

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

SMecoMP

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Balkan-Mediterranean

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Contribution to the Curriculum Development

September – October 2019

SMecoMPPartners



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Introduction

On 27th September in Prilep, a Workshop was held with relevant stakeholders. During the Workshop the participants had the opportunity to learn in depth about the project, its goals and outputs, gain valuable information about the Eco-Entrepreneurship Laboratory, discuss the results from the survey analysis, and exchange ideas regarding the proposed curriculum and learning topics. It was a valuable experience to hear different opinions and observe different standpoints from academic and business organisations.

The discussion was based on the two provided documents containing a list of potential topics and themes in the four training modules, short description of the main elements of the four training modules and suggested types of content that will form the framework for the delivery of the training modules.

The main **comments and suggestions** from the Workshop and proposals that can contribute to the development of the curriculum are:

- It would be useful for the participants on the platform and the trainings **to prepare and provide pre-course materials**. This pre-course material will serve as starting point to accept new terminology, supporting the thinking process of the participants on the topics relevant to eco-entrepreneurship, and help them to reflect on their personal goals related to their SME. This pre-course material can be available on the learning platform. Topics included in this pre-course material can be:
 - Glossary on terms and definitions in the field of sustainable development, eco-entrepreneurship, management and marketing.
 - Summary on national and international laws, strategies and programs relevant to the topic.
 - Guidelines to define personal learning goals and clear expectations from the trainings.

- **Revise the proposed training modules**. The four proposed training modules are:
 - Environmental and Energy Economics – Cost Benefit Analysis - Environmental Finance and Accounting,
 - Environmental Management – Environmental Impact Assessment - Corporate Social Responsibility,
 - Eco-innovation and technology transfer,
 - From a green idea to a sustainable business

Having in mind that for most of the participants this type of trainings will be for the first time, and many of the participants are managers or SME owners, it can be expected that several other modules can be interesting for them. These modules can be combined with the already proposed ones, making them more complementary. Here are some ideas for modules:

- **Sustainability Management and Business Models** – This course introduces the participants fundamentally with the managerial determination to harmonize various principles, processes and behavior, while identifying and solving key managerial sustainability challenges. In this context, the importance of applying the value chain of the business model is linked to increasing the awareness for different modalities of sustainability, especially in balancing with the engagement, inclusiveness and knowledge management concepts. The orientation for transparency, accountability and innovation is one of the most important sustainability challenges, in order to achieve the state of sustained organizational development.

- **Sustainability Leadership** – The course also aims at discovering the main facets of leadership in light of sustainability. Some traditional defining leadership aspects are unlocked in order to discuss issues that are more complex. This course will focus participants on their own behaviors and build skills to more effectively influence environmental decision-making within groups, organizations, networks and society.

- **Sustainable Entrepreneurship** – This course will apply entrepreneurial thinking to different business models as seen through a social, environmental and economic sustainability perspective. It is fundamentally focused on various approaches to developing sustainability entrepreneurship model, which would incorporate the economic, social and environmental needs of each enterprise. In the center of the attention are sustainable entrepreneurs, who are opportunity oriented and aim to generate new products, services, production processes, techniques and organizational modes that substantially reduce social and environment impacts whilst simultaneously improving people quality of life.

- **Sustainable Brands** – In this course participants can explore market drivers for sustainable brands (e.g. constant pressure on the environment, consumer demand, retailer's demand and providing value via sustainable marketing strategies). Also, special focus will be put on making greener products, using different approaches: ecomagination, innovation and packaging. Participants will be introduced to good practices of marketing greener products and will be foster to create incentives and regulatory drivers for sustainable brands.

- **Personal Sustainability** – The course will support the participants to explore the concept of (un)sustainability and to distinguish paradigms and mindsets impacting the individual, society and the environment. Also, the course supports the participants to uncover their own agency and potential through which they can contribute to a sustainable world. Potential topics are: mindfulness, communication, personal leadership and self-sustainability competences.

One additional idea is to use other options for trainings, and cooperate with ongoing educational projects, also unded by EU. One potential cooperation can be with the Erasmus+ Project [DECOS](#) - Developing Eco Skills for a Green Economy. Within the DECOS project will be created three courses: waste management, energy management and sustainability.

- **Revise the proposed thematic topics.** The provided potential list of thematic topics is quite long, and diverse. Selection on most relevant topics should be made, as well as revising and adding some additional topics. Some of the proposed new thematic topics are:

- New business models
- Sustainable production
- Sustainable consumption
- Sustainable marketing
- Sustainable lifestyles
- [CSR 2.0](#)
- [Cradle to cradle](#)
- Waste management
- Reducing carbon footprint
- Intellectual capital
- Design thinking
- Frame innovation process

- **Training methods and techniques** planned in the trainings are:

- Lectures – presentations with available power point documents,
- Reading materials and videos (suitable for self-guided learning, available via the platform),
- Case-studies (elaborating specific topics in the curriculum),
- Exercises during the classes in a form of workshops, supporting the communication and interaction among the participants,
- Quizzes and test (in order to assess the progress of the participants).

It is recommended to strengthen the **use of problem and project based learning**. Having in mind that the participants are adults, professionals with life and work experience, who will value the interaction among them, possibility to contribute in the workshops, and extract as much as possible new information, develop new skills in cooperation working in teams. More specifically, this curriculum will be tailor-made, developed and taught having in mind the needs, experiences and interests of the professionals (adult learners):

- ❖ The need to know;
- ❖ The role of the learners' own experiences from the workplace;
- ❖ Motivation and readiness to learn.

The content and the delivery of the training modules should be based on principles for adult learning:

- ❖ Focus on „real world“ problems,
- ❖ Emphasize how the learning can be applied,
- ❖ Relate the materials to the learners' past experiences,
- ❖ Allow debate and challenge of ideas,
- ❖ Listen to and respect the opinions of learners,
- ❖ Encourage learners to be resources to you and to each other,
- ❖ Treat learners like peers (no typical teacher-student relationship).

In this context, it is recommended to have **other form for assessment the progress of the participants**, besides the classic way of quizzes and test. One option is to have **assignments – individual or group**, where participants can develop new solutions relevant for their organisations, ready to use in practice. This way their motivation to participate and be fully engaged in the workshops will seriously influence on their motivation.

Skopje, 10.10.2019

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