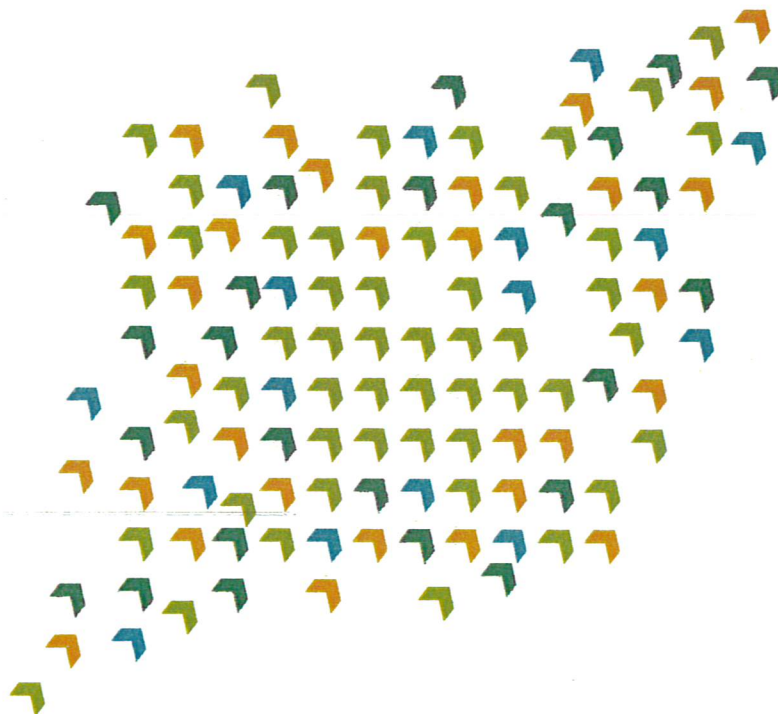




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GRESS - GREen Startup Support

Improve policies for SMEs' competitiveness by strengthening capacities to trigger and support formation of sustainable and competitive of green start-ups and spin-offs

Action Plan for the Municipality of Kristiansand



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1 Introduction

1.1 GRESS – GREen Startup Support

The overall objective of the Interreg Europe GRESS project was to improve policies for SME's competitiveness by strengthening capacities to trigger and support the formation of sustainable and competitive start-ups and spin-offs within the green economy.

Gathering partners with a range of development levels in terms of GDP, from Poland, Greece, Bulgaria, Italy and Norway, interregional collaboration was essential for mutual learning, effective coaching and bringing innovations to the market. Partners had different experiences, approaches, and performance regarding green start-up support. Through workshops and online tools, GRESS promoted policy learning between partners and regional stakeholders in a holistic manner; the horizontal actions created value and delivered innovation across multiple sectors. Specifically, GRESS generated input to the improvement of policy instruments and enabled scaling up of green innovation through the potential for replication of results in other European regions.

The project sought to improve five policy instruments through governance measures, new projects, and structural change. Around 26 MEUR in Structural Funds and 7 MEUR of other funds were estimated to be influenced by the project.

Partners within the GRESS consortium improved awareness of opportunities for SMEs in the green and blue economy with the view to:

- increase the number of participants at and improve the quality of training programmes for green start-ups
- attract more SMEs to participate and succeed in public procurement of green products and services
- enhance access of SMEs to risk capital outside the local region
- make cities and regions more attractive for young entrepreneurs in green sectors
- introduce improved incentive schemes for green start-ups, enhance the performance of ecosystems
- grow the number of competitive start-ups and spin-offs within the green economy and improve their chance of survival.

The current economic crisis has further exposed the need for a reconsideration of traditional economic models and approaches. With the economic crisis continuing to affect growth, and environmental challenges mounting, governments around the world are increasingly seeking more innovative ways to promote economic activity and tackle global environmental challenges such as climate change and the scarcity of natural resources. Green growth policies need to encourage innovation, as this can enhance efficiency in the use of natural capital and foster new economic opportunities from the emergence of new green activities.



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Green innovation not only has the potential to provide efficient and effective solutions to environmental challenges, but can also contribute to making companies more competitive, and hence work towards a stronger economy. Firstly, eco-innovations can lead to increased productivity and energy efficiency, thus improving the cost competitiveness of businesses. Secondly, the market for environmental goods and services is growing fast; a comparative advantage in such markets can therefore be an important source of economic growth. Thirdly, eco-innovation can contribute to the emergence of new business opportunities. Against this background, partners in the GRESS Project have been working since 2019.

