

«A knowledge Alliance in Eco-Innovation Entrepreneurship to Boost SMEs Competitiveness»

SMecoMP

**Presentation @ the Workshop
«Environmental Entrepreneurship»
July 10, 2019**



I. Introduction: Economic growth, environment, eco-management & eco-innovation

The environmental problems, climate change being the most urgent one, are increasingly recognized as the main global problems.

The most important development is the shift from viewing the environmental agenda as a burden to economic growth to increasingly viewing it as the most important driver of global economic development.

The global economy is in a process of green economic (r)evolution towards most sustainable goods and services as well as production and consumption processes.

In greening economic development , one of the most important parameters is technological innovation.

Eco-innovation and environmental technologies (especially in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)) offer many possibilities in meeting the twin challenges of environmental degradation and the economic crisis.



ecoManagement
Systems

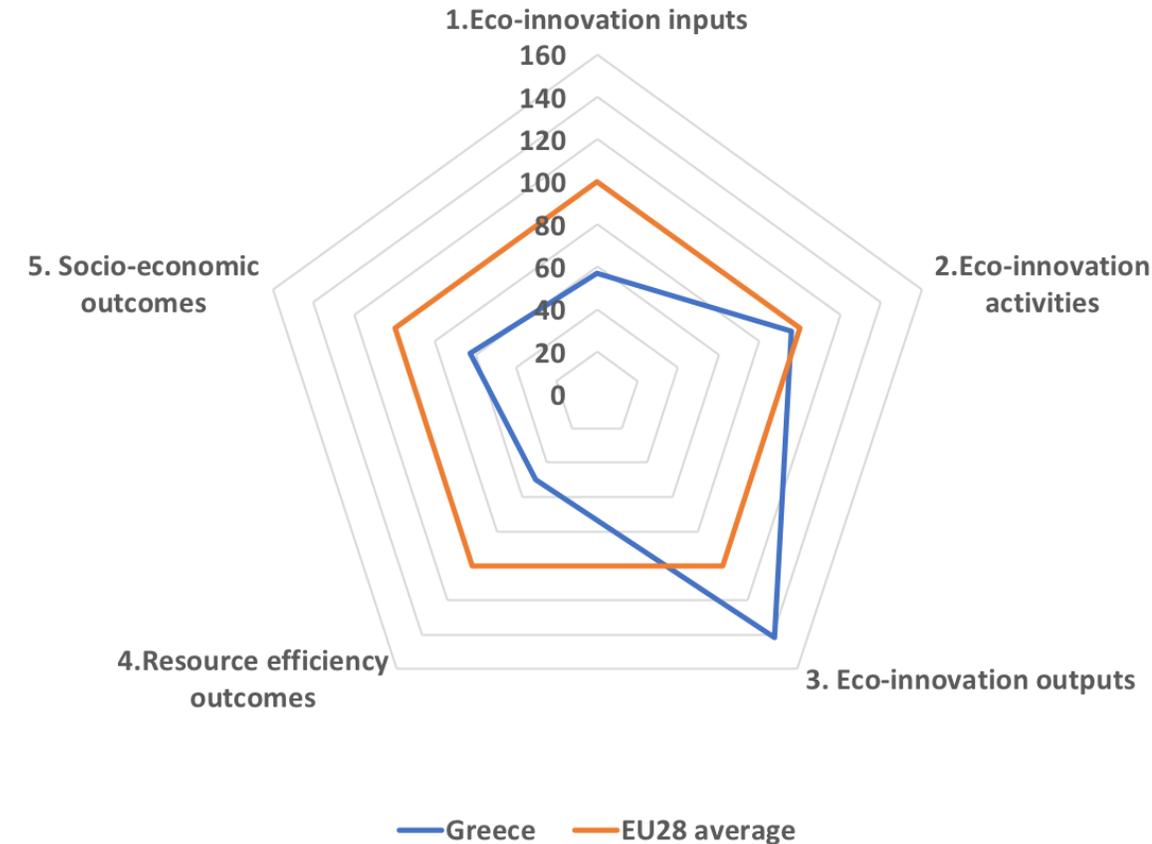
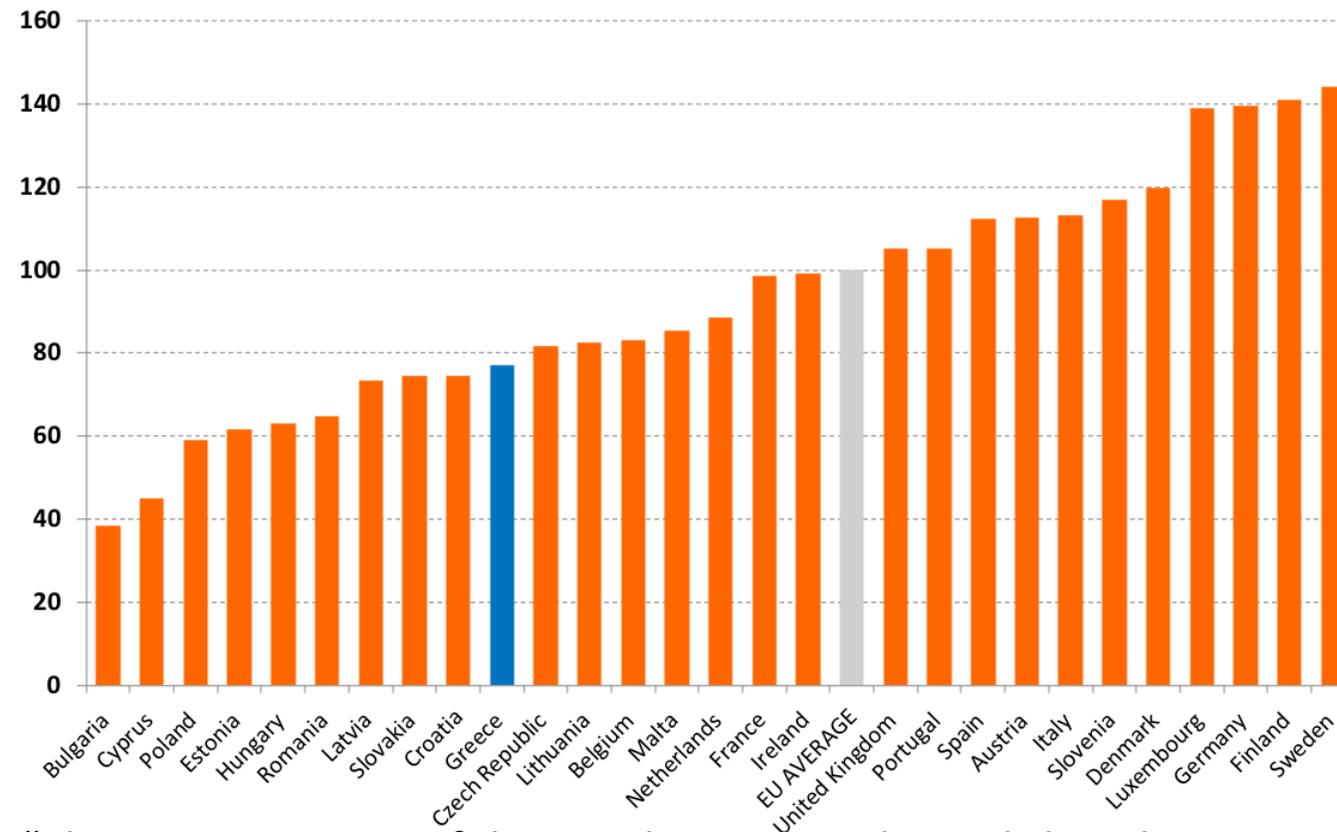




