

GreenWorks Toolkit



WP3-A4: Organisation and implementation of the piloting activities

PART 1 SYNTHESISED REPORT



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1.INTRODUCTION

The GreenLead pilot testing phase constituted a key validation stage of the project, designed to assess the quality, relevance, usability and practical applicability of the main project results with their intended end users. Implemented across Greece, Spain, North Macedonia and Slovenia, the piloting activities provided an opportunity for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), Vocational Education and Training (VET) organisations and, where relevant, other business and sectoral stakeholders to directly interact with the GreenLead learning ecosystem and provide evidence-based feedback for its final refinement.

The pilot focused on three interconnected results:



**WP3-A2 –
GreenLead
Training Course**



**WP4-A1 –
Certification Model
for the evaluation and
certification of Green
Manager skills**



**WP4-A2 – GreenLead
digital platform**

The objective was to assess the effectiveness of the course materials, their practical application, participants' engagement and interest, and the overall user experience, while collecting feedback that could support the improvement and finalisation of the project results.

The Training Course consists of six modules covering:

1 Foundations of Sustainability and the Green Policy Framework

2 Circular Economy and Green Business Models

3 Leadership, Stakeholder Engagement and Communication

4 Digitalisation, Monitoring and ESG Reporting

5 Financing and Strategic Transformation for SMEs

6 SME Transformation Plan

Testing therefore went beyond an assessment of whether the platform was technically operational. Participants were invited to experience the overall GreenLead learning pathway, engage with the training resources, assess their relevance to professional practice and examine the accompanying certification process.

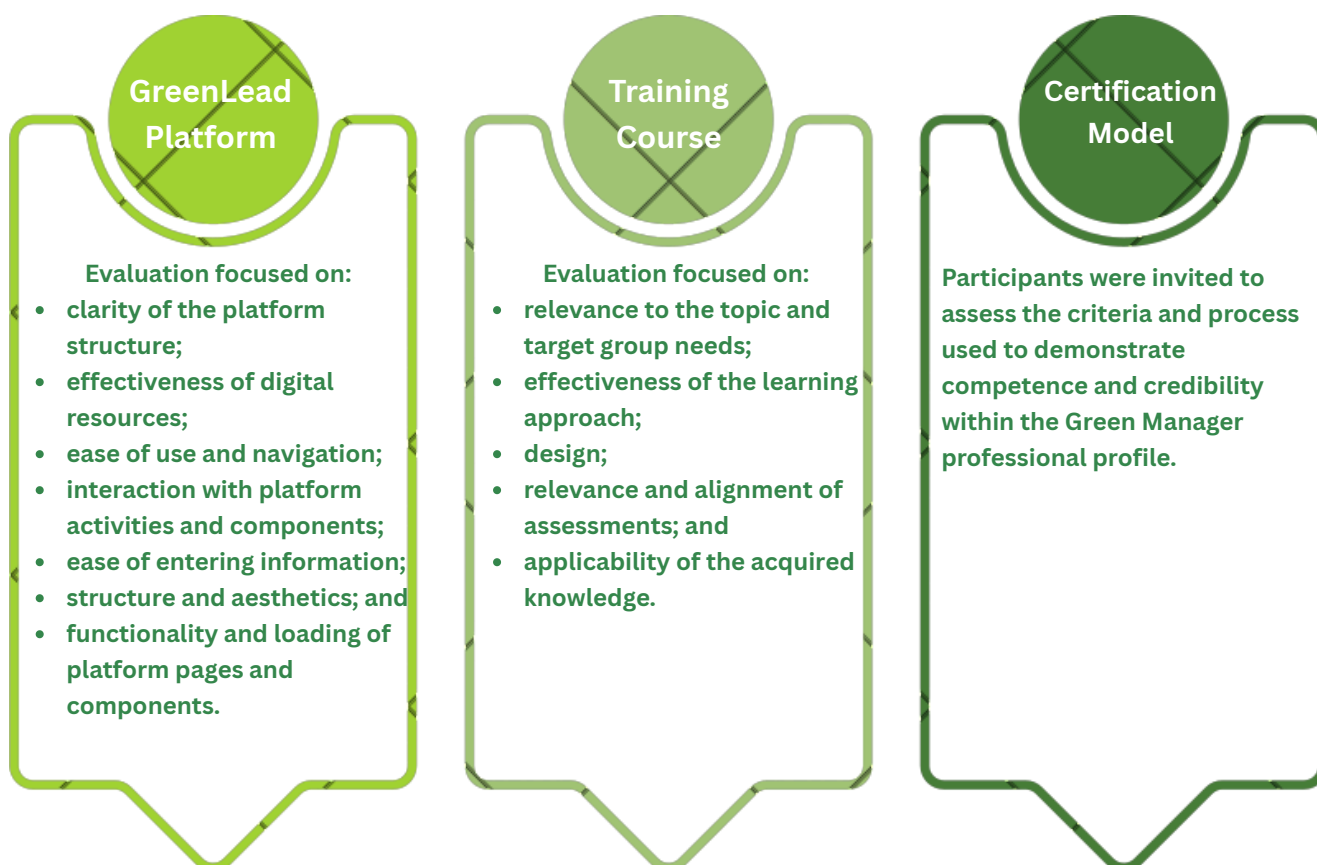
The present report synthesises the national pilot findings from Greece, Spain, North Macedonia and Slovenia, highlighting both national specificities and common cross-country conclusions.

