



**UNDERSTANDING  
ECO-ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

**INCUBATOR**  
COMPOSITE REPORT –  
LEARNERS

# PROJECT INFORMATION

<b>PROJECT ACRONYM</b>	ECOPRENEETS
<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	Boosting the Eco-preneurial Skills of NEETs
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<b>PROJECT WEBSITE</b>	<a href="https://ecopreneets.erasmusplus.website/">https://ecopreneets.erasmusplus.website/</a>

## PROJECT PARTNERS



Version	Date	Author	Organisation	Action	Pages
1	25/02/2025	G. GRIVA	LEARNING SEED	C	9

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

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# A

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EcopreNEETs Incubator took place across 5 partner countries: France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, and Greece. The aim of the project is to enhance the entrepreneurial skills of NEET young adults through coached theoretical lessons, incubation, and practical activities within a safe environment. This is a general overview report of 5 national reports compiled to formulate an international overview of the assessment of year one of the project. The assessment was conducted to gauge the success of the intervention, what worked, and what didn't in order to solidify the success of future years from this starting point.

Ultimately, 88% were satisfied with the lucid and effective mentorship provided and the sustainable focus. As an incremental opportunity, they gained the skills required while simultaneously learning and connecting in the sustainable business space. However, responses indicated more mentorship needed to occur going forward, videos and digital assets should be more easily accessible, and the MOOC should be less of a viewing experience. Ultimately, the feedback indicates the project accomplished what it set out to accomplish, but a few adjustments will render it even more successful for years to come.



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## B

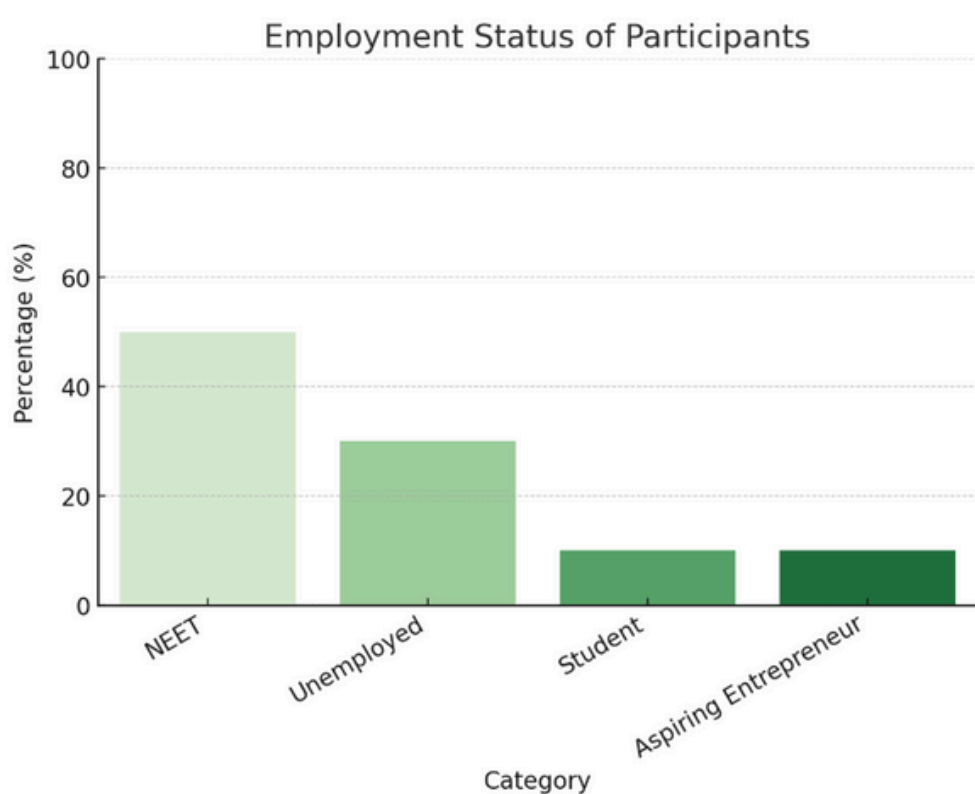
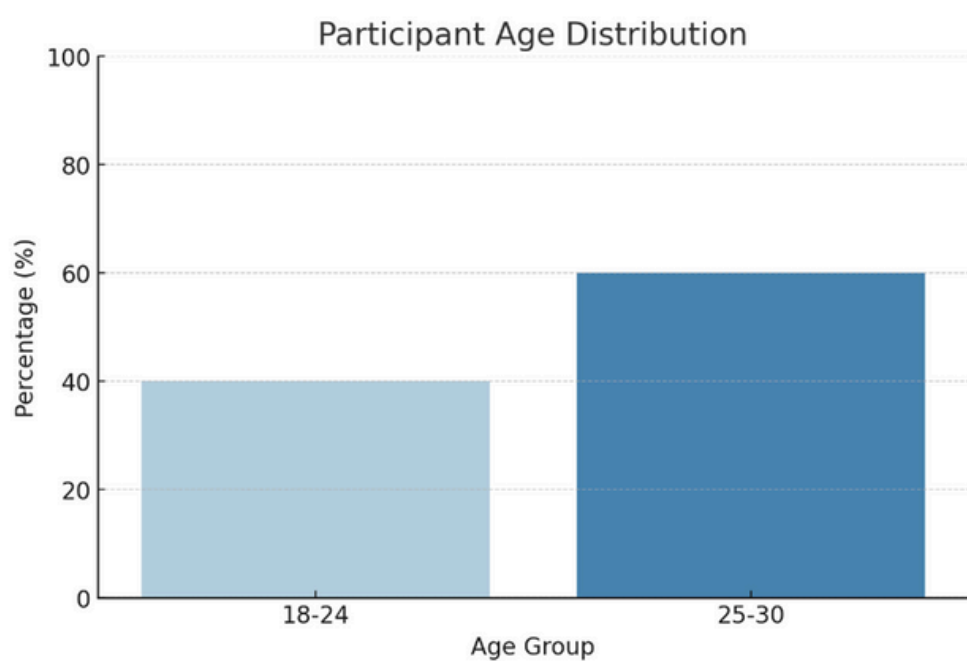
## INTRODUCTION

