

**Interreg  
Danube Region**



Co-funded by  
the European Union



# Modul 3- examples of good practice

STEMWISE

**Dr. sc. Adriana Planinić**

**Petar Gregurić, mag. ing. mech.**

# The NetZeroCities project

## Towards climate neutral European cities by 2030

- NetZeroCities supports Europe and in particular European cities to drastically cut down greenhouse gas emissions through climate action to achieve **'climate neutrality'**, one of the biggest challenges our societies face today.
- NetZeroCities is part of the Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme in support of **European Union's Green Deal**. NetZeroCities has been designed to help cities overcome the current structural, institutional and cultural barriers they face in order to **achieve climate neutrality by 2030**.
- NetZeroCities supports the **EU's Mission of "100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030"** launched as part of the Horizon Europe programme. The project works as a service-oriented platform supported by world-class practitioners. It helps European cities by providing them with the support and solutions they need to achieve climate neutrality in a socially inclusive way.
- New and existing tools, resources and expertise are developed and promoted into a one-stop platform accessible to all cities through **an online portal**. Dedicated services are designed to support **cities that are part of the EU's Mission "100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030"**. In addition, NetZeroCities supports a series of **Pilots** to help drive rapid learning about how to achieve climate neutrality at city scale and runs a **Twinning Learning programme** to enable peer-learning.



# The NetZeroCities project

- **Cities have a leading role to play**, not just in meeting the climate goals and targets set out by international policy frameworks such as the COP21 Paris Agreement, but in ensuring our decarbonisation efforts are equitable and contribute to the well-being of European communities.
- Cities take up only **4% of the EU's land area**, but they are home to **75% of EU citizens**.
- Cities consume over **65% of the world's energy** and account for more than **70% of global CO2 emissions**.
- Achieving climate neutrality in an inclusive way will be an extraordinary undertaking for each and every city. This will require profound and systemic changes. Government leadership will be critical, and actions by industry, education and research institutions, and civic organisations must align in terms of policies, governance, and the needed capital investments.
- NetZeroCities recognises the need for cities to develop specific strategies that are tailored to suit local and regional contexts, and supports them by developing and promoting new and existing tools, resources, and expertise into a One-Stop-Shop platform accessible to all cities through an [online portal](#) and hands-on support through several programmes.



# Open opportunities for newcomers

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

### Cities



Every ambitious city that wants to show the way forward towards an inclusive, thriving, climate resilient and sustainable future can get involved.

NetZeroCities provides various types of resources through several pathways. Start where you are and receive support to accelerate climate action in your city.

[I'M INTERESTED](#)

### Practitioners



Researchers, corporates, startups, NGOs, civil society organisations... You can contribute to NetZeroCities and help cities reach climate neutrality by joining our Community of Practice.

By joining this community you will gain a better understanding of cities and citizen issues and will be able to explore new opportunities.

[I'M INTERESTED](#)

# Open opportunities for newcomers

## Online Discussion Groups

EU MISSION PLATFORM | CLIMATE-NEUTRAL & SMART CITIES

### Online Discussion Groups

NetZeroCities is extending online and peer-learning opportunities to all cities that are interested in accelerating their climate action. For that purpose, Online Discussion Groups provide an online space where all cities can learn from Mission Cities' practical experience and receive technical support from experts across sectors. The programme is structured around key thematic areas essential for decarbonisation and offer cities the opportunity to explore innovative climate-neutral solutions.

Curious to learn more about the Online Discussion Groups? Find out more about the previous edition, which brought together 180 participants.

**Valongo, Portugal**

The projects of Leuven have huge relevance in terms of learning for Valongo Municipality, especially in the following aspects:

- Sharing strategies for involving citizens in decision-making processes (presentation of different solutions for streets);
- Technical solutions for experimenting temporary changes in urban context.
- These will help in implementing Valongo's Climate Action Plan.

**WHAT IS IN IT FOR YOUR CITY?**

- Gain first-hand experience from leading Mission Cities, climate actions, and projects and acquire practical insights from real-world examples.
- Access the NetZeroCities Portal and its resources on reaching climate neutrality.
- Join tailored technical support sessions on your specific themes of concern.
- Join study visits hosted by Mission Cities which have received the EU Mission Label.

**ONLINE DISCUSSION GROUPS PHASES & TIMELINE**

Take the next step on your learning journey and apply to join a Group Study Visit in Mission Cities!

Cities that have been actively involved in the Online Discussion Groups, will have the opportunity to apply to the different group study visits in Mission Cities, to go in-depth on the knowledge exchange upon completion of phase 2. The travel costs will be covered by the NetZeroCities budget and the exchanges will be supported by facilitators.

Are you interested in joining NetZeroCities' Online Discussion Groups?  
[Register here](#)

Questions? Contact the Helpdesk: [infocities@netzerocities.eu](mailto:infocities@netzerocities.eu)

www.netzerocities.eu

NetZeroCitiesEU

@NetZeroCitiesEU

netzerocities.eu

NetZeroCities EU

## Online Planning Lab

CLIMATE-NEUTRAL & SMART CITIES

### Design Your City's Net Zero Strategy: Online Planning Lab

Launching in September 2025!

✔ Free online course open to all cities committed to climate neutrality!

**6 modules** addressing key aspects of the net-zero transition, designed to provide a holistic understanding of the challenges:

MODULE

=

1 core session (2h)

+

3-5 Spotlight sessions (2h each)

- 1 "How can the NetZeroCities support my city's climate transition goals?"
- 2 "How can we develop capacity to work on the climate transition, go beyond working in silos and collaborate with the city's stakeholders?"
- 3 "How might we design an effective climate action plan for and with the city?"
- 4 "How might we leverage technical solutions, citizens-led solutions and partnerships to reduce emissions?"
- 5 "How might we access diverse funding options and unlock investments in the city for climate neutrality?"
- 6 "How might we align local, regional, and national governance to develop effective policies that support the climate transition?"

in short:

6 core + 20 optional live interactive spotlight sessions on specific topics to choose from

**OUR OFFER**

Certification after completing the 6 core sessions

**Flexible participation**

Optional **Spotlight** sessions to explore topics in depth

Key resources **translated in multiple EU languages**

Find out more & sign up!

Funded by the European Union

# NetZeroCities Portal

**Learn**


From case studies to technical approaches you can implement and adapt find resources to support your transition



Knowledge Repository →

**Connect**

Community and peer-to-peer learning supports sustainable climate transitions and moves us all towards our goals



