



**accting**

AdvanCing behavioural  
Change Through  
an INclusive Green deal

# Deliverable 5.7:

## Pilot Actions implementation report

**ICLEI Europe**

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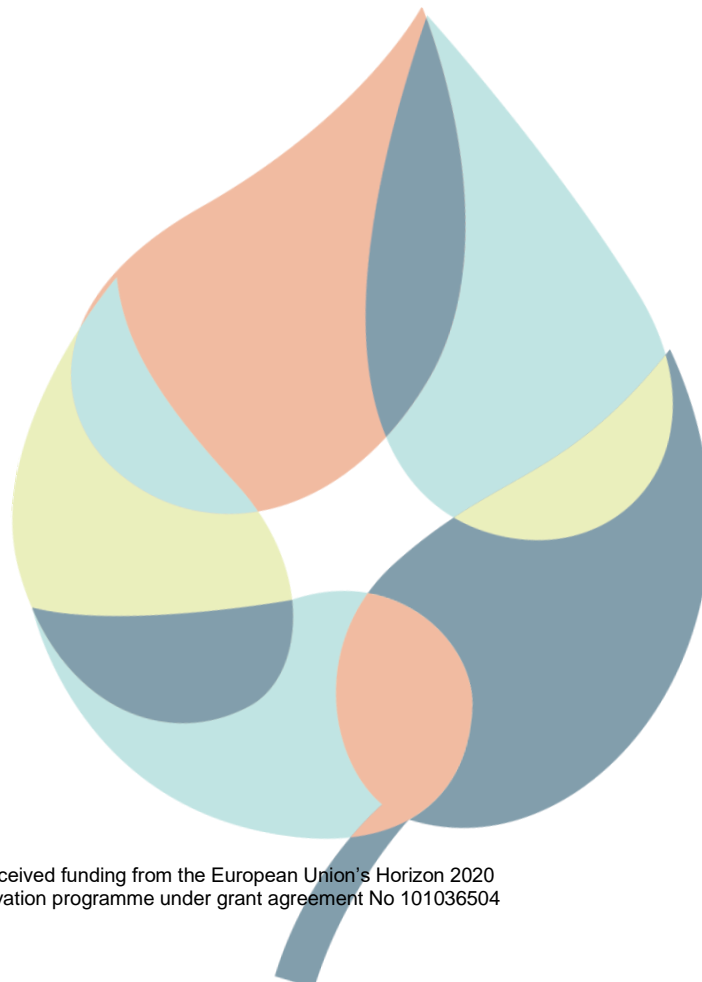
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## Disclaimer

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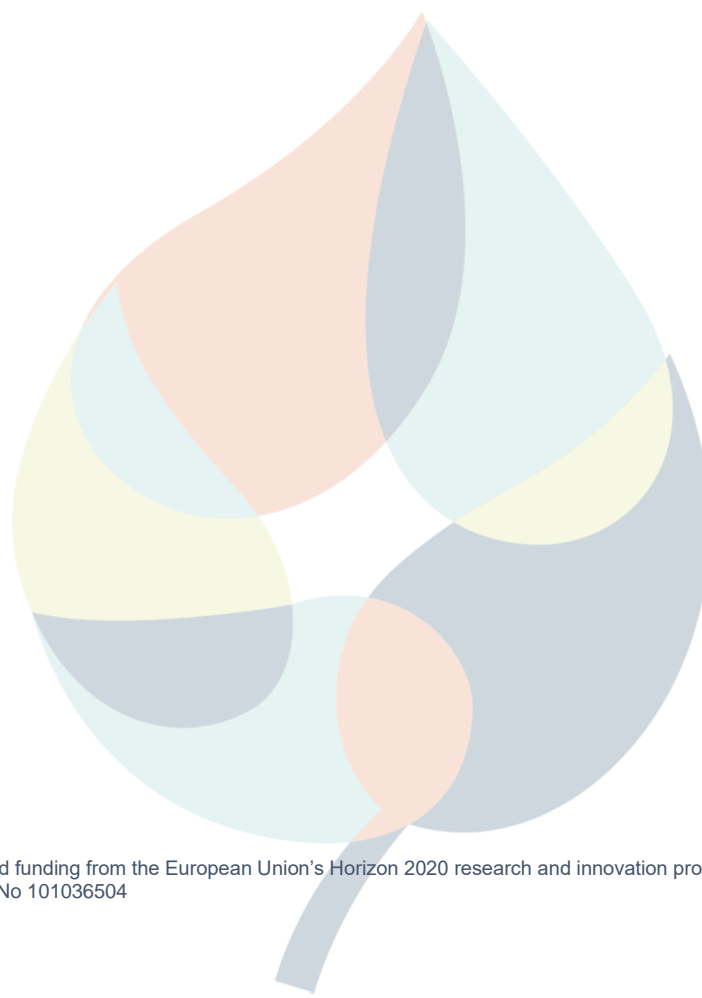
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# List of Acronyms

BUI	Bottom-up Initiative
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ECs	Energy Communities
EGD	European Green Deal
EIT NEB	European Institute of Innovation & Technology: New European Bauhaus
LAP	Local Action Plan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
PA	Pilot Action
RL	Research Line
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
YRS	Young Researchers of Serbia <i>(responsible for implementing PA9)</i>



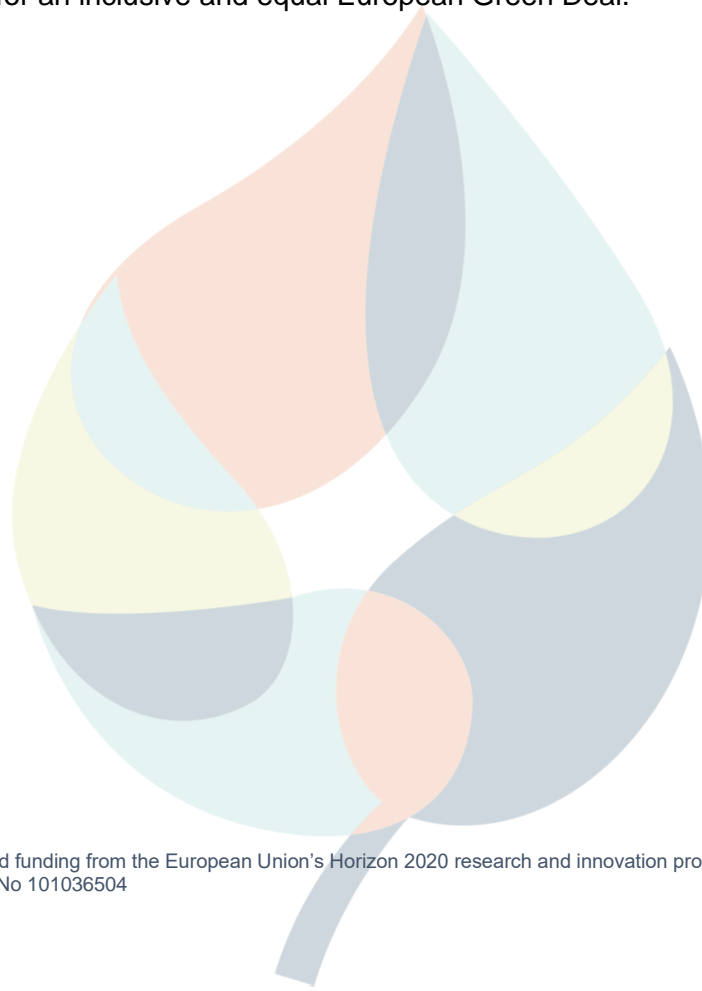
# The ACCTING project

It is acknowledged by now that the global climate crisis is not only an ecological crisis but also an economic, social and political crisis, with devastating effects on individuals and societies. These negative effects are not evenly distributed within societies. It is the poorer, marginalised and vulnerable groups who are the most acutely affected, exacerbating existing socio-economic inequalities. The European Green Deal foresees efficient use of resources for a circular and clean economy. However, inequalities emerge in the context of its policy and interventions.

The EU-funded ACCTING project takes these considerations as a starting point for a complex series of research and experimental activities aimed at identifying, analysing and testing policies and initiatives capable of responding to this crisis, mitigating its effects on the most vulnerable and helping them play a significant role in the pursuit of greater environmental sustainability.

The project mobilises research experimentation and innovation to promote an inclusive and socially just European Green Deal focusing on the inequalities produced by its policies and supporting behavioural change at individual and collective levels.

ACCTING explores the impact of Green Deal policy initiatives on individual and collective behaviours, provides evidence, and empowers policymakers and stakeholders to anticipate policy responses and potential negative influences, and mitigate such impacts in decision-making. The project collects new data on Green Deal policy interventions and co-designs and implements pilot actions to reduce or prevent policy-related inequalities and advance behavioural change for an inclusive and equal European Green Deal.



# Project Consortium

	European Science Foundation (ESF)
	Örebro University (ORU)
 YELLOW WINDOW	Yellow Window (YW)
	Knowledge and Innovation (K&I)
	Zentrum für Soziale Innovation (ZSI)
	Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)
	ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, European Secretariat
	Sabanci University (SU)
	Instituto de Geografia e Ordenamento de Território (IGOT)
	South East European Research Center (SEERC)
 ALEXANDRU IOAN CUZA UNIVERSITY OF IASI	Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi (UAIC)
	European Citizen Science Association (ECSCA)





University of Gothenburg (UGOT)

## Summary

The ACCTING project team identified 10 ideas for Pilot Actions (PAs) that have high potential to address vulnerabilities in the areas of the European Green Deal. Eight of these each link directly to one of the eight [Research Lines](#) in the ACCTING project with thematic focus on mobility, food, energy, or biodiversity, while the final two Pilot Actions contribute to the more thematically cross-cutting theme of youth empowerment and volunteering.

The PAs proved proving highly successful in promoting inclusive, collective action towards sustainability foremost through their direct engagement with target communities. Successes centred on inclusive co-creation and community ownership, empowerment of vulnerable groups as active participants, and effective promotion of collective behavioural change through engaging and fun methodologies, breaking down EGD priorities to the lived realities of target groups and ensuring that communities derive tangible benefits.

PAs were able to build sustainable impact by building platforms for ongoing collaboration, bringing diverse stakeholders together as intermediaries, and promoting the public institutionalisation of the piloted approaches. These successes provide evidence regarding the value and effectiveness of trusting CSOs and community-led initiatives to drive place-based transformations in line with EGD policy goals. On the other hand, the successes serve as valuable source of insights and inspiration for similar projects, and of policy recommendations to strengthen such work.

Given the contextual success of the PAs, the question arises how the impact of pilot actions can be scaled to promote an inclusive green transition more broadly. Project sustainability, replication, multiplication and upscaling are considered as possible pathways. While significant potential is identified, lack of long-term funding proves to be the largest challenge by far. ACCTING's Action Plan: *From Pilot Action to Sustainable Social Change*, provides some inspiration in this regard, including effective profiling and translation of pilot outputs, and support with networking and capacity-building exercises.

The findings of the pilot action implementation also suggest a number of promising avenues to improve policy and governance processes for the inclusive implementation of the Green Deal. These speak to the above successes but also two major recurrent challenges: obtaining (access to) secure and sustainable funding mechanisms; and collaborating with / obtaining permission from political and administrative authorities.

These avenues should be explored in further depth and include ways in public actors can embrace a culture of co-creation and regular dialogue with local communities and CSOs; recommendations for how funders and contracting parties can better support the work of CSOs (beyond only financial support); and leveraging educational actors and curricula as a particularly effective driver of sustainable behavioural change.



## Introduction

This deliverable focuses on assessing the implementation of Pilot Actions (PAs) through the ACCTING pilot process. This includes an overview of activities undertaken, obstacles and challenges faced, results obtained, possible sustainability and exploitation plans, and suggestions for multiplication and further action.<sup>2</sup>

The report starts by providing an overview of approach and methodology underlying the ACCTING pilot process, including the way in which the ten pilot “solutions” were developed and the ten winning proposals selected. It then moves to an overview of the actual implementation phase, breaking down for each of the ten PAs how the selected proposal responded to the specific technical specifications (objectives, activities, etc.). Each PA overview provides a summary of how the implementation phase progressed and an analysis of each PA’s successes, challenges and learnings.

Next, it provides a cross-cutting analysis of recurring themes in relation to these individual PA successes, challenges and learnings. The many successes tend to revolve around effective policy localisation and particularly the effective involvement of local stakeholders (communities to a significant extent, as well as institutional actors in certain cases). Typical challenges, in turn, relate to the twin bottlenecks of access to (sustainable) funding and adequate support from public actors – particularly their local governments.

This in turn leads to an assessment of the implications and recommendations for supporting the work of such civil society organisations in future work. Why pursue Green Deal processes through collaboration with CSOs? What (meta)recommendations have been unearthed for running such a pilot process? How can pilots be scaled and replicated, and what policy recommendations arise for pursuing Green Deal processes through collaboration with CSOs?

Overall, the findings from the ACCTING PA approach were overwhelmingly positive – with most if not all PAs achieving significant successes and outcomes on a limited budget. This provides strong practical justification for the theory of pursuing of Green Deal processes through collaboration with CSOs (as outlined in § 4.1). Accordingly, the report concludes with an outlook on more specific potential policy recommendations for particularly promising avenues and recommendations for furthering the future work of CSOs in supporting such Green Deal policies.

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<sup>2</sup> As a point of clarification, while there is repetition between the content of D5.6 (Pilot Actions *Monitoring* report), and D5.7 (Pilot Actions *implementation* report) their main difference is the viewpoint of this content. The former is written from the “from the point of view” of those who monitored/evaluated the pilot actions during their implementation, especially through monitoring sessions and visits. In contrast, this D5.7 is predominantly written “from the point of view” of the implementers of the Pilot Actions. So, for example, the successes, challenges and lessons learned are a transversal reading of all those indicated by the implementers of the Pilot Actions in their Reports.

# 1. Approach & Methodology

## 1.1 Task background

Task 5.2 is concerned with the implementation of a series of PAs. These PAs are an integral means of testing the theoretical conclusions and solutions developed in earlier phases of the ACCTING project. The aim was to test the effectiveness, applicability and replicability of the developed solutions in terms of preventing inequalities and negative impacts on poorer, marginalised and vulnerable groups in the implementation of the European Green Deal.

The work in WP5 builds on earlier research and outputs in the project, particularly the results from the analysis of the first research cycle in the various research lines of WP3 (T3.2), as well as the solutions developed in WP4. Specifically, all 10 PA ideas came out of the first round of Open Studios and were further developed into technical specifications by the consortium as part of T4.3. The Implementation of PAs (T5.2) is closely linked with their Monitoring (T5.4) and Impact Evaluation (WP6).

## 1.2 Development of the terms of reference

The “Technical Specifications” for each of the 10 PAs is the result of a co-creation process based on the research results, using the Open Studio methodology.

The goal of Open Studios is to co-create actionable ideas that drive real change, based on the research results produced in earlier stages of the project. Unlike traditional top-down policymaking, the Open Studio methodology combines collaboration, participatory design and creative techniques. Using various techniques and exercises over two days, participants go through periods of divergence (exploring in an open way) and convergence (bringing ideas to together into concepts of potential solutions). By integrating user experiences and perspectives from experts across fields – including researchers, policymakers, civil society representatives, and even artists – these sessions help shape more inclusive policies and action-solutions.<sup>3</sup>

An Open Studio is thus designed to:

- produce ideas for concrete action;
- gather input for recommendations to reshape policies;
- identify questions that still need to be answered (missing insights or knowledge).

The first cycle of four Open Studios, organised between early March and early April 2023, covered the eight research lines of the project and produced a combined total of 33 ideas for action. While some of these ideas were more suited for policy recommendations, the majority of outputs consisted of initial concepts for innovative actions. Ten of these concepts

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the Open Studios methodology, see Denis, A. & Strid, S. (2024); Strid, S., & Denis, A. (2024); and Kerremans, A., Denis, A., & Romeo, G. (2023).

were subsequently selected by the Open Studio organisers and relevant research line leaders, as they were deemed to have a high potential for social impact and addressing gender+ vulnerabilities.

These ten ideas were developed further by the consortium into detailed technical specifications, most of which were tested by external organisations for feasibility and to receive other feedback. At the end of this process, they were integrated into the overall terms of reference for the pilot actions, which were promoted through a call. The first eight pilot calls matching the project's eight research lines, and the final two pilot calls focussing on the cross-cutting topic of volunteering and youth empowerment. The [Guidelines calling for pilot action proposals](#) outlined the Terms of Reference as well as the Technical Specifications for each of the ten Pilot Actions. Applicants submitted proposals responding to one of the ten PA Calls. PAs were awarded, funded and tested through this call, which closed on 8 September 2023.

A full description of the development of the terms of reference for this call, as well as the process of receiving, evaluating and awarding of the ten pilot actions can be found in (Confidential) *Deliverable 5.2: Pilot Actions Selection Process*. Building on this, this Deliverable 5.7 focuses on the process of *implementation*, i.e. the translation of the call for pilot actions to the specific project context, the steps of implementing the project, as well as the successes, challenges and lessons learned throughout the process.

Table 1: Summary of Pilot Action Calls

Pilot Action Title	Summary of Pilot Action Call	Links to Research Line
PA1: Next time better and more inclusive	<i>The main aim (...) is to co-create a scenario for handling a disaster. This would be done as a pilot project in a region that recently faced a sudden disaster, using a bottom-up approach, involving all stakeholders including citizens. The underlying principle is the co-creation of scenarios for the future to inform and trigger a behavioural change in actors from local communities as well as from authorities. The aim is reducing the risk of similar disasters in the future as well as improving disaster preparedness.</i>	RL1: Valorising local knowledge in the frame of the community-based disasters' management and mitigating exposure
PA2: Wild Eyes - Biodiversity crisis knowledge	<i>The main aim of Wild Eyes is to start a citizen science engagement and awareness campaign to activate and encourage participants for collecting evidence of biodiversity change and preparing fact-based solutions that are positive to biodiversity, the inclusion of vulnerable groups is expected.</i>	RL2: Exploring behavioural change appearing with the establishment of protected areas, with the aim to understand the match of biodiversity land use restrictions and socio-economic needs of vulnerable groups from a gender+ perspective.

PA3: Awards for inclusive energy communities	<i>The primary objective of the awards for inclusive energy communities is to provide a valuable platform for energy communities to exchange their experiences and knowledge, fostering collaboration and learning among them. By recognising and celebrating inclusive and innovative approaches, these awards aim to inspire energy communities to adopt similar practices and principles. Furthermore, the awards serve as a means to showcase and amplify the successes of best-practice energy communities, gaining media attention and serving as role models for other initiatives in the field. Through this collective sharing of experiences and recognition, the awards contribute to the growth and development of inclusive energy communities, ultimately advancing the transition to a more sustainable and equitable energy future.</i>	RL3: Energy communities, energy poverty and community energy schemes
P 4: Hands-on small-scale support for vulnerable micro-entrepreneurs	<i>The (...) pilot action is intended to encourage vulnerable micro-entrepreneurs to make their businesses environmentally conscious and support them in achieving environmental sustainability through (i) dissemination and raising awareness actions, (ii) vocational training, (iii) tailored assistance, (iv) the connection with other businesses to share competences and practices, and (v) the recognition/reward of successful participants.</i>	RL4: Intensifying the adoption of energy-efficiency measures in micro/smaller SMEs
PA5: GardenBnB	<i>This call for a pilot project proposes the constitution of a network of urban/community garden actors and the setting up of an exchange platform to facilitate this, based on existing digital tools. The aim is to improve visibility, access, connections and practices in the field of sustainable and inclusive urban agriculture, involving vulnerable groups, existing and new actors, while creating and developing a shared repository of knowledge.</i>	RL5: Improving food security and healthy diets in vulnerable communities, through local production, informed consumption practices and circularity
PA6: F.E.T. (Food Everywhere Toolkit)	<i>The Food Everywhere Toolkit is about shaping the food choices of future generations by making healthy and sustainable food available everywhere in schools. The main objective of this pilot action is to develop a set of tools and resources to inspire, motivate and assist all relevant stakeholders in schools to launch initiatives in which healthy and sustainable food is available everywhere in the school and becomes part of its DNA. Expected outcomes include creating processes with which alliances are formed between schools and small – scale sustainable farmers to take part in the initiative as well as scaling up the initiative by disseminating activities.</i>	RL6: Values associated with Environmentally Sustainable Food Consumption (ESFC) as a function of age, gender, vulnerability to the Green Deal and country/culture
PA7: Green to school - sustainable commutes	<i>Green to school: sustainable commutes is about encouraging civil society organisations, schools and parents to make the school journey more sustainable. The main objective is to increase the uptake of sustainable mobility options in peripheral school context. This is done by encouraging a civil society organisation to work with school(s) to develop and test</i>	RL7: Transport poverty and sustainable travel: families in socially vulnerable areas



