

Thematic Working Group factsheet «Promoting the transition to the Green Economy»

Making it REAL! This factsheet is one of the outputs of the ENRD Thematic Working Group in 2016 'Promoting the transition to the Green Economy'. Shifting to a greener economy is vital to untap the economic potential of rural areas in this field, as well to ensure a sustainable future. The factsheet looks at the range of features of green projects, as well as the key steps for their development and implementation, which can be promoted through the available tools in the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs). This process aims to enable the creation of conditions for a green rural economy, to make it real.

What is the Green Economy?

The United Nations Environment Programme defines Green Economy as: "an economy that results in improved human well-being and reduced inequalities over the long term, while not exposing future generations to significant environmental risks and ecological scarcities" (UNEP, 2010).

What do good GREEN projects look like?

Key features of good projects based on TWG discussions to support the transition to the Green Economy.



Changing mindsets

They unleash economic opportunities which deliver environmental - and - social benefits.



Demand driven

They respond to growing social concerns about the environment.



Economic and environmental sustainability

They take a systemic approach. Environmental benefits are a precondition but economic and social benefits may take time to appear. This can require sensitive support frameworks.



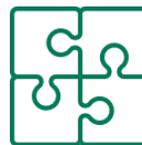
Innovative

They involve new products, new services, new technologies, new business models and/or smart adaptations and combinations of old ones.



Leadership

In the early stages they are usually led by a 'champion' who is passionate about the project.



Multi-actor-supply chain approach

They engage and motivate key people from all relevant spheres – public, private and community - from production through to consumption.



Result-based learning

Environmental, economic and social objectives are clearly specified and monitored.



Flexibility

Projects grow, evolve and adapt to changing environments and their own successes and failures.



Communication

Green projects often have a snowball effect. The first examples of success can be communicated, adapted and improved to fit new contexts.



Responsive finance and support frameworks

Regulatory frameworks build in incentives for green projects. Advice and finance is accessible in the right form and at the right time.

What are the key steps in the development of the Green Economy?

Ideas phase

Piloting & Small Scale Production

Reviewing and scaling up

- 1. Assess all the opportunities** in your field or area. What are the unmet environmental needs? Are there ways of turning these into viable activities over time? What are the barriers? Are there inspiring examples of overcoming them elsewhere?
- 2. Set realistic and time-bound objectives** in the three areas of a green project i) environment ii) the economy and iii) society. Recognise it may take longer than you think to cover costs - but there may be smart business and financial models that speed this up.
- 3. Access good information and advice** from specialists but also from people who have tried something similar. Turn this into a sound business plan.
- 4. Map out the environmental, economic and social impacts of the project.** There has to be good evidence of the benefits of the project to attract public or private finance, as well as support from potential partners, suppliers, distributors and customers.
- 5. Test the idea** as a prototype or at a very small scale to explore both environmental and economic assumptions.
- 6. Assess different sources of funding** – private, public, community – taking into account the conditions and flexibility of each.
- 7. Build trust with stakeholders** be they investors, suppliers, public authorities, partners or customers. Trust is earned by face to face contact and sticking to both written and verbal agreements.
- 8. Plan the steps required along the supply chain.** Not everything can be done within each project, but it is important to test the market and know that the resources, logistics and technical capacities are available to get there.
- 9. Promote the project.** Good examples can catch on and build support like wild fire. Face to face contact is essential, but use all channels available.
- 10. Scale up.** There are various ways of accessing the logistics, technology, finance and skills required to reach a bigger public. These include various forms of cooperation and collaboration.

How can the RDPs support the implementation of green projects?

1 Strategic planning

- RDP Priorities 4* and 5**
- LEADER Local Development Strategies
- Other regional strategies for enhancing and promoting the environment

2 Ideas, business plans

- Knowledge and information (M1)
- Cooperation (M16)
- Advisory Services (M2)
- LEADER (M19)

3 Skills acquisition

- Knowledge and information (M1)
- Advisory Services (M2)
- LEADER (M19)

4 Finance for investment

- Physical Investments (M4)
- Farm and business development (M6)
- Investment in forestry areas (M8.6)
- LEADER (M19)
- Financial Instruments (FIs)
- European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI)

5 Cooperation and organisation

- Producers organisations (M9)
- Cooperation (M16)
- LEADER (M19)

6 Market access & quality

- Quality schemes (M3)
- Organic farming (M11)
- Animal welfare (M14)
- LEADER (M19)
- Cooperation (M16)

7 Supportive territorial environment

Collective and/or results-based approaches that create incentives for green projects (M10 and M15)

*Priority 4: "Restoring and preserving ecosystems"

**Priority 5: "Resource efficiency and the shift towards a low carbon and resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors"