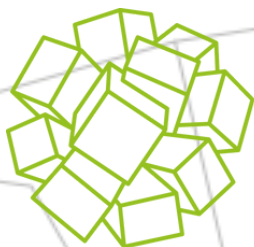


FROM IDEAS TO ACTION:

A FACILITATOR'S GUIDE TO SHAPING SUSTAINABLE BUSINESSES



endurance
green accelerator for EU clusters



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INTRODUCTION

The shift toward a green and circular economy is no longer optional, it is a strategic imperative for businesses across industries. Cluster managers play a pivotal role in accelerating this transition by fostering collaboration, often cross-sectoral and transnational, sharing best practices that might inspire SMEs and startups and helping members, not only to effectively integrate sustainability into their operations, but also to build a sense of commitment to environmental issues and the green transition.

Clusters are essential contributors and intermediaries to the creation of European alliances that support the green transition, as they can channel expertise and knowledge that will facilitate the sustainable upgrading of SMEs and startups, which are often not aware of their precise needs in terms of making the transition towards a more sustainable environmentally friendly business model or simply do not know where to start.

Data from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform shows that the green transition is among the top interests of clusters, which turns them into the perfect drivers of change, as well as accelerators and enablers of the European Green Deal, as they are the perfect places where to find education, research, innovation, knowledge creation, joint learning, technology transfer and collaboration.

With growing demands from the European Green Deal, clusters need structured, adaptable formats and tools that empower them to act as bridges between policy frameworks and SMEs' and startups' realities.



THE ENDURANCE PROJECT

Funded by Erasmus+, ENDURANCE is a pioneering initiative that equips EU clusters with a green acceleration methodology to drive sustainable growth. By integrating eco-innovation, Green Deal strategies, and tailored scenarios, the project empowers clusters to guide SMEs and startups in reshaping Europe's industrial landscape toward sustainability.

ENDURANCE will create the necessary conditions to support green employment, bridge labor shortages, and anticipate change in human capital needs by channeling green growth strategies through EU's clusters. This will trigger and accelerate industry transformation on a larger scale, helping create resilient jobs fully aligned with the European Green Deal.

ENDURANCE focuses on five core goals to accelerate the green transition:

1. Green business development

Equip clusters with tools to foster and incubate sustainable business models among their members.

2. Knowledge-sharing on sustainability

Enable clusters to provide SMEs with customized support, resources, and expertise in sustainability.

3. Support for green SMEs & startups

Nurture purpose-driven businesses with social and environmental impact at their core.

4. Triple-bottom-line advocacy

Inspire companies to excel sustainably—balancing profit, people, and planet—while attracting top talent.

5. Green sectoral skills development

Bridge the skills gap through hands-on vocational training (VET) tailored to the green economy.

ENDURANCE has developed:

- [Green acceleration methodology and learning materials](#)

A scalable, sector-agnostic roadmap to help clusters implement effective green transition strategies.

- [Best practices video interviews](#)

Engaging videos to boost SMEs' understanding of Green Deal principles and best practices.

- [Workshop facilitator's guide](#)

Ready-to-use workshop materials for cluster managers to lead their own green acceleration programs.

- [Policy paper](#)

Evidence-based recommendations to position clusters as catalysts for Europe's green industrial transformation.

Together, these tools will amplify clusters' role as hubs of innovation, ensuring no business is left behind in the shift toward a circular, low-carbon future, and contributing to sustainable growth in the EU by anticipating the important challenge for the coming years in terms of knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes needed to live in, develop and support a sustainable and resource-efficient society, thus spurring the upskilling and reskilling so that workers can thrive in more greener jobs.

***The ENDURANCE Project Partnership
June 2025***



WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS GUIDE?

This facilitator guide is a **practical and comprehensive resource** specially developed for cluster organizations who wish to organize and deliver workshops that support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and startups in navigating the green and digital transition, helping them acquire the tools, skills, and knowledge to **cultivate and incubate innovative green business** to bring the EU at the forefront of the fight against climate change.

The guide has been designed to help facilitators confidently **plan and execute capacity-building workshops** that not only raise awareness, but also enable SMEs and startups to take concrete, strategic actions. Either by working with a single SME or startup on sustainable business model redesign or guiding a group of companies through ecosystem mapping, the twin transition, green entrepreneurship or sustainability road mapping, this guide provides **clear, adaptable guidelines for cluster organizations**.

Whether you are planning in-person or online workshops, this guide provides practical steps, checklists, and content suggestions to **maximize engagement and impact**. That way, they will be able to demonstrate to SMEs and startups that not only large companies and enterprises can take measures and embrace the green transition, but that even small businesses can take action with the right tools and cluster support.