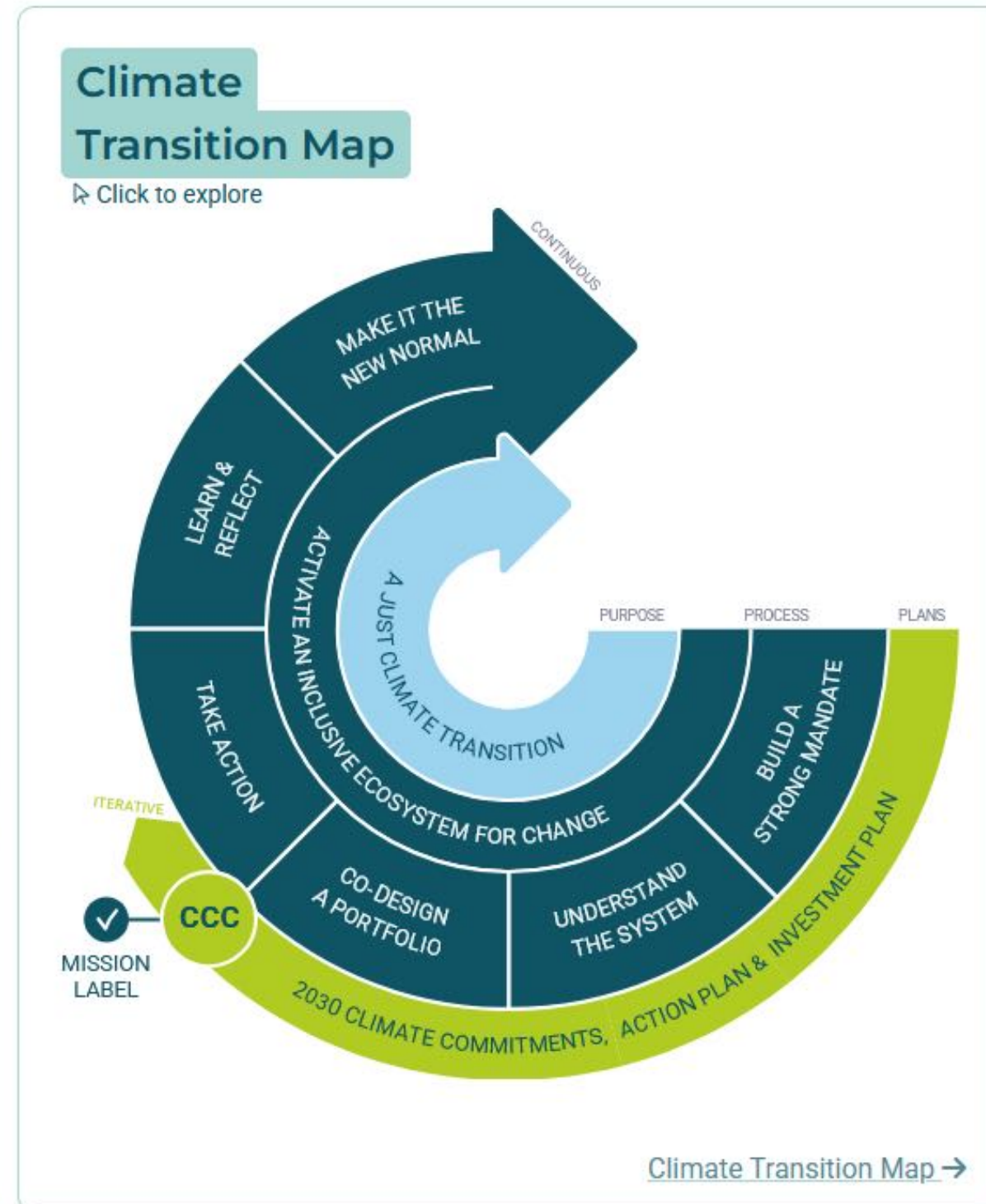
Community Space →

**Act**

Tools to empower and track your progress, supporting you to make and maintain sustainable change



Tools Overview →



**Knowledge Repository**

Search

External Collections Pilot guide book Quick reads ISA Transition team playbook Communication playbook

1166 results

**Beyond One-Off Participation: Building Long-Term Citizen Engagement for Climate Action**

2025-10-28

Many cities still approach participation on a project-by-project basis - each initiative starting from scratch, with lessons often lost when staff change or budgets end. This fragmentation makes it hard to build consistency, trust, and institutional learning. To move beyond this cycle, cities need to think of participation not as an isolated event, but as a long-term system - one that strengthens relationships...

Other participation Governance and policy Social innovation Stakeholder engagement


**Not to be missed**

Join hundreds of people in the [NetZeroCities Community of Practice](#) to connect, learn and share your knowledge. Sign up for the next webinar on a specific theme or share your expertise

Check out the [events calendar](#) and sign up for the next Portal Discovery Tour to get a full walk-through of all features

Check out the [cities section](#) to find your city, learn about their climate actions and connect with city users.

Find and connect with other climate changemakers who are on the portal on our [user directory](#)



**IN ACTION**

Community of Practice Workshop: Engaging the private sector ...

Cities in Action: Shaping Just, Resilient & Climate Neutral ...

Smart City World Expo Congress

Topic Citizen engagement and behavioural change: Turku and C...

Mission Portal Discovery Tour - Winter

# Champions in Croatia

Grad Zagreb je 15. listopada u Bruxellesu službeno primio Oznaku misije Europske unije za klimatski neutralan i pametan grad (**EU Mission Label**), čime je potvrđen kao jedan od predvodnika na putu prema klimatskoj neutralnosti i održivosti. Zagrebu je prestižnu Oznaku dodijelila Europska komisija kao jedinom gradu iz Hrvatske, u sklopu Europskog tjedna regija i gradova.

U društvu europskih gradova kojima je Oznaka dodijeljena isti dan, poput Amsterdama, Bratislave, Rima, Münchena i Rotterdama, Zagreb se svrstao među 100 europskih gradova koji predvode tranziciju prema održivoj, dekarboniziranoj i klimatski otpornoj budućnosti.

Dodjela Oznake rezultat je procesa izrade Sporazuma za klimatski grad (Climate City Contract) – strateškog planskog dokumenta koji definira set aktivnosti koje je potrebno provesti za smanjenje emisija stakleničkih plinova za 90% do 2030. godine. Kvaliteta i ambicioznost Sporazuma potvrđene su kroz detaljnu evaluaciju koju su proveli Europska komisija, Europska investicijska banka i europski konzorcij NetZeroCities.

Oznaka misije Zagrebu otvara pristup tehničkoj pomoći Europske investicijske banke, bržim postupcima odobravanja sufinanciranja te povoljnijim financijskim aranžmanima za projekte dekarbonizacije, održive mobilnosti, zelene infrastrukture i klimatske otpornosti – kako za javni tako i za privatni sektor. Iako Oznaka nije formalni preduvjet za financiranje, značajno ubrzava pristup posebnim financijskim instrumentima namijenjenima klimatski neutralnim gradovima. Partner grada Zagreba u NetZeroCities projektu je REGEA.

