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ACE-EX
AGRICULTURE CIRCULAR ECONOMY EXPERT

D8.1
SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Responsible Partner
ECRN

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Sustainability and continuation (point 3.3 of the Application form)

The consortium, as the project will be approved, will sign the MoU attached to formalize their commitment. The partnership expects that part of the dissemination results will impact the community of potential beneficiaries also beyond the termination of the project and will guide other people to the implementation of the proposed practices. For this purpose, a Sustainable plan will be formulated outlining the long-term strategy of user attraction and user retention. This will also be a central element in the ambition of tracking graduates in a long-Term perspective through their careers as Expert on Circular Economy. Moreover, a plan will include sustainability activities, which will define before the end of the project and shall be put into action after the end to ensure the sustainability and continued operation of the portal and its tools.

1.The developed qualification matrices in Skillsbank and Canvas will be routinely updated in plurilingual versions according to needs and to continuous feedback from implementation experiences, from emerging developments in the sector and the international market and in response to new training options. The coordination and communication with the ESCO system will continue through a Skillsbank link;

2.The training programmes will be revised according to field experience and feedback, and in response to market needs new training options will be developed by the providers. ITS, FAGINN, will insert ACE- programme EQF 5 in their institutional course, such as Brno school and IES Lorca (EQF 4). In long-term perspective new players in the education and training market will be welcomed to deliver training modules as on-site, as eLearning or as new MOOC modules;

3.The certification and recognition instruments organised through Skillsbank will be available both for internal as well as external candidates following the established procedures;

4.The efforts to have the new matrices / qualifications recognised in national systems will continue through the tripartite Social dialogue channels at national and European level;

5.The recognition of EQF 6 of the Training Programmes will give an incentive to the spread of ACE-EX contents and deliverables.

The cooperation between farm and chemistry companies will ensure new initiatives and cooperation. In addition, the partnership following The communities of Practise Playbook suggestions, will verify which kind of communities could better fit the ACE-EX goals and we'll participate on that. At the moment, the partnership established to participate in EPALE communities of practice, and in the European Circular Economy Stakeholders Platform (participating in the webinar, annual conference, disseminating the initiative concerning ACE-EX project).

According to expected new initiatives at Commission level, partly related to education and training, and partly as roll-out effects from the European Green Deal, the instruments, procedures, as well as fields of focus for implementation will be carefully observed.

The HE and VET will insert the ACE-EX contents in their learning offer, sharing and adapting the contents to the companies needs. The consequence of this will be that the operation has to be organised on a semi-commercial basis:

1. Project partners will have free access to the system running on NTI-MMM servers, but may be required to compensate for the volume of use based upon type and number of transactions as well as special customized services;

2. The certification process targeting individuals must be covered by a fee proportionally to the estimated workload;

3. Printing and distribution of certificates must be covered by a cost-covering transaction fee;

4. External community licenses for special purposes will be available combined with transaction- based fees. In line with what is seen in other internet-based service provisions, entry level use will be free for a certain period and/or up to a ceiling of transaction volume. Different levels can be foreseen, but where the main intention is to offer an open end-user access to the system as such, including the project outcomes through the established web sites. During the project period alternative options for the operation, further developments and maintenance will be discussed between the project partners.

After project closing

Each partner (VET and HE), Technological Center, Cluster, Chamber of commerce will enhance the results obtained introducing the courses developed during the project and adapting them to their target groups. The micro-credential contents will be used for the re-skilling of employees, and the partnership will ask a little amount (as Coursera, OpenEdu) to ensure the maintenance of the ICT systems (such as the Canvas/Skillsbank MOOC platform), and / or the database resources, and to defence systems to secure the necessary privacy and system protection. The partners will continue in the training activities and could benefit from the joining work of a very rich partnership that covers all the components of the production/research/ learning sectors as indicated in the joint MoU agreement.

The participation in the project will represent a new opportunity for the partners to become a “driver” in the Circular Economy process and will constitute - at different levels- a new business opportunity.

Moreover, a systematic tracking of web activities, participation in training programmes and eLearning on the MOOC platform will serve as a “market research”. Similarly, the number of apprentices, students, upskilling participants and individuals registering in the database for professionals or requesting certificates, will form the basis for decisions on how to capitalise on the project outcomes in a systematic valorisation effort.

1. Introduction

The ACE-EX project is designed to support the agricultural sector's transition to a circular economy (CE) by introducing a multidisciplinary professional profile: the Expert at applying Circular Economy processes in agriculture. Through innovative training tools, certification frameworks, and recognition procedures, ACE-EX ensures the development of skills essential for the reuse of agricultural production waste, fostering entrepreneurship, and promoting compliance with the EU Green Deal standards.

Given its ambitious objectives and broad stakeholder engagement—encompassing 20 consortium members across 9 EU and extra-EU countries, representing over 200,000 agricultural firms—ensuring the project's sustainability beyond its funded period is essential. The recognition of prior learning and the recognition of learning objectives of the new profession are considered as important for the project and its sustainability that a specific WP has been designed for this purpose. This sustainability plan outlines strategies to maintain and expand the project's impact, securing long-term benefits for agricultural professionals, businesses, and policymakers.

By focusing on institutional integration, financial viability, ongoing dissemination, policy alignment and establishment of a community of stakeholder Experts among consortium members and associated partners this plan details how ACE-EX will continue to fulfil the project's general and specific objectives.

Through these strategic efforts, the ACE-EX project will ensure that its training methodologies, professional certification, and Circular Economy practices remain relevant, adaptable, and impactful well beyond the project's lifecycle.

2. Purpose of the sustainability plan

The sustainability plan of the ACE-EX project aims to ensure the long-term impact and continuation of the project's results beyond its official duration. It is designed to foster the widespread adoption of circular economy principles in the agricultural sector by providing ongoing access to training resources, strengthening institutional partnerships, and integrating project outcomes into existing educational and policy frameworks. The plan will also be a central element in the ambition of tracking graduates in a long-Term perspective through their careers as Expert on Circular Economy.

More specifically, ACE-EX sustainability plan aims to:

1. Maintain and expand the accessibility of the project's training materials and certification programs. The project envisions an open access, continuously updated digital platform that will allow professionals in the agricultural sector to develop their skills in circular economy practices even after the project's conclusion. By ensuring that training content remains relevant and scalable, the sustainability plan guarantees that more professionals can benefit from these resources in the long run.
2. Establish a strong network of stakeholders, including businesses, academic institutions, vocational training providers, policymakers, and industry associations. This network will support the integration of circular economy training into formal education curricula and national qualification frameworks, ensuring that the competencies developed through the ACE-EX project are recognised and valued across different countries and sectors.
3. Ensure the financial sustainability is also a crucial element of the plan, which aims to secure funding beyond the initial EU grant. This includes potential collaborations with industry partners, government agencies, and research institutions to support continuous development and dissemination of project results. The plan also encourages participating organisations to integrate project methodologies into their existing activities, creating new business models and funding opportunities that align with circular economy objectives.
4. Outline dissemination and advocacy efforts to promote the adoption of circular economy principles in agriculture. This includes participation in policy discussions, collaboration with EU institutions, and active engagement with professional networks to ensure that the project's impact continues to grow over time.
5. Ensure the project's outputs continuously evolve in response to emerging technological innovations, market trends, and legislative developments in circular economy practices. The sustainability plan will establish processes for routine review and adaptation of training content and methodologies to maintain their relevance and effectiveness.

3. ACE-EX Sustainability strategy

ACE-EX contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The ACE-EX project is firmly aligned with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. By promoting circular economy practices in agriculture and fostering cross-sectoral collaboration, the project directly supports several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- **SDG 2: Zero Hunger**. ACE-EX promotes sustainable agriculture by introducing circular economy approaches that reduce waste, improve resource efficiency, and create new value from agricultural by-products in sectors like wine, oil, and cereals.

- **SDG 4: Quality Education.** The project develops accessible, multilingual learning pathways for learners at EQF levels 4 to 6. Through MOOCs, VR modules, and micro-credentials, it ensures inclusive, lifelong learning and professional upskilling opportunities.

- **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth.** By equipping professionals with circular economy skills and supporting the emergence of green jobs, ACE-EX fosters innovation and competitiveness in agriculture and related industries.

- **SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure.** The project supports the digitalisation of training and the development of open platforms like Skillsbank. It also facilitates the co-creation of training modules with industry partners, reinforcing innovation ecosystems.

- **SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production**: ACE-EX helps shift the agri-food sector toward more sustainable consumption and production models. It enables businesses and learners to adopt waste-reducing practices and circular value chains.

- **SDG 13: Climate Action**. While not directly addressing emissions, the project contributes to climate mitigation by promoting resource-efficient farming and reducing the environmental footprint of agricultural operations.

- **SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals**. Through a consortium of 20 partners across 9 countries and its active involvement in European platforms such as EPALE and ECESP, ACE-EX fosters multi-stakeholder partnerships that scale up innovation and sustainability practices.

Sustainability principles

The ACE-EX project is guided by a coherent set of sustainability principles that ensure the relevance, accessibility, and long-term impact of its outcomes. These principles shape the way the project is implemented, managed, and embedded into wider systems, ensuring that its benefits extend well beyond the project's official lifecycle. Together, they provide the foundation for a strategic, ethical, and future-oriented approach to sustainability.

Long-term orientation

At the heart of the sustainability vision is a commitment to ensuring that the project's impacts—such as training resources, stakeholder networks, and digital platforms—remain beneficial, accessible, and adaptable long after the funding period has ended. This long-term orientation goes beyond short-term deliverables, aiming instead to embed circular economy practices into agricultural education and industry in a lasting, transformative way.

Stakeholder inclusiveness and collaboration

The ACE-EX approach places strong emphasis on the active involvement of diverse stakeholder groups. These include educational institutions, industry representatives, public authorities, researchers, and professional networks. Collaboration is encouraged at every stage of the project—from co-designing training content to piloting tools and shaping dissemination efforts. Transparent communication and mutual learning are central to building a truly inclusive ecosystem capable of sustaining the project's outcomes.

Continuous improvement and adaptation

Recognising that societal, environmental, and technological contexts are constantly evolving, the project integrates mechanisms for ongoing feedback, evaluation, and refinement. Training materials, certification tools, and platform functionalities are regularly reviewed and updated based on user experiences, stakeholder insights, and policy or market developments. This ensures that the project remains relevant, agile, and capable of responding to emerging needs or challenges.