And why a workshop? Workshops, both online and in person, are a powerful and effective method for **facilitating learning, knowledge exchange, peer collaboration, and the generation of innovative ideas**. Through workshops, participants can carry out interactive activities and dynamic tasks by working in multidisciplinary teams within a structured environment and towards a clear goal.

To this end, the ENDURANCE workshop guide addresses **current and future sustainability challenges** by supporting environmental education and cultivating the next generation of visionary green leaders, thus fostering career development opportunities in the emerging post-pandemic jobs market.

By using the guide, facilitators will:

- Understand how to assess SMEs and startups' needs and workshop readiness.
- Choose the appropriate workshop duration, structure, and delivery mode (online, or face-to-face).
- Make use of a workshop methodology that is action-oriented, customizable and self-facilitated.
- Apply tested facilitation techniques that encourage collaboration, ensure inclusive engagement and meaningful outcomes.
- Integrate ENDURANCE's tools effectively depending on the SME or startup profile and their learning objectives.
- Build momentum for longer-term collaboration and follow-up support within their clusters.

ENDURANCE'S GREEN ACCELERATION SCENARIOS

In the framework of the ENDURANCE project, we have developed a green acceleration methodology structured around four interconnected scenarios to help EU cluster teams integrate green transition strategies into SMEs and startups.

The scenarios have been designed to be applicable and adaptable to a myriad of contexts and industrial sectors across Europe, enabling clusters to see the big picture and be equipped to design their own acceleration initiatives, as they best understand the specific needs and demands of their sector and member companies.

These four scenarios of ENDURANCE are described in detail in the comprehensive **'Pathways to Green Innovation: Acceleration Scenarios for EU Clusters'** handbook, and have been designed along with a comprehensive syllabus on sustainability, entrepreneurship, and innovation, accompanied by tailored training materials, all available [here](#).

These resources are directly targeting cluster management teams and other relevant stakeholders seeking strategies to incorporate green transition mechanisms for elevating sustainability in alignment with the principles outlined by the European Green Deal.



SCENARIO #1 ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable entrepreneurship involves launching and managing businesses that emphasize and integrate economic growth, environmental care, and social responsibility. Addressing ecological and social issues can also open up business opportunities that benefit both the economy and society.

Sustainable business models, design thinking, and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors are interconnected frameworks that enable entrepreneurs and innovators to create value in ways that are environmentally responsible, socially inclusive, and economically sustainable over the long term.



SCENARIO #2 CROSS- COLLABORATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The challenges within the green transition are complex and require broader engagement than the usual sectors and ecosystems, locally, regionally, nationally and cross-borders. This is making the support mechanisms for SMEs to navigate these challenges more complex and in turn how cluster managers need to engage in the support of their SMEs.

Cross-collaboration can support cluster managers to help raise awareness of sustainability issues and engage local, regional, national and international stakeholders from different sectors and expertise that can help in implementing solutions while also increasing knowledge and skills among all those involved.



SCENARIO #3 DIGITALIZATION FOR THE GREEN TRANSITION

The green and digital transitions hold the potential to be mutually reinforcing, with digital technologies acting as key drivers of the paradigm shift towards greater sustainability, as they can increase resource efficiency, enable the customization of products and services and extend their life cycles.

As time progresses, digitalization will play an increasingly pivotal role in increasing the competitiveness of SMEs and startups and boosting sustainable growth in the European industrial landscape. Lastly, it is imperative to understand that digitalization also entails a series of social, ethical and environmental implications and challenges that must be properly addressed.



SCENARIO #4 CIRCULAR SYSTEMIC SOLUTIONS

The challenges we face in the 21st century are fundamentally complex in nature and traditional linear approaches are limited in such context. When supporting clusters of SMES towards the development of sustainable and circular products or services, it is necessary to take a systemic perspective.

A specific mindset, some analytical frameworks and practical tools will facilitate your job in transforming your companies. Systems thinking, systems innovation, and systems change are three interconnected concepts that relate to framing, understanding and transforming complex systems. They can also be bridged with future thinking approaches to co-create desirable sustainable future.

SCENARIO #1 | Main Topics

ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

1. Sustainable Business Models.
2. Creativity and Design Thinking.
3. Environmental, social & governance factors.

SCENARIO #2 | Main Topics

CROSS-COLLABORATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

1. Cross- collaboration.
2. Cross-sector collaboration.
3. Cross-border collaboration.

SCENARIO #3 | Main Topics

DIGITALIZATION FOR THE TWIN TRANSITION

1. Digital Transformation and Sustainability.
2. Technologies enabling Circular Economy.
3. Ethical Considerations in Digital Transformation.

