

GREEN MENTOR

Project number 2015-1-ES01-KA202-015934

Intellectual Output 1

Executive summary - State of the Art Report on mentoring of green companies in Europe



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

This Project has been funded with the support of the European Commission. The information reflects the views of the authors, and Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. INTRODUCTION**
- 2. GREEN MENTORSHIP CONTEXT**
- 3. NEEDS ANALYSIS OF TARGET USERS**
- 4. GOOD PRACTICES**
- 5. STAKEHOLDERS**

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this Executive Summary report is to summarize and highlight the key conclusions emerging from the **Desk Research** carried out by each project partner **at national and European level** as a whole.

The reports from all national and European desk researches have significantly contributed to the development of the first Intellectual Output of GREEN MENTOR project: the **State of the Art** Report on mentoring of green companies in Europe.

Desk Research reports have been elaborated taking into account the State of the Art purpose:

- Help to better adapt the outputs and products of GREEN MENTOR project to the reality and specific needs of the new professional profile of mentor for green entrepreneurs.
- Identify patterns and common obstacles, opportunities and needs for Green Mentors at European and national level.
- Provide a clear understanding about the context and situation of mentoring of green companies and entrepreneurs.
- Include useful recommendations to guide the methodological implementation of the project product.

The collected information has been used to set up the basis upon the rest of the project will be developed in the next IOs.

The full report document is available at: [Shared folder IO1 · State of the art E+ · Green Mentor](#)

2. GREEN MENTORSHIP CONTEXT

A mentor is an individual who is able to provide help and advice based on his/her expertise and background in a specific area. The Green adjective is referred to the sector/business type mentorship is held, in this case Green Economy (an Economy based on sustainability principles).

There is no official profile or specific skills requirements for a Green Mentor, in so far as the professional role does not exist officially.

The following sections provides a summary of the green mentorship context in each country (Austria, Hungary, Ireland and Spain) and at a European level.

EUROPEAN LEVEL

At a european level the transition to a Green Economy has been identified, by European Commission (EC), as a priority area to act as well as the promotion of entrepreneurship. The high potential of the green jobs and the new path for a green economy has been noted.

The European 2020 strategy “A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” is the most relevant policy in this terms. The EC has proposed five measurable EU targets for 2020, that will steer the process and be translated into national targets: for employment; for research and innovation; for climate change and energy; for education; and for combating poverty. Under this the EC has proposed actions regarding the promotion and support of entrepreneurship and green jobs, which is connected to the transition to a Green Economy and consequently to Green mentorship.

Besides EC, there are some institutions at the european level that are working on promoting business through training, mentoring and coaching. These institutions are private, public, NGOs or other kind of organizations promoting entrepreneurship, mentoring or green and social issues.

The green entrepreneurship and green mentorship at this level is highlighted by the EC under the framework of the strategy Horizon 2020 and supported by the general budgets of the EU, but still there lacks a distinction for green professionals who promote green entrepreneurship or business from a green vision.

AUSTRIA

The Austrian Unemployment Service (AMS) is the most relevant organization in these issues, which started an initiative for unemployed and still employed people, who plan to start their own business. The process of starting and maintain the business is mentored. On the other hand, the WKO-Austrian chamber of commerce offers counselling before, during and after a business start. According to the results of the external evaluation, individual counselling is preferred.

On public level, there are funding structures to promote (green) entrepreneurship. The overall approach includes financial funding, but also mentoring/coaching by industry experts, who have in particular an entrepreneurial background.

Currently, there is no unique structure for mentoring of green entrepreneurs. According to the intergovernmental agreement 2015, the city of Vienna promotes green initiatives, green jobs

as well as social entrepreneurship, which does through different initiatives and funding. However, a current trend is cross-mentoring, also including b2b approaches.

Depending on the offer, the focus lies on qualification in the area of sustainability (green technology in particular), financial promotion of green businesses or business/start-up consulting with management and entrepreneurial expertise.

HUNGARY

The new National Sustainable Development Framework Strategy (NSDFS) was prepared in a wide based public consultation process during 2011 and 2012. In 2013, the Hungarian Parliament adopted the new National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development in Hungary for the period 2012-24. The Hungarian nation is currently a very long way from a condition that could satisfy sustainability requirements, therefore the achievement of sustainable development may only be performed gradually, step by step, and the current Framework Strategy is the first step of the sustainability transition.

The main drivers for Green Economy in Hungary are more the economic crisis management and competitiveness issues than the real engagement with global sustainability objectives.