## Grad Zagreb dobio Oznaku misije EU za klimatski neutralan i pametan grad

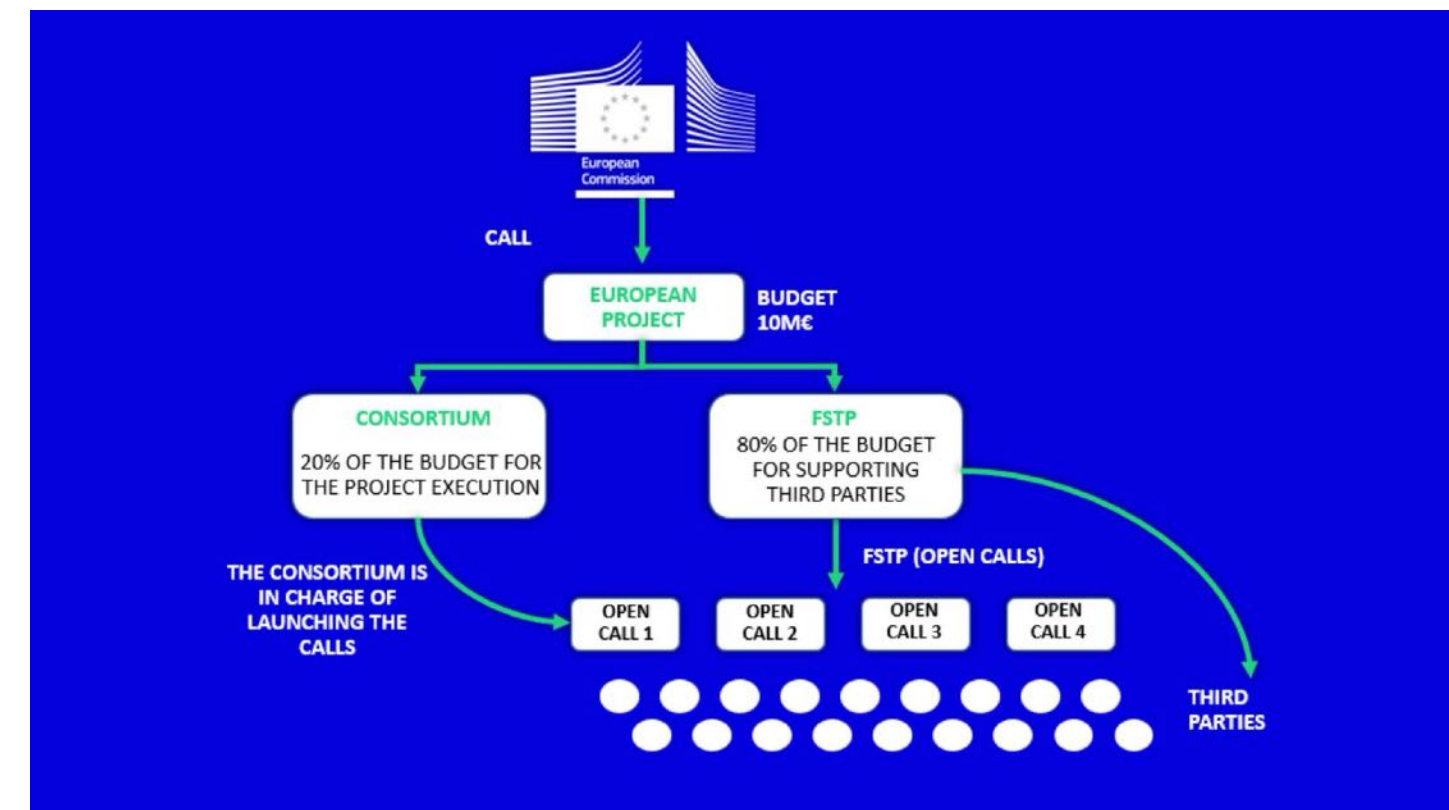


•Križevci  
•Slavonski Brod

•Rijeka  
•Ivanić-Grad

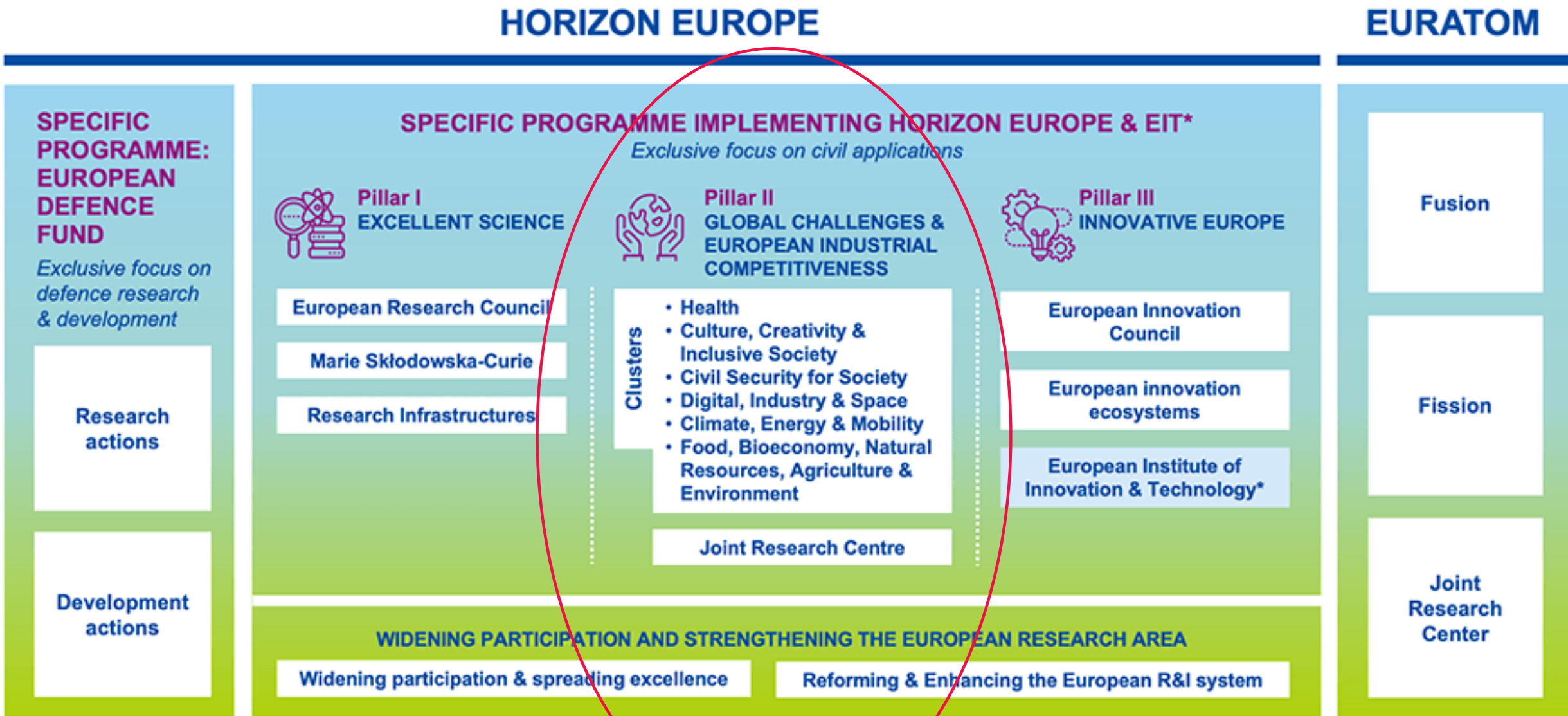
# Cascading funding / financial support to third parties (FSTP)

- Cascading funding, also known as Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP), is a mechanism within EU programmes that allows projects to distribute part of their budget to external entities, such as start-ups, SMEs, researchers, or local authorities, through open calls or sub-grants.
- It was developed by the EU Commission as part of its **Horizon 2020** framework (and continued in **Horizon Europe**)
- This approach helps widen participation, support innovation, and ensure that funding reaches a broader community.
- It enables project consortia to act as intermediaries, offering targeted financial and technical support for activities aligned with the project's objectives.



# Why did the Commission develop Cascading funding / financial support to third parties (FSTP)

In order to reach organisations that would otherwise have difficulty accessing EU funding. It is intended for smaller entities, with fewer resources and less experience to participate in calls at the European level, but which represent an important part of the economic ecosystem.



\* The European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) is not part of the Specific Programme

For newcomers and organisations without prior experience in EU projects (especially Horizon Europe) **Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP)** offers several important benefits:

- **Simplified access to EU funding:** FSTP calls are usually smaller in scale and have lighter administrative requirements than full Horizon Europe proposals, making them easier to apply for.
- **Lower entry barriers:** Organisations can gain valuable experience in EU project participation without having to form large international consortia or manage complex grant agreements.
- **Capacity building:** Participation helps organisations understand EU rules, reporting systems, and project management procedures- preparing them for future, larger calls.
- **Networking and visibility:** FSTP often connects newcomers with established European consortia, opening doors to new partnerships, innovation ecosystems, and future collaborations.
- **Targeted support for innovation:** FSTP grants are often designed to fund concrete pilots, prototypes, or experiments- helping small organisations test ideas and demonstrate their potential impact.
- **Fast evaluation process:** The evaluation process takes an average of 2 months.
- **Equity free:** Cascade financing provides access to equity-free funds, making it easier for entrepreneurs to develop ideas without having to lose control of their company.

**In short, FSTP is an ideal entry point for organisations new to EU programmes, offering a practical and less risky way to build experience, grow networks, and strengthen innovation capacity.**

# Simplified access to EU funding

## GENERAL INFORMATION

- Often to be submitted online by the coordinator
- Short and concise with the use of keywords

Acronym of the proposal	
Full title of the proposal	
Duration (in months)	
Number of project partners	
Country of project partners	
ORRI keywords	
Challenge to be addressed (50 words max)	
Changes to be achieved by the project (50 words max)	
Date of submission	
Abstract (300 words max)	

## CHANGES TO BE ACHIEVED [Impact]

- Short-term impact
- Long-term impact
- Descriptive narrative, no longer than 2 pages

## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- Declaration of Honor and data on participating organisation

### List of participating organization(s)

#	Organization full name	Short name	Country
1	Research Institution/University		
2	SME/Public authority		

### Data of the participating organization(s)

<b>Lead Partner</b>	
Legal Name (and short name)	
Type of legal entity	
Address of the organization	
Country	
VAT number (optional)	
PIC <sup>1</sup> (optional)	
Website of the organization	
Social media channels (optional)	
Main contact person	
Legal representative (if different from the primary contact person)	
Does the organization have a Gender Equality Plan in line with the requests of the Horizon Europe Programme? (Yes/No; if yes, add the link to the GEP)	
Have you received other funding related to REINFORCING cascading grants? (Yes/No) If yes, please indicate the full name and acronym of the proposal and the financing you received	

## OBJECTIVES, NEEDS and APPROACH [Excellence]

- 3-4 Objectives and related KPIs
- Needs and proposed approach to address them
- Gender
- Ethics
- Open Science
- Stakeholder engagement
- Social inclusion

## BUDGET

- Lump Sum
- Easy to calculate

Partner Name	Personnel Costs	Purchase costs	Overheads	Total
Partner 1				
Partner 2				
Total				

- ... and to report

Partner 1	Personnel Costs	Purchase costs	Overheads <sup>2</sup>	Total
Action 1				
Action 2				
Action 3				
Total				

### Purchase costs

To avoid misuse of funds, you are asked to complete the following table related to purchase costs. You are not required to submit at this moment any invoices or prove of the expenses but, after submitting this document, you can be requested at any time by the contracting entity to provide such proofs within 3 years after the project's end.

Please, complete the table below for each partner if the purchase costs exceeds 15% of the personnel costs for that participant. The record must list cost items in order of costs and starting with the largest cost item, up to the level that the remaining costs are below 15% of personnel costs.

