



**UNDERSTANDING
ECO-ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

INCUBATOR
COMPOSITE REPORT –
TRAINERS

PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT ACRONYM	ECOPRENEETS
PROJECT TITLE	Boosting the Eco-preneurial Skills of NEETs
PROJECT REFERENCE	2022-2-FR02-KA220-YOU-000098683
PROJECT DURATION	31.03.2023-30.03.2025
PROJECT WEBSITE	https://ecopreneets.erasmusplus.website/

PROJECT PARTNERS



Version	Date	Author	Organisation	Action	Pages
1	25/02/2025	G. GRIVA	LEARNING SEED	C	7

(*) Action: C = Creation, I = Insert, U = Update, R = Replace, D = Delete

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A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EcopreNEETs Incubator implemented to allow young NEETs from all over Europe the chance to legitimize their green entrepreneurial projects. The experiment was assessed in France, the Netherlands, Hungary, Poland, and Greece—with only a theoretical application assessment in the first two and more hands-on workshops, mentoring, and networking in the last three. Results indicated a significant increase in participants' feelings of efficacy, increased awareness, and intent to participate in green entrepreneurial projects.

There were particulars to celebrate for each national implementation. France did a business simulation and company visits; the Netherlands developed a more formalized online training course with a positive outcome, and Hungary decided upon personalisations as its next step. Poland and Greece had the business development implementation, which had participants solve problems for local businesses, and they solved problems for them, so the trainers had to train the trainer to ensure efficacy. However, the most important result of the national implementations is the mentorship, for all participants indicated that they required a further mentoring process aside from the training workshop. The most prominent suggestions are additional mentorship, out of the relevance to case studies, and further access for those seeking grants/business development options.



EcopreNEETs Incubator is a project that aimed to teach NEETs the fundamentals of eco-entrepreneurship. A transnational experiment took place across Europe—France, Netherlands, Hungary, Poland, and Greece—with various formats and durations due to each country's needs. This is the final summary document of the national trainer reports, lessons learned, assessment of project success, and suggestions for moving forward.

1. Participant Demographics

France

In France, the incubator was implemented in multiple locations, including Agen (Lot-et-Garonne), Bordeaux (Gironde), Mérignac (Gironde), and Saintes (Charente-Maritime). The programs ranged from one-day workshops to full incubation cycles.

- **Agen:** A group of 9 NEETs participated in an eco-business simulation focused on waste recycling. They created fictitious businesses, met with local enterprises, and engaged in cooperative projects such as producing and selling Christmas decorations from recycled materials.
- **Bordeaux:** A single-day session was attended by 8 participants and focused on raising awareness of eco-entrepreneurship through games and group activities.
- **Mérignac:** A one-day incubator tested the interest of NEETs, with three learners engaging in interactive eco-business games. Following its success, a longer three-month program is planned.



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- **Saintes:** This location hosted a structured multi-session program from September to December 2024, including workshops on business models, legal frameworks, and marketing strategies. The participants visited local eco-businesses, such as Croq'papier, and took part in community sustainability events.

Netherlands

The Dutch program was delivered as a three-day online workshop, engaging 12 young NEETs and four enterprise stakeholders. The training emphasized sustainable business development and eco-entrepreneurial networking. Mentorship was a key component, with learners praising the personalized support they received. However, some challenges included accessibility issues related to the online platform and the need for more diverse learning materials.

Hungary

The Hungarian pilot, conducted in Budapest in December 2024 and January 2025, had 12 participants, primarily aged 25–30. The program provided a mix of theoretical and practical components, including case studies on sustainable businesses. Participants found the mentorship component especially transformative, as it helped them refine their eco-business ideas. Key challenges included technical difficulties in online modules and a desire for more hands-on business planning exercises.



Poland

In Poland, the incubation sessions targeted both urban and rural NEETs. The program was structured around business model development, financial planning, and sustainability practices. While learners found the mentorship valuable, they requested more real-life case studies and opportunities to engage in peer-to-peer learning. Several participants expressed interest in collaborating post-program to develop joint eco-business projects.

Greece

Greece hosted a hybrid format incubator, blending online learning with in-person workshops. The focus was on circular economy principles, with participants developing prototypes of eco-friendly products. A highlight was a collaboration with local businesses to test sustainable product ideas in real market conditions. The participants appreciated the structured approach but suggested longer mentoring periods to support the transition from ideation to implementation.



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2. Impact and Key Findings

Across all locations, participants reported significant improvements in their understanding of eco-entrepreneurship. Several key trends emerged:

- **Mentorship as a Game Changer:** Personalized mentorship was cited as the most valuable aspect, enabling participants to refine their business ideas and gain confidence.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Exposure to real-world eco-businesses provided essential insights and networking benefits.
- **Hands-on Learning:** Practical exercises, such as role-playing games and simulated business activities, were particularly effective in engaging learners.
- **Need for Extended Support:** Many participants requested longer-term mentorship and guidance on securing funding for their ventures.

Recommendations for Future Iterations

1. **Expand Mentorship Programs:** Introduce a structured post-incubation mentorship network to provide continued support.
2. **Incorporate More Real-World Case Studies:** Engage successful eco-entrepreneurs in sharing their journeys with participants.
3. **Enhance Practical Learning Components:** Offer more site visits, internships, and real-life business challenges.
4. **Improve Online Learning Accessibility:** Address technical challenges in virtual training components to ensure smoother user experiences.
5. **Support Collaborative Projects:** Foster partnerships between participants across different countries to create cross-border eco-business initiatives.

3. Conclusion

The EcopreNEETs Incubator pilot phase has demonstrated the potential of structured training in eco-entrepreneurship to significantly impact young NEETs across Europe. The initiative successfully provided essential business and sustainability knowledge, fostering confidence in participants and opening pathways for further development.

A key takeaway from the program is the vital role mentorship plays in shaping entrepreneurial aspirations. Personalized guidance from experienced mentors helped participants refine their ideas and provided the motivation needed to take their plans forward. However, the request for continued support beyond the program indicates that mentorship should extend into a structured post-training phase.

Networking also proved to be a fundamental component. Exposure to real-life eco-businesses and opportunities to connect with professionals allowed participants to better understand the sustainability sector. Going forward, integrating direct interactions with successful eco-entrepreneurs into the curriculum can enhance the program's impact.

Another area that requires strengthening is the accessibility and diversity of learning materials. While the program effectively introduced key business concepts, feedback suggests a need for a broader range of case studies and more interactive elements, particularly for online learning modules.

Future editions of the EcopreNEETs Incubator should focus on expanding support mechanisms for graduates of the program. This could include seed funding assistance, structured mentorship programs, and more opportunities for peer collaboration. Additionally, further engagement with local businesses and institutions will enhance real-world learning opportunities.

In conclusion, the pilot phase of the EcopreNEETs Incubator was a resounding success in fostering eco-entrepreneurial skills among NEETs. By addressing the identified areas for improvement, the program can evolve into an even more robust platform that equips young individuals with the knowledge, skills, and networks they need to thrive in the sustainable business landscape.

