forum in Brno, the scouting process will be run by the local organizer BIC Brno with the support of the other Ecolnn partners. Partners will propose candidates coming from their countries or further regions

and BIC Brno will finally select the companies to invite based on their characteristics and business opportunities they might find within the Forum.

For the 2nd Green Innovation Forum in Stuttgart an application process will be open some months in advance the beginning of the event. Companies will be required to provide information on their business ideas, particularly focusing on the following aspects:

- General information on the company / business ideas and on its founders
- Stage of the company (early or advance)
- Business sector
- Type of cooperation or opportunities the company is looking for at the Green Innovation Forum (investment, license, sale or transfer, cooperation etc..)
- Detailed information on the business idea including technology, target customers, unique selling point, competition
- Environmental benefits of the business idea

The detailed application form can be found in Annex I.

All candidatures will be evaluated by a jury who will select the 10 best „Early Business Ideas“ and the 10 best „Advanced Business Ideas“ which will be invited to train and pitch within the Green Innovation Forum.

MATCHMAKING OF STAKEHOLDER IN THE GREEN TECHNOLOGY SECTOR
GREEN INNOVATION FORUM

**Selection of
business ideas
and close-to-
market research
findings**



**Innovation
Award**

Figure 6 Selection of companies for the Green Innovation Forum

5.4 Criteria for the evaluation of startups and companies

The startups and companies for the matchmaking part of the Green Innovation Forum will be invited to present their business ideas within a pitch competition. A jury will evaluate the presentation and provide feedback and evaluation on the basis of the following criteria:

- Innovation: The business idea presents a certain degree of innovation compared to the state of the art (e.g. new technology, or application of existing technology in a new way and in a new market).
- Business Model and Scalability: The business model is feasible and can potentially be scaled
- Relevance of the green technology used: The business idea make use of green technologies and / or a clear environmental impact
- Team, presentation and negotiation skills: the founder team is convincing, competent and has the right complementary expertise to execute the business idea. The presentation is clear, compelling and presents all fundamental aspects for its evaluation

6. Organisation

The Organisation of a Green Innovation Forum comprehends the following tasks:

- Adjustment of the overall concept to local needs
- Definition of the program for each local Green Innovation Forum
- Scouting of startups for the matchmaking or alternatively open call for applications
- Invitation of speakers and experts for the conference part of the event
- Invitation of experts for the training and coaching part of the event
- Invitation of investors, business angels, business partners for the Pitching competition
- Setting up of a jury for the evaluation of the selected companies
- Promotion of the event in all Danube regions
- Wide media coverage (e.g. press release, dedicated web page, social media etc)
- Possibility to find sponsors for prizes of the Award Ceremony

In order to allow a successful organisation of the Forum and a wide communication and media coverage, the preparation for the Green Innovation Forum should start 6-8 months in advance.

Following dates have been set for the two pilots:

- Ecolnnovation Forum in Brno (CZ) on the 30th November – 1st December 2017
- Green Innovation Forum in Stuttgart (DE) on the 20th – 21th February 2018

 Ecolnnovation Forum in Brno, CZ
30th Nov – 1st Dec 2017

 Green Innovation Forum in Stuttgart, DE
20th – 21th February 2018

 Scouting of startups and companies


 Call for application open for startups from all Danube Regions

Figure 7 Date of the two Green Innovation Forum

7. Marketing and Communication

The Ecolnn consortium wishes to establish the Green Innovation Forum as a platform in the Danube region to enable the matchmaking and exchange of knowledge among stakeholders of the ecoinnovation field. For this reason, marketing and communication activities are considered essential to establish the brand and the format in all regions along the Danube and to institute the event as a recurring appointment of scene. The Forum will be promoted in all Danube area thank you to the collaboration of all Ecolnn partners. Dedicated communication material for each Forum will be prepared by the local organizers with the support of the WP2 Leader CCI Vratsa and will be then disseminated by the whole consortium.