	<p>concept idea(s) to initiate a process of change amongst its pupils and families. One of the expected outcomes is the development and implementing of one or several concept idea(s) to increase the uptake of sustainable mobility in a peripheral school context.</p>	
PA8: Wheels for Justice	<p><i>Wheels for Justice is about cycling and how it can contribute to improving mobility, health and general well-being for all, with a focus on vulnerable groups. The main objective of this pilot action is to support the connection between cycling activism and social justice struggles by identifying creative ways to expand the reach and impact of cycling and make it more accessible and inclusive. Expected outcomes include celebrating and disseminating successful experiments in inclusive cycling, as well as promoting advocacy actions to address the obstacles identified along the way</i></p>	RL8: Post- lockdown sustainable mobilities: centring cycling and walking
PA9: Series-V: Kickstarting Volunteering	<p><i>The pilot action "Series V – Kickstarting Volunteering" is about creating a platform that connects individuals and organisations who have projects and ideas for efforts to advance socio-ecological transformation with volunteers who are ready to contribute to those efforts. The voluntary contributions can be through time commitment and provision of any kind of resources (e.g., expertise, tools, money). The main objective is to facilitate and activate volunteering efforts and behaviour change especially among people from vulnerable groups, to ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute to society. The expected outcome is a space where individuals can come together and create a community of volunteers and volunteerism, to establish more resilient and transformative versions of the future.</i></p>	*Cross-cutting - all research lines*
PA 10: Cultivating Changemakers: Youth Empowerment through activism	<p><i>This pilot action "Cultivating Changemakers: Youth Empowerment through activism" aims to engage adolescents between the ages of 14 to 17 in activism related to Green Deal issues. Recognising the challenges of inspiring behavioural change within the formal school system, this action emphasises on the importance of relatable role models, peer influence and structured frameworks in encouraging youth activism. By collaborating with schools and offering internships with NGOs, this action seeks to provide adolescents with valuable experiences, personal growth and opportunities as well as a platform to contribute to sustainable choices, social justice and a healthier lifestyle. Through this approach, the project aims to empower young people as catalysts for positive change contributing to a more sustainable society.</i></p>	*Cross-cutting - all research lines*

## 1.3 The ten selected Pilot Actions

Following a highly competitive application evaluation process (featuring 140 eligible applications under consideration), the following ten proposals were selected:

Table 2: Details of selected applicants

PA#	Organisation name and location	Pilot title	Funding requested
<b>PA1</b> (RL1)	<b>Name:</b> Dock <b>Country:</b> Greece	<i>Dialogue &amp; Action Against Wildfires: Empowering Communities for Disaster Resilience</i>	31,300 € (+6,260 € top-up funding)
<b>PA2</b> (RL2)	<b>Name:</b> Ecomuseum Zagori <b>Country:</b> Greece	<i>Echoversity</i>	32,000 €
<b>PA3</b> (RL3)	<b>Name:</b> La Corriente <b>Country:</b> Spain	<i>Premios inclusivECs: impulsando comunidades Inclusivas</i>	31,740 €
<b>PA4</b> (RL4)	<b>Name:</b> Institute of Romani Culture in Albania <b>Country:</b> Albania	<i>Supporting Roma micro-entrepreneurs in Albania towards better environmental sustainability</i>	21,590 € (+5,000 € top-up funding)
<b>PA5</b> (RL5)	<b>Name:</b> KOKOZA, o.p.s <b>Country:</b> Czech Republic	<i>Mapko Connects Community Gardens</i>	31,100 €
<b>PA6</b> (RL6)	<b>Name:</b> Mamagea <b>Country:</b> Greece	<i>Food4Schools (F4S)</i>	31,855 €
<b>PA7</b> (RL7)	<b>Name:</b> Active Mobility <b>Country:</b> Albania	<i>Edu Move: Boosting Bike Use in Suburban Tirana</i>	31,738 €
<b>PA8</b> (RL8)	<b>Name:</b> aquí SCCL <b>Country:</b> Spain	<i>Todas en bici</i>	32,000 €
<b>PA9</b>	<b>Name:</b> Young Researchers of Serbia <b>Country:</b> Serbia	<i>Get involved!</i>	31,970 €
<b>PA10</b>	<b>Name:</b> Per Esempio Onlus <b>Country:</b> Italy	<i>School Goes Green</i>	16,000 €

## 1.4 Implementation of Pilot Actions

The pilot actions were implemented over the course of 12 months, from December 2023 to the end of November 2024. Throughout this implementation phase, there was a close collaboration between the leads of the various tasks concerned with the Pilot Actions to improve synergy and streamline the process for the PAs: ICLEI Europe for implementation (T5.2), SEERC for monitoring (T5.4) and K&I for the impact evaluation (WP6) of the pilot actions. Specifically, ICLEI Europe, joined the regular Monitoring & Evaluation meetings that were organised by SEERC & K&I.<sup>4</sup> We also maintained close email contact with the PAs, as well as impromptu bilateral support meetings where needed. This allowed the project team to keep a close overview of PA activities and progress.

Section 2 goes into detail on the steps of implementation for each of the PAs, as well as the respective successes, challenges and lessons learned.

## 1.5 Reporting & Evaluation of Pilot Actions

Like the monitoring of the implementation phase, the process of reporting & evaluation of the PAs was conducted in close collaboration between the PA implementation, monitoring & evaluation tasks.

The reporting consisted of a midway reporting in month six (May) and final reporting in month 12 (December), with PAs given an additional month after the project end date, to submit the final report by the end of January 2024. The respective reporting templates were co-developed with the M&E ACCTING team to support their own work on impact evaluation. This was particularly the case in relation to the final reporting template.

In both reports, the focus was to ensure that all 10x PAs had complied with their *contractual* requirements, before payment of the next funding tranche could be approved. The midway report retained a strong focus on this compliance aspect; feedback by the project team focused on making sure that the trajectory of the PAs was in line with the ACCTING general objectives as well as the PA specific objectives. The final report asked about compliance, explanation and motivation of any deviations to the original proposal, as well other aspects useful for both this implementation report, the D5.6 Monitoring report as well as the D6.2 Consolidated evaluation results report. Specific questions aimed, for instance, at the project's challenges, successes, lessons learned, potential for replication & multiplication, policy recommendations, and an optional opportunity to discuss the PA's specific indicators (where appropriate).

In both cases, the evaluation process saw ICLEI, as PA implementation task lead, performing an initial thorough compliance check against both the terms of reference and technical specifications listed in the call and the project proposal submitted by the respective PA. Any issues or questions identified in this regard were flagged. Thereafter, input was received from the M&E partners. SEERC and K&I were each responsible for five PAs, so in

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<sup>4</sup> Each PA was also monitored by a representative from the related RL, with PAs 1 and 3 also benefiting from two external experts.



each case one partner had greater capacity for feedback. Finally, a decision to approve the reports was made *collectively* between all three relevant project partners.

In the case of the midway report, follow-up email guidance was sent to a number of PAs for whom it was felt this would be particularly useful. Generally, this focused on the need to continue aligning with the ACCTING project goals of a gender+ perspective and inclusion of vulnerable groups. Nonetheless in both reporting rounds, all 10x PA reports were approved without the need for further activities or descriptions from the PAs.<sup>5</sup>

For more detail in this regard, see the analysis of PA compliance with key requirements in Annex 1.

## 2. Implementation of Pilot Actions

While Section 1 focused on the general process of PA development, implementation and reporting, the following Section 2 will zoom into the specific PA projects. For each of the PAs, the technical specifications of the original action idea as well as the submitted proposal are summarised. The summary of implementation steps and lessons learned is based on the midterm and final reports, as well as additional information submitted and collected in the monitoring process.

### 2.1 Pilot Action 1: Dialogue & Action against Wildfires

#### PA1 Technical Specifications

*The main aim (...) is to co-create a scenario for handling a disaster. This would be done as a pilot project in a region that recently faced a sudden disaster, using a bottom-up approach, involving all stakeholders including citizens. The underlying principle is the co-creation of scenarios for the future to inform and trigger a behavioural change in actors from local communities as well as from authorities. The aim is reducing the risk of similar disasters in the future as well as improving disaster preparedness.*

<sup>5</sup> During the midway report evaluation, a revised work plan was requested for PA9 and received, but approval of the report itself was not dependent on this.

## PA1 Project Proposal

- **Project name:**  
“Dialogue & Action  
Against Wildfires”
- **Organisation:** DOCK
- **Location:**  
Greece (Messinia)
- **Topics:** Disaster risk  
preparedness; Local  
knowledge



Overview. [Dock – Social Solidarity Economy Zone](#) is a non-profit organisation located in Athens, Greece. It envisions the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) as an alternative way of organising economy and society based on the values of solidarity, sustainability and social justice. It aims to contribute to the visibility of SSE in Greece by organising public events, to empower SSE enterprises and initiatives by providing information, educational programmes, business support, seminars and tools.

The project focused on a cluster of four mountainous villages in Messinia, Peloponnese, Greece. With 570 inhabitants and 3.900 hectares rich in natural and cultural heritage sites, these villages serve as a microcosm that could model wildfire resilience for similarly at-risk territories. It used bottom-up approaches to co-create scenarios for handling disaster.

Objectives. The project aimed to raise awareness and build the necessary capacity and social and civic infrastructure to not only prevent devastating fire damage, but also to form a coordinated, community-based response that can protect lives, homes, and natural resources.

Through a participatory design process prioritising the needs and experiences of the most vulnerable groups, this project sought to convert vulnerability into resilience, empowering locals not just for surviving wildfires, but for transforming their communities into “Fire Smart Territories”.

Activities the project proposed to undertake included:

- establishing a **cross-sectoral advisory board** including local government officials, key community figures, and representatives from vulnerable groups like the elderly and women.
- conducting hands-on, collaborative **scenario-planning exercises** in each targeted village, followed by simulated disaster response drills using local resources.
- setting up both **physical and digital platforms** to facilitate open community discussions on vulnerabilities, equality, and the ethical dimensions of disaster management.

- methodically **analysing and converting all lessons** learned and data collected into a set of actionable policy recommendations. These recommendations will then be presented to local and regional policymakers, aiming for long-term, systemic change.

Expected impact: By directly involving these vulnerable groups in the participatory design and outcome-based discussions, the project aspired to take a more inclusive, democratic, and truly community-led approach to wildfire prevention and response. Initiated in a cluster of four villages, the project is designed for scalability, both geographically and methodologically, and could be extended to nearby villages.

Advocacy efforts aimed at institutionalising the project's approach within local government frameworks, thereby ensuring long-term sustainability and far-reaching impact. All materials were to be publicly available and open source, increasing accessibility for varied communities and stakeholders.

## PA1 Implementation

The project progressed through six key phases:

1. **Phase one established stakeholder engagement** and set the groundwork for collaboration by forming a management team and local coordination committees.
2. **Phase two raised awareness and gathered input through community events** and surveys, ensuring inclusivity by engaging vulnerable groups like women and the elderly.
3. **Phase three developed community-specific disaster risk scenarios** using local knowledge and infrastructure assessments, resulting in actionable draft plans.
4. **Phase four refined these drafts through community feedback mechanisms** such as voting, puppet theatre, and cultural events.
5. **Phase five finalised the disaster scenarios, reviewed outcomes**, and highlighted differences in readiness across villages.
6. **Phase six focused on dissemination and advocacy**, compiling a toolkit of resources and organising a forum that brought together diverse stakeholders, including policymakers, researchers, and local communities, to discuss wildfire management and share the project's methodologies.

## PA1 key project outputs

- Primary project output: [Forest Fire Risk Reduction Toolkit](#) and **Community-led Disaster Risk Reduction Framework** (both in Greek). English translation of the Toolkit forthcoming.

## PA1 Evaluation

From the outset, the project management team managed to involve local communities in its planning, forming agreements with 24 key individuals across the four villages in the early stages of the project, to ensure comprehensive involvement, understanding, and engagement. This continued with regular on-site community events in

the villages and ongoing contact through co-ordination committees, use of questionnaires to obtain maximum community input and active steps to involve e.g. gender imbalances in participation.

**Plans were developed in a highly contextualised manner.** An infrastructure assessment using maps and tables helped pinpoint resources and gaps, and through community events, participants collaborated to define a baseline (Scenario 0).

A **community-led disaster risk reduction framework** was developed which emphasised prevention, readiness, response, and recovery. This was organised into worksheets designed to simplify planning tasks, promote local ownership, and ensure consistency across participating communities. This could then be used to co-create and work on a Draft Scenario B in each of the villages. These Drafts were refined in multiple iterations through community feedback processes until a final revised version could be developed for each village.

**Empowerment of local communities** was further enhanced through related training of 29 participants in fire preparedness and -fighting, allowing them to gain confidence in handling small-scale fires, especially in domestic and agricultural contexts, using fire extinguishers and blankets. This tangible rise in preparedness was further supported by culturally adapted outreach methods, such as puppet theatre in Archaia Messinia, which broadened the audience beyond typical meeting attendees—parents, grandparents, and even visitors joined conversations, underscoring a more inclusive awareness of local fire risks.

**The primary project output is a [Forest Fire Risk Reduction Toolkit](#)** (in Greek): This bundle of resources included a community guide, training materials intended for school-based education, four worksheets covering various aspects of fire readiness, and four case studies drawn from each participating village's experiences.

The project emphasised **dialogue with both local communities** (throughout the Toolkit development) **and political and media actors in the project dissemination phase**. The project team, in partnership with the Municipality of Messinia, co-organised a two-day [forum](#) under the title “*Dialogue and Action: Climate Crisis, Forest Fires, and Resilient Landscapes*.” Held at the Messinia City Hall (symbolically chosen because the four pilot villages belong to this municipality), it brought together diverse stakeholders: municipal authorities and regional officials, civil society and social solidarity entities, nonprofit organisations, environmental and volunteer groups, educational institutions (including school representatives), and residents from various communities. This benefited from strong mayoral support and led to wider project media coverage (including local publications and e.g. a [publication](#) by Heinrich Böll Stiftung).

This wider engagement has led to **promising potential for multiplication of project outputs**. Already, individuals from neighbouring villages expressed an interest in using the toolkit to prepare for the next fire season. Many attendees at the forum expressed a desire to replicate or adapt the project's worksheets and methodology, affirming that the project had moved beyond mere pilot status to become a catalyst for policy dialogue at multiple levels.

**Learnings** highlighted the wealth of local community insights to support (better) fire prevention strategies - indicating the **strong benefits of the project's bottom-up, co-**



**creation approach for disaster risk management** generally. From a policymaking perspective, the project demonstrates the **significance of hands-on, scenario-based learning for driving behavioural change in local communities**. Rather than relying solely on public information campaigns, organisers found that interactive workshops where residents helped design prevention strategies or infrastructure upgrades, were far more effective in imparting both knowledge and confidence. Policymakers seeking to enhance community-level climate resilience might therefore consider adopting similar frameworks, particularly in areas where volunteer spirit and informal networks can supplement limited public resources.

An interesting finding suggested the **challenges of overcoming gender-roles in participation**. Ad-hoc steps could be taken to e.g. include women's inputs into planning. But deeper structural efforts need to be taken to ensure equitable access to leadership positions in particular, as well as to break down established gender norms in terms of the roles designed. More comprehensive mentorship programs in addition to policy interventions are highlighted as possibly helpful interventions.

## 2.2 Pilot Action 2: Echoversity

### PA2 Technical Specifications

*The main aim of Wild Eyes is to start a citizen science engagement and awareness campaign to activate and encourage participants for collecting evidence of biodiversity change and preparing fact-based solutions that are positive to biodiversity, the inclusion of vulnerable groups is expected.*

### PA2 Project proposal

- **Pilot Action:** 2
- **Project name:** Echoversity
- **Organisation:** EcoMuseum Zagori
- **Location:** Greece (Zagori)
- **Topics:** Biodiversity & Citizen Science



Overview: “Echoversity” is a project led by EcoMuseum Zagori, in response to ACCTING’s call for pilots Wild Eyes – Biodiversity crisis knowledge. This call supports citizen science engagement and awareness campaigns encouraging participants to collect evidence of biodiversity change and preparing fact-based solutions that are positive to biodiversity.

EcoMuseum Zagori (EMZ) promotes sustainability and the conservation of the protected areas in Zagori, Greece. The Zagori region is a border mountainous territory in Northwestern Greece attracting more than 30.000 visitors each year. With two National Parks, the area of Zagori hosts more than 2,000 rare species and subspecies of flora and

fauna. This pilot project focused on the conservation and protection of both the alpine meadows and pastures of the area and their valuable ecosystem services.

Objectives: The project aimed to record the biodiversity of the forage trails of Zagori, with the active contribution of the local community. It aimed to involve innovative soundscape applications for the mapping and conservation of biodiversity, with the participation of citizens, in the pastoral routes of Zagori. Participants detect, record, and discuss the conservation and management of the ecosystem of local pastures.

With Echoversity, the EMZ aimed to connect the landscape with the community and the tangible and intangible cultural heritage, bringing together scientists and local stakeholders, establishing the development of collaborative action relationships that aim both to record and preserve biodiversity, and to educate and raise awareness among farmers for the sustainable conservation of local habitats.

Activities: The project aimed to offer a combination of scientific and social activities:

- Three **field training workshops on biodiversity** inventory, monitoring and management, targeting local stakeholders and interested parties, with a focus on mobile livestock farmers
- The **recording and mapping of the biodiversity** of Zagori through Bio-Blitz workshops and Sound Walks
- The identification and **mapping of ecosystem services** in the field
- The identification of the cultural **identity of the nomadic pastoralists**
- **Educational Programme for Children** on the paths of transhumance and biodiversity
- **Mobile photo exhibition** inspired by the local biodiversity and its connection to the transhumance routes,
- Creation of **products** from pastoral women

Expected impact: By directly involving citizens and the scientific community and using partners' existing networks, the project aspired to raise awareness on the marginalised community of pastoral breeders on the one hand and the local argi-food and agrotourism on the other. Special focus was to be given to women pastoralists and young generations who want to get involved with transhumance as a tourism product.

At the end of the project, the Biodiversity Database and Map, the exhibition material, and the products made by pastoral women were to be maintained by EMZ, making them available for continuous dissemination, utilisation and updating.

## PA2 Implementation

The project progressed through a number of overlapping activities:

1. In close collaboration with the local community and associations, the team **mapped and marked a pastoral trail** for sustainable tourism. The digital map of the trail in the EcholociApp additionally encourages engagement with the local biodiversity via the data mapped in the BioBlitz and Sound Walks.
2. In June 2024, the team organised a **Participatory Bio-Blitz Workshop** in which participants engaged in a hands-on biodiversity inventory and a soundwalk

collecting data for local conservation efforts. Part of the workshop was also a presentation on the relationship between transhumance practices and biodiversity conservation, a hands-on bakery workshop by women from the transhumance community and a local dance showcase.

3. In parallel to the biodiversity inventory, participants of the workshop also engaged in the mapping of the area's soundscape through **Sound Walks**. The resulting soundscape was used in the EcholociApp, the educational programme and the mobile exhibitions.
4. An **educational summer programme** engaged 200 school children from the nearby city Ioannina as well as the village communities in interactive activities that linked local heritage with biodiversity conservation. This included short presentations, visits to local breeders, sound walks and educational games.
5. Additionally, the project engaged pastoral women and community artists in the **manufacturing of local products**. A range of workshops was organised particularly around various wool-based techniques that underscored wool's potential as a sustainable byproduct of livestock farming and encouraged participants to explore its creative applications. The activity concluded with a range of crafted woollen products that reflect the cultural and natural heritage, which were featured in mobile exhibitions.
6. Finally, a **mobile local biodiversity exhibition** was organised to showcase the intersection of biodiversity conservation, transhumance, and the pivotal role of women in preserving cultural heritage. "Weaving Network" travelled across the cities of Metsovo, Zagori, Ioannina and Konitsa, and was integrated into festivities around the European Wool Day and the European Heritage Days.

## PA2 key project outputs

- **Biodiversity and soundscape recordings** in the [EchoLoc App](#): A smartphone application co-developed by EMZ

## PA2 Evaluation

Successes: Through its array of integrated activities, the PA was particularly successful in **increasing awareness around (the link between) biodiversity and cultural heritage** amongst the various participants (~750 in total). Particularly, the **contribution of traditional transhumance knowledge and practices** to biodiversity protection was recognised, celebrated and leveraged.

The project placed a strong focus on **empowering (women in) transhumance communities by celebrating their traditional techniques and cultural heritage**. The project was implemented in close collaboration with local stakeholders, like cultural associations. Through the workshops, traditional breeders and manufacturers were able to showcase their cultural heritage. Feedback from women participants revealed a sense of pride and recognition, strengthening of community ties and deeper connection to transhumance practices.

At the same time, the citizen science activities provided valuable **data that will support ongoing conservation efforts** in the region. Biodiversity data from BioBlitz and Soundwalks is recorded and publicly available in the EcholociApp.

Finally, the project facilitated new relationships and **collaborations** between local stakeholders, scientists, artists, environmental groups etc., that could be fundamental in the region's efforts to integrate sustainable tourism and cultural heritage preservation. A physical manifestation of this collaboration is the newly **marked pastoral trail** for hiking. The project has also already led to new ideas and initiatives among partners. The project shows great promise for replication in other rural regions, serving as a model of how cultural heritage, community empowerment, and environmental sustainability can be successfully integrated.

One challenge was **engaging the original target group of traditional pastoralists** and particularly women within that community. Some local residents were initially hesitant to get involved due to unfamiliarity with the project's goals and methods. Overcoming this challenge involved persistent outreach, highlighting the value of the project, and demonstrating how it could benefit both local livelihoods and environmental conservation. It also included a shift in strategy to involve women in crafting local products, as well as towards educational and awareness raising programs for the general public.

The original project call put a focus on the co-creation of biodiversity solutions with local administrations. In the Echoversity project, this focus shifted somewhat towards engagement of the local community and broader awareness raising.

Learnings: According to the EMZ, a key factor contributing to long-term sustainability of the project is its strong foundation in **community engagement**. In this way, the project remains relevant and adaptable to evolving community needs. The project thus highlights the strength of a bottom-up approach to biodiversity conservation.

One key outcome of the project was the increased realisation among local people of the richness of their area and the importance of their own work. Participation of prestigious institutions amplified the region's visibility and empowered locals to take **pride** and explore ways to showcase their heritage and diversify their livelihoods in innovative ways.

Finally, the PA showed the importance of **educational activities** to foster lasting appreciation and impact for heritage and sustainability.