PARTNER 1		
List of items	Actual cost	Justification <sup>3</sup>
Remaining purchase costs (<15% of personnel costs)		\
Total		\

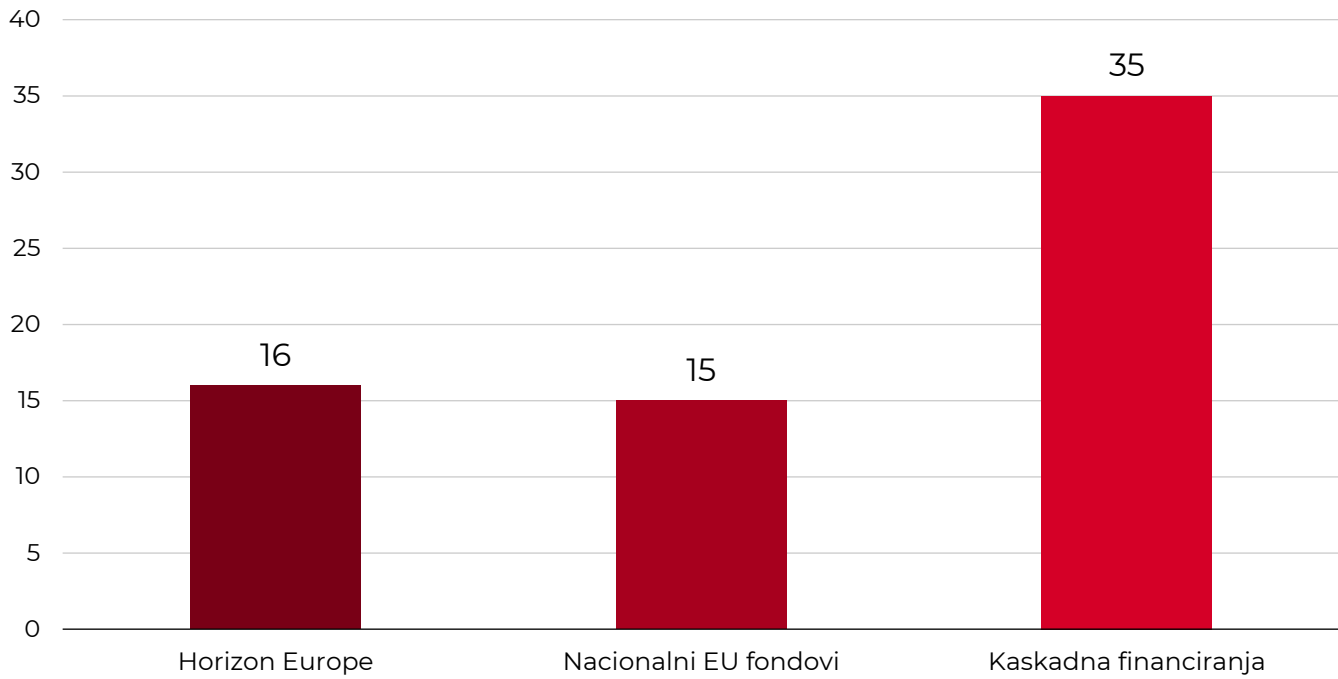
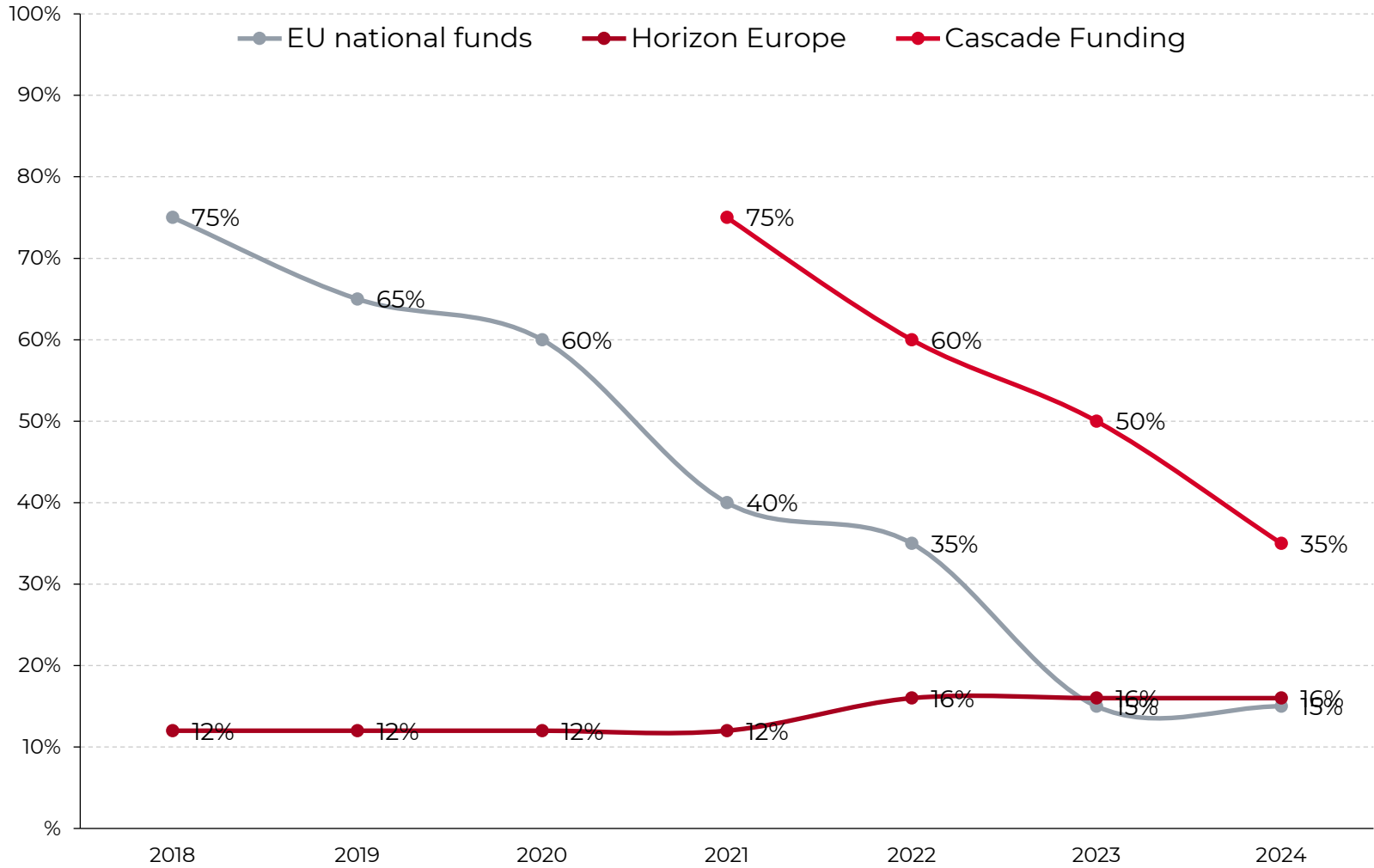
## ACTIVITIES [Work Plan]

- Shorter and easier to keep track and manage

### Action 1 – Project management and Mandatory Tasks

Lead partner	
Duration (in months)	M1 – M12
Objectives of the action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 1</li> <li>• Objective 2</li> <li>• Objective 3</li> </ul>
Description of the action	
Task 1.1:	
Task 1.2:	
Task 1.3:	
Task 1.4:	
Expected results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document   Deliverable</li> <li>• Workshop or some activity</li> <li>• Policy Paper</li> </ul>
Milestones	
Milestone 1	
Milestone 2	
Milestone 3	

# Why now is the right time?



The market success rate is higher than the average of other options

# How to start with cascade grants

Topics, target applicants, application processes and participation rules are defined by each individual project, meaning that there are no universal rules that would fit all situations.

Many new calls are announced for 2025 within the program package, but identifying them can be challenging, as they are specific and often difficult to access.

Expert support is key to identifying opportunities.

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HARMONMISSIONS



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## Prilike kaskadnog financiranja

Mjesečni izvještaj o novim prilikama financiranja kroz kaskadne natjecanje.

### WASABI 2nd Open Call

The WASABI invites proposals for **SME-led experiments** in the manufacturing sector to develop and test **AI-based digital assistance**. They are looking for consortia to create practical, scalable, user-friendly AI assistants. These projects should deliver working prototypes that simplify industrial tasks, improve decision-making, and enhance human-machine collaboration in real-world manufacturing contexts.

#### Topics:

- AI-based digital assistants
- Manufacturing sector
- Human-machine collaboration
- Digital transformation

Max funding per project:  
**125.000 €**

Consortium: YES

Applications are only accepted from consortia composed of 2 to 3 legal entities, including at least one SME from the manufacturing sector and one Digital Innovation Hub (DIH) or European DIH (EDIH).  
Funding rate: EU covers 60% of eligible costs for for-profit entities; non-profit entities receive 100% funding.