1.2 The importance of green start-up support

Europe has ambitious goals for the future - under the Paris Agreement, the EU committed itself to become carbon-neutral by 2050 and a 55% reduction of emissions by 2030. The 25 million SMEs in Europe account for 99.8% of all firms and are both a significant source of job creation and prosperity and an engine for the green transition especially now, during the recovery period post-COVID. SMEs and start-ups are deeply woven into Europe's economic and social fabric; they provide two out of three jobs, bring training opportunities across regions and sectors, including low-skilled workers, and support society's welfare, including in remote and rural areas. The daily challenges of European SMEs to comply with rules and access information, markets, and finance are thus challenges for the whole of Europe.

Green entrepreneurship is a business approach that considers not just profit, but also social and environmental sustainability. Green entrepreneurship is also a means to improve the management of natural resources while simultaneously ensuring that they are used in an efficient and sustainable way. Therefore, a business established according to principles of efficiency and sustainability becomes an interesting opportunity for the whole ecosystem, spurring imitation and innovation, and attracting capital and interest from relevant stakeholders.

Entrepreneurship developed according to the principles of sustainable consumption and production can help manage better scarce natural resources (water, land, energy, etc.) ensuring economic growth that is both efficient and sustainable. From this perspective, increasing the numbers of start-ups and spin-offs within the green economy is an opportunity for the whole society, promoting innovation, inspiring others to follow the same path, and ultimately attracting interest and capital to the economic sectors that improve the environment and the economy at large. Developing an ecosystem where green start-ups and spin-offs can flourish will require also requires the creation of national, regional, and European infrastructures that can support them.



The European Union acknowledges the essential role of SMEs and start-ups during the recovery and transition phase. As part of the industrial package, its SME strategy is viewed instrumentally for implementing, among others, the Green Deal. The European Green Deal seeks to achieve climate neutrality across Europe by 2050 by encouraging the adoption of environmental practices that promote low carbon emissions, a circular economy, and economic growth that does not jeopardise our ecosystem and natural resources.

The European Green Deal recognises the key role SMEs can play in this transition towards a more sustainable future, allowing SMEs to make the most of their flexibility and position themselves in the market as leaders in eco-innovation. For SMEs to be able to continue to grow and offer a wide range of innovative and sustainable products and services, Member States need to ensure that appropriate green industrial policies are put in place to further stimulate their onboarding in this sustainable journey, such as capacity building and support for transition, reducing regulatory burden, enhanced market entrance, and improved access to finance.

1.3 State of play for green start-up support in Europe/GRESS regions – base line report

There is no doubt that green business is critically important for productive, healthy and sustainable societies. As green businesses use limited amounts of (or no) fossil fuels and have low (or no) emissions, they can play a key role in combating climate change while contributing to growth and the creation of decent and green jobs. But apart from macro-level benefits, going green also makes business sense for the entrepreneur. The benefits of greener business include access to untapped markets, improved resource efficiency and cost savings, and improved productivity of staff as a result of a cleaner and safer working environments.

Green start-ups also play a key role in promoting structural change. While established companies generally have their strengths in improvement innovations, it is start-ups that introduce fundamental environmental innovations to the market as pioneers. In the transformation bringing us towards a climate-neutral economy, the innovative start-up teams are the main drivers of change; green start-ups predominantly rely on digital business models, making particular use of the opportunities offered by digitalisation to implement new sustainable solutions.

However, green start-ups often must struggle with particularly high barriers in many markets and are often not rewarded for their outstanding sustainability performance. In some cases, they are even disadvantaged regarding start-up promotion programmes. How this imbalance can be remedied and how the economic and sustainable potential of green start-ups can be better utilised need to be addressed.



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In view of the economic and ecological importance of green start-ups, it is essential to support this type of start-up from the outset, considering special characteristics and achievements and specific challenges visible in politics and start-up promotion programmes as well as to investors and established companies.

To identify and analyse the regional and territorial situation of the green economy (status of green growth) in the five partner territories of the GRESS project, a methodological framework was created which provides a top-down approach for the analysis of the regional business climate for green SMEs, including existing policies, support schemes and instruments, and the possible existence of strong regional markets and knowledge clusters.

This analysis served as a starting point for the exchange of experience and mutual learning process. A common template and methodology were used to ensure a harmonised approach to an activity covering territories that are very different in terms of their geography, economic and political contexts and the opportunities and capacities to realise the green economy.

The baseline document gathered the analysis of the green economy regional framework in the five GRESS project partner regions, to enable a deeper and more consolidated understanding of the existing factors and policies playing a role in fostering the sector in the five project regions.

The analysis assumed that territories are living systems continuously in evolution where diverse interests, economic drivers, social factors, and policy instruments may influence further development and valuable services for green start-ups and SMEs to develop. For this reason, a deep understanding of the existing situations in the regions was necessary as starting point for the GRESS project to pursue the objective to improve policies and reinforce SMEs' competitiveness in the green economy. In particular, the analysis focused on the diverse peculiarities of each project region in terms of existing policies at national or regional level, type of stakeholders involved, support services and innovation instruments, main start-ups economic sectors and potential for the future.

The report supported the fact that all countries consider the green economy as a driving sector for a more resilient and sustainable territorial development, and they are all positively influenced by the European policy framework stimulating and supporting the green economy. Nevertheless, fundamental differences may be found in the main green economy sectors to be fostered, the actual status of development of specific policies and instruments for the sector, as well as in the integration of European policies with more national and local policies providing strategic orientation and operative support instruments.

For instance, in some cases it was found that the national policies for innovation and green development are highly integrated with specific regional and local policies, as in the case of Kristiansand and the Metropolitan City of Bologna. However, whereas in the first case more



attention should be paid on indirect emissions and supporting scaling-up processes, in the latter case the financing instruments and support services accessed by green start-ups and enterprises at regional level are currently not specifically designed for them and a more specific focus at this regard is needed in the future.

On the contrary, Sofia municipality is trying to boost green start-ups development through acceleration programmes, even if at Bulgarian national level national policies still play a more central role and the dependency on European funds is still significant. It was also noted that the demand for more green products and services had not previously been perceived as sufficiently high and that more incentives will be provided by public institutions through the adoption of Green Public Procurement.

A general positive asset in some countries is the presence of a wide variety of actors – businesses, university and research institutions, public institutions, public service providers – having a proactive role in fostering the sector and working in close cooperation to provide green businesses with more complementary tools. The analysis also showed that more policies for the increase in green jobs were needed in most of the project territories.

The positive case studies and best practices collected played a central role in the mutual learning exchange phase of the project, through which the partners had the chance to exchange experiences with each other and to integrate the lessons learnt in the existing policy instruments addressed at local level. Indeed, interregional learning was a key success in this instance, enabled by the Interreg Europe programme, which promotes exchange of experiences among diverse European regions for them to learn from each other and build innovative policies in their territories.

2 General information

Project:	GRESS – GREEn Startup Support
Partner organisation:	Kristiansand Municipality
Country:	Norway
NUTS 2 region:	Agder and Rogaland
Contact person:	Øyvind Laderud, oyvind.laderud@kristiansand.kommune.no +47 47648492

3 Policy context Kristiansand

The Action Plan aims to impact:

- Strategic Business Development Plan for Kristiansand
- Kristiansand Climate and Environmental Strategy

The proposed actions will influence both policy instruments along the structural and governance dimensions.



3.1 Policy instrument – brief presentation

The main objective of the Business Development Plan is to enhance the competitiveness of the business community and to foster growth and value creation in the larger region.

To achieve climate targets and a green transition, focusing on green start-ups is crucial for success. Green entrepreneurship is a business approach that considers profit and social and environmental sustainability. It is also a means to improve the management of natural resources while simultaneously ensuring their efficient and sustainable use. However, until now, the focus on green start-ups has been only marginal.

Therefore, a business established according to principles of efficiency and sustainability becomes an exciting opportunity for the whole ecosystem, spurring imitation and innovation and attracting capital and interest from relevant stakeholders.

Additionally, due to the merge with two neighbouring municipalities, the Action Plan will also address the city's revised Climate and Environmental Strategy since it now to a greater extent includes the business sector. The strategy describes how Kristiansand as society are going to transition to a sustainable low-carbon society with 80 % lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions within 2030.

A necessary part of the transition is also the transition from a linear to a circular economy. The strategy will in accordance with the plan be adopted in 2022 and will be followed up with an action plan. The action plan is under preparation and will in accordance with plan be adopted during phase 2.