## 2.3 Pilot Action 3: InclusivECs awards

### PA3 Technical Specifications

*The primary objective of the awards for inclusive energy communities is to provide a valuable platform for energy communities to exchange their experiences and knowledge, fostering collaboration and learning among them. By recognising and celebrating inclusive and innovative approaches, these awards aim to inspire energy communities to adopt*



*similar practices and principles. Furthermore, the awards serve as a means to showcase and amplify the successes of best-practice energy communities, gaining media attention and serving as role models for other initiatives in the field. Through this collective sharing of experiences and recognition, the awards contribute to the growth and development of inclusive energy communities, ultimately advancing the transition to a more sustainable and equitable energy future.*

## PA3 Project proposal

- **Project name:**  
“Premios inclusivECs  
(inclusivECs awards)”
- **Organisation:** La Corriente
- **Location:** Spain (Madrid)
- **Topics:** Inclusive  
energy communities



[Economía Solidaria.](#)

Overview. “Premios inclusivECs: impulsando comunidades inclusivas” (inclusivECs awards: promoting inclusive communities) is a project led by [La Corriente](#), in response to ACCTING’s call for pilots Awards for inclusive energy communities. This call aims to provide a valuable platform for energy communities to exchange their experiences and knowledge, fostering collaboration and learning among them.

La Corriente (LCTE) is a Citizen Energy Community from Madrid, Spain. The non-profit energy coop, counting over 1000 members, was set up in 2015 and is involved in projects promoting a fair energy and inclusive transition for social justice. The project focuses on energy communities in Spain.

Objectives: The inclusivECs Awards aimed to recognise initiatives and practical examples of inclusion of vulnerable groups in energy communities (ECs) in Spain. The focus here was on good practices, projects, initiatives, and ideas from energy communities working with people suffering from energy poverty to achieve social justice.

Activities: The following key activities were proposed:

- **Online forum: a 2-day forum** to serve as a platform for similar ECs initiatives to get together and spread the word about the potential of energy communities for social change.
- **Award ceremony: Held in Madrid**, Spain, to enable all applicants to meet and exchange face-to-face.
- **Policy brief:** a policy brief report for citizens, policymakers and ECs named “Practical ideas for inclusion in an energy community” to address policies and economic models’ ideas as well as other topics brought up during the online forum.

Expected impact. The inclusivECs Awards was expected to have a direct impact on vulnerable groups, as one of the award scoring criteria was that initiatives define how they implement actions for vulnerable groups. The award will aim to be replicated yearly.

## PA3 Implementation

The inclusivECs Awards aimed to recognise initiatives and practical examples of inclusion of vulnerable groups in energy communities (ECs) in Spain. The focus here was on good practices, projects, initiatives, and ideas from energy communities working with people suffering from energy poverty to achieve social justice.

Through workshops, peer-to-peer exchanges, and the production of a practical policy brief, the PA bridged gaps in knowledge and inclusivity among volunteers, empowering over 200 participants to share experiences and tackle systemic barriers in developing community energy models.

The project progressed across four phases:

- **Drafting of the rules of the contest.** Here, a thorough summary was made of the overall characteristics to be taken into account by the InclusivEC competition team.

It was soon recognised that the project had an ambitious focus on a subject that is not particularly mature in the Spanish context, namely energy communities that include diversity and the fight against energy poverty.

A decision was therefore taken to provide a larger number of awards (with smaller prizes, given the fact that the application remained low (nine applicants in the end). Focus was shifted to support and advocating for a large number of participating ECs in the post-award advocacy phase.

- **An online conference hosted by the members of the jury.** A strong jury was put together, with an impressive list of CVs covering all experts in the fields of energy, sustainability, social and solidarity economy, and social justice: Rosario Alcantarilla, Rosa Fraga, Cristina Alonso, Soledad Montero, and Alfonso García.

These people were selected because of their (varied) experience in the field of energy with a perspective of social justice and inclusion of the most vulnerable, who share the elements they consider to be priorities and some recommendations to meet them. This conference was hosted by the jury and conceived as a training opportunity for interested ECs.

- **An online participatory workshop,** facilitating a digital space for the exchange of experiences and opinions. After the intervention of two people with extensive knowledge in the sector, a series of questions were proposed around the tools, agents or governance models that can provide more inclusiveness. Finally, the proposals were pooled and collected. These were communicated in an email with all the information sent back to the participants.
- **An in-person awards ceremony,** including an opportunity for face-to-face conversation and sharing for all those involved in the competition. More information and YouTube recordings are available [here](#). The award winners were:

### First prize

- **CE Arroyo Alumbra** (Huelva). A cooperative focused on fighting rural depopulation. It offers ongoing training to its members and in educational centres, generating synergies with the AMPA and the adult education school. It integrates a gender perspective in all its processes without falling into paternalism. The €2,500 prize will be used to acquire necessary materials for the energy efficiency courses taught at the adult school and the CEIP Centro de Educación Infantil y Primaria" [public primary schools] as well as to hire external specialists for the ongoing training of energy community members.

### Joint second prize

- **CE Catarroja** (Valencia). A cooperative with deep roots in the social fabric. It stands out for its extensive network work, which offers them greater possibilities for growth and sustainability over time. The €1000 will be used to integrate vulnerable people into the CE and give them access to part of the shared photovoltaic installation.
- **CE La Tonenca** (Barcelona). A cooperative with strong synergies with other entities, including the direct involvement of social services. It trains its members in topics related to inclusivity, such as inclusive communication and gender perspective, or the legal and social context of energy poverty. The €1000 prize will be used for the operational costs of the photovoltaic plant, such as insurance or maintenance; and to cover part of the training of the social base.

### Joint third prize

- **CE Eco Almócita** (Almeria). A cooperative with the participation of the City Council. They define their principles as sustainability, resilience, and rural empowerment. They promote an equal distribution, avoiding paternalism or discrimination among their participants. The €500 prize will be used to cover part of the costs of a software for managing the production and consumption of the members.
- **CE Joyarancón** (Huelva). A cooperative focused on fighting rural depopulation. It has the direct involvement of the City Council. Despite having a higher participation of men, the positions are egalitarian. The €500 prize will be used for an energy efficiency improvement program for elderly women, including entry into the CE, home intervention, advice on habits and bills, and the creation of an economic fund.
- **CE La Bordeta** (Barcelona). A cooperative that includes both individuals and entities from the social and solidarity economy, with a strong gender and intersectional perspective studied and applied. They work on raising awareness of energy efficiency among their participants. The €500 prize will be used to create a financing fund that combines donations, solidarity contributions, and grants for access to the CE.

## PA3 key project output



- Policy Brief: Written as a **practical guide to energy communities**, the policy brief brings together tools and methodologies to promote inclusivity and address energy poverty in an accessible format. [Spanish](#) version available, English version forthcoming.

## PA3 Evaluation

Successes: In addition to providing such practical guidance, the project gained significant social and traditional media **traction and engagement** from various stakeholders, with 20,000+ social media views, 30 participants at the final award ceremony, five media articles, etc. over the project's lifespan. This also includes plans to continue disseminating the policy brief in 2025, securing funding for a new round of InclusivECs awards for this year, etc.

Challenges: Despite the collaboration of the town councils of some small municipalities in the creation of the ECs and their participation in the online events of this project, the main challenge (unfulfilled) has been to **dialogue** with the **authorities of the autonomous community (federal level) and the central government**.

As discussed above, from the start also challenges arose from the **lack of maturity of the energy communities topic in the Spanish context**. This led to a more inclusive approach which sought to highlight good socially inclusive work amongst Spanish ECs more generally. Several ECs explained that they did not register for the award because they were not sure *how* to design inclusive actions. Accordingly, **the policy brief was written in the form of a practical guide**, with recommendations for how to develop a more inclusive EC. This includes advice on ensuring equitable participation, adapting projects to their context, promoting inclusive training, applying fair economic models, making inequalities visible, creating caring and safe spaces, and collaborating with local administrations and entities.

Learnings: For more inclusive ECs in Spain the following specific needs were identified over the project lifetime, with the policy brief speaking to the following points - training and awareness-raising, integrated governance, economic participation structures, inter-cooperation and mutual support, and transparency & accessibility.

## 2.4 Pilot Action 4: Supporting Roma micro-entrepreneurs in Albania towards better environmental sustainability

### PA4 Technical Specifications

*The (...) pilot action is intended to encourage vulnerable micro-entrepreneurs to make their businesses environmentally conscious and support them in achieving environmental sustainability through (i) dissemination and raising awareness actions, (ii) vocational training, (iii) tailored assistance, (iv) the connection with other businesses to share competences and practices, and (v) the recognition/reward of successful participants.*



## PA4 Project proposal

- **Pilot Action:** 4
- **Project name:** “Supporting Roma micro-entrepreneurs in Albania towards better environmental sustainability”
- **Organisation:** Institute of Romani Culture in Albania
- **Location:** Albania (Tirana, Berat and Fier)
- **Topics:** Environmentally conscious businesses practices



Overview: “Supporting Roma micro-entrepreneurs in Albania towards better environmental sustainability” is a project led by [the Institute of Romani Culture in Albania](#), in response to ACCTING’s call for pilots Hands-on small-scale support for vulnerable micro-entrepreneurs. This call aimed to encourage vulnerable micro-entrepreneurs to make their businesses environmentally conscious and support them in achieving environmental sustainability.

[The Institute of Romani Culture in Albania \(IRCA\)](#) supports social inclusion and economic empowerment of vulnerable communities in Albania, with a special focus on Roma minority, returnees, refugees and asylum-seekers, persons with disabilities and orphans.

The project was planned to be implemented in three localities in Albania with a high concentration of Roma members: Tirana, Berat and Fier. The main target group of the project were Roma micro-entrepreneurs in the sectors of agriculture, recycling and second-hand clothes selling.

Objectives: The project aimed to encourage Roma micro-entrepreneurs in Tirana, Fier and Berat to consider the benefits of developing environmentally aware companies and the impact they can have on the environment and society on the one hand, and the success of their own business and reputation on the other. Micro-entrepreneurs were to be provided with guidance, training, and an online networking platform, with the three best initiatives rewarded with prizes.

### Activities:

- Promoting broader dissemination and **raising awareness** among Roma micro-entrepreneurs in particular and other micro-entrepreneurs in general to consider the benefits of developing environmentally aware companies.
- Providing **capacity building and tailored support** to Roma micro-entrepreneurs on the green economy.
- **Connecting vulnerable micro-entrepreneurs with other businesses** to share competences and practices, co-learning and creating a community of like-minded entrepreneurs.
- **Promoting best practices** to motivate other micro-entrepreneurs

Expected impact: The project sought to create the opportunity for the central and local governments to understand the impact of Green Deal policies on vulnerable groups through addressing all the current shortcomings and bottlenecks identified during the project implementation, thus contributing to improving policies, regulations, and institutional functioning, while introducing new standards and regulatory frameworks that guarantee support for vulnerable groups.

## PA4 Implementation

During the one-year project period vulnerable micro-entrepreneurs from Tirana, Berat, and Fier in Albania were equipped with knowledge and skills through **two training workshops** on:

- “Funding Opportunities for Green Micro-Enterprises in Albania” and
- “Formalisation of Micro-Enterprises”,

The two training workshops employed interactive methods to engage participants and were structured into three main sessions:

- I. Introduction to Green Micro-Enterprises (including overview of green business opportunities in Albania, and importance of sustainability in business practices);
- II. Funding Opportunities (overview of local and international funding sources, and eligibility criteria & application processes);
- III. Developing Competitive Proposals (including components of a successful proposal, and practical exercises on objectives, budgets, and impact assessments).

In selecting the micro-entrepreneurs, gender balance was considered, giving priority to women and girls. 8 out of 15 of micro-entrepreneurs involved were managed by women/girls. Other criteria included commitment to promoting sustainability and environmental conservation, diversity in business scale and type (e.g. recycling, second-hand shops, agriculture, hairdressers, cultivation and sale of medicinal plants, cleaning company), degree of vulnerability, and ability to stimulate local economies through increased employment.

The project also provided more **tailored support** to the 15 vulnerable Roma micro-entrepreneurs, capacitating them to draft business plans and supplying to each of the 15 micro-entrepreneurs with equipment/materials worth €1,000 to enhance green practices in their businesses. The organisers, IRCA, provided the materials/equipment based on the agreed business plans (tricycles, solar panels, used clothes etc.). This was five more recipients than originally proposed for the project, with the cost for additional equipment made possible by a top-up grant from the ACCTING project (€5,000).

Mutual support was provided through the establishment of an **informal coalition** of Roma Green Micro-Entrepreneurs in Albania, including a larger number of micro-enterprises across all three project regions. This was linked to the development of an **online platform** - intended to serve as a hub for resources, opportunities, and communication among coalition members. More specific goals here were:

- To promote sustainable practices and green entrepreneurship within Roma communities, aligning with broader environmental and social objectives.

- To enhance the visibility of the project and create networking opportunities for coalition members; and
- To raise awareness within Roma communities about the potential of green entrepreneurship and its benefits.

As part of this mutual support, **three exchange visits** in the three project focus regions of Tirana, Berat, and Fier were also organised, to expose participating micro-entrepreneurs to successful green practices, and promote knowledge-sharing amongst them.

The project held an **award ceremony** recognising three success stories among the supported micro-entrepreneurs:

- 🏆 First prize: Leos medical herbs business:

*Established formally in March 2019, the business specializes in the collection and cultivation of various medicinal plants, which are sold locally and to companies in the herbal remedies and cosmetics industries. Leos and his family manage all aspects of the business, from cultivation to processing.*

*The enterprise has significantly contributed to local employment, particularly for Roma residents who assist in different stages of plant treatment. The seasonal nature of the work—active primarily from March to July—provides flexibility for workers, while the winter months are focused on harvesting wild roots. The family also uses their land for cultivation and rents additional land when needed. A dedicated storage facility ensures the quality and longevity of the harvested herbs. At a time when more and younger people are leaving rural areas, the business run by a young Roma boy is an inspiring example for his peers and the community.*

- 🏆 Second prize: Hazbi's collection point for waste recycling

*Hazbi Hamiti's business is an excellent example of sustainable practices that positively impact the environment and help improve waste management in Tirana.*

*Hazbi Hamiti and his wife embarked on a remarkable journey over two decades ago. Their humble beginnings involved scouring the streets for recyclable materials, but as their activity grew, they made a pivotal decision: to shift their focus to buying small quantities of sorted waste from individual collectors and reselling it in bulk to recyclers. Renting a plot of land strategically located between residential and small business plots, they created a hub for recycling activity. Every day of the week, Hazbi and his wife work to manage their operations, which now engage approximately 20 collectors, many of whom come from the Roma community. These collectors, who often face challenging socio-economic circumstances bring separated waste to Hazbi's enterprise,*

*Hazbi's business has a significant impact on both the environment and the lives of the people it touches. By providing a reliable income stream to collectors and reducing the volume of waste destined for landfills, the enterprise contributes to a greener, more sustainable future.*

- 🏆 Third prize: Renata Azemi's Hair Salon

*What sets Renata's Hair Salon apart is its unwavering commitment to customer satisfaction. Every client is treated with tailored care, ensuring their unique needs and preferences are met. Now, [it] is embarking on an inspiring journey toward sustainability. Recognizing the importance of eco-conscious practices, the salon is integrating green initiatives into its*

*operations. By transitioning to eco-friendly products, minimizing energy consumption, and introducing recycling measures, the salon aims to set a new standard for environmentally responsible beauty services.*

Finally, a **concluding event** held in Tirana, marked the culmination of activities, celebrating achievements in empowering Roma micro-entrepreneurs towards environmental sustainability generally.

## PA4 key project outputs

- Development of an **online platform** - intended to serve as a hub for resources, opportunities, and communication among coalition members.

## PA4 Evaluation

Learnings: For future and ongoing work, the project team highlighted the need for **extended training programs** (both length and duration) to recognise the lack of experience of many micro-entrepreneurs. This would provide enough time to really unpack complex concepts. This also includes the need for follow-up workshops to drive home key points and aspects, with digital literacy training particularly needed.

The mentorship and **peer-to-peer approach** (including at regional and international scale) was identified as a promising angle to pursue going forward, in terms of guidance in business planning, financial management, and green practices.

Successes: In general, the project is a showcase of dedicated effort and significant progress. Setting up an informal coalition and **an online platform for Roma Green Micro-Entrepreneurs** are both great actions that may provide long-term tools and networking possibilities. The website in particular gives a great overview of the work done.

The project team highlighted the promising potential of the project to be amplified and replicated more broadly in Albania and beyond. **Training materials** developed during the project can be utilised for additional capacity-building efforts at the local level, while workshop content is adaptable for delivery to other vulnerable groups or in different regions.

Within the existing group of “graduates”, there has been valuable **skills, knowledge and capacity transfer** through the workshops and tailored support. The project team notes that the visible improvements in supported businesses serve as inspiration for others to adopt similar approaches, highlighting the potential co-benefits of environmental protection and reduction of operation costs. Crucially, this **empowerment approach** allows for the sharing of accumulated knowledge with further potential beneficiaries at no cost to those involved.

Challenges: the project team highlighted how **time-intensive** truly effective tailored support is – something which was underestimated in the original proposal, posing logistical and financial challenges. This was particularly the case due to difficulties by some recipients to understand complex business and financial concepts owing to educational barriers.

**Vulnerability** is also a multifaceted concept, and the team sometimes had difficulty establishing fair criteria for who qualifies as “vulnerable.” This created challenges when selecting three success stories, as well as to showcase green practices that can realistically be adopted by other micro-entrepreneurs who may have limited (and differing) resources.



## 2.5 Pilot Action 5: Mapko Connects Community Gardens

### PA5 Technical Specifications

*This call for a pilot project proposes the constitution of a network of urban/community garden actors and the setting up of an exchange platform to facilitate this, based on existing digital tools. The aim is to improve visibility, access, connections and practices in the field of sustainable and inclusive urban agriculture, involving vulnerable groups, existing and new actors, while creating and developing a shared repository of knowledge.*

### PA5 Project proposal

- **Pilot Action:** 5
- **Project name:**  
Mapko Connects Community Gardens
- **Organisation:** Kokoza
- **Location:** Czech Republic  
(based in Prague)
- **Topic:** Community gardens



[Mapotic.](#)

**Overview:** Mapko Connects Community Gardens is a project led by [Kokoza](#), in response to ACCTING's call for pilots *Garden BnB – An exchange platform between actors involved with community gardens or agrifood systems*. This call aims to improve visibility, access, connections and practices in the field of sustainable and inclusive urban agriculture, involving vulnerable groups while creating and developing a shared repository of knowledge.

[Kokoza](#) supports urban residents in the Czech Republic in composting and cultivation, with the aim to enhance the harmony between humans and nature. The organisation fosters partnerships with public institutions and companies, aiding them in sustainability, corporate culture development, community gardens, and organic waste management.

**Objectives:** The core of the project was the revitalisation of the Mapko platform, which serves as a centralised hub for community gardens and composting sites, to encourage the creation of new gardens in the Czech Republic. Through the development of Mapko.cz into an interactive platform, fostering a collaborative network, enhancing visibility, and promoting inclusivity, the initiative aimed to contribute to the creation of a sustainable and inclusive urban agriculture community that benefits all stakeholders, including vulnerable groups.

#### Activities:

- Update and expansion of the Mapko map, registering missing actors and information and adding new locations
- Organisation of “Rhizomes” meetings, connecting key actors such as coordinators of community gardens, gardeners and composting experts

- Publication of information and guidance online on the topics of composting, gardening, the establishment of community gardens, and the management of organic waste
- Participatory evaluation over a one-day seminar, to assess the project's impact in an inclusive way

Expected impact: The project was expected to foster community engagement by bringing together community garden enthusiasts online as well as through meaningful offline interactions to address pertinent garden-related challenges. It was intended to be not only a short-term revitalisation effort but also a blueprint for sustained impact. The platform and events should be easily adapted for use in other regions or countries.

## PA5 Implementation

The "Mapko" pilot project highlights the role of community gardens as commons spaces that bridge social and economic inequalities in the Czech Republic. Targeted groups included migrants, refugees, low-income households, national minorities, single mothers, elderly people, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+ individuals, members of the Roma community, individuals with mental health challenges, those with penitentiary system experiences, unemployed persons, and rural inhabitants. Community gardens were viewed as **inclusive spaces** with the potential to address social, economic, and environmental inequalities while fostering resilience within vulnerable populations.

Central to the project was the **revamping and improvement of a networking platform, [Mapko.cz](https://mapko.cz), based on extensive community and user feedback**. This related not only to the usability and GDPR-compliance of the website, but also updating the mapping of community gardens across the Czech Republic. Here, the platform registered 59 new community gardens (making the current total count of 184) while documenting the closure of 12 others. Including corporate gardens marked a growing interest in using green spaces to promote employee well-being and sustainability. At these and other events (such as gardening workshops) social cohesion was further strengthened by providing childcare support and addressing linguistic barriers, enabling broader participation and promoting female leadership.

These changes were based on **multiple rounds of community and stakeholder feedback**, with two public engagement events (Rhizome Meetings), resulting in updates to 30% of the website to improve navigability and useability. The platform attracted over 6,500 users in 2024, and offered features like a knowledge bank and user recognition badges to enhance collaboration.

The KOKOZA organisation has a broader aim of **supporting the establishment and growth of community gardens within and beyond the Czech Republic**. Over the course of the Makpo team handled 1,284 requests for training, providing support on topics such as composting, general garden operations, and leadership capacity-building.

Particularly towards the latter part of the project, such outreach work focused on **extending beyond Prague and particularly into more rural areas**. The use of a multilingual social media campaign helped to reach over 30 NGOs and five municipalities outside Prague, broadening engagement with urban and rural stakeholders, including attempts to adapt the

community gardens concept to different contexts. A notable partnership milestone was a memorandum of understanding signed between Kokoza and a property development company, leveraging Kokoza's expertise to establish community gardens and green spaces in new residential projects.