#### Technology

AI and Big Data

#### Domain

Advanced Manufacturing and Industry

Digital Society and E-Inclusion

#### Type of beneficiary

SME other

### SoilTribes- Open Call to Support Initiatives Led by Multi-Actor

SoilTribes Open Call invites **multi-actor teams** to propose innovative initiatives. They seek projects at the **intersection of science, arts, and society** to increase soil literacy, raise public awareness, and engage communities in soil protection and restoration. Projects can be new ideas or improvements of existing solutions, all contributing to the European Mission "A Soil Deal for Europe" to restore soil health.

#### Topics:

- Soil literacy
- Soil protection and restoration
- Communication campaigns
- Creative activities

Max funding per project:  
**100.000 €**

Consortium: POSSIBLE

Applications can be submitted by a single applicant or a consortium.



#### Technology

Digital solutions

#### Domain

Arts

Culture and Heritage

Energy and Environment

Science Education

#### Type of beneficiary

startups MidCaps

SME research organization

university large company

Public Authorities NGOs

### dAIEDGE 3rd Open Call - Collaborative Projects

The dAIEDGE 3rd Open Call seeks **legal entities (RTOs, Academia, SMEs)** for **collaborative projects** in distributed, trustworthy, efficient, and scalable AI at the Edge. They are looking for **research and development proposals** to address dAIEDGE's Industrial Challenges, aiming to advance Europe's AI innovation. Projects should start at TRL 2-3 and reach TRL 4-5, focusing on civil applications with a European dimension.

#### Topics:

- Distributed Edge AI
- Trustworthy AI
- Industrial Challenges
- Research and Development



#### Technology

Robotics IoT

AI and Big Data

#### Domain

Advanced Manufacturing and Industry

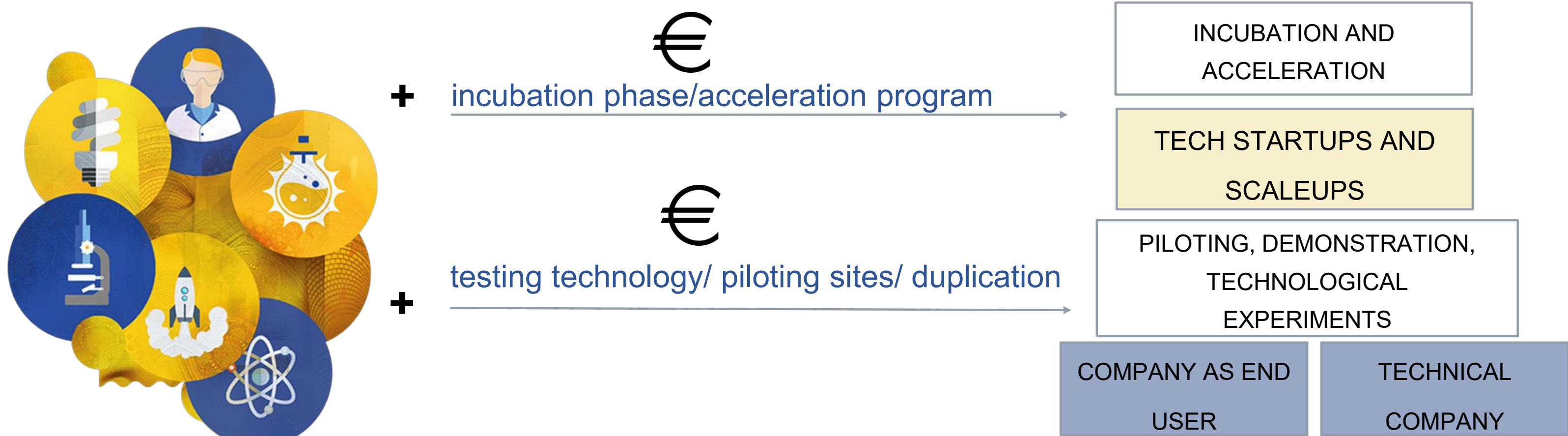
Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

#### Type of beneficiary

SME research organization

# What types of projects are most frequently requested

Approved large Horizon Europe Project



## Activities being financed

### Innovation development

The development of innovative technologies, services and solutions, especially in areas such as AI, energy efficiency, drones and others, in line with the objectives of Horizon Europe.

### Research support

Activities such as research and development (R&D), prototyping, and feasibility studies, helping companies develop their technologies from idea to market-ready product.

### Testing and validating

Testing, pilot testing and product validation activities can be financed, most often using funds that are part of the Horizon project.

### International collaboration

They are very often eligible for funding for dissemination activities through international cooperation and participation in conferences and fairs.

# Successful examples from STEMwise portfolio

## LUMBARDA Bioprotect.eu



**BioProtect** | Protecting and Restoring Ecosystems and Biodiversity

Advancing area-based management tools to accelerate the protection and restoration of marine biodiversity

EU Programme: HORIZON-MISS-2023-OCEAN-01-03

Coordinator: MATIS

Budget: 8 million €

Duration: May 2024-April 2028

Type of action: HORIZON-IA

Find out more about BioProtect  
www.bioprotect-project.eu  
info@bioprotect-project.eu

**What will BioProtect do?**

We co-develop transferable ecosystem-based solutions for effective protection and restoration of marine and coastal biodiversity.

**How will BioProtect do this?**

We promote the use of an Area-Based Management Decision Support Framework to support Ecosystem-Based Marine Spatial Planning.

**What will BioProtect achieve?**

We deliver strategic innovations and methodologies to protect and restore marine biodiversity.



- Area-based management solutions
- 18 partners from 8 countries
- Strong public participation

Project coordinator: Sophie Jensen (sophie@matis.is)

Communications manager: Marsha Papathanasiou (marsha@indigo-med.com)

Part of the EU MISSIONS RESTORE OUR OCEAN & WATERS

Funded by the European Union under Grant Agreement No. 101157341

## ŠIBENSKO-KNINSKA ŽUPANIJE Climax.eu

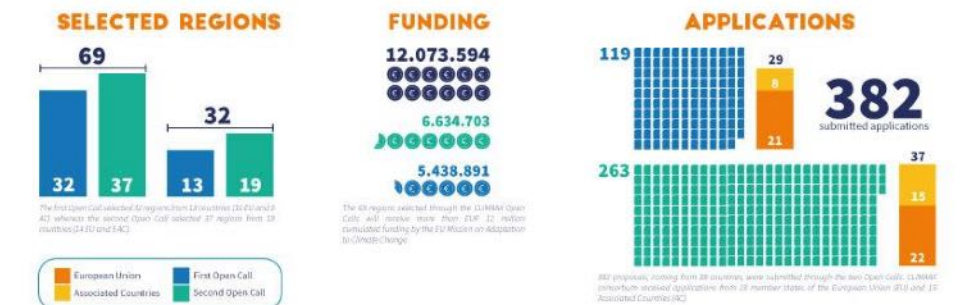


**THE FAMILY HAS GROWN**

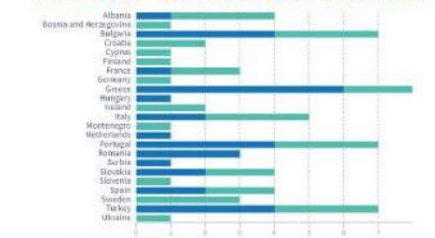
**CLIMAAX**  
climate ready regions

**RESULTS OF THE SECOND OPEN CALL**

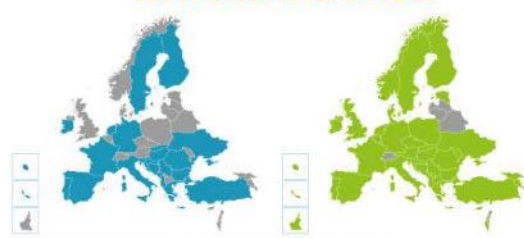
CLIMAAX CLIMATE RISK AND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK AND TOOLBOX



**SELECTED REGIONS PER COUNTRY**



**TWO CALLS IN A GLANCE**

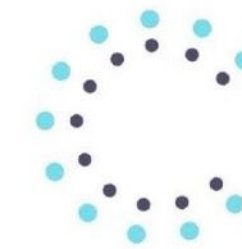


## SE4HUBIE



### REINFORCING

Responsible tErritories and Institutions  
eNable and Foster Open Research and inClusive  
Innovation for traNsitions and Governance



## SE4HuBIE

# Značajna dodana vrijednost za Lombardu

**BioProtect (2021-2027)** - Horizon Europe- Research and Innovation Action (2021. do 2027)

Pokretač preobrazbe Europe u zeleno, zdravo i otporno društvo.