Focus areas in the strategy are:

- Land use and biological diversity
- Food and agriculture
- Green mobility and logistics
- Sustainable site and property development
- Consumption and waste
- Green transition in business
- Climate management

3.1.1 Priorities

Business Development Plan's Action Plan:

2. Innovation

2.3 Public procurement for climate neutral solutions

2.5 Further development and establishment of innovation and entrepreneurship culture

2.5.4 GRESS project to improve conditions for green innovation

2.6 Facilitation for projects and co-creation within climate and circular economy



2.6.4 Competence centre for construction sector

2.6.5 Development of KPIs for the green observatory

Climate and Environmental strategy:

The new climate and environment strategy guides the work towards the business community to a large degree. Several new and revised strategies are proposed implemented in the Climate and Environmental strategy to support the actions described in this Action Plan. The most relevant to mention are these:

- Definition of KPIs for the green transition, how to measure and report them and developing concrete actions to reach the objectives
- Utilizing the municipalities role as a procurer as an active contribution the transition
- Motivate the business community and strengthen entrepreneurship using incentives and innovation.
- Collaborate with the business community and facilitate the transition to a circular economy.
- Stimulate the development of new short-distance value chains and solutions for more responsible consumption and production.
- Facilitate and collaborate with small and medium-sized companies on environmental certification.

4 Interregional exchange of experiences – lessons learned

For most of the duration of the GRESS project, society at large has been highly affected by COVID-19 pandemic. This was an unforeseeable event, which impacted our project activities greatly. Especially in early 2020, the uncertainty around the pandemic meant that it was neither possible to execute activities nor to plan. It quickly became apparent that the partnership could not conduct its activities as planned and needed to find new working methods to achieve the project's objectives. Consequently, all project activities developed into online events with a different approach but similar focus.

Working remotely had certain advantages; now, we could meet more frequently, engage more stakeholders, and organise spontaneous meetings with a particular focus. In addition, bilateral meetings between partners became more natural and thus relations between partners became closer on a personal level.

However, an entirely digital work mode proved not recommendable for the exchange of experiences and the learning process. To undertake such exchanges successfully, face to face contact is required with relationships built on both the formal and informal meetings. Informal meetings build trust and confidence, which is the starting point for such exchanges. Experience shows that learning happens not only via structured channels, but also informally via networking. Virtual tools can help, but physical meetings remain important catalysts of cooperation. Outcomes vary from concrete solutions to intangible results such as changes in mindset. Both are important. Therefore, it is essential to note that the GRESS partnership



recognises that the process has not been optimal as it should have under different circumstances and as planned initially.

Nevertheless, under the imposed and unforeseen conditions, we are pleased with our collaborative work to improve the five policy instruments.

4.1 GRESS policy learning process

Learning is a cognitive and social dynamic through which diverse types of actors involved in policy processes acquire, translate, and disseminate new information and knowledge about public problems and solutions. In turn, they maintain, strengthen, or revise their policy beliefs and preferences. A fundamental challenge in policy learning and experimentation is determining the underlying social and institutional criteria necessary to make policy learning successful.

A second related challenge is whether and how policy learning and experimentalist approaches are applicable across all types of regions. Success might depend on the ability of local leaders to form collaborative arrangements allowing public sector institutions to work with the private sector in devising experimental approaches. The ability to do so often depends on the willingness of policymakers to enhance their capacity to lead and work with change. Learning matters for innovation policy because policymakers face a complex and continuously evolving innovation system with insufficient evidence of how to influence it most effectively.

The GRESS partnership applied a five-step policy-learning process:

- 1) a review of the status on green growth in each region (further explained in section 4.2)
- 2) scan and exchange of experience and identification of good practice for mutual learning
- 3) assessment and ranking of relevant practices through peer assessments in RSGs
- 4) idea generation on policy intervention with interregional knowledge transfer
- 5) development and monitoring of regional action plans.

While the theoretical importance of policy learning is widely acknowledged, its implementation is challenging in practice. The challenges that need to be overcome to increase policy experimentation are multi-faceted, ranging from questions of commitment to learning by monitoring on the part of ruling politicians and their public sector managers to an organisation's technical capacity for learning by monitoring.

Guided by the five steps, each partner undertook a predefined and structured approach for collecting, analysing, and shortlisting suitable practices from the partner regions to respond to the identified challenges, learn, and improve the addressed policy instrument.

Through these interlinked and targeted activities, the GRESS Project promoted the exchange of experience, identification, benchmarking and transfer of good practice and knowledge between partners and regional stakeholders in a holistic manner and provided legitimacy by



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validating and confirming the benefits of importing good practice from other partner regions towards the policy responsible institutions.