Scalability and transferability

A key pillar of sustainability lies in the ability to replicate and adapt the project's results across different contexts. ACE-EX is designed with scalability in mind, enabling its content and methodologies to be adopted by institutions and stakeholders across various countries, sectors, and educational levels. This transferability is supported through modular training materials, multilingual content, and open licensing principles that encourage broad uptake and localisation.

Financial responsibility and stability

To ensure that the project's operations and results can be maintained in the long term, financial sustainability is prioritised from the outset. A mix of cost-recovery models, strategic partnerships, and potential follow-up funding streams are explored to maintain platforms, certifications, and stakeholder engagement activities. Financial transparency, efficiency, and the alignment of cost structures with stakeholder value are key to sustaining the ACE-EX system beyond EU funding.

Environmental responsibility

As a project rooted in the principles of the circular economy, ACE-EX is inherently committed to environmental sustainability. Every aspect of the project—from content to dissemination—is designed to promote the responsible use of resources, reduction of waste, and greener agricultural practices. The project actively supports EU environmental goals, including those set out in the European Green Deal, by fostering knowledge and skills that drive ecological transition.

Institutionalisation

Long-term sustainability is reinforced by embedding ACE-EX methodologies and outputs into existing institutional systems. This includes integrating the training programmes into official curricula, aligning qualifications with national and European frameworks (e.g., EQF, ESCO), and securing endorsement from education authorities and

professional bodies. By institutionalising the project's practices, ACE-EX ensures that they become part of standard operations, not temporary innovations.

Accessibility and openness

To maximise the reach and inclusiveness of its outcomes, ACE-EX is committed to providing broad, equitable, and user-friendly access to its training resources and digital tools. Open Educational Resources (OER) principles guide the development and sharing of content. Materials are made available in multiple languages and designed to be accessible across different devices and learning environments, removing barriers to participation and enabling lifelong learning.

Quality assurance and excellence

High-quality standards are maintained across all project components, including training content, user support systems, and certification processes. Peer review, pilot testing, and stakeholder validation are integral parts of the development cycle. Quality assurance frameworks are applied systematically to ensure that resources are not only technically sound but also pedagogically effective and responsive to learner needs.

Impact

Sustainability efforts are anchored in measurable, meaningful impact. The project defines clear objectives and uses key performance indicators to track progress in areas such as user engagement, skills recognition, policy uptake, and environmental outcomes. This results-oriented approach helps the consortium stay focused on delivering tangible value to stakeholders while adapting strategies based on evidence.

Innovation and responsiveness

ACE-EX embraces innovation as a driver of sustainability. New technologies, learning methods, and business models are explored and integrated where relevant. The project remains open to experimentation, piloting new approaches to stakeholder engagement, digital delivery, and industry collaboration. Responsiveness to user feedback, labour market shifts, and policy developments ensures that ACE-EX remains at the forefront of skills innovation in the circular economy.

Transparency and accountability

Finally, transparency and accountability are fundamental to trust and credibility. Clear communication channels, documented decision-making processes, and participatory governance structures are established across the project. Consortium members, stakeholders, and end users are kept informed and engaged, ensuring collective responsibility for the project's outcomes and legacy.

These principles are not standalone concepts but interconnected values that guide how ACE-EX is designed, delivered, and sustained. They form the ethical and strategic compass of the project's sustainability plan, ensuring that its results are not only preserved but continue to grow and evolve well into the future.

Sustainability objectives

The sustainability objectives of the ACE-EX project form the strategic backbone of its long-term vision. They set a clear direction for maintaining the value, relevance, and usability of the project's outputs well beyond the funding period. These objectives articulate how the results, tools, partnerships, and institutional frameworks developed during the project will continue to grow, evolve, and benefit diverse stakeholder groups across Europe.

Fundamentally, these objectives ensure that the knowledge, systems, and innovations generated by ACE-EX are not only preserved but actively integrated into broader educational and economic ecosystems. They support the transformation of circular economy practices from project outputs into mainstream methods adopted by educators, industries, policymakers, and learners. In doing so, the ACE-EX sustainability strategy bridges the gap between the project's immediate achievements and its enduring legacy, allowing its contributions to continue delivering value to society, the economy, and the environment over time.

Ensuring continued accessibility, use, and adaptation of training resources

A primary objective of ACE-EX is to guarantee that the educational resources developed through the project remain accessible, up-to-date, and widely usable. These resources—ranging from modular training content and virtual reality simulations to MOOCs and micro-credentials—are designed to support lifelong learning in the circular economy. Ensuring their long-term utility involves keeping them freely or affordably available through digital platforms such as Skillsbank and Canvas, while also integrating mechanisms for regular content revision. This allows materials to stay aligned with technological innovations, labour market shifts, and emerging policy frameworks. Scalability and adaptability are embedded by design, enabling institutions across different countries and sectors to tailor and adopt the resources within their local and national training contexts.

Securing long-term funding and financial sustainability

Another key objective is the establishment of a resilient financial foundation to support the continuity of the project's platforms, tools, and services. This includes identifying and securing new funding sources post-project, such as public-private partnerships, participation in European funding calls, or collaborations with chambers of commerce and industry networks. Additionally, revenue-generating mechanisms—such as licensing agreements, customised training packages, and modest fees for certification services—are explored to ensure cost recovery without compromising accessibility. These models allow the project to transition from a grant-funded initiative to a semi-commercial, self-sustaining system.

Strengthening and institutionalising strategic partnerships

Long-term cooperation with key institutions is essential for embedding ACE-EX outputs into formal systems. The project seeks to deepen institutional links with vocational education and training centres, universities, industry bodies, and policy actors at both national and European levels. By institutionalising the training content and methodologies into curricula, qualification frameworks, and continuous professional development pathways, ACE-EX moves from being a project-based innovation to a structural component of education and industry practice. This process is supported by signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), joint strategy planning, and continued exchange through thematic networks and policy dialogue platforms.

Expanding the ACE-EX community and integrating results into industry practice

Beyond institutional partnerships, the ACE-EX sustainability strategy aims to cultivate a vibrant, active community of practice that includes educators, business leaders, public agencies, researchers, and civil society organisations. This community will play a critical role in keeping the project's momentum alive—sharing good practices, piloting new approaches, and championing circular economy training within their respective sectors. By facilitating ongoing cross-sectoral collaboration, the ACE-EX partnership ensures that the insights, models, and lessons of the project are translated into tangible change across industries, especially in agriculture and chemistry, where circular innovation is urgently needed.

Contributing to sustainable industry transformation

ACE-EX not only serves the education sector but is also a catalyst for greener, more resilient industry practices. Through its training programmes, certification schemes, and awareness-raising efforts, the project equips professionals with the skills needed to reduce environmental impact and embrace circular business models. These include waste minimisation, resource efficiency, bio-based production, and closed-loop systems. In this way, ACE-EX supports the strategic goals of the European Green Deal and contributes directly to the decarbonisation and modernisation of agriculture, food processing, and related sectors.

Promoting cultural change toward circular economy values

A lasting shift toward sustainability requires not only tools and training but also a cultural transformation in how institutions and businesses think about growth, value, and waste. ACE-EX addresses this need by disseminating educational and advocacy materials that frame circular economy as both an economic opportunity and an environmental necessity. Through policy engagement, active presence in stakeholder forums, and visibility in public debates, the project contributes to a growing movement toward responsible production and consumption. It helps normalise sustainable thinking and embeds circular principles into everyday institutional and business culture.

Tracking and supporting graduate career development

One of the long-term measures of ACE-EX's impact will be the career trajectories of those trained through its programmes. To that end, the project establishes robust mechanisms for graduate tracking and alumni engagement. This includes maintaining contact through digital platforms, conducting follow-up surveys, and mapping employment outcomes and career progression. These data not only provide evidence of impact but also inform future updates to the training content, ensuring that it remains aligned with market needs and supports employability in the green economy.

Fostering innovation and responsiveness

Finally, the ACE-EX project is built on the recognition that change is constant—and sustainability requires the ability to respond to that change. By embedding innovation as a core objective, the project creates space for continual learning and renewal. Monitoring of technological trends, market shifts, and educational innovations ensures that ACE-EX remains ahead of the curve. The training materials and platforms are not static products but evolving tools that can adapt to new challenges and opportunities, ensuring their relevance in a fast-changing world.

These sustainability objectives collectively ensure that the ACE-EX project does not conclude with its formal end date, but continues to evolve, scale, and inspire change across Europe's agricultural and education landscapes. Through structured planning, targeted investment, and inclusive partnerships, the project lays the groundwork for a lasting legacy in the circular economy.

Potential risks and solutions

Description	Risk	Mitigation measures
Insufficient commitment from consortium partners to actively and timely contribute to and organise sustainability activities	Medium	WP leaders will assign specific roles to each partner in sustainability-related tasks. A reward system (e.g., visibility in dissemination) could be used to motivate active participation. Progress on sustainability will be part of internal reviews. Sustainability leads will be nominated at each partner and periodic reminders will be used.