## PA5 key project outputs

- The key project output was the comprehensively revamped [Mapko.cz](https://mapko.cz) community garden map.

## PA5 Evaluation

The project had significant success **expanding and refining its database** and platform useability (with significant **potential for expansion** and replication beyond the Czech Republic). It also had attracted significant public interest and was able to provide support for a high number of applicants.

The project's key challenges included difficulties with **frequent leadership changes**. The project team noted that frequent changes in leadership within community gardens disrupted continuity. Changes in personal or professional circumstances often sees leaders leaving or stepping back after ca. three years leaving gardens without clear succession plans. This impacted long-term project goals and community cohesion.

Many of the supported gardens struggled due to **lack of municipal / political support**. For instance, struggling to secure operational permissions from municipalities, or facing displacement due to public land being repurposed for real estate projects. An urban-rural divide was identified in this regard, with urban areas like Prague benefitting from greater institutional support.

While the project team speculates that the country-wide mapping task provided accessible resources for underserved populations, it is not clear to what extent this will be the case in reality. While attempts were made to **include people from vulnerable backgrounds in the project** events, the extent to which this was achieved is also not always clear. It appears that 15 requests were received from more vulnerable groups to provide specialised training in community garden management. This does however, link to **wider challenges relating to systemic exclusion**, with most community gardens relying to a significant or complete extent on member contributions for their daily functioning, particularly impacting low-income members, who struggle to afford even minimal fees, making systemic funding solutions crucial.

## 2.6 Pilot Action 6: Food4Schools

### PA6 Technical Specifications

*The Food Everywhere Toolkit is about shaping the food choices of future generations by making healthy and sustainable food available everywhere in schools. The main objective of this pilot action is to develop a set of tools and resources to inspire, motivate and assist all relevant stakeholders in schools to launch initiatives in which healthy and sustainable food is available everywhere in the school and becomes part of its DNA. Expected outcomes include creating processes with which alliances are formed between schools and small – scale sustainable farmers to take part in the initiative as well as scaling up the initiative by disseminating activities.*

### PA6 Project proposal

- **Pilot Action:** 6
- **Project name:** Food4Schools
- **Organisation:** Mamagea
- **Location:** Greece (Thessaloniki)
- **Overarching topic:**  
Sustainable school meals



Overview: Food4Schools is a project led by [Mamagea](#), in response to ACCTING's call for pilots Food Everywhere Toolkit. This call aimed to help shape the food choices of future generations by making healthy and sustainable food available everywhere in schools.

[Mamagea](#) is an environmental organisation based in Thessaloniki, Greece, aiming at improving the natural and social environment. It envisions green and sustainable cities with active and participatory neighbourhoods.

The project intended to investigate the current situation regarding sustainable food in the schools of Thessaloniki and proposes realistic ways of implementing the Farm-to-Fork Strategy through participatory processes, where the participants actively share experiences, ideas, map difficulties and propose solutions.

Objective: The Food4Schools project aimed at creating the framework and procedures needed for the implementation of the Farm to Fork strategy at a local level and specifically in schools of the wider area of Thessaloniki and Central Macedonia.

Activities: The main project's activity was to be the creation of a toolkit, resulting from the following:

- Desk research and data analysis
- Five participatory workshops
- A local action plan



Expected impact: The curriculum and educational material of the toolkit were to include specific steps and actions with many examples, methodologies and hands-on practices capable of adaptation in all primary schools in Greece. By including parents in the school's life (in both educational and operational level) it was hoped a domino effect would be created, spreading sustainable food culture at home and beyond.

## PA6 Implementation

In order to go about implementing the Farm-to-Fork EU Strategy at the local level in Thessaloniki schools, the project team undertook the creation of:

1. A **Local Action Plan** on the ways in which sustainable food will be introduced into school meals. This was produced in cooperation with the municipality of Thessaloniki and resulted in the creation of the Thessaloniki Food Council, charged with promoting healthy, environmentally sustainable food to local schools.  
A decision was made to focus the project on *nursery schools* of Thessaloniki. This shift in focus resulted from a series of consultations with local policy makers, as well as the findings of our desk-research, all of which pointed that in order for the LAP to be 'actionable', it made better sense for it to focus on the procurement services falling within the authority of the local municipality, which in Greece would be municipal nursery schools.
2. A two-part **Educational toolkit** that aims to familiarise school communities with the production and consumption of more sustainable food:
  - Firstly, outlining the ways in which administrative and institutional actors can promote systemic changes that promote sustainable nutrition in schools, while connecting them with small and medium-sized organic farmers and producers; and
  - Secondly, raising awareness, educating and motivating school communities (teachers, students, parents and school staff) to engage in sustainable nutrition practices.

The content of this Toolkit is based on:

- A **three-part research report** that explores these questions by considering:
  - the research conclusions of three previous Mamegea projects on sustainable nutrition in Thessaloniki;
  - listing a number of best practices and case examples across Europe on sustainable school food procurement; and
  - providing a mapping of the present situation of school food procurement in Greek schools.
- **5 participatory workshops** aimed at capturing and co-designing processes, actions and steps for the implementation of the "Farm to Fork" Strategy in school environments and at creating educational materials for school communities through collaborative mapping, problem-solving techniques & critical discussions on sustainable nutrition

## PA6 key project outputs

- A three-part [Research Report](#) (in English)
- A **Local Action Plan**
- An **Educational [Toolkit](#)** (in Greek)

## PA6 Evaluation

Learnings often spoke to the specific Greek context and centred on the need to foster a better culture **collaboration between local authorities and civil society organisations**. The engagement of municipal employees is in most cases top-down and official permission needs to be secured by the directors of each department. This leads to the need to often tailor methodologies and approaches to the needs and background of such stakeholders, many of whom are less comfortable with participatory methodologies for multi-stakeholder engagement and design.

It was also discovered that while schools had massive potential for ripple across the city in relation to food systems change, more work needed to be done on systemic aspects such as making tenders more accessible to small- and medium-sized producers. The limits of pilot approaches were also recognised, with **incremental outscaling needed** (not simply small-scale testing in individual nurseries), with better predictive cost-benefit analyses required to prove the benefit of such a wide scale approach.

This links to the need to take a [Whole School Food Approach](#) which recognises the interlinkages between food education and food policies as separate and stand-alone entities. Moreover, **framing food as a common good** (instead of a commodity) as illustrated in the F4S research report, can lead to policies, practices and frameworks that achieve social justice across different socio-economic backgrounds, but also tackles the gender dimensions of food.

The project team highlighted that the LAP would benefit from **further rounds of consultation** with municipality employees but also extend the process to nursery cooks, teachers and other relevant stakeholders. Further development of the current LAP should focus on creating conditions fertile for its implementation as well as a rigorous impact assessment tool (ideally in collaboration with a local academic institution and NGO) to provide the basis for evidence-based policies in the future. Such efforts should create synergies with existing networks and initiatives in the city, such as the Thessaloniki Food Council.

Successes: The overall objective of the Food Everywhere Toolkit is to develop a set of tools and resources to inspire, motivate and assist teachers, principals, students, people working in various jobs within schools, and potentially also parents, to launch initiatives at their school in which healthy and sustainable food is available everywhere in the school and becomes part of its DNA.

Food4Schools achieved the maximum possible success vis-à-vis this objective, taking a systemic approach (desk- and field-research, policy-work and educational content creation) in supporting more sustainable school-food systems with ripple effects across the city level. A number of resources (toolkit, action plan, research report) have been developed and

made accessible to facilitate this transition. Moreover, the engagement of multiple stakeholders has been carefully planned throughout the project and so was its dissemination.

Much part of Mamagea's effort in the PA was pioneering for the local standards (e.g. mapping local school procurement systems, engaging municipality employees in the co-design of a LAP for sustainable school food). As such, much of the knowledge gained was inevitably acquired throughout the process (learning by doing).

Challenges typically related to communication with public authorities. Difficulties finding consistent documentation on Greek school food procurement were compounded by a very low response rate from ministries and regional authorities on requests for information. This forced additional research in the research report, with the third section seeking to document the state of affairs. Difficulties were also faced when seeking to engage and co-create with policymakers and institutions, with a combination of institutional resistance to such approaches, and excessive professional commitments and time constraints to blame.

The project team also cited difficulties securing the (larger) amounts of future funding required to expand the project work further in 2025. For now, the project will continue with some funding from EIT NEB CONNECT and attempts to crowdsource enough to conduct a more thorough educational project structured around the F4S toolkit, working with teachers on implementation in schools.

## 2.7 Pilot Action 7: EduMove

### PA7 Technical Specifications

*Green to school: sustainable commutes is about encouraging civil society organisations, schools and parents to make the school journey more sustainable. The main objective is to increase the uptake of sustainable mobility options in peripheral school contexts. This is done by encouraging a civil society organisation to work with school(s) to develop and test concept idea(s) to initiate a process of change amongst its pupils and families. One of the expected outcomes is the development and implementation of one or several concept idea(s) to increase the uptake of sustainable mobility in a peripheral school context.*

### PA7 Project proposal

- **Pilot Action:** 7
- **Project name:**  
Edu Move
- **Organisation:**  
Active Mobility
- **Location:** Albania  
(Kamëz municipality,  
Tirana)



- **Overarching topic:**  
Cycling in schools

Overview: Edu Move is a project led by [Active Mobility](#), in response to ACCTING's call for pilots Green to school: sustainable commutes. This call aimed to increase the uptake of sustainable mobility options in peripheral school contexts.

Active Mobility is a non-governmental organisation in Tirana, Albania, aiming to make green mobility more accessible and affordable to vulnerable groups in Albania, while raising awareness about the benefits of cycling.

Objectives: The project aimed to increase green mobility among youngsters from low-income families in suburb Tirana with a history of internal migration through cycling. It was hoped this would lead to improved air quality, safer bike routes, stronger social interaction and willingness to involve in cycling activity as a sport, and an increased feeling of belonging in society.

Activities intended to focus on the municipality of Kamëz located in Tirana County, Albania:

- **Research and Fieldwork:** Conducting a survey in 5 secondary schools to understand transportation habits and attitudes toward cycling; Identifying potential local partners such as bike shops willing to offer discounts; Researching potential routes for cycling and bike racks focusing on safety, accessibility and convenience
- **Awareness and Education:** Organising school engagement meetings to raise awareness about the benefits of cycling; Conducting workshops to introduce the basics of biking, safety measures and bike maintenance.
- **Implementation:** Implementing the programme across all 5 secondary schools in Kamëz Municipality; Setting up a Bike to School Day to encourage mass participation; Organising a competition among pupils to celebrate bike use.

Expected impact: The project aimed to promote green mobility among youngsters, their peers and families. Participating schools were to become pioneers, potentially influencing policies at the local or national level. The project also sought to address sustainability by embedding cycling education within the school curriculum. It was foreseen that the project could be replicated in other areas by scaling up and down the core activities to fit the needs of different regions.

## PA7 Implementation

The PA undertook several key activities aimed at promoting safer cycling practices in Kamëz schools. Major activities included:

- **Research and fieldwork:** Conducted a questionnaire survey at the 5 secondary schools of Kamëz to understand youth's mobility practices, perceptions and attitudes towards cycling.
- **Planning & implementation of bike training workshops:** Participants for the training workshops were selected purposely based on vulnerability criteria based on the survey results and in collaboration with the school social workers. Per



school, three workshops with ~12 participants were conducted teaching basic biking skills, safety and bike maintenance.

- **Bike donation programme:** In total, 61 second-hand bikes were donated to training participants.
- **Bike Bus Implementation:** The project implemented two collective cycling initiatives called 'Bike Bus', in which participating students could practice biking in real-life conditions.
- **Bike Rack Placement:** 20 bike racks per school were placed with the start of the new year in collaboration with the Municipality.
- **Awareness Campaign:** Street banners for road safety were printed and positioned in strategic locations near schools and major intersections to maximise visibility. In addition, around 1,000 flyers were distributed to raise awareness about safe cycling practices.
- **Educational Videos:** To ensure sustainability, educational cycling videos were produced and submitted to school libraries. The approval process with the Ministry of Education is ongoing, and the videos are available on YouTube for broader accessibility.
- **Permanent Bike Corridor Construction:** Initially planned as a temporary pop-up lane, the project transitioned to constructing a permanent bike corridor in collaboration with the municipality directly. This corridor will connect three schools and is expected to be functional by March 2025.

## PA7 key project outputs

- The **installation of cycling infrastructure:** a permanent bike lane, 100 bike racks at schools and permanent banner advocating for road safety.
- **Training videos** available on [YouTube](#).

## PA7 Evaluation

The PA's successful combination of practical training, awareness campaigns, and improved infrastructure has set a solid foundation for promoting sustainable school travel in Kamëz.

One of the key challenges throughout the PA implementation was objective and subjective **concerns over road safety** of students and stakeholders. For instance, some schools decided not to participate in the Bike Bus due to safety concerns and students quoted safety concerns as one of the barriers for biking to school. Safety is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and thus also needs to be addressed holistically.

The project team also faced **administrative challenges and delays in implementation:** Placement of bike racks and banners faced delays due to municipal schedules and school holidays. These issues were mitigated by maintaining proactive communication and adjusting timelines accordingly. Similarly, gaining approval for the distribution of educational videos through school libraries required prolonged coordination with the Ministry of Education. The project team reported the dedication and hard work that was necessary to implement all aspects of the project.

This also included the bike donations, for which the allocated budget (100€ per bike) was hardly sufficient. The quality of the donated second-hand bikes led to some frustration among participants, which could have been avoided with a more substantive budget.

The main success of the PA lies in the **comprehensive, holistic approach** it implemented towards promoting behavioural change. The project managed to improve the individual skill level and awareness (workshop), individual means (bike donations), public awareness (banner campaign) and infrastructure (bike racks & bike lane) as well as leverage collective action (bike bus) to promote cycling amongst students. As a result, a more active use of bikes for school commutes could be observed.

Towards that end, the close **collaboration with the local municipality** can be considered one of the key success factors. This collaboration allowed the implementation of effective structural changes, alongside the empowerment of vulnerable individuals.

One additional learning is that educational policy can be an important mechanism for scaling the impact of these kinds of initiatives for sustainable behavioural change. The project team is working towards an integration of bike training into school curricula.

## 2.8 Pilot Action 8: Todas en bici

### PA8 Technical Specifications

*Wheels for Justice is about cycling and how it can contribute to improving mobility, health and general well-being for all, with a focus on vulnerable groups. The main objective of this pilot action is to support the connection between cycling activism and social justice struggles by identifying creative ways to expand the reach and impact of cycling and make it more accessible and inclusive. Expected outcomes include celebrating and disseminating successful experiments in inclusive cycling, as well as promoting advocacy actions to address the obstacles identified along the way*

### PA8 Project proposal

- **Pilot Action:** 8
- **Project name:**  
“Todas en bici”  
(Everyone on a bike)
- **Organisation:** aquí
- **Location:**  
Spain (Barcelona)
- **Topic:** Social justice in and through cycling activism



Overview: “Todas en bici” was a project led by [aquí](#), in response to ACCTING’s call for pilots Wheels for Justice – Connecting cycling activism with social justice struggles. This call aims to connect cycling activism with social justice struggles through identifying innovative

approaches to expand the reach and impact of cycling, making it more accessible and inclusive. The objective is to celebrate and share successful initiatives in inclusive cycling, while also advocating for actions to address the obstacles encountered during this process.

[Aquí](#) is a social innovation collective based in Barcelona, Spain. The organisation facilitates participatory processes and contributes to weaving networks of solidarity. In this project, aquí is collaborating with a network of neighbourhood collectives and activist movements fighting for a more inclusive, sustainable, liveable and healthy city.

Activities targeted three diverse peripheral districts of Barcelona (Sants-Montjuïc, Sant Martí, Horta-Guinardo), each presenting unique socio-economic, environmental and cultural characteristics.

**Objectives:** The project aimed to: increase the uptake of cycling (to reach Barcelona's 5% mode share goal in 2024); bolster the diversity of bicycle users from a gender+ perspective; and connect the practice of cycling with climate activism and social justice struggles (e.g. the right to the city, intersectional feminism, safe streets for all).

**Activities:** The project focused on:

- putting local cycling and social justice groups in contact to pursue inclusive active mobility;
- disseminating existing efforts, making them visible while at the same time inspiring other initiatives to join efforts and organise activities and events together;
- identifying and discussing national-level and local-level specific obstacles to inclusivity in and through cycling;
- promoting advocacy actions at the local or regional level to address the identified problems.

## PA8 Implementation

The project was designed using a gender+ approach, highlighting gender relations and **considering how gender intersects with and is intersected by other inequalities** to understand and analyse the (re)production of inequalities. From the onset they looked at gender data in regard to bicycle use in the city of Barcelona, which painted a striking unequal distribution of the modal share of biking in terms of gender where 72% of bicycle users are men, while only 28% are women (Chaves Vargas, 2023). Hence, the project has aimed to address the gender disparity through research, identifying obstacles to biking from a gender perspective, promoting dialogue and actions to cater specifically for women and other vulnerabilised groups.

The project completed an **ecosystem mapping which was key to situate and engage cycling activism and social justice struggles in the city of Barcelona**. Following the ecosystem mapping, the team began working to coordinate a space of dialogue and articulation for entities and grassroots movements through innovative engagement methodologies. The coordination of a "Totes en bici" multi-actor space of dialogue and articulation of efforts has guided the development of a program of activities to advance the reach and impact of inclusive cycling.

The ecosystem mapping identified more than 60 local collectives, organisations and individuals, contributing to the cycling ecosystem in and around the city. This allowed them to understand the relationships and dependencies between the various actors and stakeholders that contribute to the bicycle ecosystem. The coordination group was organised in monthly dialogue meetings with the cycling and social justice ecosystem since January 2024. It was open to any participant, be it an entity, an association, an activist, a grass-roots movement representative, a municipal technician, a representative of the regional government, etc. The organisers remained committed to this approach, in spite of anti-institutional perspectives from some participants.

Additionally, a range of activities was organised to strengthen the collaboration:

- **Regular bike rides** with different target groups (including women-only rides)
- A week-long “**brevet**” to visit community organised bike workshops
- Monthly **co-ordination group meetings** (*espai de trobada*)
- A **course on sustainable mobility** offered to 12 with policy makers (7 women, 5 men, 1 baby, 6 migrant origin) in partnership with EIT Urban Mobility and City Lab Barcelona and explored themes of bicycle infrastructure, perception of safety, accessibility.
- Active engagement in participatory processes for the city of [Barcelona's new mobility plan](#)

The project's outcomes have already been **shared at international events**, such as the Cycling and Society Symposium 2024, and with other cities and municipalities. Our goal was to share the design process to build upon local successes and spread the model to other regions to increase bicycle uptake particularly for women and other vulnerabilised populations. Although the PA ends in 2024, aquí aims to continue facilitating the coordination group into 2025 with the goal to make Barcelona a more cyclable city for all.

## PA8 key project outputs

- **A Policy Tool** to localise the [European Declaration on Cycling](#) in Barcelona (in Catalan, available on request).
- **[Better Stories: The Right to the Cycling City](#)**: A compilation of stories we have collected from 16 different cities across the world that narrate the many ways in which the bicycle is mobilised as a tool for social and climate justice

## PA8 Evaluation

Successes: While a top-down structure was originally foreseen for the project, aquí had significant success creating a **diverse and multi-organisational steering team**, with regular meetings and decentralised decision-making processes. Genuine inclusion particularly in relation to women's cycling organisations has been achieved. Aquí notes that this collective decision-making model has a higher likelihood of continuing beyond the project's timeframe. Participants noted a significant level of satisfaction with this approach, and requested aquí to continue facilitating the space into next year.

Challenges: The project has particularly found challenges in terms of **access to institutional spaces of decision-making** due to different institutional barriers. It has been



difficult to find a channel of communication with **technicians from the city of Barcelona**, even when multiple strategies have been mobilised. Hence, the team has not been able to present the policy tool that has been developed and agreed with the coordination group. Similarly, aquí has found challenges in implementing an **educational course** with teenagers in an under-resourced and marginalised neighbourhood of the city due to the lack of engagement of the students and the challenges in the coordination with the school.

The project also highlighted significant **financial challenges**. While the co-ordination group intends to continue convening, the future of the 'Totes en bici' overall is uncertain, with much of the work having been funded through the one-year ACCTING grant.

Learnings: Most importantly, that **creating a space for a collective governance of cycling** in Barcelona with a diverse array of entities, grassroots movements and activists is the **most efficient way** to ensure that sustainable mobility, and particularly in this case, active mobility is promoted in a place-based and inclusive way beyond political agendas and institutional barriers.

## 2.9 Pilot Action 9: Uključi se! (Get involved!)

### PA9 Technical Specifications

*The pilot action "Series V – Kickstarting Volunteering" is about creating a platform that connects individuals and organisations who have projects and ideas for efforts to advance socio-ecological transformation with volunteers who are ready to contribute to those efforts. The voluntary contributions can be through time commitment and provision of any kind of resources (e.g., expertise, tools, money). The main objective is to facilitate and activate volunteering efforts and behaviour change especially among people from vulnerable groups, to ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute to society. The expected outcome is a space where individuals can come together and create a community of volunteers and volunteerism, to establish more resilient and transformative versions of the future.*

### PA9 Project proposal

- **Pilot Action:** 9
- **Project name:**  
Uključi se! (Get involved!)
- **Organisation:**  
Young Researchers of Serbia
- **Location:** Serbia
- **Topic:** Climate Volunteering



Overview: Uključi se! (Get involved!) was a project led by **Young Researchers of Serbia**, in response to ACCTING's call for pilots **"Series V" Kickstarting Volunteerism: Crowd-**



**funding approach to stimulate volunteers for climate change initiatives.** This project aimed to help connect individuals and organisations who have projects and ideas for efforts to advance socio-ecological transformation with volunteers who are ready to contribute to those efforts.