GRESS partners designed learning activities aimed at improving policy instruments. Learning therefore took place at different levels; individual (through workshops), organisational (through internal seminars and dissemination events for staff in partner's institutions), stakeholder (through RSGs) and external learning (through the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform and targeted EU networks).

4.1.1 Kristiansand policy learning process

The [survey](#) and the [baseline report](#) has been at the core of this process. Based on these results and consulting with the RSG, Kristiansand identified three topics of interest and engaged extensively with the partnership, especially with Metropolitan City of Bologna - MCOB and Foundation Cleantech Bulgaria.

Inspired by ongoing activities and good practices, especially from both Bologna and Sofia, Kristiansand started to develop actions in cooperation with its RSG and the GRESS partnership. Two interregional workshops ([18.11.2020](#), [01.12.2021](#) dedicated to Kristiansand's AP resulted in the following two proposed actions:

- 1. Competence centre for a greener and more circular economy within the construction sector**
- 2. Agder Green Observatory**

4.2 Survey analysis

As an integral part of the GRESS policy learning process, the partnership executed a survey in the project regions, targeting start-ups and SMEs to identify the drivers and challenges for green entrepreneurship.

The analysis focused on the positive effects of the green economy for businesses, not only in environmental terms but also in competitiveness. It aimed to identify the stimuli, the barriers and the public policies that could speed up green economy development and start-up processes. In particular, the survey focused on green investments, access to public and private funding, green jobs, and enabling external factors.

The survey results implemented in the partner regions show that their green economy business ecosystems present several similarities, although various peculiarities also occur. The need to establish a more integrated, supportive, and holistic ecosystem for green business development is particularly emphasised in the cases of Piraeus (Greece) and Bulgaria. More comprehensive support in internationalisation processes, networks, and translation of strategies into policies is required in the West Pomeranian and the Agder regions. In contrast, more excellent public sector leadership in fostering the green economy is needed in the Emilia-Romagna region (Italy).



The role of private and public funding also differs quite significantly among the regions. In West Pomeranian and Bulgaria, most respondents mainly went through a complete self-financing process for their business. In the Agder region and Emilia-Romagna on the other hand, public and private financing were significant in several cases. In addition, several respondents had access to external support services, incubators, acceleration programs or counselling.

Despite regional differences, numerous common challenges, obstacles, and drivers have been identified by respondents throughout all partner regions. For example, most respondents underlined that private and public funding was too small to support the development of new green start-ups and SMEs, which usually have to self-finance their business ideas. Access to public funding at the regional, national, and European levels was considered complicated and time-consuming. It requires high investment costs, human resources, time, and energy.

Complex application and administration procedures discourage applicants in all regions from submitting project ideas, in addition to high competition and selection criteria. The survey results clearly showed the need of more support services in the application phase, process simplification and institutions that can provide support to green businesses.

Respondents from all regions indicated the expectation for green jobs to increase in the future. However, recruitment of highly skilled employees and those qualified in green skills was considered an enormous challenge for green businesses.

Another common barrier encountered by green enterprises was the ability to afford the green investment and adaptation costs to be able to access the market. This is a crucial point as start-ups have identified insufficient market demand as hampering green investments.

In conclusion, the public sector must play an essential role in this sense and take the lead by improving green public procurement procedures, applying legislative, regulatory changes, providing more specific incentives for green businesses, and recruiting highly skilled green workers.



5 Actions

Action 1

Competence centre for a greener and more circular economy within the construction and building sector

1. Background

Globally, the building and construction industry accounts for more than a third of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, a third of the world's waste, 40 per cent of the world's energy consumption and 40 per cent of global natural resource use (metals, minerals, forests, etc.). The industries have a large consumption of virgin materials and a high proportion of waste, not reintroduced into the economy.

The building and construction industry is the largest single source of waste in Norway. The potential for increased circularity in the industry is high. Consequently, the building and construction industry is one of four priority areas in the EU's roadmap for a circular economy.

The GRESS project launched a survey to understand better how to support and strengthen green entrepreneurship and start-ups within the respective countries. In Kristiansand, the most critical challenges for green transition were lack of capital and market. Experiences from the other partners in the GRESS project confirm this, both based on the survey results and experiences beyond this project. MCBO shared information about barriers to implementing circular economy mechanisms from the CESME project that addressed SME inclusion in the circular economy. The barriers were regulations and bureaucracy, lack of economic resources, lack of culture and knowledge and lack of collaboration.