There is no existing mentoring practice for the business entrepreneurs in green vision nor in the public sector, neither in the private. However, as long as the environmental awareness is quite high among the young people, the education based on sustainability orientation could be exploited in developing a new green mentor profession in Hungary.

IRELAND

The Green Economy presents a major opportunity for employment creation in Ireland and for the development of indigenous enterprises. Comprehensive data on employment in the Green Economy in Ireland is problematic because of the breadth of the sectors it covers. A number of strategies and programmes are already implemented to support individual sectors in the Green Economy.

Regarding the mentoring practises, the use of mentors in Ireland to help existing SMEs grow and scale is varied and in many sectors there is quite low usage of experienced mentors by management teams, and apart from some specific measures such as Green Business, the mentorship support related to green jobs is limited.

In the start-up sector of , the vast majority of mentors are funded by the state and provided as a free support service to the startup either directly or through participation in a business support programme in a business incubator through the local enterprise offices, further collaboration with the existing agencies and incubators for green mentors is recommended.

There is a broad range of mentoring services for SMEs in Ireland. The various government bodies providing these services subsidise a large portion of the costs of these services.

SPAIN

The main leading institution regarding green entrepreneurship in the environmental field is the Biodiversity Foundation (Fundacion biodiversidad), which launched The Green Entrepreneur Support Network (Red Empreverde), co-founded by the European Social Found, with more than 7.500 entrepreneurs of the green sector.

In the next months, a new space Central NIDA, promoted by Red Empreverde and managed by UTOPICUS, is going to open to become a collaborative space for green entrepreneurs aimed at promoting and fostering the development of green economy through creativity, entrepreneurship and technology.

At national level there is not a comprehensive national training strategy for green skills.

3. NEEDS ANALYSIS OF TARGET USERS

AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

A good way to start is looking at end user's need: Who is receiving mentor's support? who are those end users? Accordingly with mentor definition, whose is receiving support is the "Mentee", usually, Green Entrepreneurs and established businesses that want to become "greener". Mentee's needs (translated into Mentor's needs) could be identified and divided in three levels: **Competences**, **Caring** and **Integrity** (source: <http://www.sfedi.co.uk/>).

Competences

Mentors are typically drawn from a variety of backgrounds including entrepreneurial, general business/management experience, technical and sectoral specialty. In the case of start-ups, mentors play a particularly crucial role in supporting a fledgling business to get off the ground and into a viable position through supporting entrepreneurs in the areas of:

- Assessing and validating the opportunity area and customer value proposition
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis of existing business, including staff skills and processes.
- Supporting the founders and management team in coping with the start-up pressures and evolving as a management team
- Formulating a business plan and design an working business model
- Product & service development strategy
- Sales and marketing strategy with particular focus on key initial sales
- Supporting preparing the company for investment & internationalisation
- Supporting the creation of a new business plan to enter new markets with existing products.
- Assessing the company's' current market position and market trends.
- Managing legal, financial and operational aspects of the company

Caring

Human relationship among GM and mentee is key. Caring is about personal & soft skills, like empathy and other social aptitudes, it is about generosity and facing challenges together.

Integrity

Integrity is about shared values and commitment with the mentee and the project. All of them are built upon trust, the main pillar of the relationship among GM and Mentee.

No official recognition

There is a lack of a defined and structured **profile for Mentors for Green Entrepreneurs**, in terms of skills and competencies; furthermore there isn't documentation or studies analyzing this particular profile. Like honoris causa entitlement, potential candidates become Mentors, after being recognized as so due their wide and proven experience. There is a huge opportunity to harmonize this vocational trajectory towards a common one throughout EU.

At national Level

AUSTRIA

For the Austrian context, the missing link between mentoring and knowledge in the field of sustainability has to be defined. Although the mentoring process is particularly defined by giving advice and support, the mentor has to have good insights in the topic he/she is dealing with. It strongly depends on the kind of start-up he/she is mentoring and what their needs are. The competences of a mentor should comprise professional knowledge and skills, business skills such as leadership, decision making and networking, combined with social skills.

HUNGARY

Currently there is no need for officially “recognized” (certified) skills, as the SME market is very cost sensitive and not tolerable to any additional fee-increasing factors. The (easily controllable) communication and practical problem-solving skills are more important than any formalized “certification”. Mentoring is anyhow a more personalized relationship, than the formal consultancy works.