2. PILOT TESTING METHODOLOGY

A common methodology was developed to ensure that the national pilots tested the same GreenLead outputs and addressed comparable evaluation dimensions while allowing sufficient flexibility for implementation within different national and organisational contexts.

The methodology established a target of engaging SMEs and their key staff and allowed piloting to take place online or face-to-face, separately with individual SMEs or collectively with groups of learners. The methodology envisaged a combination of an introductory session, online learning activities and self-driven learning through the GreenLead e-learning platform.

Participants were expected to assess three main dimensions.



3. OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPATION

<u>Country</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Number of participating organisations/entities</u>
Spain	Cámara Teruel & Politeknika Txorierri	12
Greece	Innovation Hive & AKMI	14
North Macedonia	ECO-LOGIC	11
Slovenia	IPS	13
Total	4 pilot countries	50

The pilot therefore reached a diverse group of SMEs, VET providers, business organisations, sectoral organisations and professionals operating within different economic environments.

This diversity is particularly important for GreenLead because it enabled the consortium to examine the applicability of the learning resources beyond a single type or size of organisation.



4. NATIONAL PILOT TESTING RESULTS



4.1 SPAIN



Implementation and Participants

The Spanish pilot involved 12 organisations/entities and was coordinated through two complementary partner-led streams. The participant group included SMEs, VET providers, business and sectoral associations, and professionals, ensuring perspectives from education, business support and different economic sectors. The profiles represented included management, quality, technical and EU-project responsibilities, strengthening the business-oriented character of the pilot. Five organisations participated mainly through online, self-paced piloting sessions, during which they independently tested the platform, training materials, practical activities and certification model while receiving ongoing support.

A further seven organisations/entities were engaged through a business network and formal participation declarations. The process was supported by email instructions, a video tutorial on platform navigation and use, and technical/content-related assistance. An evaluation questionnaire was distributed after completion of the pilot activities.

Training Course Feedback

The training course received excellent feedback, with all questionnaire respondents rating their overall satisfaction at 5/5 and the relevance of the training at 4.8/5. Participants considered the content easy to understand, practical and applicable to real work situations, with scores ranging from 4.6 to 4.8/5. The practical activities and the relevance of the modules for SMEs were particularly appreciated, while Modules 1 and 3 stood out for their introductory value, use of real SME scenarios and focus on communicating sustainability without greenwashing. Respondents also reported gaining new skills and increased confidence in applying them professionally.