Learning exchange:

As described above, learning exchange has been performed to identify barriers and challenges for green transition, through the GRESS survey and information from the CESME project. Such knowledge is crucial to manage to develop actions with potential high impact.

Measures to reduce these challenges and barriers, both for the public and the private sector are also identified based on learning exchange as described below, e.g.:

- A partner meeting 12 January 2022 where MCBO presented the experience from the CESME project and the White Book. In addition to the learning about the barriers to overcome for SME inclusion in the circular economy, there has been learning outcomes about measures already performed by others to reduce barriers, e.g., sharing of good practice and knowledge, improving collaboration, digital information, and collaboration platforms. The White Book is regarded as a knowledge bank that has been used in the development and will be used further in the performance of this action.
- An exchange learning event between all partners in CESME and GRESS. This event is under planning and will be performed during the project period.



- The Good practice Clust-ER GREENTECH shared from MCBO. Cluster-ER is a regional innovation ecosystem that operates transversally. The main goal of the Clust-ERs is being a place of co-design and collaborative innovation between the companies, the research centres and the training institutions, to increase the competitiveness of the regional production system. Communication is a key success factor - important to adjust communication to target audience and stay up to date on relevant topics.
- The online study visit organized by CT-Bulgaria, at the Club House by Sofia Tech Park. The Club House is home to 14 clubs of interest in the fields of entrepreneurship, artificial intelligence, bioinformatics, space science, robotics and much more. It is located in the Business Incubator building of Sofia Tech Park. The goal is to open conversations among like-minded and curious innovators in the direction of new generation innovations and technologies, to expand the network of contacts to the start-ups, the scientific community and the business in general. The Club House is the core of the Incubator, where innovative ideas, concepts, partnerships and projects are born. Many events have taken place at the Club House.
- The PLP event Fostering the circular transformation of businesses, on 15 March 2021. Fostering the circular transformation of businesses requires an approach to whole ecosystems and bold moves towards circular economy. Such changes require a strong involvement and collaboration among stakeholders from policy, research, industry and civil society.
- Several stakeholder meetings, both within the public and private sector. These meetings have been important in the development of the action, and more meetings will be performed during phase 2 for planning of the action in more detail. This is performed to make sure that the action will reduce the barriers and challenges identified during the GRESS project.
- Respondent answers in the GRESS survey that the public sector must play an important role and take the lead through improving green public procedures, increasing awareness of the consumers and of the whole value-chain, as well as applying legislative, regulatory changes and providing more specific incentives for green businesses. To manage this, the public sector should collaborate with the private sector.

Municipalities may have considerable influence over the public and commerce, far-reaching purchasing power, and the ability to impact millions of stakeholders through policies and programmes.

This action will facilitate for implementation of several measures to overcome the challenges and barriers described to accelerate the transition to a circular economy within buildings and construction.



SMEs and start-ups are the primary targets for these measures since SMEs are considered one of the main engines playing a relevant role within the complex systemic process enabling a more circular economy.

2. Action description

This action establishes a competence centre for a greener and more circular economy within buildings and construction. With this, we want to facilitate for implementation of several measures to overcome the challenges and barriers described above, especially for green start-ups and SMEs.

We want to facilitate increased collaboration between the public and the private sector. The business community experiences that increased collaboration with the public sector is crucial to managing the transition from a linear to a more circular economy

Today's sorting and material recycling requirements are not enough if you want to facilitate a circular building and construction industry.

On the other hand, the municipalities also experience that collaborative innovation is needed for the transition to a low-carbon society and circular economy.

To improve the collaboration, with a particular focus on green start-ups and SMEs, we want with the competence centre to:

- Improve the dialogue between the public and private sector about, e.g., setting common goals, and possibilities and challenges to reach these goals
- Increase the use of municipal tools like public procurements, incentives, regulations, and policy
- Facilitate for exchange of experience and good practice
- Increase knowledge within the public and private sector
- Support and accelerate the development of new and innovative solutions

To achieve this, we want the competence centre to be a meeting arena, with various kinds of events and activities:

1. Meeting with Bølgen sustainability house to plan a workshop with stakeholders for implementation of the action «Competence centre for construction and building sector»
2. Workshop for input on
 - Stakeholder needs
 - Events/activities for 2022/23
 - Organisation and roles
 - Financing
3. Prepare a plan for events and activities for 2022-2023
4. Arrange event/activity
5. Evaluate and adjust the action
6. Applying for funding of activities and events.