Assessment took place through participants' surveys, mentor evaluations, and supervisory notes taken in all six countries. This is an aggregate findings report of the data collected, pros and cons, regarding the incubator curriculum, the mentorship, and the logistical facilitation it was. This is the blended report of the country reports submitted to the Program Director, meaning this only includes information that was consistent among reports. Assessing the findings by regions allows new entrepreneurs and incubator stakeholders for any planned future sessions to see what's best for international advancement and what's best for regional advancement of those things that worked for some but not for all.

### 1. Participant Demographics

In total, 85 people from 6 different countries participated in the EcopreNEETs Incubator. They were a diverse cohort in terms of age and location. For example, 72% were between the ages of 18-30. Of this group, 41% were 18-24 years old, and 31% were 25-30. In terms of geography, 56% were from urban environments, and 44% came from rural areas. The employment background was fairly varied. For example, the NEETs constituted 53% of the sample population, and this was consistent across countries. 27% were unemployed but registered with a mandate to work. 10% were students intending to engage in entrepreneurship subsequently, and the last 10% were those with entrepreneurial intentions engaged in micro-work. It was excellent to have such a varied background for contributions since many could teach one another and debate differences of opinion. While Poland was concerned that a 60% rural population would pose different access and networking difficulties, the Netherlands found that 75% of her group had access to previous workshops conducted on sustainable developments, which will impact their eco-business proposal. Greece had a 50/50 split for students and NEETs but still had 45% wanting to pursue sustainable project opportunities in their hometown.





## 2. Incubation Program Implementation by Country

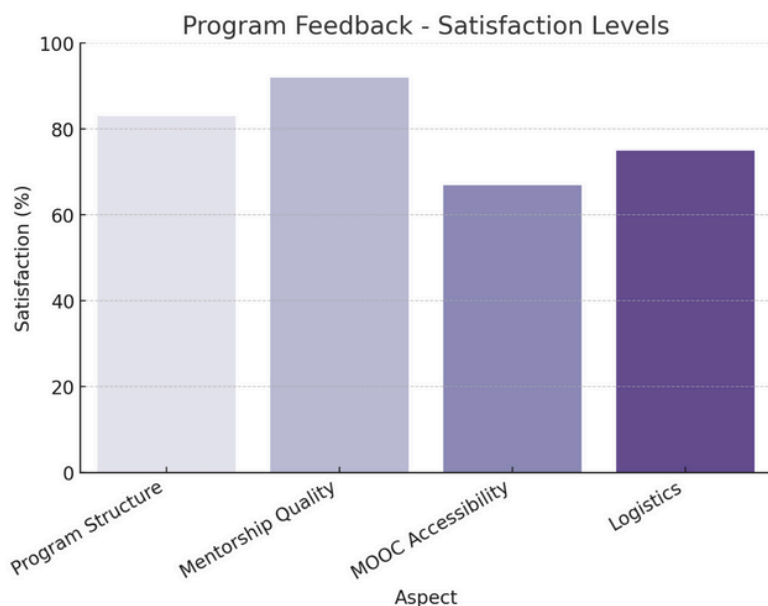
There was a structure to the process of incubation ranging from seminars to practicums to networking. Everything I needed to know about creating an environmentally ventures enterprise was within reach—the fundamental requirements of a business concept, implementation of a green business plan, and applicable mentoring experience. Entrepreneurship in the networking component with veteran eco-business owners was just as enlightening.