Glavni cilj projekta je razvoj i demonstracija prilagodljivih rješenja koja će ubrzati učinkovitu zaštitu te obnovu bioraznolikosti u morskim i obalnim ekosustavima.

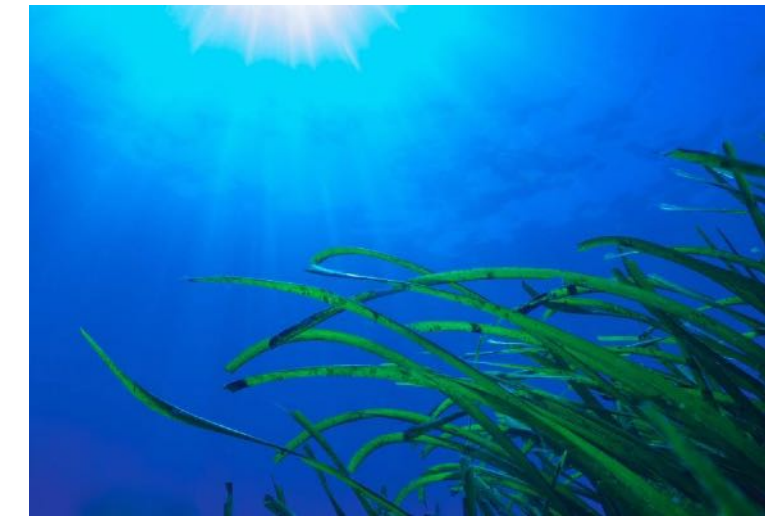
Alati koji se razvijaju za vrijeme projekta testiraju se na lokacijama od Arktika do Azora, a kaskadnim financiranjem je osigurana mogućnost sudjelovanja različitih europskih regija.

Kaskadni projekt Općine Lombarda u vrijednosti od 100 000 € započeo je u svibnju 2025 (vrijeme trajanja- 24mj)

Izrada karte podmorja koja obuhvaća 5 km<sup>2</sup> lokalnih voda. Mapiranje će se provoditi pomoću podvodne kamere *Azor Drift-Cam* te korištenjem satelitskih snimki. Ovim interdisciplinarnim pristupom omogućit će se nadzor staništa pjeskovitog dna i livada Posidonije, položaj kompleksa grebena, bolji uvid u arheološko nalazište Soline te praćenje čistoće mora.

Projekt uključuje veliki digitalizacijski napredak jer će općina trajno moći koristiti razna softverska rješenja koja će biti razvijena kroz BioProtect projekt, a dodatno će se podići kvaliteta i već postojeće GIS platforme.

Za Općinu Lombarda, koja je mjesto bogate turističke tradicije, projekt BioProtect osigurava trajne kapacitete za znanstveno praćenje i odgovorno upravljanje – ključno za postizanje dugoročne ekološke stabilnosti uz održavanje vitalnih gospodarskih aktivnosti. Time će Lombarda ponuditi vjerodostojan model drugim jadranskim zajednicama, pokazujući kako male općine mogu iskoristiti integrirane sustave podataka za zaštitu bioraznolikosti i vrijedne kulturne baštine ovog područja.

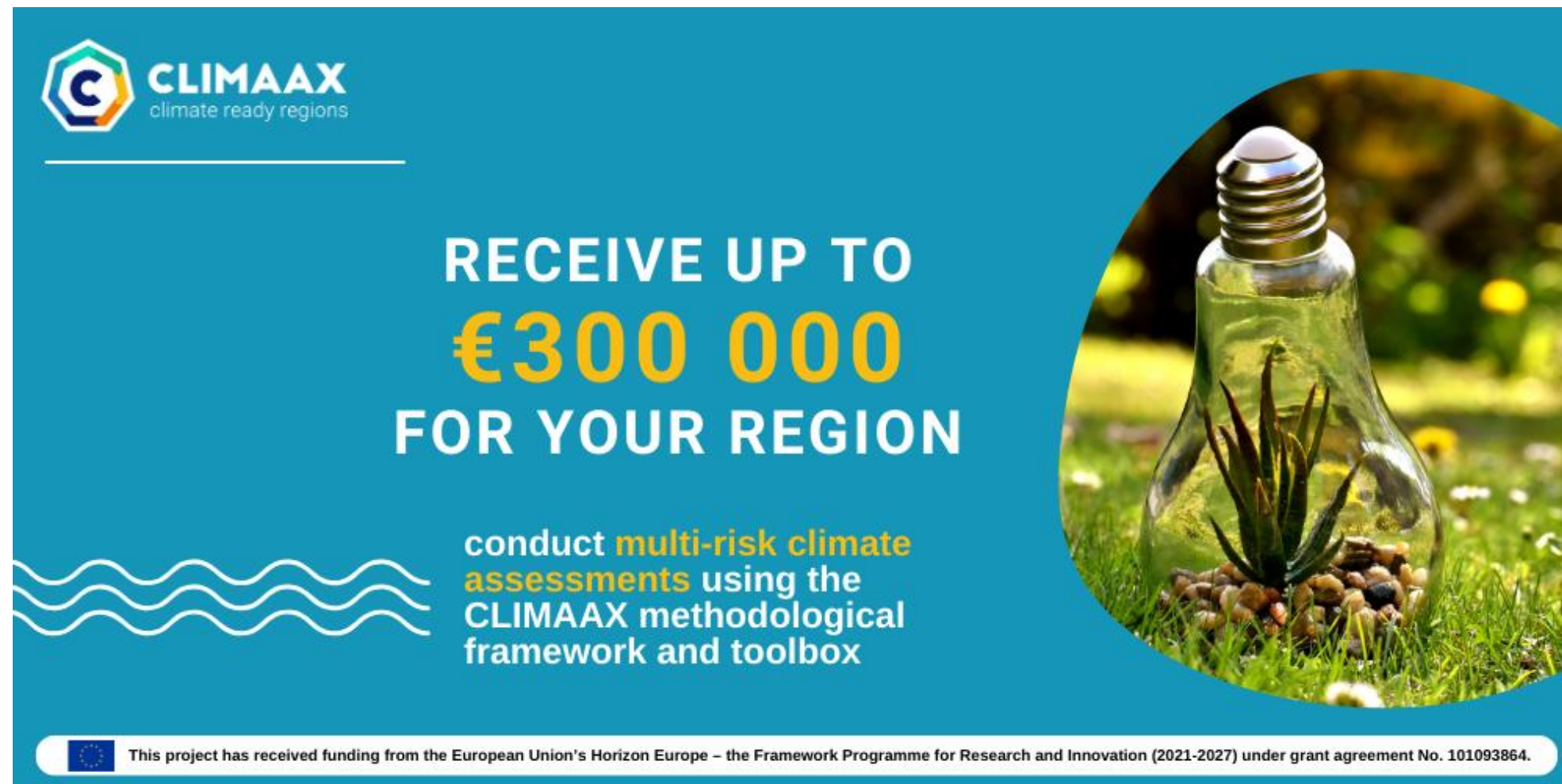


# Značajna dodana vrijednost za Lombardu

Projekt CLIMAAX financiran je u sklopu poziva EU MISSION 1: **Prilagodba klimatskim promjenama**: podržati najmanje 150 europskih regija i zajednica da postanu otporne na klimatske promjene do 2030. (neslužbeni nazivi: misija Klima; engleski naziv: *EU Mission: Adaptation to Climate Change*).

Od 263 prijavljena projekta na drugom pozivu Programa CLIMAAX – HORIZON EUROPE, odabrano je 39 projekata iz 19 europskih zemalja s ukupnom vrijednosti projekata preko 6,6 milijuna eura. Šibensko-kninska županija jedna je od 2 hrvatske regije koje su odabrane za financiranje projekata na svom putu prema klimatskoj otpornosti.

STEMwise je pružio tehničku pomoć Razvojnoj agenciji Šibensko-Kninske županije u pripremi i prijavi projekta. Vrijednost projekta iznosila je 170.000,00 €.



CLIMAAX  
climate ready regions

RECEIVE UP TO  
**€300 000**  
FOR YOUR REGION

conduct **multi-risk climate assessments** using the CLIMAAX methodological framework and toolbox

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) under grant agreement No. 101093864.

The graphic features a blue background with a circular inset showing a lightbulb containing a small green plant growing in soil and pebbles. The CLIMAAX logo is in the top left, and a small EU flag logo is in the bottom left.