<p>3. Stakeholders involved</p>	<p>Responsible stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kristiansand municipality - owner of the action, public sector • Bølgen sustainability house – coordinator and facilitator of events and activities at the competence centre <p>Stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Byggeforum • Kristiansand Chambers of Commerce and other business organizations • Eco Lighthouse • Agder symbiosis • University of Agder • Green start-ups and SMEs
<p>4. Timeframe</p>	<p>Indicative timeline for implementation of the action:</p> <p>August 2022 Meeting with Bølgen sustainability house to plan a workshop with stakeholders for implementation of the action «Competence centre for construction and building sector»</p> <p>September 2022 Workshop to get input on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The stakeholder needs • Events and activities for 2022/2023 • Organization and roles • Financing <p>September/October 2022 Prepare a plan for events and activities for 2022-2023</p> <p>November 2022 – March 2023 Arrange events/activities</p> <p>May/June 2023 Evaluate and adjust the action</p> <p>Continuously Applying for funding of activities and events.</p>
<p>5. Funding source</p>	<p>The sustainability house is financed through the budget of the municipal owner of the Environmental and climate strategy, with 1.2 mill NOK per year.</p> <p>The costs related to the events and activities for the action are estimated to be 25 000 NOK per and will for the implementation period be 100 000 NOK. In addition, there will be “in kind” costs for the municipality.</p>
<p>6. Expected impact</p>	<p>If the action is successful, this will be important for the transition to a circular economy for the building and construction industry in Kristiansand</p>



	municipality and region Agder. Due to the high potential related to increased circularity in the sector, the potential impact is high.
7. Monitoring	<p>KPIs to be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for events and venue for 2022-2023 • Number of events and activities <p>Number of participants, including SMEs, at events and activities</p>

Action 2	Agder Green Observatory
1. Background	<p>Sustainability challenges are driving fundamental economic changes and it's essential to turn challenges into business opportunities for green start-ups and SMEs. It is thus a need to improve the performance of businesses and the society. This was the background for the GRESS project. The European Green Deal aims to boost the efficient use of resources by moving to a clean, circular economy and stop climate change, revert biodiversity loss and cut pollution. Green SMEs and start-ups have a key function as an engine for structural change.</p> <p>«Whatever the underlying dynamics of the local green economy, in the public policy context it is essential to emphasize the importance of integrating economic and environmental policies in a way that highlights the opportunities for new sources of economic growth while avoiding unsustainable pressure on the quality and quantity of the natural assets.</p> <p>Promotion of the green economy in Europe involves a variety of measures ranging from economic instruments, such as taxes, incentives, subsidies and trading schemes, through regulatory policies, including the setting of standards, to non-economic measures such as voluntary approaches and information provision» (Baseline report)</p> <p>However, many local and national governments or institutions fail to explain in detail what transition to green economy implies and how we can measure green growth? Political leaders at all levels call for indicators and reference-testing that could help us measure any progress and as such assess the performances. How can governments at national and local level adapt or adjust its policy measures?</p> <p>At local level in the Agder region and in city of Kristiansand there is a lack of reliable methods or tools to supply policy makers with sufficient reference frames to measure green economy or green growth in a useful and sensible way.</p> <p>At national level we have seen some attempts to describe or define green economy but for all purposes we need to develop analysis and to define a set of indicators to be shared and tested between regions.</p> <p>Learning exchange:</p>



The exchange of practices within the GRESS project proved that there was a gap in all regions to fully describe or define the green economy and measure green growth:

- definition of green economy,
- what sectors or value chains will be included in the green economy?
- growth in green start-ups or SMEs?
- important drivers for green growth and the circular economy in Agder
- statistical analysis of the economic trends, green and circular
- indicators set that can be used to compare between regions.
- Also considering indicators analysis at EU/International level
- Improved decision basis for policies and measures for green economy and green growth

GRESS project partner, Metropolitan City of Bologna established a few years ago the Green Economy Observatory of the Emilia Romagna Region (GEOER). GEOER monitors the phenomenon of the green economy both from a numerical and qualitative point of view. The Observatory works on the topics of green economy, circular economy, resource efficiency and sustainable production

According to ECO- Innovation there is no indicator that can be a single measurement for the Circular Economy, but several existing indicators can help to measure performance in several areas that directly or indirectly contribute to the Circular Economy development. Businesses are the engine behind the circular economy transition.

2. Action description

There is a need for long term political management tools for the national and regional economies for practical use when developing strategic objectives and policies for energy-, environmental and economic growth. Thematic insights on the main supply chains and statistical analysis of the economic trends and comparison with the regional ones, including green transition of SMEs and start-ups.