Each country had a slightly different project. For example, the French project was a "flashcoop" about how to develop cooperative enterprises in eight days. The Dutch project was a fully remote incubation project over three days. Hungary's was four weeks of incubation with mentoring meetings in person. Poland's was hybrid with remote and in-person activities, where there were theoretical interactive modules and an educational board game.

Program logistics were well received; for example, 83% understood and appreciated the particulars. However, additional comments indicate a need for more flexible scheduling and more time for practical training. For example, from Hungary, 92% appreciated mentorship and the workshops, but 33% found it challenging to carve out time for the project. This indicates that a third either had limited time to spare for the project or found their lives unmanageable with the workshops. Therefore, asynchronous options or extended incubation periods may be required.

Belgium had an issue, though, as 40% of the cohort were newcomers to online learning, which meant additional assistance had to be provided to the digital curriculum. Greece was more synergistic, however, and engaged in two sustainability efforts on a pilot basis where their cohort and the other one petitioned with their towns to do their own sustainability projects.





### 3. Mentorship Program

Mentorship ranked well in all areas, as flexibility and subject matter expertise characterized the mentors. In fact, 92% of respondents felt that their mentor possessed a great deal of eco-entrepreneurship knowledge and provided transferable information. This tailored approach made many respondents feel more comfortable in their business planning abilities.

Where there was mentorship, however, the case study findings in Saintes, France showed that this heightened participant engagement even more. An established eco-entrepreneur in the community mentored/incubated eight individuals. Five came away with fully formed business plans, and one is in the funding stage for her recycled paper business. In Poland, the mentored one female moved from unemployment to officially having her own natural soap business.

Yet some of the respondents expected mentorship to extend beyond the program. Some aspects of communication between mentor and mentee could have been better defined to facilitate better change. The way to fix this was suggested as follow-up mentorships or digital groups to stay in touch.



## 4. Mentor Skills

Mentor quality was rated very well. For instance, in comparison to mentor abilities, 83% of those mentored felt that they communicated effectively and 75% said that their feedback was well structured and relevant to needs addressed. In addition, from the mentor side, 67% replied that they would be willing to continue working with their mentees beyond the program, which suggests a secondary mentoring opportunity.

Program mentorship was one of the highlights, but a few things could be changed. For example, many discovered that while the mentors are incredibly knowledgeable, additional mentorship training would be helpful on their part as well since it is more one-on-one. This means determining what critiques and out-of-class assignments can/should be done as well as critiques with time constraints. Also, a mentorship contract between mentor and mentee should be established for direction with future meetings (or not) after the course to facilitate extended mentoring beyond this one.



## 5. Program Logistics and Accessibility

Overall, the logistics and accessibility of the program were reviewed positively. For instance, 75% found the ease of accessibility to the online and in-person offerings easy. Yet this still means a percentage of incubator members had issues with the MOOC. Complicated materials confused some, and others found it challenging to move forward due to improper language skills. Recommendations for improvement include a more engaging resource and a less complicated MOOC that would be reliant upon engagement. To assess the success of the incubator, the assessment of access to digital tools for the subsequent cohorts was assessed.

However, while the study took place totally online in the Netherlands, 92% reported the online platform was user-friendly, while in Hungary, 67% were satisfied with online materials. Thus, where some have the technology and know how to use it at hand, other populations might need extra assistance when it comes to digital resource availability. This might be due to the culture in which they've had past exposure to e-learning.

However, in Greece, 55% reported that online access limitations in rural areas kept them from participating in online education. Therefore, this issue of accessibility can be circumvented with blended learning experiences with information presented in person.



## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The EcopreNEETs Incubator aimed to equip NEETs with necessary rudimentary skills to pursue eco-entrepreneurship and build their self-esteem and teamwork potential. The assessment indicates that the project was carried out effectively in many areas relative to expectations and areas of learned shortcomings which will enhance the project moving forward.

Critical changes for the future of the program would be mentorship with a post-incubation follow-up program, enhanced education with further translatable/MOOC friendly content, greater application with additional activities and better access through digital connectivity for all those not in-person. For example, some sort of graduation, future workshops, and alumni would ensure the project's effectiveness and sustainability down the line. Thus, this would be best for the future of the EcopreNEETs Incubator as it supports the young population and encourages sustainable growth for businesses.