The promotion will include among other following activities:

- Publication of news item on the Ecolnn Website as well as newsletter
- Direct mailing to possible interested stakeholders (young entrepreneurs, startups but also potential multipliers as universities, regional development agencies etc..)
- Publication of a news regarding the Green Innovation Forum on all partners' website and social media channels
- Promotion through the Ecolnn social media channels (e.g. Twitter and Facebook)
- Identification of relevant stakeholder and multipliers and dissemination of the news through their channels
- Direct promotion during events, fairs and stakeholder meetings

8. Evaluation of results

In order to consolidate the format for the Green Innovation Forum and ensure its sustainability, the partners will perform also in this case some evaluation activities to investigate which aspects of the Forum were appreciated by the participants, which were most effective and which should be improved in the future. For this purpose, a satisfaction survey has been prepared. This particularly focus on three aspects:

- The expectations participants and stakeholders had in preparation for the Forum
- The reasons why they attended
- How the event help them to create new contacts, deepen the ecoinnovation topic and possibly find investment opportunities

The survey will be distributed at the end of each event. The results of the evaluation will be analyzed in a dedicated report on the Forum drafted by each local organizer at the end of event. Furthermore, the results will also constitute a starting point to finally consolidate the model of the Green Innovation Forum and define the guidelines for its repeatability.

9. Sustainability

In parallel to the evaluation of the Forum and the identifications of its core and most effective aspects, the local organizer as well as the whole Ecolnn consortium will start evaluating how to replicate this pilot action in the future. In particular, the countries who hosted the pilot will promptly identify opportunities to integrate this action within existing regional or national structures and events. The stakeholders and partners involved in both events will be contacted to discuss possibility to replicate the format in the future also thanks to their support. At the same time, the Ecolnn consortium will evaluate how to replicate the format also in other Danube regions and how to increase the transnational cooperation and exchange among companies and stakeholders of different regions by each edition of the Green Innovation Forum. Considerations on the sustainability of the Green Innovation Forum will be formalized within the follow-up plan that will constitute an useful guideline for the replication of the format in the future.

Annex I: Application form (whereas applicable)

Please describe in precise sentences (where applicable), no lists.

Name of the product/business idea

(Planned) name of the company/institution

First name of first applicant

Surname of first applicant

Title

First name of second applicant (max. 2 member per team)

Surname of second applicant (max. 2 member per team)

Title

Address

Postcode and city

Country

Phone number

Email address

Email address (second applicant)

At which stage you see yourself/your company

early

advanced

expansion

Business sector

Environmental Engineering

Alternative Materials/Renewable Resources

Efficient Production Process/ Urban Factories

Sustainable Solutions for Smart Cities

Green IT/Smart Grids/ Sensor Technology

Renewable Energy/ Climate Protection

What are you looking for?

Investment : _____

licence: _____

sale or transfer: _____

cooperation: _____

What is the problem? Who has this problem?

Solution, business idea

Advantages and benefits

Unique selling point

(Potential) competition/competitors

Technology and unique features (How does it work?)

Envisioned product and added value for (potential) clients

Target customers and (potential) market volume

What are the environmental ("green") benefits of your product idea / your solution?

In which phase of the product life cycle do the "green" benefits arise? How are these benefit generated? Please specify:

• Raw materials production: _____

• Production: _____

• Transport: _____

• Use phase: _____

• End-of-life: _____

Patents filed?

Do you have a Business Plan?

Upload business plan (all shortlisted companies will receive a personal feedback by internal coach based on the uploaded business Plan)

Annex II: Satisfaction Survey

1. General impressions (0 = dislike/totally disagree; 4= like very much/fully agree)

	0	1	2	3	4
General Impression of the event	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The event has triggered ideas for my daily work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have had interesting conversations/I met interesting people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I liked the location, catering and atmosphere	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I have missed _____

I liked the most _____

What kind of topics/sessions shall we consider in the future?

Where did you hear about the forum? _____

2. For start-ups

My goal at the forum was to _____

	0 = totally disagree	1	2	3	4 = fully agree
The event corresponded with my expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. For enterprises & investors

	0 = totally disagree	1	2	3	4 = fully agree
I have found viable business/investment opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Annex III: Format for reporting the Green Innovation Forum

Please write a short report on the Green Innovation Forum highlighting following aspects:

- Overall description of the event (topics, number and type of participants and of audience, overall aims)
- Obtained results and evaluation of feedback of participants
- Sustainability

Please include following documents:

1. Signed participant lists
2. Program
3. List of startups admitted to the event
4. List of experts and coaches invited
5. Evaluation of startups
6. Selection of pictures
7. Agenda and further material available
8. Filled satisfaction survey