YRS – one of the biggest NGOs in Serbia supporting green initiatives coming from citizens, informal groups and NGOs – aimed to create a digital community of volunteers and contributors that kickstarts good green practices and support Serbia' sustainable development process.

Objectives: The project aimed to create a unique platform that serves those who want to promote their initiatives and get support for their local actions, as well as to those willing to donate time and resources to support them. The digital platform “Uključi se!” was envisioned as a place to connect projects and local actions with NGOs, CSOs, private companies as well as individuals. The aim was to support small ideas that would motivate others to get involved and continue working on sustainable development and climate change. The project was implemented on the territory of the Republic of Serbia.

Activities:

- Developing the first digital platform for volunteers that promotes and supports green projects by individuals, informal citizens' groups and organisations and stimulates networking and collaboration
- Promoting volunteering and individual actions tackling pressing issues in relation to sustainable development and climate change that can multiply in the local community
- Motivating corporations to engage in public activities that promote environmental protection

Expected impact: Digitalisation can support and accelerate sustainable development and help in climate change adaptation. Local communities were to benefit from the project by having positive changes in environmental and climate change awareness, higher visibility and involvement of its citizens. In addition, promotion of local actions would benefit other communities as they have good practices to follow. The platform which will be developed can serve to bridge communities and connect them.

## PA9 Implementation

In its last five years of activity, Young Researchers of Serbia (YRS) has developed a process to support informal groups to drive bottom-up action for their communities. Through the PA, YRS created an online platform to streamline support to grassroots initiatives at the local level. These initiatives can pitch their activities through the platform and receive support both through additional volunteers, funding or other means. The set-up of the platform proceeded through the following steps:

- Within the **inception phase**, the project team published a call for developers and selected a suitable service provider. Based on the defined functionalities and components, the structure of the platform was co-designed with the developers. Also, the project team created the visual identity with much care.

- The **development of the digital platform** progressed through a recurring process of development, testing, feedback and upgrading. The platform includes an interactive map featuring local initiatives. It also features recurrent calls for application and mentoring resources to support informal groups, a news section publishing volunteering opportunities, as well as information for companies on how to get involved as funders. The platform also features a universal registration form where groups can submit their project ideas regardless of a specific call.
- **Outreach and promotion:** Through its ongoing work, YRS has an established network of informal groups/civil society organisations and volunteers. The outreach and promotion activities thus focused on the onboarding of private companies as potential funders through Corporate Social Responsibility. As a proof of concept, a local action day was organised on a business initiative, in which employees of three companies and volunteers joined in biodiversity protection.
- **Launching call for projects submission:** In July 2024, the first call for project submissions was published through the platform, followed by three more in October and December. The projects are supported through third party funding (e.g. USAID, FAO), not (yet) through matches made on the platform. Additionally, two calls for volunteers were published, next to the ongoing possibility for volunteers to connect with the published projects.
- **Implementation of the supported projects:** Through these programs, 52 projects were selected, supported, implemented and evaluated by the time of reporting. These projects are showcased on the platform.

## PA9 key project outputs

- The [Uključi se!](#) Digital Platform

## PA9 Evaluation

YRS is successful in its approach to **support informal groups**: Usually, individuals and informal groups cannot be supported or held accountable for financial spending through projects and donations. YRS serves as an umbrella organisation and broker to financially support these projects. Through this work, the organisation is supporting activism and community-led action towards sustainability in a variety of formats. As the organisation reports, it has engaged around 1000 young people in local activities. Through individual mentoring, these youth also learn and practice crucial project management skills. By initiative of the ACCTING project, YRS has included questions **around the inclusion of vulnerable groups** into their application and reporting process, motivating young participants to reflect this part of their work.

The newly established platform serves as a platform to coordinate that work. It serves to connect different stakeholders and offers **new models of cooperation**. It also showcases the crucial work of the many projects.

At the same time, it has still shown to be challenging to build it up as a platform of true matchmaking and collaboration between diverse actors. So far, YRS serves as a broker. The sustainability and usability of the platform depends on the engagement and provision of funds from donors, including the private sector.

Even in its current form, the set-up of the platform was tricky and **time consuming**. The development of a useful digital tool takes time and skills. In this case, it took longer than expected, which led to some delay in the other activities.

Another challenge was the **engagement of the private sector**. One learning of the project is that, in order to put trust and support in local initiatives, companies need time and planning. Still, organisations like YRS can function as brokers/bridges between diverse actors, particularly civil society and corporate funders, building trust through experience, relationships and innovative methodologies, like the platform.

## 2.10 Pilot Action 10: School goes green

### PA10 Technical Specifications

*This pilot action “Cultivating Changemakers: Youth Empowerment through activism” aims to engage adolescents between the ages of 14 to 17 in activism related to Green Deal issues. Recognising the challenges of inspiring behavioural change within the formal school system, this action emphasises on the importance of relatable role models, peer influence and structured frameworks in encouraging youth activism. By collaborating with schools and offering internships with NGOs, this action seeks to provide adolescents with valuable experiences, personal growth and opportunities as well as a platform to contribute to sustainable choices, social justice and a healthier lifestyle.*

### PA10 Project proposal

- **Pilot Action:** 10
- **Project name:**  
School goes green
- **Organisation:**  
Per Esemplio Onlus
- **Location:** Italy (Palermo)
- **Topic:** Student climate volunteering



Overview: “School goes green” was a project led by [Per esempio](#), in response to ACCTING’s call for pilots Cultivating changemakers. This call aimed to engage adolescents in activism related to Green Deal issues. Per esempio is a non-profit organisation based in Palermo Italy, aimed at reinforcing social cohesion and creating equal opportunities for young people, adults and professionals through education and training.

Objectives: The project aimed to promote the active engagement and participation of young people in the local territory, learning by practicing a healthy, equal and sustainable lifestyle, as well as contributing to the impact of the hosting associations involved.

Activities were implemented in Palermo with the active collaboration of the Liceo Regina Margherita high school and addressed to students between 14 and 17 years old:

- At least 20 volunteering experiences were to be made available to students at the Regina Margherita high school. These were to last at least 10 days (20h minimum) and be implemented between June and August 2024 among the local organisations of Per esempio's network.
- Volunteering opportunities were to be promoted locally and within the high school thanks to the involvement of the student committee (Sindacato).
- A school event was to be organised to share and celebrate the outcomes of the volunteering activities undertaken by students. The aim being to share the achievements of participants and inspire other young people and families to open up toward sustainable lifestyle and volunteering.

Expected impact: The project aimed to directly involve at least 150 students attending the info day, with 20 taking part in the volunteering activities themselves. Expected impacts include students' increased participation in school and/or local activities; improved knowledge of local opportunities and resources; promotion of a more sustainable lifestyle.

## PA10 Implementation

The project successfully engaged 21 students of R. Margherita High School in a summer volunteering experience with local NGOs in the field of social and environmental sustainability. The volunteering experience was embedded in a training and reflection program for the participants and wider communication activities in the school to raise awareness, knowledge and sustainable behavioural change in line with the Green Deal priorities. Central to the project's approach was the co-creation and -implementation of the project with a students' committee (the 'Sindacato'), leveraging the element of 'peer influence'. The project was implemented through the following key phases and activities:

- **Preparation phase:** The program was co-created with students and teachers of the high school. Six students of the student's committee were engaged as peer facilitators. Local hosting organisations were contacted through Per Esemplio's network and seven organisations agreed to host voluntary internships in the field of biodiversity (Legambiente Palermo), circular economy (Sartoria sociale, Emmaus) and social justice/education (Santa Chiara, Casa ancora, Booq, Per Esemplio).
- **Information campaign:** An information campaign advertising the program was co-created and implemented with the support of teachers and the student committee. This included class visits, a video promotion, podcast and social media campaign, as well as an info day for interested students.
- **Volunteering experience:** Applicants to the program were matched with host organisations based on their interests and needs. Volunteering agreements were signed between volunteers, parents, Per esempio and the host organisations to clarify objectives, responsibilities and benefits. The participating students supported the activities of the local organisations for an average of 45 hours through the summer break in June & July.



- **Mentoring & peer-support:** A mentoring program supported participants throughout in their reflection and learning. An initial workshop distilled basics of the EGD, assessed learning expectations and stimulated critical thinking around activism and sustainability. During the volunteering experience, participants used a learning diary and filled quick feedback questionnaires weekly. The final workshop was an opportunity to reflect on participants learning experiences and developing outputs for the final event.
- **Final reflection & celebration:** Small groups of volunteers from each host organisation created multi-media narratives that were integrated by Per Esemplio into video stories. The final event gathered 100 attendees (volunteers, teachers, students, local organisations, school representatives etc.) to celebrate participants engagement and serve as a source of inspiration. A final reflection of the experience fed into the Green Guide as a source of multiplication of the project learnings.

## PA10 key project outputs

- The [Green Guide](#) (Italian and English versions), a co-created **step-by-step guide** aimed at inspiring representatives of school communities and civil society organisations to create a similar volunteering learning experience.
- A [video story on YouTube](#), showcasing the volunteering experience of the student participants

## PA10 Evaluation

The project was successful in engaging students in a **transformational learning experience**. According to the monitoring and evaluation that was implemented by the project team shows, students report a higher understanding of environmental sustainability, increased awareness of sustainable practices and change in habits as well as a sense of initiative and activation.

A key success condition was the regular, ongoing and **trust-based collaboration with the school and students**. The project managed to engage teachers as allies to promote and encourage participation in the project. One learning for the future is to align the experience closer to the school's didactic learning objectives.

What stands out is the **project's student co-ownership**. A dedicated group of young students was engaged throughout the process of the project, from first steps of project design to targeted communication to peer-to-peer facilitation. The project team stressed how important it is to encourage the creation of self-managed spaces within schools, allowing young peoples and desires to become increasingly visible and allowing experiences of self-efficacy.

An interesting learning is that students closely associate volunteering with care and social animation activities, less with **civic engagement towards ecological sustainability**. This was also a challenge when selecting civil society organisations to host volunteering activities that are explicitly related to the EGD priorities. Based on these findings, the project team is advocating for **co-created spaces between policy makers and (local) youth** to increase the identification with ongoing policy issues.



## 2.11 Conclusion: Pilot Actions Implementation

In conclusion, all of the PAs were implemented successfully. This means that all 10 PAs were able to meet the key requirements and objectives that were outlined in the Call for PAs (Terms of Reference & Technical Specifications) as well as in the project proposals submitted by the applicant in response. In some cases, there were slight deviations from the promised activities in the implementation. However, these were reasonable adaptations due to changing context or on-going reflections and were always justified in the reporting. Crucially, the ACCTING M&E & Implementation team had a close working relationship with the PAs through regular check-ins, which allowed an early anticipation and mitigation of challenges towards the overall objectives of the specific project. Annex 2 shows a full list of requirements and adaptations for each of the PAs.

The reports and observations above suggest that the PAs as ‘experiments’ were also successful in producing the desired impact within the ACCTING project, namely promoting individual and collective pro-environmental behavioural change and reducing territorial as well as gender+ inequalities. The comprehensive evaluation is however outside of the scope of this report and will be covered in the upcoming Consolidated evaluation results report (D6.2).

Still, it is impressive how much the PAs were able to achieve given the limited time and resources. This on the one hand speak to the capacity of civil society organisations to drive place-based transformations in a comprehensive manner. On the other hand, it speak to the viability of the PA process as set-up within the ACCTING project. We will expand on both below.

After covering the overall PA process as well as the specific PA projects individually, we will now synthesise the overall lessons learned across the different projects before turning to their implications and resulting recommendations for diverse stakeholders.

## 3. Analysis of ACCTING pilot actions

All of the PAs shared the objective of driving inclusive and sustainable behavioural change. The specific objectives of each PA as well as the context in which they were implemented however vary greatly – this includes the sectoral (from fire resilience to cycling) and geographic context (from rural Zagori to urban Palermo), as well as the primary target group (from Roma communities to disadvantaged youth). The strong engagement with the specific context of the target groups is one of the strengths of the PAs. At the same time, they make a synthesis of results challenging.

Nevertheless, there is a range of shared successes (and enabling factors underlying these successes), challenges and obstacles as well as general lessons learned that can be identified as cross-cutting.

## 3.1 Successes achieved by the ACCTING Pilots

### **Success #1: Community ownership**

Many of the PAs succeeded in ensuring the involvement and ownership of local communities in the planning and implementation of their projects. This was highlighted as instrumental for the project's success, particularly in relation to ensuring long-term buy-in and project sustainability - by remaining relevant and adaptive to community-needs. As one report stated, *"Projects may start and end, but people remain."*

Specific examples include the village coordination committees established in PA1 at the very outset of the project (and continuing right through all project stages). PA10 engaged a group of high school students ('Sindacato') from the onset in the design, implementation and peer-to-peer facilitation of the 'School goes Green' volunteering experience. According to their experience, this was a key factor for the high turnout and satisfaction of participating students and distilled a sense of ownership and self-actualisation in the Sindacato students. Similarly, PA8 decided to set-up a multi-organisational steering team with decentralised and collective decision-making processes. According to the organisers, such collective ownership increases the likelihood of continuing beyond the project's timeframe.

### **Success #2: Inclusive co-creation**

Here, a strongly related point is the commitment to involving affected / vulnerable stakeholders as much as possible throughout the PA process - following the mantra, *"Nothing about them, without them."* As highlighted in PA1, this was not only a question of justice but also served as a valuable source of insight. The implementation team highlighted the decisive role of local knowledge in shaping effective disaster management strategies, with community mapping scenario-based worksheets unearthing a wealth of insights regarding local terrain, water sources, and historical fire patterns. These had not been considered in previous official fire prevention strategies. PA2 took a similarly inclusive approach throughout the project's design and implementation phases, seeking the active participation of a diverse group of stakeholders, farmers, artisans, educators, and residents, in the design and implementation of the project activities.

### **Success #3: Empowerment of vulnerable groups**

Through their continued consultation and involvement, a noticeable change was observed in many of the vulnerable communities included in the PAs. This relates to an increased sense of self-efficacy and -empowerment in relation to the topic at hand. Through the project, communities understood the value they bring to the achievement of larger goals.

For example, the inclusion of local villagers in PA1's fire prevention strategies through interactive workshops, *including identification of different roles for individuals in emergencies, related training programmes, etc.* This workshop methodology (rather than relying on the usual top-down public information campaigns), contributes substantially to imparting both knowledge and confidence.

At other times, this also contributed to wider social goals beyond environmental protection, boosting a community's sense of identity and self-esteem, and instilling a sense of pride for one's own cultural and natural heritage and traditions. The importance of the Zagori region's

transhumance practices in PA2, linking to protection of the area's strong biodiversity, maintenance of local trails, and wool-crafting heritage, was a clear example. This was made evident to local communities through the project as a whole, and particularly through the participation of prestigious local organisations, such as the University of Ioannina.

#### ***Success #4: Making climate protection fun and engaging***

There has been widespread societal discussion on the need to make environmentalist activities fun and exciting, as opposed to an additional burden. Failure to do so can lead to the disengage of the public from sustainable lifestyles and activism, despite climate change remaining a real and present concern. In this context, a number of the PAs presented a genuine alternative, grounded in a sense of playfulness and community co-creation.

For instance, the educational program of PA2 was successful in linking the topic of biodiversity protection to positive experiences through direct interaction with their natural environment. This connection of children with their natural environment and awareness raising about the links to cultural heritage, creates meaningful memories for future decision-makers, fostering a lasting appreciation for heritage and sustainability. Similarly, PA10 highlighted the importance of informal moments, or the “party method”, into the project experience to build relationship and foster engagement.

#### ***Success #5: Raising consciousness around vulnerability and inclusivity***

Finally, through the project local communities and stakeholders were at times challenged to think about their own positionality and how they too could maximise inclusivity. In PA9, for instance, a question was added in the application form relating to inclusion of vulnerable groups. This motivated the youth applying to the project's volunteer programmes to think about which demographics and social groups were still missing from the project, providing the project organisers with a clearer overview on shortcomings to address.

#### ***Success #6: Translation of Green Deal policies to lived realities***

Through their project activities, the PAs were (at least partially) successful in translating high level concepts of the Green Deal to the lived reality of their target groups - an explicit rationale for the ACCTING project's overall motivation regarding work with bottom-up organisations.

For instance, PA10 made a conscious effort in linking the high-level policy priorities of the European Green Deal with the lived reality of the students through participatory and reflexive methods during the initial workshop, the volunteering experience and the final event. As a result, students reported a considerably higher level of understanding of the EGD and its principles.

PA4 had significant success supporting participating SMEs by providing them with equipment and materials valued at €1,000 per enterprise. This proved highly labour-intensive, owing to the beneficiaries' limited experience with formal business planning. Nonetheless, the results were highly effective in ensuring real value for the day-to-day business realities of each enterprise, leading to cost savings *and reduced environmental impact*. The main effect being the effective change in management - budgeting makes it feasible to take decisions on how the business is managed and ensure environmental impacts are minimised.

### ***Success #7: Ensuring communities derive tangible benefits***

Other success factors point to the project's legacy and longer-term impact. Plans, strategies, worksheets and other typical deliverables can be valuable from a policy and replication / multiplication perspective. Yet several PAs cited the importance of also linking the project outcomes to tangible benefits for participants and the wider community, making it easier to position the project as successful from the perspective of local communities.

One example is creation of new and/or increased **opportunities for employment and income-generation**. PA2 establishment of a foundation for eco-tourism and regenerative tourism by mapping and marking the transhumance trail is one such case - creating opportunities for local communities generally, and breeders in particular to generate income. PA4 listed an ability to stimulate local economies through increased employment as one of the evaluation criteria for selecting which micro-enterprises to support.

Other tangible outcomes could be **infrastructure** (such as the development of a new bicycle lane and bicycle parking in PA7) or **equipment** (PA4's €1,000 tailored support for local SMEs; PA7's bicycle donation to local school children). Here, and in **awards and prize ceremonies** to recognise good work (PA3 and PA4) it is important to consider equitable distribution to avoid promoting tensions and further inequities, as discussed under challenges.

### ***Success #8 Providing platforms for ongoing collaboration***

In a number of cases, the PAs as a whole, or specific project outputs, provided an important networking role with other CSOs. (Usually online) platforms were thus provided for **collaboration and networking, resource-sharing, and highlighting the work** of different CSOs. This platforming helps to provide peer support and inspiration between CSOs, but also to provide visibility of their good work to potential future funders.

Thus, for instance, PA4 established an informal *Coalition of Roma Green Micro-entrepreneurs* group for meetings and mutual support. As part of the project, an [online platform](#) was also developed to serve as a central hub for resources, opportunities, and communication among coalition members.

PA5 also conducted a comprehensive revamp of its [community garden map](#), adding a host of new community gardens and documenting the closure of others, which significantly enhanced its usability. New features were introduced, including an interactive menu, a comprehensive knowledge bank, and user recognition through special badges, confirming the entity's status on the platform. In today's version, the badges are divided into four categories depending on the status and level of maturity of the given garden, providing a superb overview of the state of play in Czechia.

Something similar was done in PA9, where the project team developed a website "Get involved!" that connects informal groups with donors to implement climate projects in local communities. The positive feedback of both companies and informal groups led to a decision to maintain this website after the project ends for at least the next three years - "We see great potential to activate many more young people with more companies and donors that would then open more calls for support."



### Success #9 Public institutionalisation of pilot approaches

Many PA organisations noted that the long-term sustainability and scaling of impact depends on the engagement of institutionalised actors, like public administrations and policy makers. PAs had some success in engaging municipalities towards the **institutionalisation of their approaches** (albeit to varying degrees). For example, PA1 notes that:

*“Local stakeholders have begun discussing ways to integrate the project’s bottom-up approach into municipal civil protection plans, which could lead to greater institutionalisation of community-led disaster risk reduction. These early signs of official endorsement suggest that even though formal budget lines have yet to be established, the pilot action’s methodologies and ethos stand a good chance of being recognised and sustained in future, supposing that some of the community members continue to continuously push forward the political agenda.”*

Similarly, PA5 had success engaging not only local communities *but also municipalities and developers* to establish a collaboration regarding community gardens in the Czech Republic. This resulted in agreements to include community gardens in urban planning, with a memorandum of understanding facilitating green spaces in new residential projects. PA7, meanwhile, benefited from good relations between the implementing organisation and the local municipality to implement actions like permanent bike lanes and a public campaign with permanent banners.

In contrast, other PAs faced significant difficulty gaining public support, including municipalities (e.g. PA8) and national actors (PA3). The burning question from a policy perspective is: **What are the crucial conditions making such institutionalisation successful?** The following success factors are posited:

- Public priorities and consciousness:

Bottom-up innovations are more likely to be picked up and supported if they are in line with current public priorities and political pressures. It is no surprise, for instance, that the topic of wildfires in Greece found resonance with local politicians, given the level of discourse around the topic. Vice versa, PA3 clearly struggled simply due to the level of maturity of energy communities in Spain generally, meaning that less public support was forthcoming.

- Windows of opportunity:

Some projects clearly benefit from being the right topic at the right time in relation to current policy agendas (and vice versa). To have political impact it is crucial to link on-going policy processes and priorities, i.e. helping policy makers solve problems they are currently concerned with. Thus, for instance, PA6 have done well to link their project (nominally about food in schools) to the highly publicised 100 Climate Neutral Cities Mission, noting how food systems transformation is intimately linked with climate resilience, and linking this to the work of Greek Mission cities - including Thessaloniki, Ioannina, and Kalamata.