IRELAND

In Ireland, there is no previous work on green mentoring specifically, however, there is a government report on mentorship that provides a detailed analysis of the needs and profile of business mentors for startups and SMEs in general. According to the report, mentors play a critical role in supporting the management teams for both start-up and growing existing businesses. Mentors perform a range of roles from a general role across all areas of the business to a specific-focus role such as in the sales and marketing area. Mentors are typically drawn from a variety of backgrounds including entrepreneurial, general business/management experience, technical and sectoral expertise.

SPAIN

In Spain, one relevant conclusion of a Red Empreverde” research (a network with more than 7.500 participants) is that more than 50% of green entrepreneurs have low or null knowledge on business management. That is, they have skill needs on business management issues. At the same time, more than 80% have attended training activities related with this area. Other relevant conclusion is that most green entrepreneurs are high-qualified (84% college degree), have high environmental awareness (72%) and have high knowledge about their specific area of green activity (80%).

4. GOOD PRACTICES

All the good practices identified at the national and European level concerns to the European country members as a result of a main guidance from the UE. The most relevant of them are the following ones:

- Skills for the green economy by CEDEFOP in Europe

This project explores employment effects, skill requirements and policy implications of the transition towards a greener economy. CEDEFOP underline that understanding the environmental implications of an occupation needs to be mainstreamed into education and training systems.

- The Green Entrepreneurship Europe in Europe

The GEE (Green Entrepreneurship Europe) project links the understanding of the paradigm change to a green economy and the promotion of the entrepreneurship and the development of its skills. A way to rethink how important the training, mentoring or any other way of learning/teaching/guiding is.

- [Ecopreneurs4climate by Ecopreneur.eu in Europe](#)

Ecopreneur.eu is the European Sustainable Business Federation, an alliance of more than 1.000 sustainable businesses. One of the most important practices is the program Ecopreneur for Climate (<http://ecopreneurs4climate.org/>) and its Champion Award to the best and brightest green businesses at the city/community and country levels.

- [EMCC in Europe](#)

European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) has 5,000+ members in 67 countries. It has two important standards: *European Individual Accreditation (EIA v2)* and *European Quality Award (EQA)*.

It has also an interesting database search engine to find a Mentor and/or Coach filtering results by Location, Working languages, Fields of expertise, EIA Accreditation level and EQA Qualification level.

- [Youth and Environment Europe in Europe](#)

The long-term project "Green entrepreneurship" is an Erasmus+ project and it was developed within Youth and Environment Europe network based on observation of lack of work opportunities of young people, lack of support for young entrepreneurs and the need to promote environmentally friendly solutions. The project aims to facilitate the access of young people to the labor market by training their skills, inspiring them to create their own green start-ups and promoting entrepreneurship.

- [SWITCHMED program in EU](#)

In order to boost green entrepreneurship, SwitchMed developed in 2015 a methodology to help Green Entrepreneurs through Green Mentorship. It is currently delivering a Training / Mentorship Programme up to 2,700 entrepreneurs in MENA region.

- [PRO CONCEPT/schooltalk.at in Austria](#)

The Education Mentoring Program is aimed at committed and performance-oriented young people who early on are based on the model of seasoned executives and also want to build a network of contacts for her career. Following, a suitable Mentoring Matching is introduced. Mentees get practical tips from the professionals' own experiences and may they occasionally accompany during their employment.

- [Green Business in Ireland](#)

Green Business is a free and confidential resource efficiency service for all types of SMEs in Ireland. The service is funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the National Waste Prevention Programme with the objective of delivering substantive resource efficiency improvements and cost savings, through waste prevention and reductions in water and energy consumption.

- [Eco-Recinnova by Red emprendeVerde in Spain](#)

The mentoring program Eco-Recinnova is aimed at providing an individualized and specialized support. Five entrepreneurs per year, from EmprendeVerde network, will take part in the mentorship process, which implies four face to face sessions and mentoring via email and phone during three months.

5. STAKEHOLDERS

Among the different kinds of entities managing green economy in general , a great relevance to the topic could be given by any NGO, social platform, national/international agency dealing with mentoring and coaching programmes and/or green economy issues.

In addition, also lobby groups could be very interested in defining the profile of green mentor in order to increase their efficiency and achieve their objectives at both national and European level. Furthermore, civil society as a whole could be identified as a unique stakeholder: the success of this project could contribute to improving or maintaining an adequate quality of life securing our social models.

More specifically, among the numerous stakeholders involved, we have identified the most relevant at european level and at national level (Austria, Hungary, Ireland and Spain) that can be consulted in the State of The Art report.