Disconnection between sustainability activities and real needs of the market and stakeholders	Medium	Involvements of companies and stakeholders/actors in the labour market. Stakeholder feedback loops will be implemented (e.g., surveys, interviews, stakeholder panels). Industry advisory boards will be consulted regularly to ensure alignment with labour market trends.
Low interest from stakeholders in using the training material	Low	Training content will be continuously improved and customised based on user feedback. Dissemination activities will highlight the benefits and applicability of the training to industry needs. Early adopters will be showcased as case studies.
Insufficient funding for sustainability after the end of the project	Medium	A diversified funding strategy will be developed, including transaction-based fees, public-private partnerships, and alignment with national and EU funding calls. Partners will explore ERASMUS+ follow-up opportunities and partnerships with chambers of commerce.
Low dissemination of project results	Medium	A dedicated dissemination strategy will focus on tailored messages for different audiences (e.g., SMEs, policymakers, educators). Multipliers like sectoral associations and professional platforms (EPALE, CEDEFOP) will be engaged. Annual outreach targets will be monitored.
Difficulties in using the MOOC platform	Low	Ongoing technical support and user helpdesk services will be provided. User manuals and short video tutorials will be available in multiple languages. The platform interface will be continuously evaluated for user-friendliness.
Insufficient expansion of the network and insufficient impact within the agriculture ecosystem	Low	Expanding the network is key in long-term project sustainability. Mitigating measures include creating opportunities for community building via all the sustainability activities, dissemination, consultations and other events. This includes the distribution of clear and well interpretable information, using targeted channels for key stakeholders and using appropriate design-thinking methodologies. Networking will be embedded into all dissemination and training events.
Insufficient linkage to existing initiatives to ensure the project sustainability in the medium and long term.	Low	The consortium composition is an important risk mitigating factor. Consortium partners can ensure a wide consultation of their stakeholders concerning existing initiatives. Furthermore, partners have cleared the importance of creating synergies with other initiatives and a budget has been allocated to ensure wide consultations with multiple stakeholders. Partners will map and regularly update relevant EU and national initiatives (e.g., Green Deal actions, national CE roadmaps).
Poor quality of sustainability activities	Medium	Peer review mechanisms and external quality advisors will be engaged. Feedback from stakeholders will be incorporated through continuous improvement loops.
Loss of institutional memory after project ends (e.g., due to staff turnover)	Medium	Clear documentation and knowledge transfer protocols will be developed.

Language and cultural barriers limiting uptake in new regions	Low	Materials will be available in multiple languages and culturally adapted.
Regulatory or policy changes that devalue or displace the qualifications developed	Medium	Monitoring of EU and national VET policies on a regular basis is crucial. Maintaining dialogue with accreditation bodies. Project outcomes will be embedded in flexible, modular formats (e.g., micro-credentials) that can adapt to new frameworks.

4. Stakeholder engagement and partnership development

Identification of stakeholders

Stakeholder identification is a foundational step for ensuring the effective and sustained impact of the ACE-EX project. This section outlines the types and levels of stakeholders identified within the project framework and describes how the stakeholder landscape can be further expanded to support long-term objectives, including sustainability, innovation uptake, and policy integration.

First level: core project stakeholders

The first level includes local, regional, and institutional stakeholders directly involved in the ACE-EX project, particularly those influencing or implementing educational, vocational, and sectoral policies related to circular economy practices in agriculture and green chemistry. These stakeholders are expected to contribute to the continuous refinement of training curricula, tools, and certification mechanisms. Regular stakeholder group meetings facilitate the exchange of experiences, identification of challenges, and co-creation of strategies to sustain and expand the project's results. This level of engagement supports the institutionalization of circular economy training and enhances regional capacities to integrate project outputs into formal education and workforce development systems.

Indicative examples include:

- Staff of partner institutions actively engaged in project implementation
- Additional personnel and affiliates from partner organizations contributing to related initiatives
- Local and regional training authorities and course accreditation bodies

Second level: national and EU-level influencers

The second level includes national and EU-wide stakeholders not directly involved in project activities but who have the authority or influence to shape education, sustainability, and workforce policies across member states. These actors play a strategic role in supporting the recognition of ACE-EX certifications and the integration of learning outcomes into national qualification frameworks. Each partner is encouraged to develop and maintain a database of second-level stakeholders, identifying them through institutional networks, policy platforms, or collaboration with managing authorities. This engagement will be critical in aligning project results with policy agendas like the European Green Deal and national circular economy strategies.

Indicative examples include:

- National education and training authorities
- Ministries of agriculture, environment, or industry
- European vocational training bodies and networks (e.g., CEDEFOP, EPALE)
- EU-wide associations in the agriculture and chemical sectors

Third level: knowledge multipliers and sectoral experts

The third level concerns stakeholders who, during and after the project, develop new skills and knowledge based on the ACE-EX outcomes. These actors contribute to the dissemination, replication, and policy influence of the project by participating in learning exchanges and stakeholder forums. Their engagement leads to the creation of transferable tools, policy recommendations, and educational resources that can be adapted beyond the original partnership.

Indicative examples include:

- Experts in circular economy and sustainable agriculture
- Consultants in green chemistry, environmental management, and skills development
- Accreditation professionals and curriculum developers

Fourth level: broader ecosystem and end users

The fourth level encompasses the wider community of stakeholders who benefit from the availability and use of ACE-EX outputs, such as digital platforms (Skillsbank), training materials, and methodological guides. These include businesses, public agencies, chambers of commerce, and innovation hubs that apply project tools for training, upskilling, and system transformation. Their continued engagement supports the regional and sectoral implementation of circular economy strategies and enhances cross-sectoral and cross-border cooperation in education and sustainability practices.

Indicative examples include:

- Chambers of commerce and industry associations
- Universities and research centre with a focus on environmental sustainability or agri-tech
- Policy stakeholders and networks operating outside the direct partnership regions
- Agricultural cooperatives and SMEs involved in bioeconomy and green innovation

ACE-EX stakeholder repository

An organised and evolving stakeholder repository is a vital asset for the long-term sustainability of the ACE-EX project. More than a simple list of contacts, the repository serves as a strategic foundation for engagement, outreach, collaboration, and institutional memory. As the project matures and transitions beyond its funded phase, the ability to maintain strong relationships with key actors will be essential for ensuring the ongoing relevance and implementation of its outcomes.

The first step in developing such a tool is to clearly define its purpose. In the context of ACE-EX, the repository should enable targeted communication for training uptake, policy alignment, certification partnerships, dissemination, and future funding opportunities. To this end, stakeholders must be mapped not only by name or affiliation, but also by their relationship to the project's goals—whether as educators, policymakers, industry partners, or representatives of civil society.

Categories might include VET and higher education institutions, agricultural and chemical industry actors, public authorities at local or national levels, research centres, NGOs, and European platforms engaged in skills development or sustainability transitions.

Identifying stakeholders is not a one-time task, but a continuous process rooted in both existing networks and proactive outreach. Partners are encouraged to draw from internal contact lists, previous EU-funded initiatives, participation at relevant events, policy consultation forums, and sectoral platforms such as EPALE, CEDEFOP, or the Enterprise Europe Network. Personal recommendations from advisory board members or peer institutions can also lead to high-value connections. To facilitate consistency across the consortium, it is helpful to adopt a standard data collection format that includes contact details, sector affiliation, geographic level of influence, and thematic relevance to ACE-EX activities.

Once identified, stakeholders should be classified not only by sector, but by level of engagement and potential impact. Some may be directly involved in the implementation of training programmes or co-development of tools—these form the core group. Others may show intermittent interest or be well-placed to amplify dissemination efforts. Influential actors, such as regulators or funders, may have no day-to-day involvement in the project but hold significant power to shape its uptake or replication. And finally, some stakeholders function as multipliers—organisations with the ability to introduce ACE-EX practices into broader networks and markets. This classification is not static and should be reviewed periodically as relationships evolve.

To manage this information effectively, a centralised and collaborative system is essential. While smaller repositories can be maintained using tools such as Google Sheets or Excel, larger and more dynamic databases benefit from the functionality of cloud-based CRM platforms like Airtable, Notion, or HubSpot. These tools allow for shared access, tagging by thematic area, tracking of communication history, and segmentation for targeted outreach. Integration with project management platforms or mailing tools also ensures that engagement efforts remain structured and efficient.

However, the technical infrastructure must be accompanied by strong data governance. Each partner must ensure that stakeholder data are managed in compliance with GDPR regulations. Consent, privacy, and the clear purpose of data usage must be communicated from the outset. Establishing role-based access rights, setting update cycles, and validating data regularly are all part of maintaining a healthy and secure repository. These procedures should be formalised in the project's quality management plan or data handling policy.

A sustainable repository must also be dynamic. It should expand regularly, with each partner contributing new entries over the course of the project and beyond. Events, webinars, newsletters, and community engagements provide valuable opportunities to connect with new contacts. Creating incentives for partners—such as visibility in reports, priority invitations to events, or shared access to project outcomes—can help motivate regular contributions and updates.

Most importantly, the repository must be used. It is not merely a storage space but an operational tool for action. Stakeholders should be engaged in a manner that reflects their interests and roles: industry partners may be invited to co-develop training modules, while policymakers might be consulted on qualification frameworks or invited to high-level forums. The database allows for this kind of targeted outreach and ensures that communication efforts are not generic but tailored to individual and institutional priorities.

Monitoring engagement over time adds another layer of strategic value. Tracking who has attended events, provided input, adopted tools, or expressed interest in further collaboration allows the consortium to focus efforts where they will have the greatest impact. It also supports future evaluation and reporting activities, helping to demonstrate the depth and breadth of ACE-EX's stakeholder involvement.

In conclusion, the stakeholder repository is a key mechanism for translating the project's results into sustained, real-world impact. It becomes much more than a database—it is a dynamic system of relationships that supports

the ongoing life of the project, ensures its outcomes remain relevant, and fosters a vibrant community committed to circular economy transformation in agriculture and beyond.

The repository of stakeholders will be included in an external document in order to be completed and updated as necessary (to ensure flexibility and reflect evolving project needs.

Key stakeholders in the ACE-EX project

Stakeholders are individuals or groups including educational institutions (VET, HE), technology centres, industry clusters, chambers of commerce, policymakers, agricultural and chemical companies, professionals, and trainees who have a direct or indirect interest and engagement in the ACE-EX project.

Potential benefits for stakeholders

Stakeholders involved in the ACE-EX project stand to gain a wide range of strategic, professional, and institutional benefits, both during the project's lifetime and beyond. These benefits stem from the project's core mission: to support the transition of the agricultural sector toward a circular economy through high-quality, innovative education and training.

First and foremost, ACE-EX provides access to cutting-edge training and skills development tools. Educational institutions, including vocational education and training providers (VET) and higher education institutions (HEIs), benefit from the integration of advanced training content into their curricula. This includes virtual reality modules, serious games, and MOOCs, all aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) at levels 4 to 6. These resources are designed for adaptability and relevance, enabling institutions to enhance their learning offerings and address emerging skill needs.

Professionals, students, and employees also benefit directly from these resources. They gain access to up-to-date, flexible training content that strengthens their qualifications and employability. In particular, the focus on circular economy principles and green chemistry equips learners with highly sought-after competencies that are applicable in multiple sectors, including agriculture, agri-food processing, and environmental services.