- Leveraging existing relationships with political actors

Some of the PAs were able to leverage positive relationships between the PA contacts and the municipalities to push for joined projects (Messinia in Greece, and



Tirana/Kamëz in Albania, respectively). Vice versa, the projects are then opportunities to build dialogue and trust for future collaborations. This is compromised whenever there is a lack of personal continuity, as outlined in challenge #8.

### **Success #10: Facilitating translocal learning & multiplication**

A number of PAs had success **developing plans & templates that are modular**, generalised and process-oriented. This approach supports replication and multiplication, allowing projects and planning to be adapted and/or tailored to other contexts and account for distinct legal frameworks, cultural practices, or geographical constraints - an essential element for [translocal learning](#). PA1's [Forest Fire Risk Reduction Toolkit](#) is one great example of this and is currently translated to English.

Others explicitly began the hard work of identifying promising **NGOs and CSOs who would have interest in collaborating** on similar projects in the future. PA5 did this in the context of food gardens in and beyond the Czech Republic (Spain, France, Germany, Austria, Poland, and Bosnia). The project leads suggest starting with regional groupings such as the V4 (Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia). Doing this through a unified platform such as PA5's [Mapko site](#), will allow for a better understanding of the varying approaches to urban agriculture, legislative frameworks, and socioeconomic conditions, nonetheless fostering collaboration across borders.

### **Success #11 CSOs as mediators**

Lastly, the role of CSOs as **mediators between diverse stakeholders** was repeatedly emphasised, indicating their value in building trust and lowering transaction costs. This networking role could be with individual stakeholders, but in other cases it was between organisations - a network of CSOs (illustrating the importance of similar organisations like [ECOLISE](#) at the EU-wide level).

PA4 and PA5 thus for instance helped to provide recognition and a voice for smaller organisations (SMEs and community gardens respectively) who would not have had the size or capacity to do this on their own. PA1 similarly acted as a single broker and contact between small, isolated villages with fluctuating populations (summer versus winter) and the public authorities responsible for creation of disaster planning (fire departments, municipalities generally).

In some cases, this was an explicit aim of the project. Thus, PA9 had the core objective of acting as a broker between companies and volunteers/informal groups. The organisation, Young Researchers of Serbia (YRS), thus established a methodology for mentorship and financial support, giving many companies to plan their own CSO work. This was a safer way for the companies to support individual climate ideas because YRS's co-ordination provided the **institutional credibility and organisational skills** to lower the risk of working with fully grassroots actors. Through the application and selection methodology, companies could also be sure that selected projects had been adequately vetted.

This trust and brokerage relate not only to reputations but also to **legal and financial capacity**. For instance, PA9 noted that replication in countries beyond Serbia would require *"an umbrella association that can handle the financial weight and be the contact point for smaller organisations on [the] local level that would work directly with the local community."*

They highlight that their methodology is invaluable for the involvement and support of informal groups who, as individuals, cannot be supported or held accountable for financial spending through projects and donations. *“YRS has therefore created a system that enables them to still do projects and YRS would cover the costs through invoices provided by them in our name. This is due to the legal framework in Serbia, but also in many other countries.”*

In other cases, the careful **involvement of key multipliers** to further this networking potential. PA10 had success in also involving individuals with high multiplier potential in their school volunteering project. For instance, 14 teachers, many of whom will be moved to new schools in Palermo in 2025 - boding well for replication of the project ethos in further regional schools in the future.

## 3.2 Challenges faced by certain ACCTING Pilots:

### *Challenge #1 Lack of secure / formal funding mechanisms*

Arguably the greatest challenge was the lack of long-term funding for the work of the PAs, making it difficult for them to plan or commit to medium- to long-term actions. Given the fixed, one-year nature of the ACCTING funding, the ACCTING project team were repeatedly approached by the PAs, asking about possibilities for further ACCTING funding or knowledge of other funding opportunities. It is clear that this is part of a pattern of ad-hoc, short-term funding, which likely contributes to the high turnover rate of personnel and indeed CSOs themselves (see Challenge #9). Indeed, not all organisations involved in the ACCTING PAs will necessarily be able to continue running in and beyond 2025.

Regarding the specific work of the PAs for instance, PA1 noted in its final report that despite clear plans to continue the PA work, that it has not yet secured any formal funding mechanism that would guarantee ongoing support for work such as training, equipment upgrades, or scenario-refinement exercises. PA6 noted similar difficulties in relation to its work on sustainable food in Greek schools.

### *Challenge #2 Financial constraints excluding certain demographics*

The funding constraints mentioned above have implications not only on the sustainability but also on the *inclusivity* of the initiatives. For instance, some initiatives, like the Urban Gardens in PA5 have to collect a membership fee for their functioning, which serves as an access barrier for participation of lower income groups. Similarly, many initiatives cannot pay compensation for engagement of participants, which similarly serves as a barrier for deeper engagement.

### *Challenge #3 Ensuring equitable distribution of benefits and recognition*

Regarding the tangible benefits discussed, such as infrastructure, equipment, and awards (see Success #6), equitable distribution and clear explanation of criteria is essential, with a number of PAs noting tensions in this regard. PA7 noting frustration by participants as regards to sub-par and/or differing quality of the bicycles donated.

In the PA4's case, they noted that vulnerability is not a self-evident concept, and the criteria for who qualifies as "vulnerable" was challenging during the implementation of project activities. This is also the case in relation to **awards and prize ceremonies** to recognise good work (PAs 3 and 4). Again, the selection process can lead to similar disagreements and perceived bias from those not selected.

#### **Challenge #4 Difficulty obtaining government permission**

While a few PAs had success engaging municipal actors (see *Success #7*), many faced **significant delays or lack of responses** from government actors at various levels. This often significantly held up their ability to progress with their planned projects.

While PA5 was able to conduct their own project work of mapping and supporting community gardens, they noted that many gardens struggle to secure operational permissions from municipalities, and others even face displacement due to land being repurposed for other projects (e.g. real estate development).

PA7 noted challenges to receive approval to conduct bicycle riding and safety training in schools. While they had good relationships with the local municipality, the **school curriculum** is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. They note that while videos and other materials can be produced and delivered to school libraries, they risk gathering dust unless actively included in curricula. Thus, *"The key to making this initiative successful is to create a clear structure, training schedules, and ensuring ongoing access to the materials."*

PA8's work to advocate for a safer and more inclusive cycling city for all Barcelona residents ran into difficulties engaging the municipality with a variety of policy proposals. With no clear contact within the municipality, plans to influence the city's plans and infrastructure development were stillborn. This is clearly **more crucial for some topics (e.g. cycling)**, where infrastructure and other top-down support is so necessary for influencing long-term outcomes.

In PA3, the PA similarly noted that the competencies for regulation of energy communities are shared across three levels of government - local town councils, regional state actors (the autonomous community) and the central government. While support was obtained from the former, lack of dialogue with the latter two created challenges. **Better multi-level governance is required.**

At other times, even where (local) governments wished to support, capacity issues sometimes arose. Thus, for instance, PA6 noted that pressing professional commitments and time constraints created difficulties in engaging local policy-makers who might otherwise have participated more actively.

#### **Challenge #5 Top-down administrative culture**

In the process of seeking institutional support for their work, some PAs noted difficulties with hierarchical, top-down administrative cultures. While PA1 had some success working with their municipality of Messina, they noted challenges for multiplication across Greece owing to the *"top-down administrative culture of most regions in Greece and may slow the adoption of bottom-up planning."*

This unwillingness to give up centralised control can sometimes make it hard for “outsiders” looking to support the work of public actors. Thus, for instance PA6’s work on sustainable food procurement was made challenging from the start by a lack of consistent documentation on how this is dealt with in the Greek context, compounded by a very low response rate from ministries and regional authorities on requests for information. This required additional unexpected research work - the third part of the project’s final research report.

#### ***Challenge #6 CSO time-constraints***

Many PAs worked to tailor support and/or project outputs to specific geographical contexts or (vulnerable) target groups. Here it was noted that any work to this effect was enormously time-consuming. PA4, for instance, had challenges tailoring their business support and tools to vulnerable Roma micro-entrepreneurs, especially owing to the beneficiaries’ limited experience with formal business planning.

#### ***Challenge #7 Lack of personnel continuity***

Finally, as repeatedly hinted at, changes in leadership create substantial challenges for CSOs. Thus, for instance, PA7 noted that any work and communication with schools and students depends entirely on the subjective personal engagement and reliability of the contact point at that particular school.

PA5 in particular noted a trend of leaders in community gardens moving or reducing engagement for personal reasons after around three years of involvement, substantially impacting long-term project goals, community cohesion, and the kinds of fruitful personal relationships previously discussed. They cite a number of specific policy recommendations in Section 4 to overcome this (in addition to the need to simply provide more funding for CSOs).

### **3.3 Lessons learned by the ACCTING Pilots:**

In addition to specific challenges and successes, the PAs were also specifically asked about the overall lessons learned through the PA process. The following topics were repeatedly raised in this regard:

- Many stressed the need for increasing investment in approaches grounded in **resilience and dialogue**, given environmental variables and increasingly volatile climatic conditions. While some successes were seen in this regard, the lack of response and top-down approach taken by many public authorities towards the PAs is at odds with the need to engage and co-create with the public. As conditions on the ground become increasingly unstable and prone to sudden changes, traditional planning approaches become less fit for purpose and an approach of regular monitoring and dialogue is instead needed.
- We also see that there are **different ways municipalities can support** the work of CSO actors. These might be simply uptake and scaling (as in the case of PA1’s fire resilience planning), but they could also take the form of enabling or complementary



actions (as in the case of the Municipality of Kaměz building new bike lanes to support the cycling advocacy work of PA7; or various Czech municipalities engaging with PA5 on ways to include community gardens in urban planning processes).

- The **involvement of educational actors** was commonly cited as a promising approach. This could be in terms of stakeholder recruitment generally (for instance, PA7 noted that working with students had the benefit of involving a lot of young, open-minded potential participants). Or as seen in *Success #3*, it could be involvement of respected academic institutions to provide legitimacy to the project (see PA2). The strong potential “ripple effects” of working through educational policy was noted in a number of instances, a way to reach less engaged individuals such as parents through their children (PA10), or to test systems change in a smaller, more controlled environment (schools), before seeking to roll out similar changes at a city-wide scale (PA6).
- **Educational policy** is seen as a particularly crucial enabler of “locking in” learnings from pilot projects, - influencing generations of students through inclusion of project outputs in school curricula and thereby driving long-term behavioural change (PA7). The incorporation of sustainability goals into educational curricula can also help to develop a more nuanced and systemic understanding of the issues at hand, with PA6 for instance citing the need for a [Whole School Food Approach](#) that recognises food education and food policies as inherently interlinked.
- Certain topics are particularly worth addressing through CSOs because they tend to have a bottom-up ethos yet have **translocal relevance** and are perhaps less limited by country-specific rules and regulations. Food gardens are one such community practice that is found across Europe and globally.
- In many instances, we see trade-offs between **formalisation and flexibility** / informality with the work of CSOs. There is a risk that positive avenues of dialogue and co-creation will cease, once projects are taken up and formalised by public actors. Resistance can also be raised by local communities to such formalisation attempts - for instance PA4 noted the project’s aim to support vulnerable micro-entrepreneurs was met with resistance to change due to perceived risks of formalisation. Informal groups can be a valuable conduit for volunteering and activism, but these actors tend to still require support due to limited recognition and capacity, pointing to the potential value of umbrella / framework organisations like PA4 and PA9.
- This links to an important point about the complementarity of different actors. It is clear that there is real value in having **different kinds of CSOs with complementary skill sets**. Some might be more locally rooted, trusted by their communities, and activism-oriented. Others might be more institutionally rooted, experienced and well-organised and -capacitated, able to provide a link between public actors and/or business and community groups on the ground. PA9 for instance notes that they *“provide mentors through local partners that are “hands-on” support for each informal group. They can support them in project writing, financial,*



*communication and reporting aspects of the project.*” Finding a balance between these types of CSOs is key.

- Even at the bottom-up level, there is **evidence of an urban-rural divide**, with initiatives in rural areas having a harder time obtaining the required institutional support. For instance, in PA5 it was noted that community gardens in urban areas like Prague benefit from greater institutional support, while rural regions struggle with limited access to resources such as funding and training for community garden leaders.
- **Pilots can help make higher-level policy processes more tangible** - creating localised findings and deliverables. Pilots can also likely benefit from greater institutional support if they make these links, i.e. helping policy-makers to solve a policy-problem that they already have. PA6’s example of hoping to replicate their school food policy in Greece by noting how food systems transformation is entangled with climate resilience, and seeking to link to the work of Greek Mission Cities - Thessaloniki, Ioannina, and Kalamata.
- However, in relation to behavioural change particularly there are real shortcomings to a piloting approach. The experience of the ACCTING PAs shows that behaviour is often enabled or restricted by **broader systemic conditions** - especially for vulnerable groups. You cannot pilot your way out of structural challenges, and behavioural change is thus inherently linked to systemic change through structural policy. PA1 went to great lengths to increase inclusion in their participatory work (e.g. improving gender balance) but noted that while targeted activities can help bring underrepresented voices to the table, more comprehensive mentorship programs or policy interventions may be required.
- In PA1, deeper structural issues (cultural norms, time constraints for caregiving, and limited familiarity with civil protection roles) also continued to hinder many women from taking on formal leadership positions in particular. For school food systems, PA6 similarly notes that behavioural change needs to be examined and pursued in the context of broader systemic change that cannot exclude public institutions, authorities and the market. Similarly, their Local Action Plan notes that transition towards more sustainable school food systems in nurseries cannot be ventured as a pilot. Instead, change needs to be incremental and applied gradually across *all* nurseries.
- In this regard a **holistic, multi-dimensional approach** is usually needed to enable sustainable behavioural change. This needs to consist of various factors including a) awareness- / motivation-raising activities, b) support for skills / capacity, c) advocacy to change structural conditions, and d) influencing social dynamics in communities. PA7 uses the example of lack of safety as a central barrier for a modal shift to cycling. They argue that this multi-dimensional phenomenon can only effectively be tackled as such through actual infrastructural change to increase road safety, awareness campaigns for drivers and other transport users, and training and

equipment for would-be cyclists to improve skills and subjective feelings of safety.

- To support ongoing sustainability of pilot work, there is potential in **using graduates and/or former participants** as multipliers for ongoing CSO work. This can keep the project running in its original location and help to ensure buy-in of local (vulnerable) communities - creating role model figures. A clear example is seen in PA10, where a past graduate of the school volunteering programme is employed in the project co-ordination team, allowing future volunteers to more easily see themselves in the project.
- Finally, it is worth highlighting that the success of projects does not depend only on the quality of the project put forward, but also that it is simply the **right project at the right time** (see *Success #7*). PA3's challenges with many energy communities (ECs) not registering for the inclusive award ceremony, arose because many existing ECs did not know how to design inclusive actions. The topic of inclusive energy communities was simply too new in Spain, requiring a partial shift in approach to providing more practical guidance. It might have been more useful to have a project that from the start builds capacity for inclusive actions, instead of one that sought to celebrate such actions prematurely.

### 3.4 Analysis conclusion

In conclusion, the PAs were successful in promoting inclusive, collective action towards sustainability foremost through their direct engagement with the target community. Through their efforts in promoting inclusive co-creation and community ownership, they successfully empowered vulnerable groups to play an active role in transition processes. Collective behavioural change was furthermore promoted through engaging and fun methodologies, breaking down EGD priorities to the lived realities of target groups and ensuring that communities derive tangible benefits. PAs were able to build sustainable impact by building platforms for ongoing collaboration, bringing diverse stakeholders together as intermediaries, promoting the public institutionalisation of the piloted approaches, and facilitating translocal learning and multiplication.

These successes provide evidence regarding the value and effectiveness of the approach, trusting CSOs and community-led initiatives to drive place-based transformations in line with EGD policy goals. On the other hand, the successes serve as valuable source of insights and inspiration for similar projects, and of policy recommendations to strengthen such work.

At the same time, the PAs encountered a range of challenges and barriers that served as a bottleneck for sustainable impact. Two major clusters emerged: On the one hand, CSOs struggle with the lack of secure and sustainable funding mechanisms. Financial constraints, “projectism” and competition for funds also leads to other operational challenges, like capacity constraints, the lack of personnel continuity and exclusionary practices. On the other hand, the PAs struggled with collaborating with political and administrative authorities,

leading for instance to difficulties in obtaining government permission for project activities. Reasons are top-down administrative cultures and intransparencies, but also limited capacities of (local) governance to pursue in-depth partnerships.

The PAs highlight that a shift in perspective is necessary, so as to prioritise investment in (community) resilience and social infrastructure in times of increasing uncertainty. Civil Society Organisations can play a key role in providing this, especially in partnership with local governments and supported through sustainable funding arrangements. The learnings also point to the importance of education in promoting behavioural change, targeting educational actors and policy makers as key actors. At the same time, behavioural change is often enabled or restricted by broader systemic conditions, especially for vulnerable groups. This includes infrastructure, cultural norms and the individual socio-economic situation, limiting the capacity to engage. Holistic, multi-dimensional approaches are needed that consider individual capabilities, structural conditions and social dynamics.

## 4. Implications & recommendations

### 4.1 Motivation: Why pursue Green Deal processes through collaboration with CSOs?

The European Commission has the ambition to implement the European Green Deal in a manner that is just and inclusive, leaving no-one behind. To do so, it is crucial to not only understand the inequalities produced and reproduced in the context of Green Deal policies but also the specific drivers and barriers of behavioural change of the diverse communities affected by it, including the most vulnerable to exacerbating inequalities. As the PAs show, CSOs have the capability to work with vulnerable populations in just transition processes that leverage collective action and alleviate place-based inequalities. Leveraging the important work that CSOs already do on the ground is thus a crucial step for implementing a just and inclusive implementation of the European Green Deal.

Benefits include:

- Their social embeddedness is a significant strength
- They enjoy more public trust than governments, corporations, and the media
- They provide policy- & decisions-makers with expertise
- They can represent specific marginalised groups often excluded
- They provide legitimacy to environmental governance generally

ACCTING research shows while infrastructure is a barrier, social dynamics and sense of belonging is a key enabler for behavioural change. This includes person-to-person interaction and being part of communities and social networks. As the [ACCTING Factsheet](#) on an Inclusive civil society for an inclusive Green Deal notes,

*“CSOs play a key role in this community building. Our research shows the great potential for civil society and other public actors to contribute more proactively to behavioural change, by providing easily accessible information on why and how to do so, as well as by promoting new social norms that are aligned with green deal ambitions”*

The quality and scale of work that the ACCTING PAs have been able to achieve in the space of just one year on a typical budget of only ca. €32,000 is testament to the value for money offered by such collaboration with CSOs. Their size, flexibility, and low overheads keep costs down. One simple recommendation would therefore be for policymakers to **drive Green Deal policy process partly through financially supporting CSOs** - such pilots provide a cost-effective way to localise policy agendas. For those who want to follow that advice, the following section will thus give recommendations to implement such a pilot process from the ACCTING experience. How can those seeking to support the work of CSOs (including public and private sector actors) structure a working relationship with CSOs in such a way that pilot actions are actively supported, rather than being unduly burdened?

## 4.2 Recommendations for others seeking to run a similar pilot process

There are various steps that can be taken to facilitate increased involvement of CSOs in Green Deal processes, and collaboration with local governments in particular in implementing EGD policy. These touch on both governance approaches in departments as well as the amount but also the conditions of funding and reporting from both public and private sector actors. In the final reports, the ACCTING PAs were also asked for their candid feedback on this question, and their feedback is included below.

### (i) Provide sufficient financial support

As has been repeatedly seen, many CSOs have struggled with funding shortages in the current landscape. To lower the risk of CSOs and their members being left financially unsupported, it is important to plan for longer financial timelines, build bridge funding into funding calls so that pilots are not left entirely without funding after projects end, and to pay all participants for their time - recognising that project work can distract from time for community work.

### (ii) Provide flexibility in proposal and reporting structures

Even with existing funding amounts, previous ICLEI projects such as *UrbanCommunity* suggest that additional support can be provided by funders **providing flexibility in both the proposal and reporting stages**. In terms of how project calls are structured, it is important to not be overly prescriptive and rigid - allowing some flexibility in deadlines and outcomes. Reporting processes should for example provide room for creative or alternative forms of reporting, and allow CSOs to voice doubts in addition to highlighting successes. Some relevant *UrbanCommunity* publications in this regard include:

- [How Funders can Support Community-led Initiatives: 8 lessons learned](#)
- [Partnering up for Sustainable and Just Cities:](#)  
*Local governments and community-led initiatives*

For instance, the ACCTING PA process' original call's Terms of Reference & Technical Specifications stipulated a framework with key processes and deliverables, but retaining substantial room for applicants to shape their proposal (although some PAs suggested even more flexibility could have been provided). It provided ample notice period of the deadline over social media platforms, and included regular info sessions to ensure that potential applicants had ample time to prepare. The application process was kept short and simple to a maximum 10 pages.

After selection of the PAs the implementation incorporated two elements that minimised reporting stress for the implementation teams. Firstly, the contracts and subsequent report evaluations focused to a substantial extent on *actions* required of the PAs (deliverables, workshops hosted, etc.), recognising that the actual outcomes (number of participants, uptake of policy proposals, etc.) would often be beyond the control of the PA. Secondly, while a basic cost breakdown was required for the original proposal, the reporting was narrative only, with PAs having flexibility about the use of financial resources.