- SMEs dominate economic activity in all countries of the programme area (for example, SMEs account for 72% of added value and 86% of employment in Greece, 76% and 81% in Cyprus, 66% and 77% in FYROM and 61.5% and 76% in Bulgaria) *2014 Small Business Act (SBA) Fact Sheets, DG Enterprise*
- Despite their, substantially above EU average, contribution to their economies, SMEs in the programme area face strong challenges, especially in the areas of **entrepreneurship**, **innovation** and **environmental protection**, which are exacerbated by the continuing economic crisis that created the biggest brain drain in the region in modern times, depriving SMEs and HEI from young, talented, and well educated personnel.
- The challenges are due on the one hand to institutional and bureaucratic rigidities, such as the difficulties in the process of starting and closing a business the inadequate incentives to invest in innovative, growth producing projects. On the other hand SMEs in the programme area are predominately family businesses, focusing primarily on generating current family income instead of boosting innovation and generating growth. Furthermore, only a small proportion of SMEs are investing in resource-efficiency measures or produce 'green' products/services.

I. Introduction: Challenges in Greece

Eco-Innovation Index 2017



“The innovativeness of the Greek economy depends largely on imported technology and knowhow. Its strengths lie more with organisational and marketing innovations and less with technical improvements. At the same time, new firms – especially SMEs – find it difficult to have access to capital due to the reluctance of financial institutions to shoulder the risk. The present economic context can only accentuate this trend. Presently, actions to foster research and innovation capacity heavily depend on the ability to absorb EU Structural Funds and EU research funding.” Eco-Innovation Observatory Country Profile 2016-2017: Greece Author: Andreas Mitsios

- Vast opportunities exist in all countries in the area, in both improving the institutional framework, reduce bureaucracy, provide the appropriate incentives to boost innovative, growth-producing SMEs and managing environmental resources and natural beauty areas (for example promoting SMEs in alternative and eco-tourism or in green food supply chain) and introducing environmental issues in managing SMEs (energy efficiency, waste reduction, etc).
- The SMecoMP project focuses in the promotion of **eco-management** and **eco-innovation** among existing SMEs and the support of young entrepreneurs in entering in the "green" and/or "blue" economy, creating new added value jobs, improving the area's competitiveness and ameliorating the brain drain phenomenon and thus, contributing to the area's sustainable development.