Platform Feedback

The GreenLead platform was also evaluated very positively. Participants described it as clear, intuitive and easy to navigate, with scores of 4.6/5 for structure, 4.8/5 for ease of navigation and 4.6/5 for design and layout, while the digital resources received 4.8/5. No significant usability challenges were reported, and most suggestions indicated that major changes were unnecessary. For final fine-tuning, the strong clarity of the platform, intuitive navigation and practical orientation should be maintained, while future evaluation activities would benefit from a common questionnaire and shared data-collection format across all participating organisations.



4.2 NORTH MACEDONIA



Implementation and Participants

The pilot implementation followed a staged recruitment and engagement process. Eco-Logic first mapped relevant SME sectors and mobilised its existing professional networks to identify suitable SMEs and VET organisations. This outreach involved business-support actors, youth and employability networks, representatives of the German businesses network in the country and the national Economic Chamber, helping to broaden the pool of potential participants.

Following this initial mapping, Eco-Logic established direct contact with selected organisations to introduce the GreenLead platform, training course, certification model and evaluation process.

In total, 10 SMEs and 1 VET organisation participated in the pilot. Six SMEs took part through online sessions, while four SMEs and one VET organisation participated through face-to-face information sessions. The online sessions generally lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and involved either groups of staff members or company owners/managers.

After the introductory sessions, participants registered on the platform, engaged with the training materials and certification process, and completed the Pilot Evaluation Questionnaire. Registrations and questionnaire responses were monitored, while additional informal communication was maintained to provide clarification and support where needed.



Training Course Feedback

Feedback on the Training Course was positive overall. Participants particularly valued its simple, accessible and beginner-friendly structure, as well as the practical exercises, which were considered one of the strongest elements of the course. The self-paced learning approach was also appreciated, as it allowed participants to progress according to their own availability.

At the same time, participants suggested introducing an advanced or “level-up” learning pathway for users with greater prior knowledge. They also recommended adding more reading and research materials to complement the practical content. Language accessibility was identified as important, with participants showing interest in using the course in Macedonian as well as English. To support the long-term relevance of the training, the materials should also be reviewed and updated periodically, particularly given the rapidly evolving nature of sustainability-related topics.

Platform Feedback

The GreenLead platform and certification model received a high overall evaluation. Participants appreciated the possibility of accessing the learning resources at their own pace, while the accompanying video tutorial was considered useful for explaining the platform and certification process and for supporting users who may not have direct contact with project partners.

The main recommendations concerned visibility, engagement and long-term use. Participants suggested stronger promotional activities to increase awareness of both the platform and certification opportunity, including social media content, blog posts and participant testimonials. The possibility of introducing networking opportunities between SMEs and VET organisations was also identified as a potential enhancement.



4.3 SLOVENIA



Implementation and Participants

The Slovenian pilot was coordinated by the Jožef Stefan International Postgraduate School (IPS) and targeted SMEs and VET organisations. Recruitment combined direct outreach to organisations previously involved in the GreenLead needs analysis with dissemination through established professional and sectoral networks, including competence centres, Smart Specialisation actors, the Slovenian Chamber of Craft and Small Business and the national VET institute. The pilot was also promoted through a national information event, while direct mailing reached more than 1,200 SMEs and 20 VET organisations.

At the time of reporting, 13 organisations had confirmed participation—11 SMEs and 2 VET organisations, representing 43 individual participants. The pilot was implemented entirely through a self-paced online format, without formal workshops. Participants independently registered on the platform, completed the learning modules, reviewed the certification model and submitted the evaluation questionnaire. Written instructions, a video tutorial and individual email support were provided throughout the process. Although participation was affected by the summer holiday period and organisational time constraints, the outreach generated substantial interest and several additional organisations indicated their intention to engage with GreenLead at a later stage.