In the Monitoring and Evaluation meetings and report evaluations (mid- and final-), flexibility was provided for deviations from original proposals, provided this was well motivated (see Annex #1). Further flexibility was provided by the decision to retain a pool of money for unforeseen costs, rather than funding further PAs. This allowed two PAs to motivate for, and benefit from ad-hoc top-up funding to provide for unforeseen costs in furthering their work beyond what was originally foreseen in the project proposal.

The **flexible, open-ended nature of the calls** was appreciated by the PAs, ensuring that the proposal and subsequent change "is rooted in the wisdom and needs of the people most connected to their environment" (PA2). This ethos was continued in the implementation phase, retaining focus on overarching goals and providing space for motivated deviations from original plan. Key to this was again the regular engagement through M&E meetings (three online and one on-site) - allowing the monitoring to keep abreast of developments and fostering a sense of trust and transparency. Linked to this was the recognition that some adaptation would inevitably be required, with PA3's energy awards being one example where a number of real deviations were motivated and thus accepted.

### (iii) **Ensure balance in project monitoring activities**

The PAs also appreciated the balance of guidance and autonomy provided by the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) team. Many noted the particular value of the in-person kick-off meeting in Rome at the start of the PA process, and the overall development and monitoring of a tailored, **PA-specific M&E framework**. It can be speculated this helped the PAs to think in a more procedural and systemic way, with



the PA organisations having varying degrees of experience working in the field of policy analysis.

This can also **support prioritisation and target-setting**, when these are not self-evident. PAs can be encouraged to consider the multiple dimensions that condition success and impact in their particular case - for instance awareness vs motivation, capacity vs skills, influencing structural conditions vs infrastructure, etc. See *Lessons learned by the ACCTING PAs → holistic, multi-dimensional approach*, above.

(iv) **Ensure that pilots also have a chance to provide their own feedback**

The PAs also valued the bidirectional nature of the feedback, with opportunities for the **PAs to also provide feedback on improving EU-level policies**. As PA2 noted, this created a bridge between academic theory and practical, on-site activities, testing and demonstrating the feasibility of sustainable practices, as well as demonstrating real outcomes to the public.

(v) **Support for pilots after the project has ended need not only be financial**

Lastly, even where (as in the case of ACCTING), no bridge funding was possible after the end of the one-year implementation period, support can be provided to CSOs by seeking to **highlight and amplify their work to others**. This can be done by summarising and highlighting their good work and connecting them to relevant actors and especially potential funders. Section 4.3 below outlines some of the key activities that were implemented jointly by the Consortium and Pilot Actions to promote sustainability and scale the impact of the PAs.

## 4.3 Scaling the impact: Sustainability, multiplication, scaling up

Within the ACCTING project the PA actions were implemented to test the effectiveness of selected interventions on promoting inclusive & sustainable behavioural change. In a second step, the question arises: In how far can these interventions as well as their positive impact be scaled to promote an inclusive green transition more broadly? And if so, how?

Several dimensions/pathways can be considered for such scaling.

- On the one hand, there is the sustainability (i.e. the longer-term continuation of an existing process) as well as the replication (i.e. repeating a similar or adapted project in similar context) of the PA by the implementing organisation / partners. This requires reflection and adaption of the process, as well as longer-term funding and capacity.
- Another impact pathway is that of multiplication or translocal imitation, i.e. repeating the approach in a different (geographical) context and potentially by different actors.

This requires communication and diffusion of the innovative approach, learning and adaption to a different context.

- Finally, PAs can scale-up, i.e. influence social structures, such as laws, policies, and institutions to allow good practices to be adopted more extensively. This requires advocacy, networking, partnership and negotiation.

In collaboration with the consortium partners, the PAs are engaging in activities to scale their impact through all three of these pathways.

## Sustainability & Replication of Pilot Actions

Almost all implementing organisations have expressed their intention to pursue the work of the PAs further after the projects end. Some PAs are hoping that the initiated processes are continued in community ownership (e.g. PA1, PA8) or build on the new collaborations to build the organisations impact in the region (PA2). Other PAs continue their work with the target group in different ways (PA4) or work towards institutional buy in to mainstream their approach (PA6). Other approaches are to work towards replication in other schools (PA7) or in adapted form next year (PA10, PA3). The PAs that build up or expanded on functioning online platforms are planning to use these actively in the future (PA5, PA9)

In terms of sustainability, an often-cited question of how to set up clear systems, to avoid overreliance on individuals and individual relationships, leading to burnout and organisers reducing their commitment to CSO activities. Operational recommendations in this regard are the need for structured leadership succession planning, long-term participant engagement strategies, and stronger institutional support to ensure the sustainability of community gardens. Meanwhile, leadership turnover can be mitigated by more community involvement and various capacity-building procedures (see PA5 recommendations).

The support provided by the ACCTING core team to highlight and amplify the work of the PAs is also crucial in this regard - a way of connecting them to relevant actors and especially potential funders (see below).

## Multiplication of pilot actions

[Translocal learning](#) is generally a strong pathway to wider uptake. Learning from other places can provide inspiration and motivation (particularly emerging initiatives), build solidarity across places, and enable adaptation of more generic lessons, such as governance arrangements, to new places.

In the context of the ACCTING PAs, multiplication is of particular importance. Due to the strength of applications from Southern Europe, this region (particularly Greece) is overrepresented in the ten pilots. To ensure geographic balance, a particular focus lies on the multiplication of initiatives and learnings to other parts of Europe, particularly Central, Western and Northern Europe.

In preparation of respective activities, the consortium considered the multiplier potential of each PA and categorised them as medium or high potential:

Table 3: Assessment of multiplication potential

Description		Multiplication potential
PA1	<b>Dialogue &amp; Action Against Wildfires:</b> Empowering communities for disaster resilience	<b>High:</b> It can be easily scaled geographically by its method (community engagement), if independence from external funding sources can be maintained.
PA2	<b>Echoversity:</b> A participatory biodiversity conservation project	<b>High:</b> It can be replicated because it combines biodiversity conservation with the preservation of cultural heritage in a simple way that actively involves local communities. Its design (workshops, app, educational programs) can be adapted to other regions with similar needs.
PA3	<b>InclusivECs awards:</b> Encouraging the inclusion of vulnerable groups in energy communities	<b>Medium/High:</b> Simple concept – awards ceremony for energy communities fulfilling a social contribution, judged by an interdisciplinary panel of experts. Organisers have struggled with shortage of potential candidates in Spain and may similarly struggle in other such countries. May be more easily applicable in countries with a larger culture of energy communities.
PA4	<b>Supporting Roma micro-entrepreneurs</b> in Albania towards better environmental sustainability	<b>Medium.</b> On the one hand, the PA4 itinerary is replicable for similar programmes on the other, the context is very particular (assistance to Roma micro-entrepreneurs in Albania). It cannot be taken for granted that the implementation methods are replicable, as in PA4 they were strongly (and correctly) adapted to a very particular context.
PA5	<b>Mapko:</b> Connecting community gardens in the Czech Republic	<b>High.</b> The core of the project revolves around the Mapko.cz platform, a digital hub that connects community gardens and composting sites. It could be easily customised for use in other countries or cities.
PA6	<b>Food4Schools:</b> A toolkit to inspire healthy and sustainable food initiatives in schools	<b>Medium/High:</b> On the one hand, the nature of school system governance, levels of funding and food provided can differ significantly between countries.  On the other hand, the project is already well tapped into relevant EU policy processes – most notably drawing on insights from the SchoolFood4Change project – which has significant reach across and beyond Europe.
PA7	<b>Edu Move:</b> Boosting bike use in suburban Tirana	<b>Medium:</b> Mainly because they offered bikes to the pupils
PA8	<b>Todas en Bici:</b> Connecting cycling activism with social justice struggles	<b>Medium/High:</b> The initiative does not require major financial investment or infrastructure changes (such as cycle lanes) and builds on existing groups, initiatives and activities, working to connect them. It however requires a vibrant cycling community, which is not always there.
PA9	<b>Uključí se! (Get involved!):</b> Supporting green initiatives	<b>Medium/High:</b> Similar platforms to connect green projects with companies, individuals and NGOs could be set up in other countries.
PA10	<b>School goes green:</b> Volunteering opportunities for school students	<b>Medium/High:</b> It can be replicated geographically, provided the implementation team has a good network of contacts with the school and associations where the students can volunteer.

### Open Studio & Action Plan: “From Pilot Action to Sustainable Social Change”

To support, promote and multiply the impact of the PAs, the consortium decided to hold an Open Studio (OS) called “From Pilot Action to Sustainable Social Change”. Six out of ten PAs attended and developed a detailed action plan to replicate and multiply their PAs with support of the consortium member and external experts. Here the PAs noted the importance of securing effective implementation, sustainability and impact first before seeking to scale or multiply. Two primary bottlenecks were identified in this regard: securing access to longer-term funding, and the need for more support from local governments, with peer support and matchmaking identified as further necessary supporting actions.

Based on the feedback from this OS, an *Open Studio Multiplication Action Plan* was developed for ICLEI and other relevant partners involved in the PA process to support the PA multiplication. Identified activities include:

- Profiling the pilot actions and their outputs

Including the summaries provided in this document, links to key project outputs, publications and websites. The plan is to update the ACCTING PA profile pages as well as sharing this with relevant stakeholders (potential funders and future collaborators - e.g. the ICLEI thematic teams working on topics like food and mobility). Here it is crucial to formalise **process knowledge** (e.g. handbook, toolbox, and other similar deliverables) at a level that is general enough for multiplication by other actors in different contexts. Translations of key outputs are thus currently underway.

- Support with networking

Introducing PAs to the "**Urban Community on Sustainable & Just Cities**" as a community of peer-support. The Urban Community is a legacy of the *UrbanA* and *UrbanCommunity* projects, designed as an open space of exchange between a diversity of stakeholders from municipalities, civil society, academia etc. PAs were invited to send their LinkedIn profiles, and these were used to introduce PAs to the [LinkedIn group](#). PAs were also invited to freely share information about their work, including achievements and needs for support/collaborations.

Planning an **in-person reflection & exchange workshop** in Brussels with (hopefully) all PAs as well as a number of external CSOs from other parts of Europe identified based on their potential ability to replicate the PA approach. The PAs will present their work, including key challenges and future plans, and will benefit from input from matching external CSOs. This will take place on Wednesday, April 30th - the morning after the ACCTING final conference.

- Capacity-building

Organising a **two-part online webinar series** on the crucial topics of securing funding, and support by local governments:

The first Community Conversation on "*Funding support for bottom-up initiatives: An overview of sources & tips for applying*" was held on Tuesday, 11 Feb, 3-4pm with contributions from Matthew Bach (ICLEI, sharing experience with EU funding), Ania Rok (formerly Open Society Foundation, sharing experience with philanthropic funding) and Janelle Conn (ECOLISE, introducing funding opportunities under the [Funding Fairer Futures](#) project). Slides and a [summary](#) were shared afterwards.

The second webinar (to be held in April 2025) will focus on the second bottleneck identified in the multiplication Open Studio - Recommendations for local governments to support the work of CSOs.

- Commonisers programme

ACCTING also launched a concept to train leaders - facilitators of existing or new commons initiatives. Many of the PAs are linked to commons, some of them even very strongly (PA2, PA5). This training programme concept emerged from the research results as well as the PAs and is now being developed together with partners. It will (hopefully) be launched after ACCTING ends, by consortium and external partners.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the ACCTING PA process served as a real-world laboratory for testing the project's theories and research on two levels: Firstly, it tested the 10 specific pilot action solutions, hypothesized to have high potential to address vulnerabilities in the areas of the EGD. These solutions were the result of a co-creation process based on the ACCTING research results, using the Open Studio methodology to turn these into actionable "ideas" which were incorporated into the terms of reference and 10x different technical specifications.

An exhaustive selection process saw over 140 applicants assessed, leading to the selection of ten final PA proposals by CSOs from six EU countries. The PAs were implemented over the course of 12 months, from December 2023 to the end of November 2024. Close contact was maintained with the 10x PAs through both M&E meetings and a mid-term and final reports. The final report in particular was structured so as to not only assess contractual compliance, but also gain as much feedback as possible from the PAs, further enriching the report's final analysis.

Secondly, and more systemically, they tested the ACCTING approach of leveraging the crucial work that CSOs and BUIs are doing on the ground to implement the European Green Deal in a just and inclusive manner. This approach builds on factors including their social embeddedness and the significant trust they enjoy, the local expertise they can provide to policy- & decisions-makers, their ability to represent specific marginalised groups who are often excluded, and their ability to generally provide legitimacy to environmental governance processes.

On both levels the Pilot Action process can be considered a significant success. As the transversal analysis shows, the PAs effectively promoted inclusive, community-driven sustainability efforts by engaging directly with target groups and fostering co-creation and ownership, particularly among vulnerable populations. They encouraged collective behavioural change through engaging methods that connected EGD priorities to real-life experiences while ensuring tangible benefits for communities. Their long-term impact was strengthened by facilitating collaboration among diverse stakeholders, institutionalizing successful approaches, and promoting translocal learning.

However, challenges emerged, particularly regarding the lack of stable funding for CSOs and difficulties in collaborating with political and administrative authorities due to



bureaucratic barriers and governance limitations. To ensure sustainable impact, the findings emphasise the need for investment in community resilience, stronger partnerships between CSOs and local governments, and holistic approaches that address both individual and systemic barriers to behavioural change.

The impact of the pilot actions can be scaled through various pathways, including promoting the sustainability of the project and impact on-the-ground, the multiplication of the action solutions in other contexts, as well as the upscaling and integration of learnings into GD policy and governance mechanisms. In fact, the actual sustainability of the current PA projects and even the underlying organisations is often unclear, with lack of long-term funding the overwhelming concern – highlighting the danger of using and “discarding” local community groups in the long term and thus undermining crucial momentum and trust. Structures of support are needed. At the same time, there is a high potential for multiplication of the pilot solutions, with the present implementation serving as a ‘proof of concept’ and the implementing organisations as holders of transferable knowledge. Followingly, the ACCTING consortium is organizing a set of activities to address the identified bottlenecks of bottom-up transformation, to showcase the Pilot Action success and formalise lessons learned, and to promote partnership and multiplication efforts across Europe.

Finally, the findings of the PA implementation suggest a number of promising avenues to improve policy and governance processes for the inclusive implementation of the Green Deal. These should be explored in further depth and include:

Crucially, **public actors should embrace a culture of co-creation** and regular dialogue with local communities. Especially in the context of increasing uncertainty and (climate) volatility, this should not be seen not as an additional task but as the only effective response. Static, top-down plans will not work here. Instead, local and tradition knowledge needs to be mainstreamed throughout disaster risk management, biodiversity protection and other climate resilience measures. The systematic engagement of communities makes EGD transition processes tangible and has the potential to produce co-benefits, thus increasing public support and acceptance. This links to a wider shift from a reactive to **more proactive approach to policymaking**, focusing on prevention and resilience. With municipalities often under-capacitated, proactive engagement of local communities and CSOs can save significant time and effort in the long-run – allowing public actors to draw on a wealth of local knowledge, clearly define where support is required in times of crisis and allocate roles and trainings to local communities accordingly.

In this respect, local governments in particular should be encouraged and indeed **capacitated to better collaborate** with civil society, including building the necessary skills.<sup>6</sup> In the case of the ACCTING PAs, this includes recognising the different ways they can support - uptake and scaling versus enabling or complementary actions and creating spaces of collective governance in cities about topics that people (especially youth) might already feel passionate about, such as cycling. At the same time, the **different types of CSOs with different strengths** should be recognised: On the one hand, grassroots organisations, who are particularly embedded in their community, have higher trust levels, understanding of local conditions, and needs. On the other hand, network organisations

<sup>6</sup> See ACCTING fact sheet on [Public civil society partnerships for behavioural change](#).

have a crucial role as brokers of knowledge and intermediaries for collaboration with other (private & public) stakeholders.

To support the work of civil society organisations, a general recommendation is to **provide more (and long-term) funding to CSOs**, so that they can pay all staff for all the work they do. This will prevent difficulties arising from high staff turnover highlighted by a number of the PAs. Furthermore, it will increase involvement of vulnerable groups in CSOs, as such people are inevitably less likely to be able to take on unpaid work commitments. Even where no further funding is available, there are a host of ways in which **funders can support CSOs without incurring additional costs**. These include flexibility in proposal and reporting structures, ensuring balance in project monitoring activities, opportunities for pilots to provide their own feedback, and support for post-project pilots after the project - highlighting and amplifying their work to other relevant actors and especially potential funders. Finally, **training and leadership to support CSO operations** (rather than substantive work) is needed (see section 4.3).

The experience from the ACCTING PA implementation has also highlighted a number of recommendations for CSOs to leverage their work for impact. These include creating platforms for networking and collaboration (whether physical or online), focusing projects on topics with a high degree of translocal relevance, and gaining political support by linking projects to processes with more mainstream and high-level political agendas.

Particularly, the **involvement of educational actors and policy makers** has crystallised as a key lever for sustainable behavioural change beyond the own project. CSOs can benefit from working to incorporate their insights around inclusive, collective & sustainable behavioural change into educational policy, including school curricula. School environments have strong potential of inducing “ripple effects” – working through educational policy can help reach less engaged individuals such as parents through their children. It is also a particularly crucial enabler of “locking in” learnings from PAs, - influencing generations of students through inclusion of project outputs in school curricula and thereby driving long-term behavioural change, while developing a more nuanced and systemic understanding of the issues at hand.

Many of these recommendations point to the need for structural changes and holistic approaches to promote behavioural change. Behavioural change is often enabled or restricted by broader systemic conditions, especially for vulnerable groups. This includes infrastructure, cultural norms and the individual socio-economic situation, limiting the capacity to engage. In that regard, the Pilot Action approach is also limited to some extent. Holistic, multi-dimensional (policy) approaches are needed that consider individual capabilities, structural conditions and social dynamics to drive inclusive green transitions with communities at heart.

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# Annex: Analysis of Pilot Action contract performance

Table 4: Analysis of PA1 key requirements

Requirements: Project proposal	Met	Adapted	Further detail
Establish a cross-sectoral advisory board including local government officials, key community figures, and representatives from vulnerable groups like the elderly and women.	✓		<p>Phase 1: On the local level, key stakeholders were identified and contacted across four villages, and web meetings were arranged in each community to present the project and discuss a community-led disaster management plan.</p> <p>By the end of Phase 1, agreements were reached with 24 key individuals across the four villages, confirming their willingness to participate actively. Altogether, four web meetings and two in-person gatherings successfully established basic rapport and secured buy-in from local communities.</p>
Conduct hands-on, collaborative scenario-planning exercises in each targeted village, followed by simulated disaster response drills using local resources.	✓		<p>Phase 3: the project team started to develop a community-led disaster risk reduction framework. They conducted content analysis of recorded discussions and interviews to identify local strengths and vulnerabilities and performed a stakeholder analysis to clarify roles and concerns. An infrastructure assessment using maps and tables helped pinpoint resources and gaps, and through community events, participants collaborated to define a baseline (Scenario 0) and propose improvements (Draft Scenario B)</p>
Set up both physical and digital platforms to facilitate open community discussions on vulnerabilities, equality, and the ethical dimensions of disaster management.	✓		<p>Emphasizing prevention, readiness, response, and recovery, the framework was organised into worksheets designed to simplify planning tasks, promote local ownership, and ensure consistency across participating communities. Meanwhile, recorded discussions and interviews were thoroughly reviewed to uncover local strengths, vulnerabilities, and ethical factors. These content analysis findings made certain that the scenario planning process aligned with the actual capacities and concerns of each community.</p> <p>When it came to scenario development, community events facilitated both a collective review of Scenario 0 and the collaborative creation of Draft Scenario B in all four villages.</p> <p>During Phase 4, the project team organised the third series of on-site events in Manganiako and Archaea Messini, focusing on practical demonstrations for handling potential fires in homes, gardens, and fields. Participants learned about the fire triangle (heat, fuel, oxygen), practiced using fire extinguishers and fire blankets, and were introduced to Draft Scenario B. The third series of on-site events could not be held in Koromilia and Trikorfo because the fire season started unexpectedly early this year, making it unsafe to conduct the planned training since fire-usage outdoors is restricted during the fire season. After finalizing the model and the worksheets, the project team gathered feedback on the preliminary scenario B in a fourth series of on-site events in Koromilia, Trikorfo and Manganiako, by using the EU elections day. Community members were</p>

			<i>prompted to vote on their preferred actions but also propose additional actions if wanted.</i>
Methodically analyse and convert all lessons learned and data collected into a set of actionable policy recommendations. These recommendations will then be presented to local and regional policymakers, aiming for long-term, systemic change.	✓		<i>Phase 6: In this final phase, the project team recorded and disseminated the project's results, concluding with recommendations for inclusive participatory processes as a standard model for wildfire management (included in the comprehensive Toolkit)</i>

Table 5: Analysis of PA2 key requirements

Requirements: Project proposal	Met	Adapted	Further detail
Three field training workshops on biodiversity inventory, monitoring and management, targeting local stakeholders and interested parties, with a focus on mobile livestock farmers		✓	
The recording and mapping of the biodiversity of Zagori through Bio-Blitz workshops and Sound Walks	✓		
The identification and mapping of ecosystem services in the field		✓	
The identification of the cultural identity of the nomadic pastoralists	✓		
Educational Programme for Children on the paths of transhumance and biodiversity	✓		
Mobile photo exhibition inspired by the local biodiversity and its connection to the transhumance routes.	✓		
Creation of products from pastoral women	✓		