Companies and business stakeholders participating in the ACE-EX project benefit from having access to a growing pool of skilled professionals trained in circular economy practices. These companies can also utilise the project's resources for internal staff training and certification, improving workforce capability and supporting sustainable business transformation. Moreover, the incorporation of Skillsbank certification mechanisms ensures that staff development is recognized and valued in alignment with European standards.

In addition, ACE-EX aligns directly with key EU policy frameworks such as the European Green Deal, the Circular Economy Action Plan, and the Sustainable Development Goals. Participation in the project enables stakeholders to align their strategies with these long-term priorities, enhancing institutional relevance and access to future EU programmes and funding opportunities. Public authorities, in particular, benefit from the project's support for regional and national sustainability goals, and from tools that facilitate policy implementation.

Networking and collaboration also represent major benefits of participation. ACE-EX brings together a multi-stakeholder platform composed of educators, researchers, industry experts, and policymakers from across

Europe. Through Communities of Practice, thematic events, and joint dissemination activities, stakeholders can build long-lasting partnerships, increase their visibility, and contribute to the co-design of educational innovation.

Recognition and certification are further benefits of involvement. The project provides opportunities for individuals and institutions to engage in certified training that is recognized across borders. This not only increases mobility and employability but also allows institutions to enhance their credibility and offering as training providers. The use of micro-credentials, digital badges, and validated learning outcomes contributes to the creation of portable qualifications relevant in a European context.

Stakeholders are also given the opportunity to shape the content and direction of training and policy development. Public bodies, chambers of commerce, and industry partners are encouraged to provide feedback and co-develop the project's curricula and tools, ensuring alignment with real labour market needs. This input helps to create a responsive, inclusive system that maximizes uptake and long-term sustainability.

From a business development perspective, participating organizations can use ACE-EX to develop new services, explore new markets, and position themselves as innovation leaders. The project also provides early access to research findings, market trends, and educational methodologies that can inform strategy and operational planning.

Finally, stakeholders benefit from access to data and insights. Graduate tracking mechanisms, MOOC platform analytics, and feedback loops offer valuable information for institutions and companies to assess impact, inform future training initiatives, and adjust their practices to meet evolving demands.

In summary, the project offers an ecosystem of benefits that support stakeholder development, collaboration, recognition, and sustainability. By engaging with the project, stakeholders not only contribute to a shared vision of circular economy education but also strengthen their own strategic positioning in a rapidly evolving green economy.

The project offers a broad range of potential benefits for stakeholders across the education, industry, and policy sectors. These benefits are long-lasting, especially for those engaged in agriculture, green chemistry, and vocational training.

Agricultural and industrial stakeholders

Employers in the agriculture sector and related industries benefit from a steadily expanding pool of professionals equipped with skills in circular economy (CE) principles. These individuals are prepared to introduce sustainable practices that enhance resource efficiency and reduce waste throughout production cycles.

The transformation of agricultural waste and surplus—such as by-products from wine, oil, or cereal production—opens up new opportunities for innovation. These materials can be redirected into the creation of new products, the development of cost-effective processes, or the adoption of alternative business models, helping companies remain competitive in an evolving market landscape.

Early adoption of circular economy practices also offers a strategic advantage. Businesses that implement sustainable approaches position themselves more effectively within green markets and are better aligned with European Union sustainability directives, giving them a head start in meeting future regulatory requirements.

Furthermore, stakeholders have the opportunity to co-develop training content and pilot educational modules. This collaborative approach ensures that the learning materials reflect real-world needs and are tailored to

specific technologies and operational contexts, making the outputs of the ACE-EX project both practical and adaptable.

Educational and training institutions (VET & HE)

Educational and training institutions gain immediate value from the ACE-EX project through access to a ready-to-use, modular curriculum designed to meet EQF levels 4 to 6. This innovative learning offer includes virtual reality modules, serious games, MOOCs, and micro-credentials, providing flexible and engaging formats suited to a variety of learners.

By integrating ACE-EX content into their programmes, institutions can modernise their training provision, increase their appeal to prospective students, and strengthen connections with industry. This alignment with labour market needs helps ensure that training remains relevant and forward-looking.

Through the use of the Skillsbank platform and coordination with the ESCO classification system, ACE-EX also facilitates the recognition of qualifications across borders. Learners benefit from the ability to demonstrate competencies that are acknowledged throughout Europe, supporting both mobility and employability.

Moreover, participation in the ACE-EX network opens up lasting opportunities for collaboration. Institutions become part of a strong, transnational partnership that can lead to future cooperation in Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, and other European education and innovation initiatives.

Policymakers and public authorities

ACE-EX delivers concrete, evidence-based insights that can guide the development of skills policies at local, regional, and national levels. By providing data, training standards, and the results of pilot activities, the project offers a solid foundation for informed policymaking.

It actively contributes to the objectives of the European Green Deal, the Circular Economy Action Plan and national circular economy strategies. In doing so, ACE-EX supports the creation of green jobs and promotes sustainable economic growth.

Public authorities also stand to benefit from a strengthened regional skills ecosystem. The project helps align training provision more closely with labour market demands, thereby enhancing regional capacity to support the transition to a more circular and sustainable economy.

Learners and professionals

Learners benefit from acquiring practical, labour market–oriented skills in circular economy practices, significantly enhancing their employability and enabling a smooth transition into emerging green job sectors.

The project also offers recognised certifications aligned with EQF levels 4 to 6, creating opportunities for professional mobility across different sectors and European countries. These qualifications help learners demonstrate their competencies in a clear and transferable way.

Additionally, the flexible structure of ACE-EX learning pathways—delivered through online platforms, modular content, VR simulations, and multilingual micro-credentials—supports lifelong learning and continuous upskilling, making education more accessible and adaptable to individual needs and career goals.

Broader society

The promotion of sustainable practices in agriculture through the ACE-EX project leads to significant environmental benefits, including improved resource efficiency, reduced waste, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

By equipping local businesses and workers—particularly in rural areas—with the skills and tools needed for the circular economy, the project helps build more resilient local economies. This, in turn, fosters inclusive growth and strengthens regional innovation ecosystems.

Through widespread dissemination efforts and active stakeholder engagement, ACE-EX also contributes to a broader cultural shift toward sustainability, raising public awareness and encouraging lasting behavioural change across communities.

5. Key pillars of the ACE-EX sustainability strategy

Integration into institutional course

To embed ACE-EX outputs as a permanent part of each partner's curriculum, each institution first appoints a **small curriculum-integration team**—typically an academic lead, an instructional designer and a quality-assurance officer—to inventory all EQF-4 and EQF-5 courses that address circular-economy skills and align their learning outcomes with the ACE-EX competence matrix. A **focused mapping workshop** then reveals any gaps or overlaps. Where only minor gaps appear, the team simply amends existing module descriptors—updating learning objectives, content outlines and assessments—and channels the changes through the institution's routine course-change portal. When larger gaps emerge, the team designs self-contained micro-modules worth one to three ECTS that plug into programmes as electives or stackable credentials.

All teaching resources—slides, case studies, the VR laboratory and the serious game—are released under a Creative Commons licence in both the institution's virtual-learning environment and a public cloud repository, ensuring staff and students can access and update the material long after project funding ends.

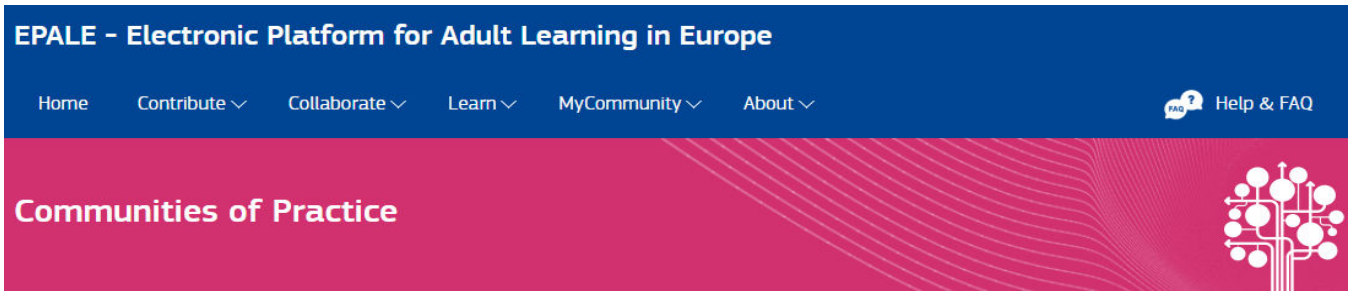
The revised descriptors, an EQF-alignment table and letters of labour-market support from regional agri-clusters are bundled into a single dossier for the faculty or curriculum committee, guaranteeing that ACE-EX modules pass through existing quality-assurance gates and receive full accreditation. Once approved, lecturers complete a brief "train-the-trainer" programme—ideally by following the ACE-EX MOOC themselves—so that delivery capacity is embedded locally rather than dependent on external experts. The new or revised modules are then piloted with a small student cohort, evaluated for workload and learning gain, and incorporated into the programme's routine annual review. This cyclical review locks ACE-EX content into the institutional timetable, while a part-time repository coordinator curates the open materials and convenes a semi-annual stakeholder meeting to keep resources and assessments aligned with evolving circular-economy practice.

By leveraging established governance channels, open licensing and light but continuous oversight, the partners ensure that ACE-EX results remain accredited, examinable components of their curricula well beyond the project's lifetime.

Networking and knowledge-sharing platforms

ACE-EX can leverage EPALE's Communities of Practice (CoP) as a living extension of the project by (1) enrolling all partner-institution trainers and students in existing CoP focused on green skills, circular economy and digital learning, thereby tapping an active, pan-European peer network EPALE - European Commission; (2) launching a

dedicated "Circular Economy in Agri-Food" CoP on EPALE to host the project's open-licensed resources, discussion threads, and FAQs, so that educators beyond the consortium can adopt—and continuously improve—the ACE-EX competence matrix, serious game and VR labs; (3) contributing regular blog posts, short videos and "community stories" that showcase classroom pilots and learner impact, which EPALE curates in its annual storybook and newsletters to reach thousands of adult-learning professionals LinkedIn; (4) organising live debates and micro-webinars through EPALE's built-in event engine, giving partners a ready-made channel for CPD sessions and for gathering practitioner feedback on new versions of the materials YouTube; (5) using EPALE's partner-search tool and AI-focused CoP to recruit new VET providers, industry mentors and policy actors when scaling the certification pathway aipioneers.org; and (6) linking every ACE-EX MOOC lesson to its matching CoP thread so that learners can pose questions and exchange good practice in real time. Embedding these six interaction loops transforms EPALE from a one-off dissemination outlet into an ongoing community hub that sustains, updates and broadens the reach of ACE-EX long after the project ends.