Training Course Feedback

The training course received very positive feedback, with participants considering the content relevant, understandable and applicable to real working environments. All respondents indicated that they had gained new knowledge and that the acquired competences could support their future professional development. The practical orientation of the course was particularly appreciated, with Module 6 highlighted for its practical examples and case studies.

Participants also valued the flexibility of the self-paced format. Suggested improvements focused on adding more interactive learning activities, further real-life SME case studies and additional practical examples, while a short introductory webinar could help participants better understand the course structure and expected benefits before starting.

Platform Feedback

The GreenLead platform was evaluated very positively and described as clear, well structured, user-friendly and easy to navigate. Participants appreciated the interface, digital learning resources and the possibility of completing the training remotely and at their own pace.

The certification process was also considered clear and appropriate for assessing competences related to sustainable and green innovation. The main recommendations concerned stronger promotion and guided introduction, particularly through SME and VET networks and intermediary organisations. Participants also stressed the importance of keeping the platform and its content updated over time so that it remains relevant, visible and useful beyond the project period.



4.4 GREECE



Implementation and Participants

The Greek pilot testing was implemented jointly by AKMI and Innovation Hive, involving a total of 14 participating organisations/entities. AKMI engaged 5 organisations from business, consulting, tourism, higher education and training-related fields, while Innovation Hive involved 9 organisations, including 8 SMEs and 1 VET provider. This combination ensured a diverse testing environment, involving managers, employees, trainers, HR specialists, academics and other professionals with different levels of experience in sustainability and green innovation. Recruitment was mainly based on the partners' established professional networks. Innovation Hive drew particularly on its strong links with SMEs and its cooperation network around the Chamber of Commerce in Larissa, enabling direct outreach to relevant businesses and training actors.

The piloting was conducted predominantly through online and remote participation, allowing users to access the GreenLead platform and learning materials at their own pace. Participants reviewed the training modules, practical activities, platform functionality and certification process, while guidance and support were provided through online communication and email when needed. Video-based guidance was also used to facilitate navigation and participation. The combined approach enabled GreenLead to be tested across a broad range of business, educational and professional contexts and strengthened the assessment of its applicability and transferability.

Training Course Feedback

The training course received very positive feedback, with AKMI respondents reporting high satisfaction (4.73/5), strong relevance to their needs (4.86/5) and high willingness to recommend the training (4.68/5). The content was considered easy to understand (4.82/5) and particularly applicable to real work situations (4.77/5), while all 22 respondents reported gaining new skills. Modules 3 and 6 were among the most valued, mainly because of their practical relevance and connection to sustainability and workplace application. Feedback from the complementary Innovation Hive pilot with 8 SMEs and 1 VET organisation similarly reinforced the value of accessible, self-paced and practice-oriented learning. The main recommendations were to include more real-life SME case studies, practical exercises, videos, interactive resources and sector-specific examples, while keeping the existing clear and accessible structure.

Platform Feedback

The platform and certification model were also evaluated very positively. AKMI participants rated the platform structure at 4.55/5, navigation at 4.59/5, design and layout at 4.45/5, and the usefulness of digital resources at 4.64/5. The certification process was one of the strongest elements, with both clarity and effectiveness rated at 4.82/5. Participants particularly appreciated the clean interface, clear organisation of topics and flexibility of online access, a finding also reflected in the mainly remote Innovation Hive implementation. Improvements should focus on responsiveness, loading speed, technical reliability, navigation between courses and consistent Greek-language localisation, together with clearer guidance from registration through certification. Regular updating of the platform and learning resources was also considered important for maintaining their long-term relevance.

5. CROSS-COUNTRY ANALYSIS



5.1 STRONGEST ASSETS OF GREENLEAD

The strongest result emerging from the pilot testing is the high relevance of the GreenLead training to the professional needs of its target groups. Across the available quantitative datasets, satisfaction and relevance remained consistently high. Overall satisfaction ranged from 4.73/5 to 5/5, while relevance to participants' needs reached approximately 4.8–4.86/5. Participants were also highly willing to recommend the programme to others.