In the Agder region there is a need to establish a similar observatory on the same topics that also include a view on the green transition of SMEs and start-ups.

The plan is to establish a scoreboard of indicators as a quantitative tool that aims to measure the complex phenomenon of green growth. There is also a need to supplement the quantitative indicators with qualitative analysis and information from different sources, like case studies, thematic insights in value chains, economic trends that could be collected and processed in a Agder green monitor or observatory.

The observatory should beside monitor the green economy also provide and carry out information and communication activities and diffusion of the Green



Economy in the Region. For a full take-off of the green transition, private and public institutions need to provide the proper set of skills and competences.

- Kristiansand municipality and the Agder regional authority have met on several occasions in 2021 and 2022 to discuss how we can proceed and work together to realize the green observatory in our region. Partners will establish a preliminary working group.
- Developing quantitative tools and indicators. Analysing indicators for green growth and regional competitiveness is an important task and must be addressed by research and development institutions. In the course of 2021, Kristiansand identified an interesting R&D project in Norway led by a research institute. Indicators and indicators set of particular interest to measure green economic growth and green competitiveness. Kristiansand and Agder region will follow and learn from the work and attend open meetings to ensure sufficient learning. In addition, we will seek to identify specific indicators of importance for positive or negative effect for green growth in the Agder region
- The action also includes further discussions and meeting with Green Economy Observatory of the Emilia Romagna Region. Beside learning more from experiences so far, the Observatory created a reference group focused on green economy composed of regional institutions, enterprise associations, research institutes and clusters. Other observatories and important indicators work in Europe to measure green growth will also be analysed, like indicators used to monitor the progress towards a circular economy (Eurostat)
- For Kristiansand and Agder region the solution is to establish a digital platform where the indicators will be one element in it. In addition, we will include qualitative descriptions, analysis, relevant reports, case studies, SME sustainability surveys, regional and local policy measures and calls, news on public procurement etc.
- The project will organize a workshop with relevant stakeholders to discuss the Observatory, main purpose, different elements of the observatory, steering group, working group, resource group
- Establish a first reference group focusing on green economy. Municipality, regional institutions, enterprise associations, clusters, research etc
- By July 2023 we have produced the first demo web site for Agder Green Growth Monitor/Observatory with a pilot version of the



	indicators we have identified so far, relevant reports and surveys posted on the platform.
3. Stakeholders involved	<p>Kristiansand municipality, City of Kristiansand, Agder County municipality, Agder regional authority (member of GRESS stakeholder group), Kristiansand Greater Chamber of Commerce, (GRESS RSG).</p> <p>Will also draw upon project by SINTEF (R&D centre).</p>
4. Timeframe	May 2022 – July 2023
5. Funding source	<p>Most of the work will be carried out as staff costs borne by the different involved partners. We estimate also costs related web development. Such costs will be responsibility of the regional authority and City of Kristiansand. Chamber of Commerce will cover own staff costs, and the costs related to surveys that will be a part of the work and the Green Monitor. Costs of workshops, travel and external will be covered by Agder County council, Municipality of Kristiansand and the involved partners mentioned above.</p>
6. Expected impact	<p>The region will be equipped with a new methodology to measure green growth over several years. Consequently, increased knowledge and skills on green growth within the region will support politicians and administrators making informed decisions on instruments, measures, and programs.</p> <p>The observatory will ensure increased focus on green growth and increased competitiveness in businesses and provides insights on different parts of the green transition process.</p> <p>This action will lead to the development of more targeted policy instruments for start-ups and increase the number of SMEs accessing support instruments.</p> <p>The dissemination of EUs green policies, measures and tools will foster alignments among regional and European policies.</p>
7. Monitoring	<p>The established steering group and working group are responsible for monitoring the progress.</p> <p>During the set-up and implementation phase of the action, regular consultations with MCBO on Green Economy Observatory in Emilia Romagna are planned to ensure quality.</p>



Institution: City of Kristiansand / Kristiansand commune

Name of signatory: Jan Oddvar Skisland

Position: Mayor of Kristiansand

Date: 06 / 09 / 2022

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Jan Oddvar Skisland". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the first letter 'J'.



Kristiansand
kommune



Further, consultations with a national R&D project on green growth indicators are scheduled to ensure sufficient learning for Agder

6 Endorsement

Date:

Name of the Organisation(s):

Signature

Jan Oddvar Rindland