Furthermore, ACE-EX can turn the European Circular Economy Stakeholders Platform into a high-visibility launchpad and feedback loop for its agricultural-circular-economy resources by working through four complementary channels already embedded in the platform:

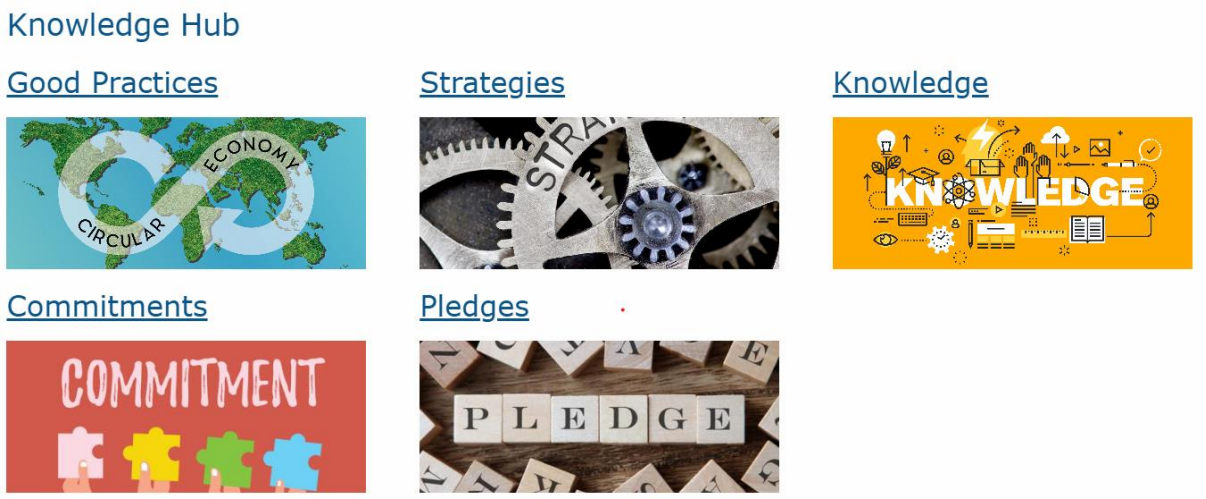
1. **Showcase and archive the project's deliverables in the Knowledge Hub** – Upload the competence matrix, VR scenarios, serious game, policy briefs and pilot-course results as "Good Practices", "Knowledge documents" and "Education & Training" entries. Each item stays permanently searchable in the ECESP library, and the built-in submission form lets you link to the open repository and include contact details for follow-up.

2. **Curate a dedicated Collection of case studies** – The Knowledge Hub allows organisations to group multiple uploads under a branded Collection. Creating an "ACE-EX" Collection places all partner case studies, assessment tools and classroom testimonials in one click-through bundle that teachers, SMEs and policymakers can browse or download as a set.

3. **Run an "EU Circular Talk" webinar series** – ECESP's event engine offers ready-made registration, streaming and promotion

4. **Plug into annual conferences and leadership groups** – By submitting a session proposal or poster to the ECESP Annual Conference and volunteering experts to join a relevant Leadership Group (e.g., Circular

Bioeconomy or Education & Skills), ACE-EX gains a seat at EU-level agenda-setting meetings and taps a continuous peer-review network for future curriculum updates.



Digital learning platforms (MOOCs, Skillsbank, Canvas)

ACE-EX delivers every learning activity through a single digital ecosystem in which the Canvas MOOC environment is linked to the Skillsbank qualification database. Learners enrol once, follow modular courses and VR activities in Canvas, and see their results automatically written to Skillsbank against the project's EQF-aligned competence matrices. Before each new or revised unit goes live, the instructional team translates it into all partner languages so that identical content is available in ACE-EX official languages from the first day of release. The whole system already runs on the NTI-MMM servers used for earlier Erasmus+ projects; service-level agreements, included in the consortium MoU, keep hosting, maintenance and help-desk support in place for at least five years after the official project end, exactly as required by Article 17 of the Grant Agreement.

When learners finish a module or a full learning path, Skillsbank issues an electronic ACE-EX Certificate that shows title, workload, EQF/NQF level, assessment score and a secure link to any supporting evidence. Certificates follow the procedures described in the CEDEFOP "European Guidelines for Validating Non-formal Learning" and can be requested by external candidates under the same rules as internal learners. Because every competence matrix stored in Skillsbank is mapped to ESCO and to national frameworks, the certificate can be presented for micro-credential recognition or for eventual credit transfer once EQF level 6 status is granted; the steering committee will continue the dialogue with national authorities with the aim of securing that recognition during the third project year. A modest, transparent fee—proportional to assessment workload and printing costs—covers administration so that the service remains financially self-supporting without restricting open access to learning materials.

Canvas and Skillsbank supply live analytics on registrations, completion rates, certificates issued and language versions downloaded. These data feed a project dashboard reviewed twice a year by the Digital Resources Steering Committee and the Quality-Assurance team (WP 6). Baseline targets are set at 500 unique learners and 150 certificates in the first post-pilot year, rising to 2 000 learners and 800 certificates by year five. If indicators fall below trajectory, the committee agrees to corrective actions—extra tutoring hours, interface tweaks, content updates—and records them in the management log so that progress is visible at each reporting point in WP 8.

All course files, videos, VR assets and game code are stored in a shared Git-based repository and released under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 (CC BY 4.0) licence named in Article 17.3 of the Grant Agreement. Twice a year the content team—instructional designers, ICT specialists and subject experts—meets to review learner feedback, refresh case studies, add new language versions and update qualification matrices so that emerging policy or market changes are reflected without delay. The public website, hosted alongside Canvas on the NTI-MMM server, carries the EU emblem and the standard Erasmus+ disclaimer on every page, links to all partner sites and to flagship circular-economy portals, and provides a password-free forum that lets teachers, businesses and students exchange experience. Back-ups, security patches, GDPR-compliant analytics and WCAG 2.1 accessibility checks are part of the hosting contract. The site also offers downloadable visual-identity templates—logo files, slide decks and factsheet layouts—so that every dissemination action (WP 7) follows the same style guidelines. These scheduled, lightweight routines ensure that ACE-EX digital assets remain accurate, multilingual, visible and fully compliant with the Grant-Agreement obligations long after the project's funded period.

Industry demonstrations, outreach events and activities

To reinforce the practical applicability and visibility of the ACE-EX project's outputs, industry demonstrations and outreach events will be systematically attended. These events will include live demonstrations, showcasing real-world applications of circular economy practices in agriculture, particularly targeting sectors such as oil, wine, and cereals.

Collaboration with industry leaders and participation in major events will significantly enhance stakeholder engagement, fostering meaningful dialogue between the academic community, industry practitioners, policymakers, and the general public.

Such events are critical not only for disseminating project results but also for encouraging industry adoption, facilitating knowledge transfer, and creating new business and research opportunities within the circular economy landscape.

Industry demonstrations and events

The plan foresees the possible participation to the following conferences:

1. **Ecomondo – The Green Technology Expo**
    - **Location:** Rimini, Italy
    - **Focus:** Ecomondo is the key event for a green and circular economy. It's the meeting place where industrial groups, stakeholders, policy makers, opinion leaders, local authorities, research bodies and institutions come together and put in place the key elements that define the strategies for the development of EU environmental policy.
    - **Website:** www.en.ecomondo.com
2. **Vinitaly**
    - Location: Verona, Italy
    - Focus: It is an annual international wine and spirits exhibition held in Verona, Italy. It's one of the largest and most prestigious wine trade fairs in the world, bringing together producers, buyers, distributors, and wine professionals from across the globe.
    - Website:

3. **Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA)**
    - **Location:** Berlin, Germany
    - **Focus: The forum** is an annual international conference organized in Berlin, Germany, focusing on agriculture, food security, and sustainable farming practices. The event is hosted by the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) and brings together global policymakers, representatives from agriculture and food sectors, international organizations, NGOs, researchers, and experts.
    - **Website:** www.gffa-berlin.de
4. **BIOFACH**
    - **Location:** Nuremberg, Germany
    - **Focus:** Organic agriculture, sustainable farming practices, bioeconomy
    - **Website:** www.biofach.de
5. **European Circular Economy Stakeholder Conference**
    - **Location:** Rotating European cities (e.g., Brussels)
    - **Focus:** Circular economy policies, EU initiatives, innovation and industry collaborations
    - **Website:** ec.europa.eu/environment
6. **International Conference on Sustainable Agriculture (ICSA)**
    - **Location:** Rotating international cities
    - **Focus:** Sustainable farming, technology integration, policy development
    - **Website:** www.waset.org/sustainable-agriculture-conference
7. **Agritechnica**
    - **Location:** Hannover, Germany
    - **Focus:** Agricultural innovation, machinery, digital transformation
    - **Website:** www.agritechnica.com
8. **Anuga FoodTec**
    - **Location:** Cologne, Germany
    - **Focus:** Innovation in food production, resource efficiency, circular economy in food industry
    - **Website:** www.anugafoodtec.com
9. **Green Week (Grüne Woche)**
    - **Location:** Berlin, Germany
    - **Focus:** Food production, agriculture, sustainability, renewable resources

- **Website:** www.gruenewoche.com

10. **Circular Economy Hotspot**
    - **Location:** Annual rotation across Europe (e.g., Dublin, Barcelona, Amsterdam)
    - **Focus:** Sharing best practices, innovation in circular economy, industry and academia collaboration
    - **Website:** www.circulareconomyhotspot.eu

Sustainability and outreach activities

Consortium partners are asked to fill out their planned sustainability activities

Consortium partner name: Confagricoltura

Title, name of activity: National event during: Ecomondo

Description of activity: Workshop

Timing of activity: 5th of November (09,00-13,00)

Activity's contribution to the sustainability of the project: Dissemination of results

Planned budget: has established in the project proposal

Location: Rimini

Website: https://www.confagricoltura.it/ita/

https://agricolae.eu/ecomondo-2025-on-the-road-tre-tappe-internazionali-verso-ledizione-di-novembre-alla-fiera-di-rimini/

Consortium partner name: ITS For new Life technologies

Title, name of activity: ACE-EX new perspective for the Circular economy

Description of activity: conference with companies, representative organizations, policy makers, and stakeholders

Timing of activity: October 2025- During Erasmus Day 15 of October (4 h)

Activity's contribution to the sustainability of the project: Dissemination of the results to promote the TP's developed

Planned budget: € 1500

Location: Bergamo

Website: www.fondazionebiotecnologie.it

Consortium partner name: Fthiotida Chamber

Title, name of activity: Circular Economy Perspectives and Its Impact on Agricultural Businesses Sustainability

Description of activity: Informative event concerning the ACE EX program and the impact of the circular economy on interested companies, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders.