These results are particularly significant because the pilots included different organisational and professional profiles. GreenLead was not tested exclusively by sustainability specialists, but by managers, employees, trainers, educational professionals, consultants and representatives of SMEs and training organisations. The positive results across these profiles indicate that the course succeeds in making sustainability and green-transition concepts accessible to a broader professional audience.

The final version should therefore not become more theoretical. Instead, the practical dimension should be strengthened through:

- short real-company cases;
- sector-specific SME scenarios;
- practical decision exercises;
- examples of sustainability measures at workplace level;
- ESG and reporting examples;
- transformation-planning activities.



Practical applicability

The practical orientation of the course is arguably its strongest pedagogical asset. Participants repeatedly valued exercises, applied examples, SME scenarios and modules that linked sustainability concepts to real organisational situations. In one of the larger questionnaire datasets, applicability to real work situations reached 4.77/5, while ease of understanding reached 4.82/5. All respondents in the same dataset reported having gained new skills through the training.

This suggests that GreenLead successfully avoids functioning as a purely theoretical sustainability course. Its value lies in helping users connect concepts such as sustainable leadership, stakeholder engagement, ESG, circular economy and organisational transformation with decisions they may need to take within their own workplaces. Modules with a particularly strong practical component were repeatedly identified among the most useful parts of the programme. Practical activities, real SME scenarios and transformation-oriented content were similarly highlighted across the different pilot settings.



Accessibility of the learning content

The course was also consistently perceived as clear and understandable. This represents an important strength because the intended users do not necessarily have prior expertise in sustainability or ESG.

The beginner-friendly structure was explicitly appreciated, while other findings showed very high scores for ease of understanding.

GreenLead therefore occupies a useful position between introductory awareness raising and specialised sustainability education. It provides sufficient substance to support competence development without creating an excessive technical barrier for SME employees and managers.



Flexible and self-paced learning

The digital delivery model was another clear strength. The platform was generally characterised as clear, intuitive and easy to navigate, with high ratings for structure, navigation, design and digital resources.



Strong certification component

The Certification Model emerged as one of the most positively evaluated elements of the GreenLead ecosystem.

Participants generally considered the certification procedure clear and appropriate for assessing sustainability and green-innovation competences. In one detailed dataset, both the clarity and effectiveness of the certification process reached 4.82/5, while all respondents gave the highest available score for overall satisfaction with certification.

This gives GreenLead an advantage over a conventional repository of open educational resources. Learners do not simply access information; they follow a structured pathway leading towards the assessment and recognition of competences.



Transferability to different learning environments

The pilots also provide evidence that GreenLead can be applied beyond its immediate SME-training context.

The materials were positively received by actors from education, training, consultancy and other professional environments. The evidence suggests that selected modules could be incorporated into VET programmes, continuing professional development, lifelong learning, staff-development activities, higher-education provision and blended workshops.

This broadens the exploitation potential of the project considerably.



Overall profile of the strongest assets

Strongest asset	Evidence from the pilots	Implication
 Professional relevance	Consistently high satisfaction and relevance ratings	Maintain current thematic focus
 Practical orientation	Exercises, examples and applied modules repeatedly valued	Preserve as central pedagogical principle
 Understand ability	Very high clarity/ease-of-understanding ratings	Keep accessible language and structure
 Flexible learning	Self-paced participation widely appreciated	Maintain asynchronous format
 Platform usability	Strong ratings for navigation, structure and resources	Optimise rather than redesign
 Certification	Very strong clarity and satisfaction results	Maintain as key added value
 Transferability	Positive use across SME, VET and educational contexts	Expand exploitation pathways

5.2 Recommendations for Final Optimisation and Sustainability



The pilot findings do not indicate the need for a fundamental redesign of GreenLead. The proposed changes are for targeted improvements intended to reinforce the already positively validated model.