SCENARIO #4 | Main Topics

CIRCULAR SYSTEMIC SOLUTIONS

1. Systems Thinking
2. Systems Innovation
3. Systems Change
4. Future Thinking

1. PREPARING FOR THE WORKSHOP

1.1 What is facilitation?

Facilitation is a process in which a person guides a group through a structured process to achieve a specific objective, enabling learning and exchange. A good facilitator always aims to create a collaborative environment and help the group share knowledge, experiences, and ideas, working together effectively to learn from each other, encouraging participants to step outside their comfort zone and explore new opportunities.

To be a good facilitator, it is essential to be an active listener, a clear communicator, and an impartial guide who can manage group dynamics and encourage participation. This includes understanding group dynamics, using a variety of facilitation techniques, and being flexible to adapt to the needs of the group.



1.2 How to set up a workshop

In this section we provide you with some basic but important tips on how to set up successful online and face to face workshops.

1.2.1. Before the workshop

1. Clarify the purpose of the workshop

First of all, you need to start by defining specific outcomes you want to achieve, thinking especially about the target group you are going to engage in. You will find more information on this in later sections of this guide. For example, if the workshop focuses on green transition initiatives, outline the key topics such as energy efficiency, waste reduction, or sustainable supply chains and align them with the profile of the participants.

2. Prepare a structured agenda

Create a detailed agenda that breaks down the workshop into manageable segments, as this helps keep the session focused and ensures you cover all essential topics. Include time for introductions, presentations, breakout sessions, and Q&A. Share this agenda at least a month in advance so participants can prepare for discussions or activities.

3. Invite the right audience

Carefully invite participants who are relevant to your workshop objectives, for example decision makers from companies who can implement green initiatives or experts who can provide valuable insights on sustainability practices within clusters.

4. Engage participants early

Build anticipation by sending pre-workshop materials such as documents, factsheets, short videos, articles, or surveys related to green transition initiatives. You can even use the video kit developed by the ENDURANCE project and share with participants the videos that resonate the most with the goal of the workshop. Another useful engagement technique is to ask participants to reflect on specific questions or challenges before the session begins, as this ensures they arrive ready to learn and contribute.

5. Define roles clearly

Assign specific roles to ensure smooth facilitation of the workshop. For example, the lead facilitator will run the whole workshop, potentially with support from group facilitators; group facilitators will moderate small discussions and keep the group focused; a documenter will record all key insights and decisions; and technical support person will ensure all equipment works properly. Having clearly defined roles will help avoid any confusion and will ensure that all aspects of the workshop run smoothly.

6. Provide immediate feedback

During group exercises or presentations, offer constructive feedback that highlights strengths while suggesting improvements where necessary. This encourages participants to refine their ideas while boosting confidence in their contributions.

7. Embrace flexibility

Be prepared to adapt your plan based on participant needs or unexpected challenges during the session. For example, if a discussion becomes particularly engaging but runs over time, adjust later segments accordingly, or if certain activities are not resonating with the group change to alternative methods like open Q&A sessions, as flexibility will ensure your workshop remains dynamic and productive.

8. Record the results of the workshop

It is important to collect all the results obtained during the workshop, photographing whiteboards, flipcharts, and sticky notes before removing them and storing them in the case of face-to-face workshops, or saving a copy of the results developed in the digital tools used in the case of online workshops. This has two main goals. First, analyzing the results will help you improve the workshop or even plan a new, more advanced one. It will also make it easier to share the results with participants so they can keep learning even after the session is over.

1.2.2. After the workshop

1. Collect feedback

Measure impact and results by gathering feedback to be able to assess whether the workshop achieved its objectives and to identify areas for improvement for future events. You can use our dedicated workshop feedback survey included in the pages below!

2. Send a summary to participants

Compile lessons learned and share key findings, resources used, action plans, and next steps with participants. Remember that the workshop is part of a bigger process, so keep communication going.



SETTING UP ONLINE WORKSHOPS



1. Choose appropriate online tools

Select reliable and intuitive platforms for hosting the workshop, with tools like Zoom, Google Meet, or Microsoft Teams are ideal to facilitate presentations and discussions. Also, collaboration platforms like [Miro](#), [Lucidspark](#) or Google Docs can be used for brainstorming and documenting ideas, and [Mentimeter](#) or [Slido](#) can facilitate engagement with real-time polling and quizzes.