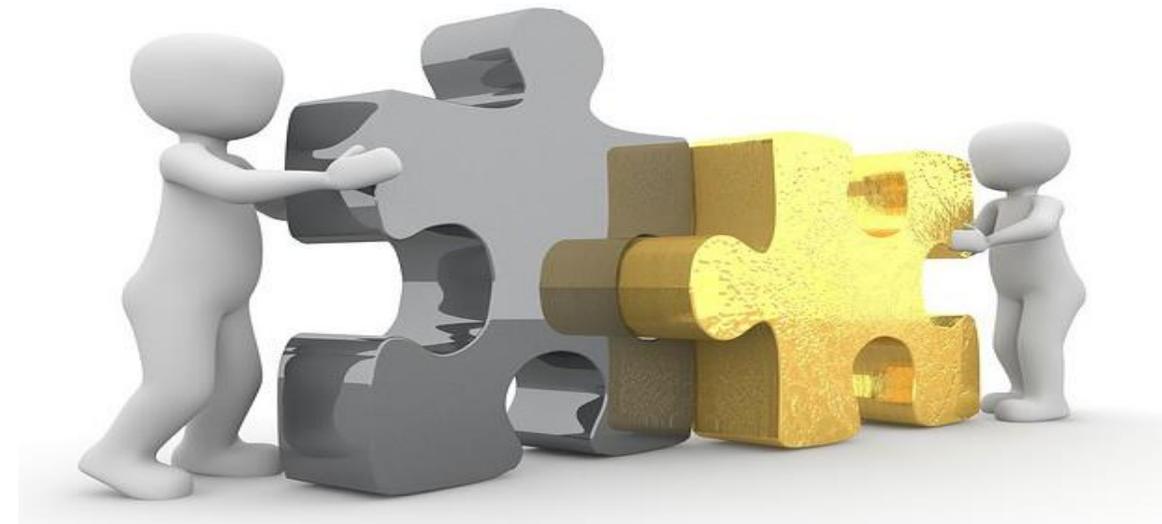


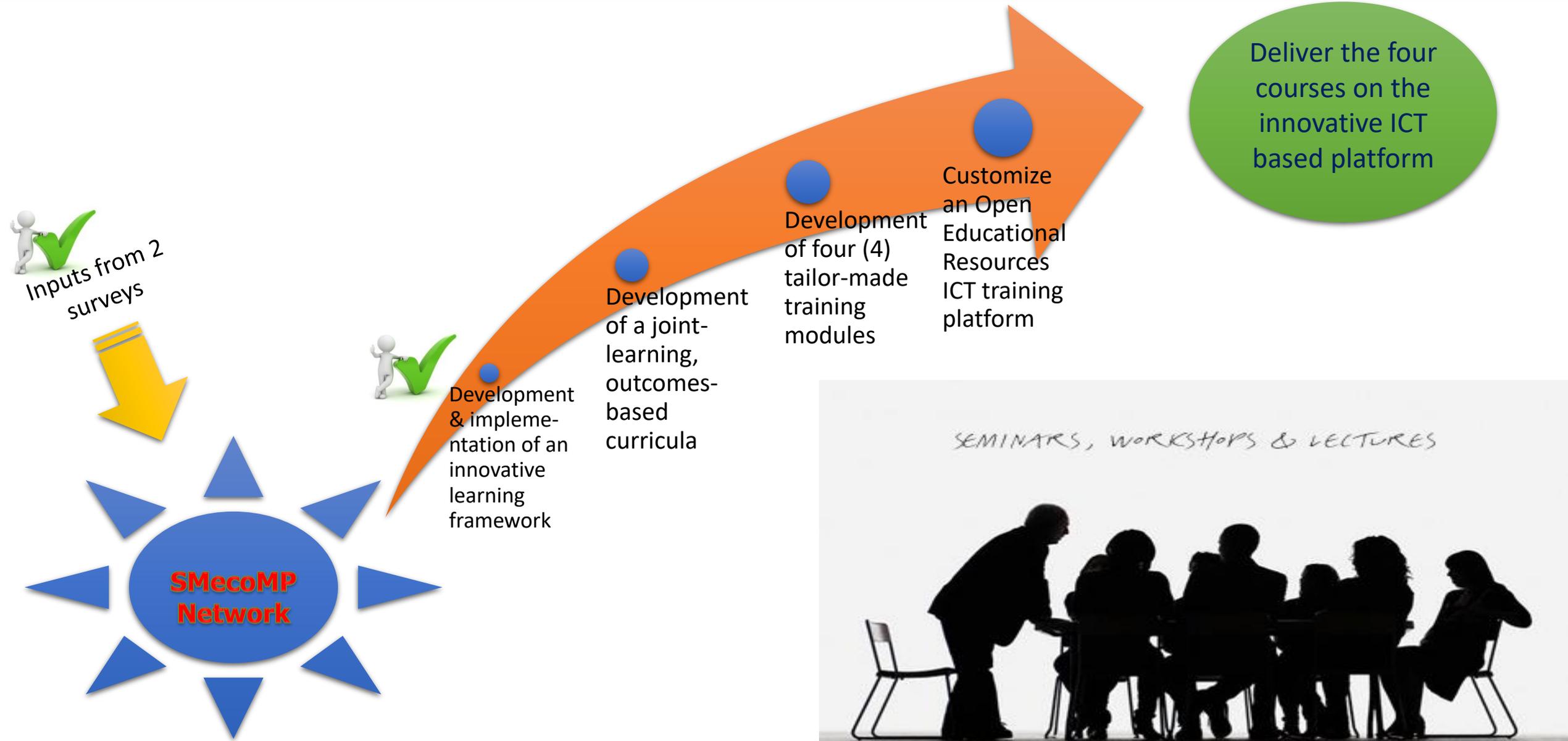


The project's goal is to create a strong network of academics, SME's staff and other stakeholders to foster the development of Eco-Innovation and Eco-Entrepreneurship for SMEs in the Balkan Med area