Timing of activity: November 2025 (4 h)

Activity's contribution to the sustainability of the project: Dissemination of the goals of the ACE EX project, focused mainly on the agricultural sector, by providing a platform and necessary knowledge of applied circular economy principles

Planned budget: to be announced

Location: Lamia, Greece

Website: www.fthiotidoscc.gr

Consortium partner name: Fundación Patrimonio Natural de Castilla y León (FPNCYL)

Title, name of activity: ACE-EX dedicated session at the Castile and León "Bioeconomy Forum 2025" [ES.- *Foro de Bioeconomía de Castilla y León*]

Description of activity: In-person session on the ACE-EX project at the Castile and León Bioeconomy Forum, where the project's objective and main results will be presented, as well as the presentation of the access website for the ACE-EX MOOC courses and the Serious Game. During the session, attendees will be encouraged to enroll in one of the online courses and they will be able to try out the serious game live. Dissemination and engagement will be assured. The Forum on Bioeconomy is organized by Cesefor, a private foundation for the comprehensive development of the forestry sector.

Timing of activity: 9-10 October 2025.

Activity's contribution to the sustainability of the project: Direct dissemination of the ACE-EX project to influential strategic stakeholders at the regional level. The content of the in-person workshop will be tailored to the ACE-EX project, which focuses on the circular economy, education/training, and agriculture. Expected attendees are 200. They will be engaged in the ACE-EX project sustainability.

Planned budget: maximum 3,500 €

Location: Soria (Spain)

Websites: https://forodebioeconomia.es/ https://patrimonionatural.org/proyectos/erasmus-plus-ace-ex

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Consortium partner name: Valencia Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Services and Shipping (Valencia CCI)

Title, name of activity: Valencia Green Summit 2025

Description of activity: The Valencia Green Summit is an event held in Valencia that brings together companies, public administrations, professionals and citizens to promote sustainability, the green economy and climate action. Organised with the support of entities such as the Valencia Chamber of Commerce, the event offers conferences, round tables, exhibitions and networking spaces focused on ecological transition, sustainable innovation and public-private collaboration. Its aim is to promote solutions to climate change, connect key players and encourage a transformation towards a more sustainable economic model.

Timing of activity: Expected in November 2025.

Activity's contribution to the sustainability of the project: The Valencia Green Summit 2025 will strengthen the ACE EX project by providing a platform to disseminate its goals and results, increase its visibility, and position it as a reference in circular economy applied to agriculture. It will also facilitate the creation of strategic alliances with companies, public institutions, and green sector stakeholders, enhancing its implementation and reach. Finally, it will offer the opportunity to integrate awareness-raising activities from the project into the event's program, bringing circular economy principles closer to the agricultural sector in a participatory and specialized environment.

Planned budget: Approx. 2,000 €

Location: Valencia (Spain)

Website: https://vlcgreensummit.camaravalencia.com/

Consortium partner name: AINIA

Title, name of activity: Fruit Attraction 2025

Description of activity: Fruit Attraction is the leading international trade show for the fruit and vegetable sector, organised by *IFEMA Madrid* in collaboration with FEPEX. The event brings together producers, distributors, buyers, technologists, and key players from the agri-food value chain, offering spaces for networking and knowledge exchange. AINIA participates with an exhibition stand and presents innovation projects related to sustainability, food safety, and agricultural by-product valorisation. The show includes conferences, themed forums, and specialised areas such as *Smart Agro* and *Biotech Attraction*, reinforcing its role as a strategic platform for innovation in the sector.

Timing of activity: 30 September – 2 October 2025

Activity's contribution to the sustainability of the project: Participation in Fruit Attraction 2025 will allow AINIA to disseminate the progress and results of the ACE EX project to a specialised audience of agri-food companies, public organisations, and technology centres. It will position the project as a reference in the circular economy applied to agriculture, foster collaboration opportunities, and support the transfer of innovative solutions. In addition, AINIA will integrate awareness-raising activities targeting the primary sector, promoting sustainable practices and amplifying the project's impact within the business ecosystem.

Planned budget: Approx. € 1.500

Location: Madrid, Spain

Website: **https://www.ifema.es/fruit-attraction**

Consortium partner name: AINIA

Title, name of activity: BIOSPAIN 2025

Description of activity: BIOSPAIN is one of the leading international biotechnology events, organised by ASEBIO, bringing together companies, research centres, public administrations, and investors from the biotech sector. The 2025 edition will take place in Barcelona at Fira de Barcelona – Montjuïc (Hall 1) and is expected to gather over 2,000 professionals from more than 1,000 organisations across 30 countries. The event programme includes

conferences, thematic sessions, B2B partnering, exhibitions, and networking activities, with a strong presence of both national and international stakeholders.

Timing of activity: 7–9 October 2025 (three full days of sessions and partnering)

Activity's contribution to the sustainability of the project: Participation in BIOSPAIN 2025 will help raise awareness of the ACE EX project within one of Europe's most relevant biotech ecosystems. It will enhance the project's positioning in circular economy solutions applied to agri-food systems, support the creation of strategic alliances (with companies, investors, R&D institutions), and foster opportunities for scaling and implementation through B2B meetings and technical presentations. Moreover, AINIA will be able to integrate awareness-raising actions within the scientific framework of the event, promoting sustainable practices among biotech and agricultural sector stakeholders.

Planned budget: Approx. € 1.000

Location: Barcelona, Spain — Fira de Barcelona – Montjuïc (Hall 1)

Website: https://www.biospain.es

Consortium partner name: AINIA

Title, name of activity: Congreso Iberoamericano de Ingeniería Química CIBIQ 2025 – Foro Química y Sociedad

Description of activity: The Ibero-American Congress of Chemical Engineering (CIBIQ 2025) – Foro Química y Sociedad is a key scientific and technical event that brings together professionals, researchers, and institutions from Ibero-American countries working in the fields of chemical engineering, biotechnology, and sustainable innovation. Held in conjunction with the European Congress of Chemical Engineering (ECCE 15) and the European Congress of Applied Biotechnology (ECAB 8), CIBIQ 2025 offers a unique platform for knowledge exchange, networking, and the promotion of innovative solutions addressing global challenges. The forum highlights the role of chemical engineering in advancing the circular economy, clean technologies, and sustainable industrial practices. It also fosters collaboration between academia, industry, and public institutions, with a strong emphasis on transferring research results to real-world applications.

Activity's contribution to the sustainability of the project: Participation in the Ibero-American Congress of Chemical Engineering (CIBIQ 2025) – Foro Química y Sociedad will provide AINIA with the opportunity to disseminate the ACE EX project among experts, researchers, and industry professionals from the Ibero-American chemical and engineering sectors. The event will serve as a platform to showcase the project's advances in circular economy and sustainable technologies applied to the agri-food sector. Participation will foster collaboration with academic and industrial stakeholders, enhance the visibility of innovative solutions developed within the project, and support their potential transfer and implementation. Additionally, AINIA will contribute to awareness-raising efforts by promoting the adoption of sustainable practices aligned with the project's objectives.

Timing of activity: 8 -10 September

Location: Lisboa – Portugal

Website: https://ecce-ecab2025.eu/

Project outcomes and results to be sustained

Report on Circular Economy Practices

The ACE-EX project delivers a comprehensive assessment of the potential for circular economy (CE) practices in agriculture—specifically in the wine, oil, and cereal sectors—highlighting results that strongly support sustainability-driven innovation. This synthesis focuses on the key results emerging from the deliverable and presents them in a format tailored for long-term integration into sustainability strategy.

The research confirmed that while circular economy practices are emerging, their application remains uneven, particularly among SMEs. The report identifies five critical action fields—extraction, transformation, distribution, use/consumption, and reuse—and demonstrates, through 18 detailed best practices from seven countries, how each phase can be aligned with CE principles. Notable examples include converting grape waste into cosmetics and feed, using olive waste for energy, and repurposing cereal by-products into bio-materials. These implementations prove both environmentally beneficial and economically viable.

Stakeholder engagement emerged as essential. A stakeholder mapping methodology, based on the Business Model Canvas and GRI standards, was developed to identify all actors influenced by or involved in circular transitions. These include not just producers and regulators, but also the environment itself and future generations. The result is a dynamic map that supports strategic engagement, vital for systemic change and social acceptance of new CE practices.

The project also uncovered major gaps in existing training frameworks. Current programs rarely offer integrated CE content, and there is a lack of harmonization across EQF levels. ACE-EX responds with a structured curriculum framework targeting EQF levels 4 and 5, scalable to EQF 6, supported by VR modules, serious games, and a MOOC platform. These tools aim to deliver practical, multidisciplinary learning and facilitate Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), with certification tied to professional impact.

The ACE-EX Certification and ACE Brand are two innovative outputs designed for sustainability. The certification validates individual competencies in CE, while the brand allows companies to publicly demonstrate commitment to sustainable transformation. These are intended to have lasting utility, not only improving employability and competitiveness but embedding CE values into market identity.

National legislative analysis shows growing policy support across partner countries, with CE integration into strategic plans (e.g., Spain's España Circular 2030, Greece's Circular Economy Action Plan 2021–2025, Italy's AGROENER and cereal-sector reforms). However, practical alignment between regulation and education remains weak. The ACE-EX results offer a bridge, translating policy into applicable training and business practice.