Table 6: Analysis of PA3 key requirements

Requirements: Project proposal	Met	Adapted	Further detail
Online forum: the 2-day forum will be a platform for similar ECs initiatives to get together and spread the word about the potential of energy communities for social change.		✓	<p>The number of ECs submitted is lower than estimated in the proposal, 9 ECs registered for the call (one more registered after the deadline). This is one of the issues addressed in the follow-up meetings. The state of development of the EC(s) in Spain is quite low, being isolated and recent projects, in which in many cases inclusion has not been addressed. Even so, we want to assess the differences between the projects registered, in terms of territory, size and needs. For further details, please refer to appendix c1. This is one of the reasons why it was decided to approach the policy brief as a useful guide to generate resources that are easy to understand and apply.</p>
Award ceremony: Held in Madrid, Spain, the ceremony will enable all applicants to meet and exchange face-to-face.	✓		<p>Award ceremony attendants – 30 people. The target attendance is exceeded, including the option to watch the gala live and the recording afterwards. A representative of the IDAE (Spanish national energy agency) was scheduled to attend this event, but was informed at short notice that they were not going to be able to do so in the end.</p> <p>The awards ceremony has accumulated 150+ views to date: Link to <a href="#">YouTube video</a></p> <p>The award ceremony allowed CEs from all over the country to exchange contacts with socially-minded energy professionals and other CEs. This natural impulse is what gave rise to the creation of the telegram group (not yet concluded at time of writing).</p>
Prize money for two distinguished awards (app. €5,000 per award)		✓	<p>Prize money reduced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- From approximately €10,000 total (€2x 5,000)</li> <li>- To €5,000 total (1x €2500, 2x €1,000 &amp; 3x €500)</li> </ul> <p>Discussed and approved with ACCTING monitoring team → After several internal meetings, it was decided to reduce the amount of the prizes in order to allocate the budget to other items, mainly to increase the amount initially allocated to the programmed events (Forum and Awards Ceremony) and to the elaboration of the final briefing. We believe that facilitating an environment</p>

			<p>in which the ECs can network and freely exchange their experiences and needs, and providing a document that is widely distributed with the conclusions of the project, will be a key element.</p> <p>Also slightly smaller scope (fewer applicants, etc.) Would it be interesting to have different categories? In this edition, we have decided not to divide the contestants. The current state of ECs in Spain is not sufficiently developed inclusivity practices to have any specialised approach.</p>
Policy brief: a policy brief report for citizens, policymakers and ECs named "Practical ideas for inclusion in an energy community" will address policies and economic models' ideas as well as other topics brought up during the online forum.		✓	<p><b>Policy Brief</b> (in <a href="#">Spanish</a>) English translation forthcoming. Written in the form of a practical guide, responding to the primary need that we have detected: the lack of perspective and training among the volunteers who make up the energy communities, in the area of poverty and inclusiveness. It brings together all the methodological proposals and tools, in an accessible, easy-to-read format that facilitates its use as a practical guide. It gathers all the tools and methodological proposals, in an accessible and easy to read format that facilitates its use as a practical guide.</p> <p>We have not yet reached 150 downloads registered on the website, but we are very optimistic about the scope of the policy brief. We understand that the timing of the launch (18 December) is not the most appropriate from a strategic point of view, so the dissemination is planned in several stages. In January 2025, we will continue with it, and among other activities we will carry out an online presentation inviting all the people who participated in the previous activities</p> <p>The policy brief dissemination campaign has been designed in two different stages due to the holidays so close to its publication (details in annex b5). The first stage, linked to the awards ceremony, has been completed. The second phase, which will start in January with an online presentation, will be linked to the publicity of the second edition of the awards.</p>

Table 7: Analysis of PA4 key requirements

Requirements: Project proposal	Met	Adapted	Further detail
<p>1. Call to Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operational design and test of tools to be utilised for broader dissemination and raising awareness among micro-entrepreneurs</li> </ul>	✓		<p>The Project team decided to apply an interactive approach, taking into consideration the vulnerability and marginalised situations of Roma community members (low level of education, the difficulty to understand the Albanian language as some of them use the Roma language more, socio-economic difficulties etc.)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisation of 3 info sessions</li> </ul>			<p>Thus, the project team decided to organise the activities such as: info sessions, coaching sessions near their settlements as to facilitate their participation in project activities. The team also decided to have participatory approach based on informal discussion rather than academic presentations and the duration of the meetings should not exceed 3 hours, so that the activities would be as productive as possible and the participants would not lose concentration.</p>
<p>2. Engaging the interested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment of the experts responsible for training</li> <li>• Follow-up programme for vulnerable micro-entrepreneurs, who express (max. 20)</li> </ul>	✓		<p>During the reporting period, the project team recruited an expert focusing on environmental issues and an expert for preparing an online platform for fostering the networking among Roma micro-entrepreneurs. The project team decided to engage experts who have been collaborating with the organisation in previous projects, because they are familiar with the context of the Roma population.</p> <p>Following the info sessions, coaching sessions were organised with small group of Roma micro-entrepreneurs. The project team selected 20 Roma micro-entrepreneurs among the one that participated in the info session trying to strike a balance by involving different representatives of the various groups such as Roma women, young Roma, returnees, who are interested in the project, project locations etc.</p> <p>The groups of participants in each project locality were composed as following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Tirana 9 participants (6 F). (The profile of Micro-enterprises: Second hand clothes, Recycling, Hairdressing)</li> <li>• In Fier 7 Participants (3 F). (The profile of Micro-enterprises: Second hand clothes, Recycling, agriculture, herbal medicine, cleaning company)</li> <li>• In Berat 4 participants (All F) (The profile of Micro-enterprises: Second hand clothes, Recycling)</li> </ul> <p>In each of localities were conducted 6 training sessions.</p>
<p>3. Tailored Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of micro-enterprises sectors to be focused on in the pilot action</li> <li>• Identification and recruit</li> </ul>	✓		<p>15 vulnerable micro-entrepreneurs were involved in tailored support, 5 more beneficiaries than 10 initially planned in the project. IRCA's request for additional funds to increase the number of entrepreneurs to be followed individually was approved by the donor.</p> <p>During the reporting period, two training workshops were organised on the topics: "Funding</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recruitment of the experts responsible for training</li> <li>recruitment of up to 10 vulnerable Roma micro-entrepreneurs to be supported</li> <li>Tailored support on issues of interest</li> </ul>			<p><i>Opportunities for Green Micro-Enterprises in Albania” and “Formalisation of Micro-Enterprises”.</i></p> <p><i>The primary goals of the training on funding opportunities for green micro-enterprises were:</i></p> <p><i>1) To increase awareness among green micro-enterprises about available funding opportunities in Albania;</i></p> <p><i>2) To provide practical guidance on accessing grants, loans, and other financial support mechanisms.</i></p> <p><i>3) To enhance the capacity of participants to prepare competitive funding proposals.</i></p>
<p>4. Mutual support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment of additional micro and small entrepreneurs</li> <li>Establish Coalition of Roma Green Micro-entrepreneurs (CRGM) &amp; online platform</li> <li>organise 3 exchange visits</li> </ul>	✓		<p><i>An informal Coalition of Roma Green Micro-Entrepreneurs in Albania was established and it was developed as an online platform as a hub for resources, opportunities, and communication among coalition members. [This] created a support system, encouraging collaboration and collective problem-solving within a vulnerable demographic.</i></p> <p><i>3 exchange visits for 15 Roma Micro-entrepreneurs supported by the project, were organised in each of the project locations. The visits aimed to showcase successful green practices applied by the small businesses in the region and to foster inspiration and knowledge-sharing among the participants.</i></p>
<p>5. Recognition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Award/recognition of success stories (3 awards)</li> <li>Public event</li> </ul>	✓		<p>The project provided awards for 3 success stories, among 15 Roma micro-entrepreneurs supported.</p> <p>On November 27, the concluding event for the project "Supporting Roma Micro-Entrepreneurs in Albania towards Better Environmental Sustainability" took place in Tirana. The event marked the culmination of a series of impactful activities aimed at empowering Roma micro-entrepreneurs and promoting environmental sustainability within their enterprises. The activity was attended by about 30 participants (project beneficiaries from the 3 implementation areas, representatives of civil society organisations and other local actors).</p> <p>The event commenced with a greeting speech delivered by the Executive Director of IRCA, Mr. Bledar Taho. In his address, Mr. Taho highlighted the project's mission to foster inclusivity and environmental awareness among Roma communities. He expressed gratitude to the participants, project partners, and stakeholders for their unwavering support and dedication. A detailed presentation was provided by the Project Manager to showcase the activities undertaken during the</p>

			<p>project's implementation phase. Key milestones included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organising workshops and training sessions on eco-friendly business practices; and</li> <li>• Providing financial and technical support to Roma micro-entrepreneurs.</li> </ul>
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Table 8: Analysis of PA5 key requirements

Requirements: Project proposal	Met	Adapted	Further detail
Activity No. 1 - Mapko.cz Update. We will reach out to missing actors from the community gardens and other projects. We will register them, update existing registered locations and projects, fill in missing information, expand, and refine descriptions of individual sites and their activities.	✓		<p><i>A comprehensive revamp of Mapko.cz significantly enhanced its usability, especially on mobile devices, and integrated a centralised communication strategy. The platform registered 59 new community gardens (making the current total count of 184) while documenting the closure of 12 others.</i></p> <p><i>New features were introduced, including an interactive menu, a comprehensive knowledge bank, and user recognition through special badges, confirming the entity's status on the platform. In today's version, the badges are divided into four categories: 1) Verified Garden (the CG that is fully operational and its members are responsive and are willing to implement new ideas); 2) Verification Pending (the CGs that we assume as operational (through personal or other connections), yet, they have not yet responded to a call for a certification procedure); 3) Vanished Garden (these are the gardens that have confirmed us that they are no longer operational). In addition, the same logic of the badges was developed for the community composters (further referred to as CC), as they serve almost the same purpose as the CG but on a smaller scale. Due to the high volume of the CCs constructed in Czechia, not all of them have yet been verified. These badges are today assigned to all newly registered. All previous users have been asked to proceed with the verification. Those who have not responded to the initial call were reminded via email. Further phone calls and in-person meetings have been arranged. Today, we are waiting for the verification of approximately 42% of the CGs.</i></p>
Activity No. 2 - Meeting of "Rhizomes." Invite all individuals from our current list, which currently comprises 260 contacts. The meetings will occur twice a year in Prague (one day). Additionally, we will promote the event on social media platforms	✓		<p><i>Two Rhizome Meetings brought together community members and stakeholders. These events encouraged collective discussions and insights, directly influencing improvements to the Mapko platform. During the second meeting, consultations refined 30% of the platform's content.</i></p>



Activity No. 3 - Online Advisory and Consultation in the areas of composting, gardening, the establishment of community gardens, and the management of organic waste (Email and SM). We anticipate addressing approximately 1000 inquiries	✓	<p><i>The advisory service handled 1,284 inquiries, with composting (65%), community garden operations (21%), and capacity-building for leaders among the most frequent topics.</i></p> <p><i>The second Rhizomes meeting, held on November 6, focused on evaluating the user experience of the updated Mapko platform, as well as members' perceptions and benefits of the engagement within the urban agriculture framework. Community members participated in consultations lasting 3.5 hours, providing critical feedback on the platform's usability and content. As a result, approximately 30% of the content was refined, with significant improvements in mobile device compatibility and the organisation of articles on the website. Based on feedback, the idea of maintaining a live feed of updates was replaced with a unified communication strategy under Kokoza. This approach streamlined communication, increased organic reach, and encouraged active user engagement. Additionally, GDPR policies were updated to ensure compliance while embedding all Mapko users into Kokoza's centralised system.</i></p>
Activity No. 4 - Publicity and Project Impact Monitoring. We will consistently disseminate project updates through our communication channels, including our website, blog, and SM platforms.	✓	<p><i>Four newsletters were distributed to Kokoza's mailing list, providing updates on the progress of the project, highlighting success stories, and promoting opportunities for involvement. The newsletters reached over 3,000 subscribers, with an average open rate of 42%, significantly above the industry benchmark. Social media posts achieved high engagement, with a total reach of 6,340 users per month and a notable spike during the campaign for attracting community gardens.</i></p> <p><i>A targeted social media campaign was implemented on Kokoza's platforms, focusing on attracting community gardens to join the enhanced Mapko platform. These posts included testimonials, interactive content, and success metrics to demonstrate the platform's value.</i></p> <p><i>Direct emails were sent to NGOs, CSOs, and municipal representatives, inviting them to explore the Mapko platform and participate in collaborative opportunities. Participation in high-profile events, such as the Sustainability Summit 2024, RefuFest, and Vyspělé Česko 2024, significantly expanded the project's visibility.</i></p>

Table 9: Analysis of PA6 key requirements

Requirements:			Further detail
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Project proposal			
<p>Desk research and data analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One research report</li> </ul>	✓		<p>(i) How can we promote systemic changes that promote sustainable nutrition in schools, while connecting them with small and medium-sized organic farmers and producers?</p> <p>(ii) How can we raise awareness, educating and motivating school communities (teachers, students, parents and school staff) to engage in sustainable nutrition practices?</p> <p>The content of the Toolkit is based on a three-part <a href="#">research report</a> that explores these questions by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>considering the research conclusions of three previous Mamagea projects on sustainable nutrition in Thessaloniki;</li> <li>listing a number of best practices and case examples across Europe on sustainable school food procurement; and</li> <li>providing a mapping of the present situation of school food procurement in Greek schools.</li> </ul>
<p>Participatory workshops and policymaking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three (3) Participatory Workshops for systemic change*</li> <li>Two (2) Participatory Workshop for educational content creation*</li> <li>One (1) Local Action Plan highlighting the roadmap for sustainable food in schools</li> </ul>	✓		<p>[Mamagea completed] 5 participatory workshops aimed at capturing and co-designing processes, actions and steps for the implementation of the "Farm to Fork" Strategy in school environments and at creating educational materials for school communities through collaborative mapping, problem-solving techniques &amp; critical discussions on sustainable nutrition.</p> <p>A maximum of 24 policy makers and municipal stakeholders were involved in the participatory workshop for systemic change and focus group.</p> <p>The engagement of vulnerable groups has primarily been addressed during the participatory workshops for educational content (D2.2), whereby participating schools were distributed in varying socio-economic and cultural demographics, including pupils from a multicultural school. D2.2 not online - needs to be requested from Mamagea.</p> <p>The <a href="#">local action plan</a> has been successfully completed, in collaboration with the municipality of Thessaloniki.</p>
<p>One (1) toolkit with two parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part 1: Administrative toolkit for implementing</li> </ul>		✓	<p>The <a href="#">F4S toolkit</a> was initially described as one deliverable consisting of two parts: one administrative toolkit for implementing Farm to Fork Strategy at a local level and one educational toolkit</p>

<p>F2F Strategy at a local level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part 2: Educational toolkit for raising awareness and educating school communities</li> </ul>			<p>for raising awareness and educating school communities.</p> <p>Following Mamagea's pre-final M&amp;E meeting with the SEERC team on the 20th of September, it was deemed relevant that the two parts of the toolkit come separately as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part one primarily concerns local authorities and it coincides with the Local Action Plan</li> <li>Whereas part two concerns school communities and can be distributed more broadly.</li> </ul> <p>As such, from now on when referring to the F4S toolkit we primarily refer to the educational toolkit addressed to the school communities.</p>
<p>Dissemination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One (1) promotional video documentation</li> <li>One (1) photobook</li> <li>Fifteen (15) official invitations to public bodies and education representatives</li> <li>Three (3) interviews on local radio and television shows</li> <li>Two (2) press releases</li> <li>Ten (10) posts (at least) on Mamagea's social media and website</li> <li>One (1) digital format/upload of the toolkit</li> </ul>	✓		<p><i>In the context of communication and dissemination activities, Mamagea has successfully completed all deliverables described under WP4.5. See <a href="#">links here</a>.</i></p> <p><i>Additional activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The training seminar entitled <b>“Children-City-Environment: towards a green and participatory present in school communities”</b></li> <li>The ACCTING F4S toolkit was presented during Genderyard's closing ceremony hosted by the Municipality of Thessaloniki. Title <b>“<a href="#">School yards and communities as living labs for inclusion, equality and urban resilience</a>”</b>.</li> </ul>
<p>Project management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One (1) project report</li> </ul>	✓		<p>Submitted to ACCTING WP5 team 27th December 2024</p>

Table 10: Analysis of PA7 key requirements

Requirements: Project proposal	Met	Adapted	Further detail
Research and Fieldwork			

Conducting a survey in 5 secondary schools to understand transportation habits and attitudes toward cycling	✓		
Identifying potential local partners such as bike shops willing to offer discounts	✓		
Researching potential routes for cycling and bike racks focusing on safety, accessibility and convenience	✓		
Awareness and Education			
Organising school engagement meetings to raise awareness about the benefits of cycling	✓		
Conducting workshops to introduce the basics of biking, safety measures and bike maintenance	✓		
Implementation			
Implementing the programme across all 5 secondary schools in Kamëz Municipality	✓		
Setting up a Bike to School Day to encourage mass participation	✓		
Organising a competition among pupils to celebrate bike use	✓		

Table 11: Analysis of PA8 key requirements

Requirements: Project proposal	Met	Adapted	Further detail
Putting local cycling and social justice groups in contact to pursue inclusive active mobility;	✓		<p>The coordination group was organised in monthly dialogue meetings with the cycling and social justice ecosystem since January 2024. The aims of the</p> <p>coordination group were (1) to define and guide the program of activities of the pilot project in order to build consensus and promote those efforts that had been underfunded, fill gaps in the programming or cater specifically for women, (2) establish a collective governance mechanism for the governance of the pilot project, (3) co-organise activities and events, (4) connect local struggles for</p> <p>cycling activism and social justice struggles.</p>

			<p>The coordination team (<i>espai de trobada</i>) was open to any participant, be it an entity, an association, an activist, a grass-roots movement representative, a municipal technician, a representative of the regional government, etc.</p>
Disseminating existing efforts, making them visible while at the same time inspiring other initiatives to join efforts and organise activities and events together.	✓		<p>We realised through and thanks to the coordination team there was a very vibrant ecosystem of cycling and social justice activism including grassroots movements, entities, associations and activists. We also observed and understood the necessary knowledge or the creativity necessary to devise a program of activities already existed within the ecosystem, but resources and time were lacking.</p> <p>From the onset, the coordination team was articulated around the idea of joining forces, injecting resources and helping strategically where the ecosystem needed it the most. The main objective devised collectively was to support and bring coordination and synergies between the existing stakeholders and cover the missing links that are not already covered by the ecosystem,</p> <p>focusing specifically on young people, women and vulnerabilised populations. The point being to strategically invest efforts to add strength where there is already momentum, rather than to propose activities that might not answer to the existing needs of the ecosystem.</p> <p>We also aimed to reach vulnerabilised individuals or groups by transforming the governance of the pilot project by giving decision-making power to the coordination team. We considered that we would be more efficient in reaching vulnerabilised groups if we were aiming to include the demands of the existing ecosystem of cycling and social justice activists. For instance, we developed an activity with self-managed bicycle workshops of the city, which was not based on competition, but mutual support, recognition and discovery.</p>
Identifying and discussing national-level and local-level specific obstacles to inclusivity in and through cycling	✓		<p>During the initial research and design phase, we also used the Logical Model Framework (LFM) to work on the project planning, taking into account sources of verification, indicators and sources of potential risk. The internal monitoring covered the main activities and lines of action: the coordination group, disseminating existing efforts, identifying and discussing national level and local level-specific obstacles to inclusivity, and promoting advocacy actions at the local or regional level to address the identified problems.</p> <p>See also Policy tool to localise the European Declaration on Cycling in Barcelona.</p>



Promoting advocacy actions at the local or regional level to address the identified problems.	✓		See above ↑
Tangible outputs:			
A printed booklet compiling better stories and best practices (both local and international) of social justice and climate action through cycling, to be distributed in community events;	✓		<u><i>Better Stories: The Right to the Cycling City</i></u>  <i>A compilation of stories we have collected from 16 different cities across the world that narrate the many ways in which the bicycle is mobilised as a tool for social and climate justice (<a href="#">link</a>)</i>
An open-source policy tool on overcoming gender-biased obstacles to cycling, specifically targeted towards policy-makers	✓		<i>See Policy tool to localise the European Declaration on Cycling in Barcelona.</i>
After the end of the project, a research publication in an academic journal and/or a relevant conference which will reflect upon the impacts and findings from the pilot project.	✓		<i>We have engaged in communication activities, participating in numerous public activities, seminars and conferences organised around the issue of active mobility in the city of Barcelona, in Valencia and in Porto. [We also presented our] pilot project at a symposium on "Cycling and Society" taking place in Porto. We also attended other events at a local level. One of these was an international event on local democracy and climate adaptation organised by ICLEI, where we had the opportunity to share our local efforts and learning from the pilot project with global activists from around the world.</i>

Table 12: Analysis of PA9 key requirements

Requirements: Project proposal	Met	Adapted	Further detail
Developing the first digital platform for volunteers that promotes and supports green projects by individuals, informal citizens" groups and organisations and stimulates networking and collaboration	✓		
Promoting volunteering and individual actions tackling pressing issues in relation to sustainable development and climate change that can multiply in the local community	✓		
Motivating corporations to engage in public activities that promote environmental protection	✓		

Table 13: Analysis of PA10 key requirements

Requirements: Project proposal	Met	Adapted	Further detail
At least 20 volunteering experiences were to be made available to students of the Regina Margherita highschool. These will last at least 10 days (20h minimum) and will be implemented between June and August 2024 among the local organisations of Per esempio's network.	✓		
Volunteering opportunities were to be promoted locally and within the high school thanks to the involvement of the student committee (Sindacato).	✓		
A school event was to be organised to share and celebrate the outcomes of the volunteering activities undertaken by students. The aim being to share the achievements of participants and inspire other young people and families to open up toward sustainable lifestyle and volunteering.	✓		