- **The SMecoMP's main objectives are:**
 - develop a transnational network of academics, SME's staff and other stakeholders,
 - Develop learning-outcome-based curricula and four training modules, focusing on Eco-Innovation and Entrepreneurship knowledge and skills, catering to the needs of SMEs' staff and young entrepreneurs,
 - Establish the SMecoMP pre-Incubator program for individual entrepreneurs to receive training, coaching and mentoring,
 - customize of an ICT training platform to deliver blended learning courses on EIE.

- The project's approach relies mainly in developing business-university collaboration across countries in the programme area, to promote eco-entrepreneurship and eco-management.
- Universities are an integral part of the “skills and innovation supply chain” to business. However, for this supply chain to be of high quality, strong and resilient, close collaboration, partnership and understanding between business and universities is required.
- These are the foundations upon which the project's network of Universities and Businesses will be developed in order to address the two main common challenges identified above:
 - entrepreneurship skills and
 - environmental and resource management of SMEs.







- SMecoMP's main outputs are:

- i. Current State and Best Practices Report

 The report will include the results drawn from analyzing data collected from two surveys (one on knowledge and skills that SMEs require and one on formal and non-formal educational training processes) in all participating countries.

- ii. SMecoMP Transnational Network

 A network of academics, vocational trainers, researchers, mentors, professionals, SME's owners and staff and members of start-ups, that promotes the integration of education, research and business, to improve entrepreneurship education, support eco-entrepreneurial lifelong learning and improve SME's competitiveness. It will be open to new members during and after the project's lifetime.

- iii. Development and implementation of an innovative learning framework.

 Taking into account the results of output (i) and through the exchange of experiences and best practices, partners will develop the framework and the platforms through which education and training will be delivered.



- The SMecoMP's main outputs are:

- iv. Development of a joint-learning-outcomes based curricula

 Based on output (iii), develop the curricula for 4 training modules addressing the identified cognitive and training needs by the HEIs and VET centers, the labour market actors and SMEs professionals.

- v. Development of four (4) tailor-made training modules, based on output (iv), adapted to eco-innovation entrepreneurial knowledge and skills required by SMEs' professionals and young ecopreneurs.

- vi. Customize an Open Educational Resources ICT training platform to deliver blended learning courses both to SMEs professionals and HEIs students to support both education and vocational lifelong learning.