In terms of results to be sustained:

1. **Best Practice Catalogue**: Analyzed examples are aligned with CE criteria across design, consumption, and waste recovery. These are sector-specific, replicable, and documented through a standardized assessment method, enabling scalability and adaptation across regions and sectors.
2. **Qualification Matrix**: Defines the learning outcomes, skills, and competences for the CE Expert in Agriculture. This result is foundational for developing consistent, quality-assured training programs across EU countries.
3. **Curriculum and Training Tools**: The integrated use of immersive learning, online platforms, and real-life simulations ensures the accessibility and long-term relevance of the training model.

4. **Stakeholder Engagement Strategy**: The structured map and guidelines for stakeholder identification and involvement serve as a reusable toolkit for other CE-focused projects or policy initiatives.
5. **Policy and Regulatory Alignment**: A comparative review of CE-relevant legislation ensures that the training is responsive to regulatory contexts, improving both uptake and compliance.
6. **Sustainability Competence Gaps**: Clear identification of gaps (technical, digital, regulatory knowledge, stakeholder coordination) provides a roadmap for future capacity building.
7. **Certification and Branding Tools**: These offer long-term visibility and recognition, extending the project's impact beyond its duration.

Training Adaptation

Skills needed by the industrial sector are in continuous development. For this reason, to ensure the continuous maintenance and further development of the ACE-EX training provisions, Skillsbank facilities, MOOCs, and the project website will be systematically managed through the following structured approaches and resources. This is a central element in the ambition of tracking graduates in a long-Term perspective through their careers as Expert on Circular Economy in the Agricultural Sector.

- **Qualification matrices updates**

Regular updates to Skillsbank and Canvas qualification matrices in multiple languages will reflect real-world feedback, emerging industry trends, and international market developments. Continuous coordination with the ESCO system will ensure alignment and broader recognition.

- **Content review process**

Implementing a structured content management system to ensure training materials and modules are reviewed, updated, and enhanced bi-annually. This includes engaging subject matter experts from academia, industry professionals, and stakeholders to ensure alignment with the latest sector-specific advancements and regulatory requirements, including those outlined by the European Union.

Training content will be revised based on field experience, market needs, and stakeholder feedback. Existing educational institutions such as ITS, FAGINN, IES, and Brno school will integrate ACE-EX programs (EQF levels 4 and 5). Opportunities for new education providers to offer onsite, eLearning, or MOOC modules will be actively encouraged.

- **User-centric feedback integration**

Developing and implementing robust mechanisms to systematically collect, analyse, and integrate feedback from users, trainers, and stakeholders. Surveys, and analytics-driven assessments will form the basis for ongoing refinement and evolution of educational content, ensuring relevance and responsiveness to learners' evolving needs.

6. Financial sustainability & funding strategy

This chapter aims to explore the possibilities for the ACE-EX project to be financially sustainable after the termination of the EU funding.

European projects often face significant challenges in maintaining their activities and achieving a lasting impact once EU funding comes to an end. One of the primary reasons is **overreliance on external financial support**. Many initiatives are designed around the specific criteria of the grant, lacking a sustainable revenue model or alternative funding sources. When the initial funding period concludes, the project may struggle to secure the resources required to keep its operations running, leading to a sudden loss of momentum.

Also, insufficient long-term planning exacerbates this problem. Consortia and partnerships may focus on fulfilling objectives within the typical two- or three-year funding window without developing robust strategies for the future. When the official project period ends, there is often no clear plan for how to sustain or advance the work, leaving the project vulnerable to fragmentation or abandonment.

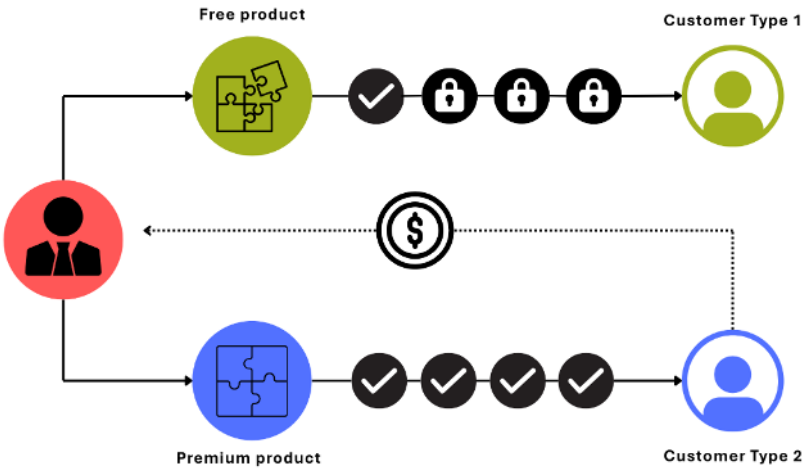
Finally, **strict administrative and reporting requirements consume a significant portion of project resources**. The need to adhere to complex EU regulations and procedures leaves less time and energy to establish strategies for market outreach, community building, or other activities that could foster long-term viability. As a result, many EU-funded projects struggle to transition from time-bound initiatives to enduring enterprises with a strong financial and organizational foundation. Effective sustainability planning, deeper stakeholder engagement, and institutional backing are key factors in overcoming these challenges.

This section proposes some solutions to overcome this project and guarantee that the innovation of ACE-EX is not lost.

Long-term financial strategy for maintaining ACE-EX platforms

To ensure the long-term sustainability, relevance, and functionality of the ACE-EX platforms beyond the end of EU funding, a combination of financial model must be adopted. These models are designed to maintain the technological infrastructure, regularly update training content, and expand outreach through diverse partnerships.

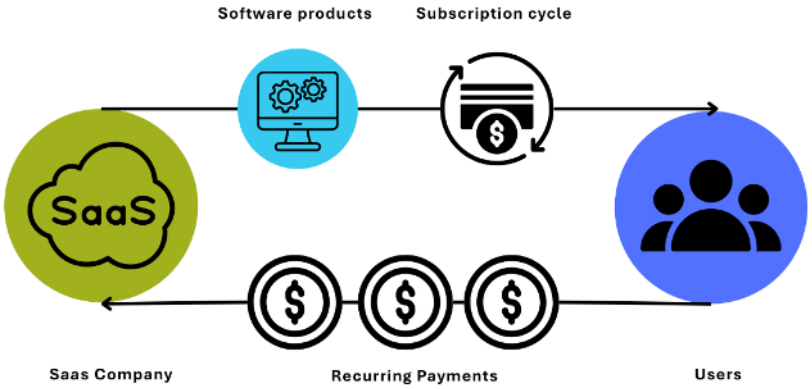
From a financial perspective, a freemium model (1) offers a promising route. A **freemium** business model offers a basic service for free, additional premium functions or services are only available for a fee. As a result, while core training remains free, revenue can be generated through optional paid services such as certification (including EQF level validation), custom learning paths, and one-on-one mentoring. These certificates would be managed and issued through a secure backend system maintained by the ACE-EX entity.



A **membership-based model** (2) could further support financial stability, inviting agricultural firms, training centres, and local governments to become paying members. In return, they would gain access to exclusive resources, premium modules, private webinars, and recognition as

''ACE-EX certified supporters''. Tiered membership options would make participation accessible to a diverse range of organizations.

Additional revenue could be generated through **direct service contracts with industry** (3). Customized training and upskilling programmes could be offered to companies operating in sectors such as agri-food, cosmetics, and waste valorisation. In return for financial support, these companies would gain access to talent pipelines and the ability to co-develop relevant training content.



Finally, elements of the ACE-EX platform—such as the Skillsbank or VR training modules—could be offered as **Software-as-a-Service** (SaaS) (4) to external training providers or universities, with fees covering integration, white-labeling, and API access. It's a software delivery model where applications are hosted by a provider (and made available to users over the internet. **In simple terms,** instead of downloading and installing software on individual computers, users **access it online**—usually through a subscription or licensing fee.

Diversification of funding sources

To ensure the sustainability of the ACE-EX project following the conclusion of EU funding, exploring national and regional funding opportunities is essential. Various countries offer specific grants and financial instruments aimed at promoting circular economy initiatives and educational projects.

To complement these models, ACE-EX could actively seek support from national and regional funding streams. This includes applying for development funds such as Italy's Circular Economy Fund, Spain's CDTI R&D grants, Erasmus+ continuation grants under Key Action 2, and local calls targeting green innovation or digital transformation. A dedicated funding coordinator could be appointed to monitor relevant calls and manage applications.

Please find below a non-exhaustive list of national and regional financial instruments.

- **Belgium**: In the Walloon region, businesses can access "Chèques-entreprises," which provide financial support for feasibility studies, market analyses, and other services related to circular economy projects. These vouchers are partially funded by the Walloon government to encourage sustainable business practices. https://www.cheques-entreprises.be/
- **Italy**: Invitalia's Circular Economy incentive, introduced by the Ministry of Enterprise and Made in Italy, aims to support the transition of production activities towards a sustainable model that preserves the value of products, materials, and resources while minimizing waste. This initiative encourages the productive reconversion of the industrial sector and funds entrepreneurial research and development

projects focused on efficient and sustainable resource use. The program offers €100 million in subsidised loans and €40 million in direct contributions to expenses. Eligible applicants include companies of any size engaged in industrial, agro-industrial, craft, industrial service, and research centre activities https://www.invitalia.it/en/incentives-and-tools/circular-economy

- **Spain**: The Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology (CDTI) offers financial aid, including grants and loans, to companies engaging in research, development, and innovation projects. These funds aim to elevate the technological level of Spanish companies, with a focus on innovation, digitalization, decarbonization, sustainable management, and support for SMEs.

Additionally, the European Investment Bank (EIB) collaborates with regional governments to co-finance projects that align with green and digital transitions. For instance, the EIB signed a €215 million loan agreement with the regional government of Andalusia to support investments in education, energy transition, healthcare, sustainable transport, and digital projects.

By tapping into these national and regional funding sources, ACE-EX can secure the necessary financial support to continue its impactful work in promoting circular economy education and practices.