# Projekt REINFORCING: Podrška za otvorena i odgovorna istraživanja i inovacije

## Cilj EU projekta

Projekt REINFORCING je projekt financirana od strane Europske unije putem programa Horizon Europe, posvećena promicanju otvorenih i odgovornih istraživanja i inovacija (ORRI) diljem Europe, s posebnim naglaskom na Balkan.

## Trajanje i fokus

Projekt je započeo u siječnju 2023. i trajat će do veljače 2027. godine. Cilj mu je potaknuti suradničke i uključive istraživačke prakse u koje su uključeni različiti dionici, uključujući i građane.

## Mogućnosti financiranja

Projekt nudi kaskadno (FSTP) financiranje za projekte koji se bave promicanjem ORRI-a na Balkanu.



The screenshot shows the REINFORCING website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for ABOUT, OPEN CALLS, ORRI PLATFORM, NEWS, RESOURCES, and CONTACT. The main header features the REINFORCING logo and the tagline "The European Platform for Open and Responsible R&I Practices". Below this, there are two buttons: "ACCESS THE PLATFORM" and "GET TO KNOW US".

The main content area includes a paragraph stating: "REINFORCING supports organizations and institutions in Europe to transition to a new paradigm where responsibility and openness drive research and innovation processes. The platform provides you with:"

Three key features are highlighted in separate boxes:

- Tested resources:** To guide you in your path towards responsible and inclusive research and innovation practices, our expert partners will curate and organize resources in different pathways to help you navigate change.
- A tailored set of services:** Including training modules, to build capacity and assist you with the appropriate support during your ORRI practice.
- 7 open calls:** To financially support your experiments and pilots in Open and Responsible R&I, both if your organization is a newcomer wishing to embark on ORRI and if your institution is an experienced entity that would like to strengthen ORRI implementation.

Below these features, there is a large teal banner with the text "WELCOME TO THE REINFORCING PLATFORM".

Underneath the banner, the text reads: "Open and Responsible Research and Innovation Platform. The one-stop source to knowledge and expertise to support you on your ORRI journey. All services are easily accessible, and tailored to community needs."

At the bottom, there are six teal boxes, each representing a service:

- Grants:** Grants to financially support your pilots in Open and Responsible R&I (ORRI) are already available.
- ORRI Platform:** Open and Responsible Research and Innovation Platform.
- ORRI Community:** Find peers and experts to help you in your journey towards ORRI implementation.
- Tools:** Resources to support you in implementing your ORRI project with tools and best practices.
- Trainings:** Find training modules on specific topics related to ORRI.
- Pathways:** Explore pathways to find the right resources fitting your concrete ORRI challenge.

- **Treći REINFORCING kaskadni poziv** je imao za cilj podržati organizacije i područja koja aktivno doprinose europskim misijama (**EU MISSIONS**) uključivanjem relevantnih dionika, uključujući građane, u procese istraživanja i inovacija i politike povezane s jednom od misija EU-a.
- Ovaj projekt ima za cilj poboljšati očuvanje bioraznolikosti Hutovog Blata kroz suradnju relevantnih dionika, uključujući lokalnu zajednicu, znanstvenike, industriju i političke aktere.
- Projekt koristi inovativni pristup, kombinirajući **citizen science** pristup i **tradicionalno znanje**, kako bi se osigurala održiva budućnost ovog zaštićenog močvarnog ekosustava.

## Partneri na projektu

### CIRP

CIRP je neprofitna organizacija osnovana 2017. godine. Njihov rad se fokusira na promociju Hercegovine kao atraktivne investicijske destinacije, istovremeno provodeći brojne projekte u zaštiti okoliša, razvoju turizma i očuvanju kulturne baštine.

### STEMwise

STEMwise je konzalting tvrtka specijalizirana za podršku aktivnostima istraživanja i razvoja, s posebnim naglaskom na društveno osjetljiva područja. Posjeduju široku ekspertizu u različitim pristupima uključivanju dionika u procese ko- kreacije.



# Tri stupa SE4HuBIE Projekta

## Obuka i mapiranje

Obuka zaposlenika i mapiranje dionika za uključivanje u očuvanje ekosustava.

## Radionice građanske znanosti

Uključivanje lokalne zajednice u praćenje bioraznolikosti i prikupljanje podataka.

## Tradicionalno znanje

Integracija tradicionalnog znanja u znanstveno razumijevanje ekosustava.

*Hutovo Blato  
Vision 2030  
Policy Paper*

# Stakeholder engagement brochure/ Brošura sa smjernicama za uključivanje dionika

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT BROCHURE

### WHAT IS STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement involves the active participation of all relevant stakeholders throughout the various phases of a project—from planning and implementation to the application of results. It is a critical component of successful projects, as it ensures that research is aligned with societal needs.

Effective stakeholder engagement requires both the willingness and motivation of stakeholders to participate, as well as the inclusiveness of all potentially interested parties. It also depends on providing equal access to information and knowledge, fostering transparency and collaboration.

### REASONS AND BENEFITS OF ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

One of the main reasons for engaging in environmental conservation projects is that stakeholders should have a voice in decisions that affect the environment around them.

Stakeholder engagement bridges science and society, increasing the likelihood that research outcomes will be adopted and applied, ultimately leading to real-life, beneficial impacts. Research teams benefit from stakeholder involvement through access to better quality data, additional resources, improved methods, more relevant research questions, valuable contacts for future collaboration, greater support for the research, more effective dissemination of results, and a higher potential to create meaningful change.

Stakeholders, in return, gain learning opportunities through improved access to knowledge, technologies, and potential business ventures. They may also feel included, motivated, and empowered by a sense of ownership.

Ultimately, stakeholder engagement helps restore respect and trust in science by fostering more relevant and inclusive research, stronger evidence, and better-informed policies.



### WHO ARE THE QUADRUPLE HELIX ACTORS

The Quadruple Helix model brings together representatives from all sectors of society: government, industry, academia, and civil society.

It is an innovation and collaboration model that incorporates a citizen and end-user perspective. This approach is particularly valuable in innovation processes where citizens' needs are central—such as in projects related to nature conservation, environmental protection, and public services.

#### GOVERNMENT

This group includes public authorities and policymakers, such as city administrations, municipal representatives, local government bodies, ministries, regional development agencies, and funding institutions.

#### INDUSTRY

Comprising public and private companies as well as business clusters, the industry sector brings practical insight, market-oriented perspectives, and implementation capacity.

#### ACADEMIA

This includes universities, research institutes, and research centers. Researchers are the intellectual drivers and primary innovators in research projects, contributing scientific knowledge and methodological rigor.

#### CIVIL SOCIETY

Also referred to as the local community. Civil society includes NGOs, various associations, independent media, and interested citizens. Civil society plays a vital role as vocal advocates for project goals and can serve as focus groups to test research ideas and gather public opinion.

### RISKS, CHALLENGES AND LIMITS TO ENGAGEMENT

When stakeholders are not involved in the co-creation process, the resulting products and services may fail to meet real needs, leading to low adoption or limited impact. A mismatch between the developed solution and actual user requirements can undermine the success of a project. While stakeholder engagement offers numerous benefits to both the research process and the wider community, such as improved relevance, impact, and inclusivity, it also presents certain challenges. These may include increased costs, greater complexity in project management, and longer research timelines.

In some cases, stakeholders may be reluctant to participate due to previous negative experiences, where their involvement did not result in meaningful outcomes for their community. Additionally, perceptions of imbalance or unfairness in how research funding is distributed can be seen as unjust or demotivating, further discouraging engagement.

### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS



### METHODS HOW TO ENGAGE WITH STAKEHOLDERS

A crucial aspect of stakeholder engagement is building trust, which depends on the effective alignment of interests and goals among all members of the Quadruple Helix.

#### BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorming is a group creativity technique where participants spontaneously contribute ideas to solve a problem or generate new concepts. It is a relaxed and informal process designed to encourage creative thinking and the exploration of unconventional solutions. Evaluation of ideas should occur only after all contributions have been shared. Criticism or praise during the session should be avoided to maintain an open and nonjudgmental atmosphere.

#### CO-CREATION WORKSHOPS

Co-creation workshops are among the most common techniques for stakeholder engagement. In these sessions, researchers and stakeholders collaborate on a specific task—such as brainstorming research questions, co-designing experimental protocols, creating prototypes, or jointly interpreting results.

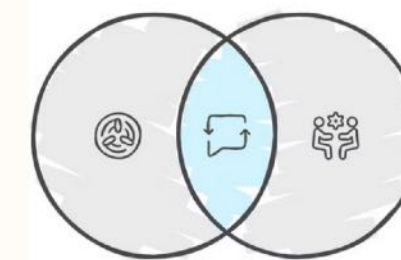
Workshops should promote open dialogue and ensure equal participation, making space for less vocal groups to be heard. The goal is not merely to gather stakeholder input, but to empower participants to actively contribute to and shape the design process.

#### FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups are effective for gaining in-depth insights from smaller, more homogeneous groups of stakeholders on a particular topic. For instance, before launching a large collaborative research project, a focus group with end users can help explore their needs, expectations, and perceptions. These insights can then inform and improve the project design.

#### ONLINE TOOLS

Organizations can facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue through online platforms such as engagement hubs or dedicated portals. These tools help ensure that communication is clear, consistent, and multidirectional—enabling ongoing interaction and feedback regardless of geographical or time constraints.



#### LIVING LABS

A Living Lab is a methodology that enables the testing of innovations in real-life settings with active user participation. For researchers in STEM fields, this involves testing new technologies or prototypes in situ, where users provide feedback that informs iterative improvements.

The key to a successful Living Lab is maintaining continuous communication with users throughout the testing phase—for example, through diary entries, feedback sessions, or regular meetings. Equally important is the research team's ability to respond agilely to this input and adapt the solution accordingly.

#### METHODS OF JOINT DECISION-MAKING

In projects where stakeholders are involved in making key decisions—such as selecting research priorities or evaluating alternative strategies—structured participatory methods can help ensure transparency, inclusiveness, and effective outcomes.

#### DELPHI METHOD

The Delphi Method facilitates expert consensus through a series of anonymous surveys or polls. It is particularly well-suited for complex decisions that require informed, expert-driven insights while minimizing the influence of dominant personalities.

#### MULTICRITERIA ANALYSIS

Multicriteria Analysis allows stakeholders to evaluate different options based on a range of predefined criteria. It is especially useful for decisions involving multiple dimensions—such as cost, feasibility, social impact, and environmental benefit—providing a balanced framework for collaborative decision-making.

### LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

To ensure a successful and inclusive stakeholder engagement process, four distinct levels of involvement should be considered:

#### INFORM

At this level, communication is one-way—from the project owner or lead researcher to the stakeholders. The goal is to share basic information about the project to promote transparency and raise awareness. Stakeholders at this stage are typically not expected to provide input and have limited influence. However, clear and accessible communication is essential to keep them informed and engaged at an appropriate level.

#### CONSULT

Here, stakeholders are invited to share their opinions and feedback, which are then considered during the decision-making process. The project owner actively seeks input through surveys, interviews, public meetings, or other feedback mechanisms. This level fosters a two-way dialogue where stakeholders feel heard, though final decisions remain with the project team.

#### INVOLVE

This level represents deeper engagement, where stakeholders actively participate in shaping decisions and project outcomes. Their perspectives are integrated throughout the process, and two-way communication is ongoing and meaningful. While final decision-making may still rest with the project owner, stakeholder input significantly influences the direction and quality of the project.

#### COLLABORATE

Collaboration involves stakeholders as equal partners in the process. They contribute high levels of interest, commitment, and influence, and work alongside researchers to co-develop solutions and make shared decisions. This level of engagement is most intensive and reflects true co-creation, fostering ownership, trust, and long-term impact.

# Quadruple Helix Stakeholders Map of Hutovo blato Nature Park

## ACADEMIA

- Faculty of Science and Education, University of Mostar
- Faculty of Agriculture and Food Technology, University of Mostar
  - Džemal Bijedić University, Mostar
- Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, University of Sarajevo
- Institute for Tourism and Environment, University of Mostar
  - University of Herzegovina
- Institute for Regional Development of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton (HNC)
- Institute for Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Džemal Bijedić University
- Center for Ichthyology and Fisheries, University of Sarajevo
- Institute for Hydraulic Engineering, Sarajevo

## INDUSTRY

- Public company "Elektroprivreda HZ HB" d.d. - PSHPP Čapljina
- Croatian Telecommunications Ltd.
- Public Utility Company "Čapljina" Ltd.
  - Roda Ltd.
- AGROHERC Ltd. Čapljina
  - Farm VITA VI Ltd.
- Family Agricultural Holding ECO Gabela
  - Ecoplan Ltd.
  - ARH Concept Ltd.
  - ZGI Ltd.

## GOVERNMENT

- Public company "Hutovo Blato Nature Park" Ltd.
  - City of Čapljina
  - City of Stolac
- Government of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton (HNC)
- Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Environmental Protection of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton (HNC)
- Ministry of Construction and Spatial Planning of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton (HNC)
- Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton (HNC)
  - Agency for watershed of the Adriatic sea
  - Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism
- Environmental protection fund of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
  - Environmental protection fund of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton (HNC)

## CIVIL SOCIETY:

- Center for Investments and Entrepreneurship Development (CIRP)
  - NGO Dinarica
  - NGO ANGUILLA
- Fishing Association: USR "Neretva 1933"
  - Š.R.D. Bjelave
- Local Communities of Čapljina and Stolac
  - Ornithological Society "Our Birds"
    - NGO REC
  - NGO Hercegovina Bike
  - Čapljinka Tourist Organization
  - Čapljina Secondary School
    - Primary Schools
- Media: Radio Station Čapljina and web portals: Bljesak.info, Čaportal, Djaka City
  - Rubik Agency

# Uključivanje građana u praćenje bioraznolikosti

## 1 Radionica građanske znanosti

Radionice za lokalnu zajednicu o praćenju bioraznolikosti.

## 2 Obuka na terenu

Obuka za 20 članova lokalne zajednice u osnovama praćenja bioraznolikosti.



# Integracija tradicionalnog znanja

## Priče o ekosustavu

Prikupljanje i analiza tradicionalnog ekološkog znanja od lokalnih stanovnika.

Dva ciklusa: 1- prikupljanja priča starosjedioca Hutovog Blata o ekosustavu, s fokusom na dokumentiranje promjena u razinama vode, populacijama riba i ptica, praksama korištenja zemljišta i utjecajima klime na Hutovo Blato.

2- Prikupljanje dostupnih znanstvenih podataka i intervjuiranje znanstvenika koji su provodili znanstvena istraživanja na prostoru Hutova Blata.

Svaki krug će obuhvatiti barem 5 različitih sudionika

Dobiveni podaci će se obraditi, objediniti te kreirati narativ razvoja Hutovog Blata u posljednjih 50tak Godina.

## Okrugli stol

Okrugli stol s političkim akterima za izradu "Vizije Hutovog Blata 2030".



# Hutovo Blato Vision 2030: Policy Paper

Dokument "**Hutovo Blato Vizija 2030**", rezultat sveobuhvatnog angažmana dionika, pružit će stratešku viziju puta za održivo upravljanje ekosustavom Hutovo Blato.

Bit će strukturiran oko tri ključna stupa:

- Prepoznavanje strukturnih problema s kojima se suočava Hutovo Blato; **Akcijski plan za invazivne riblje vrste**; popis strategija koje opisuju pristupe održivom upravljanju
- Potencijal za budući razvoj kroz različite instrumente EU financiranja
- Plan rada novoformiranog savjetodavnog tijela "*Hutovo Blato Stakeholders Hub*"

Ovaj dokument će poslužiti kao temeljni okvir za operativne smjernice Hutovo Blato Hub-a.

## Mapiranje dionika

Projekt započinje s identifikacijom i mapiranjem ključnih dionika Hutovog Blata, uključujući lokalnu zajednicu, znanstvenike, industriju i političke aktere.

## Vision 2030

Kroz participativni proces, projekt će razviti "Vision 2030" za održivo upravljanje Hutovim Blatom, uključujući formaciju Huba dionika.

1

2

3

## Radionice građanske znanosti

U suradnji s lokalnom zajednicom, projekt će provesti radionicu građanske znanosti za praćenje bioraznolikosti uz pomoć iNaturalist aplikacije.

1

## Formiranje Huba

Uspostava savjetodavnog tijela s predstavnicima svih dionika.

2

## Suradnja

Osiguranje kontinuirane suradnje i razmjene znanja među dionicima.

3

## Održivost

Integracija Huba u strukturu Parka prirode Hutovo Blato za dugoročnu održivost.

# Zaključak

**1**

## **Suradnja**

Projekt će pokazati kako suradnja svih dionika može dovesti do učinkovitijeg i održivijeg očuvanja bioraznolikosti.

**2**

## **Inovacije**

Projekt će koristiti inovativne pristupe, uključujući građansku znanost i tradicionalno ekološko znanje.

**3**

## **Održivost**

Projekt će osigurati dugoročnu održivost očuvanja ekosustava Hutovog Blata.