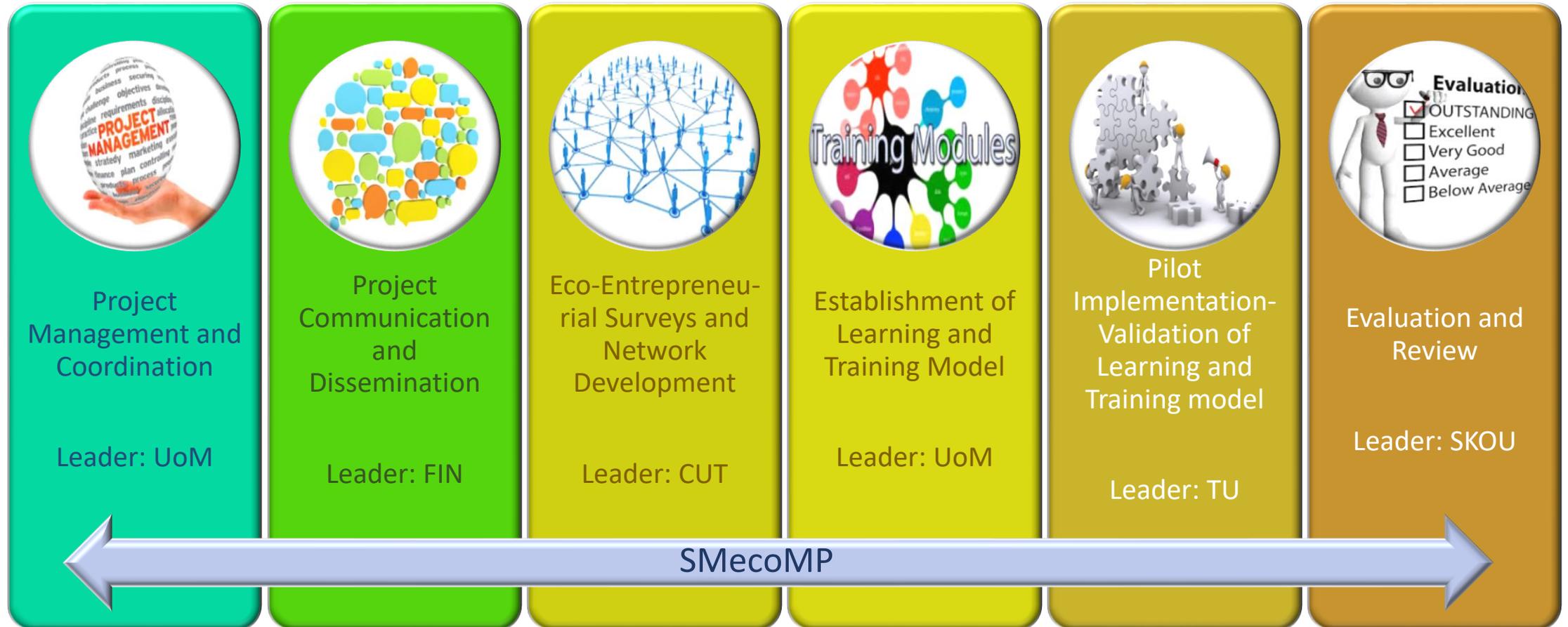
- vii. Deliver the four courses on the innovative ICT based platform.

- viii. Disseminate through workshops ad seminars.

- Develop a comprehensive framework of training curricula that include:
 - courses,
 - coaching and mentoring tools,
 - seminars,
 - workshops,
 - impromptu think tanks,
 - and motivational videos.
- All the above will be provided through classroom or electronic environments.
- Through these tailor-made learning modules on eco-entrepreneurship and management, SMecoMP will teach, mentor and coach green entrepreneurs so that they will develop the necessary skills to produce/offer a product, service, or process that benefits the environment.
- Promoting the participation of the area's SMEs in the "green economy" and, in the same time, exploring cooperation opportunities, will improve the area's competitiveness.

- The project's main target groups and their benefits are:
 - SMEs will benefit from receiving training for their staff and managers in eco-management practices, from sharing experiences and know-how, improving economic performance and competitiveness
 - SMEs' staff will improve their skills and competences, enhancing their performance at current occupation and also their employment opportunities
 - Young entrepreneurs will receive training, coaching and mentoring that will improve their abilities to function effectively as entrepreneurs or in an entrepreneurial capacity, launching their own SMEs and pursue personal ventures and propagate relevant values and knowledge
 - Universities will improve their understanding of markets' needs, improve curricula and enhance cooperation with businesses. Academic and technical staff, through sharing experiences with business, will improve their teaching material and update their research agenda. Students will acquire enhanced skills that will allow them to think creatively, be innovative, develop an awareness of intellectual assets and enhanced capacity to manage and exploit them.

VII. Project's organization in WPs



*Join the SMecoMP network
to collaborate
for a greener future*