Enrich the practical learning experience

The most consistent recommendation is to increase the amount of real-world and sector-specific material.

Participants requested more:

- ✓ SME case studies
- ✓ practical examples
- ✓ sector-specific scenarios
- ✓ videos and multimedia
- ✓ interactive exercises
- ✓ examples of sustainability measures in real workplaces
- ✓ examples showing how organisations move from sustainability objectives to implementation



The final refinement should therefore prioritise practical enrichment rather than the addition of extensive theoretical material.

A practical case structure



This would make complex sustainability concepts easier to transfer into professional practice.



Introduce optional advanced learning resources

The accessibility of the current course should be preserved.

However, the pilots also revealed that some participants would welcome greater depth, including additional research materials and a more advanced learning level.



Instead of making the compulsory course more complex, GreenLead could adopt a layered model:



Core pathway

Essential Green Manager knowledge and competences



Applied resources

Exercises, SME examples and sectoral scenarios



Advanced resources

Research, legislation, tools, extended cases and specialised readings

CONCLUSION

The cross-country pilot provides clear validation of the GreenLead learning model, demonstrating high relevance, accessibility, practical usefulness and satisfaction with the training, platform and certification mechanism. These findings are also documented in the **Satisfaction Survey Annex**, which presents the detailed survey results.

Overall, the evidence supports preserving the core programme, with improvements focused on targeted enrichment, stronger interactivity, technical optimisation and clearer user guidance rather than fundamental redesign.

The first conclusion is that practicality should remain the defining pedagogical principle. The parts of the programme that participants valued most were those that made sustainability tangible through practical examples, exercises, workplace situations and transformation-oriented modules. Future improvements should therefore deepen this applied dimension rather than substantially expand theoretical complexity. This approach appears particularly appropriate for SMEs, as the platform reduces participation barriers through self-paced learning while its practical structure helps users translate sustainability concepts into organisational practice.

The second conclusion is the importance of supported autonomy. Self-paced learning is highly appropriate for the target group, as it allows participants to engage with the programme according to their own schedules and organisational constraints. However, flexibility should not mean that learners are left entirely on their own. Independent learning is most effective when accompanied by clear onboarding, intuitive navigation and easily accessible support. The final implementation model should therefore preserve learner autonomy while providing a light-touch support structure that helps participants navigate the learning pathway and remain engaged.

A third conclusion concerns the importance of certification. The strong evaluation of the certification mechanism demonstrates that learners value not only access to knowledge but also the opportunity to have their competences assessed and formally recognised. Certification gives the GreenLead learning pathway a clear endpoint and strengthens its potential professional value.

GreenLead's strongest combination is:



**Accessible knowledge + practical application + flexible learning +
competence recognition**

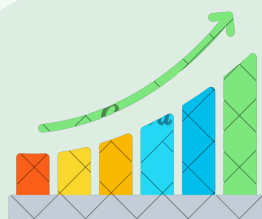
The next phase should consequently move from validation to optimisation and uptake.

What should remain unchanged

- ✓ Accessible structure
- ✓ Practical orientation
- ✓ Modular learning
- ✓ Self-paced participation
- ✓ Certification pathway
- ✓ Strong SME focus



What should be strengthened



- More real-life cases
- More interactive resources
- Better technical performance
 - Clearer onboarding
 - Stronger localisation
- Optional advanced resources
- Continuous content updating
- Wider institutional uptake

Finally, the pilots indicate that GreenLead has the potential to extend beyond its original implementation context. Its modules can support SME staff development, VET, lifelong learning, higher education and continuing professional development.

The strategic objective should therefore no longer be simply to maintain a completed project platform. It should be to consolidate GreenLead as a reusable, adaptable and continuously updated competence-development resource for sustainable leadership and green organisational transformation.

The pilot testing demonstrates that the foundation for this transition is already in place. The required next step is not reinvention, but focused improvement, institutional embedding and sustained use.