Commercialization strategies for training and certification programs

The revenue generated through the fee-based models, including certification fees and payments for specialized content on MOOC platforms, typically flows to the organization or consortium entity designated to manage the ACE-EX project's sustainability phase. In practical terms, the management and distribution of this income can be organized pragmatically as follows:

1. Establishing a Legal Entity or a Management Consortium

To handle financial transactions clearly and legally, ACE-EX would likely need to formalize a specific legal entity, such as:

- **Non-profit association or foundation**: Ideal for continued educational and sustainability-focused objectives. Income would directly support the entity's sustainability, course maintenance, and innovation.

- **Consortium Agreement**: An internal legal framework (consortium agreement) between partners, defining clearly how revenues are distributed and reinvested, can be utilized if no separate legal entity is established.

2. Revenue Sharing Agreements

A transparent revenue-sharing mechanism must be clearly established among the ACE-EX project partners through a legally binding consortium or partnership agreement. Typically, revenues might be shared based on:

- Each partner's level of involvement or contribution to developing, updating, and maintaining course content.

- Pre-agreed percentages for partners involved in specific roles, such as content providers, technical platform managers, certification issuers, or marketing teams.

3. Centralized Management of Funds

Funds earned from course enrollments, certifications, or related educational services (e.g., certificates printing, specialized modules) can be managed centrally by the designated entity. This entity would then allocate these resources systematically for ongoing operations, including:

- Maintaining and upgrading ICT infrastructures and platforms (e.g., Skillsbank, Canvas, MOOCs).
- Covering administrative costs, such as platform fees, licenses, marketing expenses, and content updating.
- Compensating consortium members for their continuing roles (e.g., content creators, evaluators, ICT specialists, support staff).

4. Reinvestment for Project Sustainability

Surplus revenue can be strategically reinvested into ACE-EX itself to ensure long-term sustainability. Potential reinvestment opportunities include:

- Funding further development of innovative training modules or virtual reality content.
- Research and innovation projects related to circular economy advancements within agriculture.
- Subsidizing training for specific target groups (e.g., SMEs, farmers, students).

5. Transparent Financial Governance

To ensure credibility and continued stakeholder trust, the financial governance of ACE-EX must include:

- Regular financial reporting and transparency regarding income streams and spending.
- Oversight by an advisory board or steering committee composed of consortium members and external stakeholders, ensuring accountability and aligning funds with strategic objectives.

By adopting this structured financial governance model, ACE-EX ensures clarity about who receives, manages, and utilizes the money generated through the project's ongoing educational offerings. This approach helps safeguard the project's future operations, impact, and reputation.

7. ESG performance monitoring & key performance indicators (KPIs)

This new chapter translates the ACE-EX sustainability vision into a concise set of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) metrics. Each KPI is directly linked to the activities, platforms and commitments already described in Chapter 5 – especially the Skillsbank/Canvas ecosystem, the stakeholder-engagement strategy and the financial-sustainability roadmap.

> **Purpose:** *Provide a common yardstick for partners, funders and external auditors to judge whether ACE-EX is delivering real-world impact – not just outputs. Embed continuous improvement by reviewing results twice a year, aligning targets with EU Green Deal goals, national CE roadmaps and the Grant Agreement reporting cycles.*

KPI selection principles

1. **Materiality** – indicators measure issues that are both mission-critical (circular-economy skills, training uptake) and stakeholder-critical (resource use, inclusiveness).
2. **Measurability & data availability** – all data come from systems that already exist or will be maintained for at least five years (Canvas analytics, Skillsbank logs, survey templates, consortium accounts).
3. **Baseline & target logic** – Year 0 baseline = end of pilot phase; Year 5 targets line up with the post-project ambitions in Section 7.
4. **Balanced coverage** – at least four indicators each for **E**, **S** and **G**.

ESG KPI dashboard

#	Indicator	Metric (unit)	Data source	Baseline (Y0)	2027 Target	Responsible WP
E-01	**Platform energy intensity**	kWh per active learner	Server-host reports (NTI-MMM)	*to be logged*	-25 % vs Y0	WP6 (QA)
E-02	Learner projects that close nutrient/biomass loops	% of capstone projects rated “CE-best-practice”	MOOC peer-review rubric	0 %	≥40 %	WP4
E-03	Certified companies that publish waste-reduction data	% of companies with ACE-EX brand reporting tonnes/yr saved	Skillsbank + public CSR	0	≥30	WP5
S-01	Total learners completing at	Persons	Canvas analytics	500	2000	WP4

	least one module					
S-02	Female participation in certified cohorT	% of certificates	Skillsbank	35%	45%	WP4
S-04	Graduate employment in green jobs after 12 m	% (survey)	Alumni tracker	Baseline survey	≥60 %	WP5

G-01	Sustainability-plan revision on schedule	Yes/No	Steering-committee minutes	-	100%	WP5
G-02	Public release of KPI scorecard	Days after period-close	Project website	n/a	≤60 days	WP5
G-03	Stakeholder-satisfaction index	Score / 10	Bi-annual survey	-≥8.0	-	WP3

Each KPI is reviewed annually.

Data-collection & assurance procedure

1. **Automated pulls** – Platform KPIs (E-01, S-01/02) flow automatically from server and LMS dashboards.
2. **Structured partner logs** – Stakeholder-engagement data captured via a shared online form at each event.
3. **Annual surveys** – Alumni employment and stakeholder-satisfaction surveys issued in all partner languages.
4. **Publication** – A colour-coded KPI scorecard is embedded in the public project website.

8. Timeline of the activities

The sustainability strategy of the ACE-EX project is structured into three key phases to ensure the long-term viability, scalability, and impact of its outcomes. These phases—Start-up, Implementation, and Post-Project—are designed to build momentum from early planning through active engagement to sustained integration across sectors and geographies.

In the **Start-up Phase (Months 21-24)**, the focus is on establishing a clear sustainability vision and mobilizing the partnership around shared goals. A dedicated "Sustainability and Exploitation" meeting is held in **Month 21** in Brno, Czech Republic, where partners define strategic priorities, target audiences, and tailored exploitation pathways for VET providers, higher education institutions, and key industry actors in agriculture and chemistry. During this phase, the ACE-EX brand is promoted across platforms and events, and the project seeks to collect at least 20 pledges from companies committed to reskilling employees through ACE-EX programs. A first version of the Sustainability Plan is also developed during this period, led by ECRN, with the involvement of all partners. This draft includes funding options for long-term continuation, institutional roles in sustainability, and actions to be initiated in the subsequent phase.

The **Implementation Phase (Months 25–36)** centres on rolling out the sustainability measures and beginning their practical application. The project's online educational content—MOOCs, serious games, and V/R modules—is deployed on platforms like Coursera/EDU to ensure wide access and visibility. Partners host local public events between **Months 21 and 36** to promote ACE-EX's offerings and gather additional feedback from target stakeholders. During this time, consortium members also begin transferring the project results to adjacent sectors such as bioenergy, green chemistry, and bio composite production. The expert stakeholder community created in the early phase is further reinforced, serving as a foundation for long-term collaboration, validation, and outreach activities.

The **Post-Project Phase (Months 36 and beyond)** focuses on ensuring the persistence and growth of ACE-EX results after the project's formal conclusion. The Skillsbank platform and MOOCs will remain accessible, and their content will be regularly updated to remain aligned with evolving sector needs. Certification services through the Skillsbank will continue to be offered, enabling participants to self-assess and receive recognition for their competencies. Advocacy efforts will be scaled up between **Months 28 and 36**, aiming for the formal recognition of ACE-EX qualifications within national qualification frameworks. Additionally, partners will monitor graduate outcomes, maintain engagement with educational institutions, and continue to onboard new collaborators to scale the ACE-EX ecosystem sustainably into the future.

9. Revisions and updates to the Sustainability Plan

This proposal sets out **who revises the plan, how revisions are gathered, when each step happens, and how the new version is approved and published**. It follows the workflow and quality-control rules already defined in the Grant Agreement (Work Packages 6 & 8) and keeps the text clear, short and easy to navigate.

1. **Governance and Roles**

Role	Main duties in the revision cycle
Sustainability Lead (WP 8)	Coordinates the whole process; keeps the master file; monitors deadlines.

Work-Package Leaders	Supply updates for their sections (digital resources, finance, stakeholder engagement, etc.).
Quality-Assurance Manager (WP 6)	Checks that each update matches GA obligations, CC-BY licence, EU-emblem rules and EQF/ESCO references.
External Advisory Board	Reviews the near-final draft for clarity, realism and industry fit.
Consortium Steering Committee	Gives the formal "go/no go" before publication.

2. Six-Step Revision Cycle

Step	Timing*	Key outputs
1. Kick-off briefing	Month 0	Annotated copy of the current plan showing sections that need change (e.g. new KPIs, new funding calls).
2. Input phase	Weeks 1-6	WP leaders add tracked changes directly in the shared document; minor wording changes flagged with margin notes.
3. Synthesis & first QA check	Weeks 7-8	Sustainability Lead merges all edits, resolves overlaps, and sends the compiled draft to QA.
4. External review	Weeks 9-10	Advisory Board comments on realism, market alignment and policy consistency.
5. Final QA & approval	Week 11	QA Manager signs off; Steering Committee votes electronically (simple majority).
6. Publication & dissemination	Week 12	New version uploaded to project website, Canvas workspace and EU Funding & Tenders Portal; partners informed by a one-page changelog.

*The first full revision occurs six months after project start; thereafter the same 12-week sequence runs **once a year** (or sooner if a major policy change demands it).

3. Version Control and Transparency

- Master file kept in the consortium's Git-based repository; each approved edition tagged "v1.0, v1.1…"
- Changelog lists every substantive modification (new financial model, updated KPI targets, added risk).
- Obsolete versions remain accessible for audit but are clearly marked "superseded".

4. Core Content Checks at Each Revision

- **Grant-Agreement compliance** – EU emblem, CC-BY 4.0 licence, five-year availability promise, multilingual updates.

- **KPI table** – Baselines, annual targets, data-collection method.
- **Financial section** – New national/regional calls, fee structure, membership uptake.
- **Digital resources** – Canvas/Skillsbank maintenance schedule, WCAG 2.1 status, data-protection log.
- **Stakeholder map** – New contacts added, engagement level re-scored.
- **Risk matrix** – Emerging risks and updated mitigation owners.