Before using them make sure that all participants are familiar with these tools with a brief introduction even during the workshop itself especially if participants need to be logged in.

2. Test technology

Conduct a thorough test of all technology tools before the workshop with your team and also with any external speaker that may take part in the workshop. Check video and audio quality, screen share capabilities and any interactive features like polls or breakout rooms have a backup plan in case of any technical issues such as alternative connection links or contact information for tech support.

3. Foster interaction

Use interactive elements to keep participants

engaged throughout the session. For example, in this guide you will find some ice breaker exercises related to sustainability practices in companies that you can use in your workshop. Another option is to ask participants to share an eco-friendly initiative that their company has recently implemented or even their own personal opinions on sustainability trends.

If you have multiple facilitators during the workshop you can move into breakout rooms for small group discussions or exercises that then can be shared with the rest of the group.

Incorporating live Q&A sessions and encouraging participants to share questions or ideas via chat is always a great idea. To keep your workshop alive to keep your workshop participative and alive.

4. Set ground rules

Although everyone is now very familiar with online sessions and meetings it is still a good idea to set up some clear ground rules at the beginning, for example ask participants to mute their microphones when they are not speaking to reduce distractions also provide instructions on how to use the that feature or how to raise their hand virtually to ask questions.

5. Limit session length

Online workshops can be mentally exhausting because they require a very high level of concentration so it is recommended that sessions last less than 90 minutes with short breaks every 45-50 minutes. If your workshop requires more time, consider splitting it into several sessions over several days or conducting it in person.

SETTING UP FACE-TO-FACE WORKSHOPS



1. Select the right location

Choose a dynamic location or room that encourages collaboration, teamwork, and creativity, preferably with natural lighting and comfortable seating and tables. The more customizable the space, the better you can adapt it to the layout needs of your workshop.

Do not forget to check that the space has Wi-Fi access if you are going to use digital or online tools, and to carry out a preliminary check to ensure that everything is working properly. Last but not least, make sure that the space is accessible for people with disabilities or reduced mobility.

2. Have all the necessary materials

Make sure the space has all the materials you will need during the workshop, from digital equipment such as projectors or screens, to supplies such as whiteboards, flipcharts, pens, markers, sticky notes, poster boards, and paper.

3. Use interactive methods

It is always a good idea to incorporate practical activities that encourage active participation, making learning more dynamic and engaging,

and fostering an atmosphere of collaboration and cross-learning. Some examples include a brainstorming session with sticky notes where participants write down ideas for reducing carbon emissions in their sector, or an exercise where participants work in teams to design simulated sustainability plans.

4. Diversify learning materials

Workshops, especially those lasting several hours, can be tedious if we do not incorporate different learning methods to ensure inclusivity and maximize participation. It is therefore important to also bear in mind that there are different types of learning, and that each type is better suited to a particular set of activities.

For example, visual learners learn better from graphics, infographics, or videos, and auditory learners prefer presentations or group discussions, while kinesthetic learners prefer to do things with their hands, such as designing processes on whiteboards or writing on sticky notes.

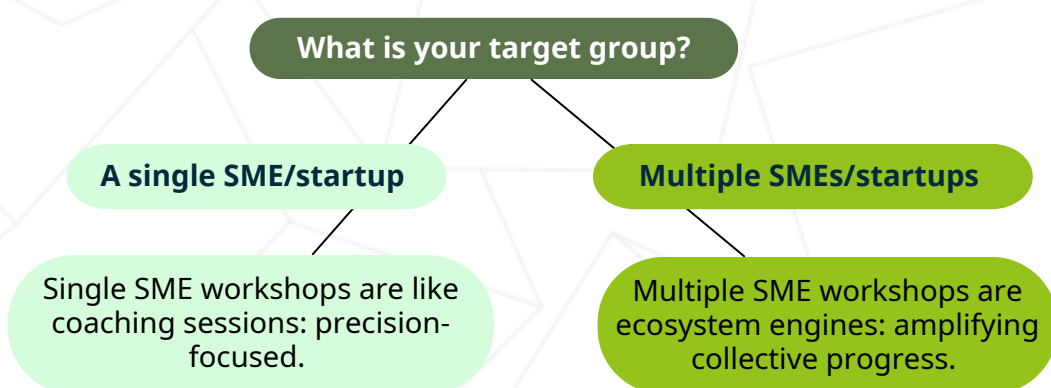
2. STRUCTURING THE WORKSHOP

2.1 Navigate your options

In order to help you design the right workshop format, we developed some decision trees.

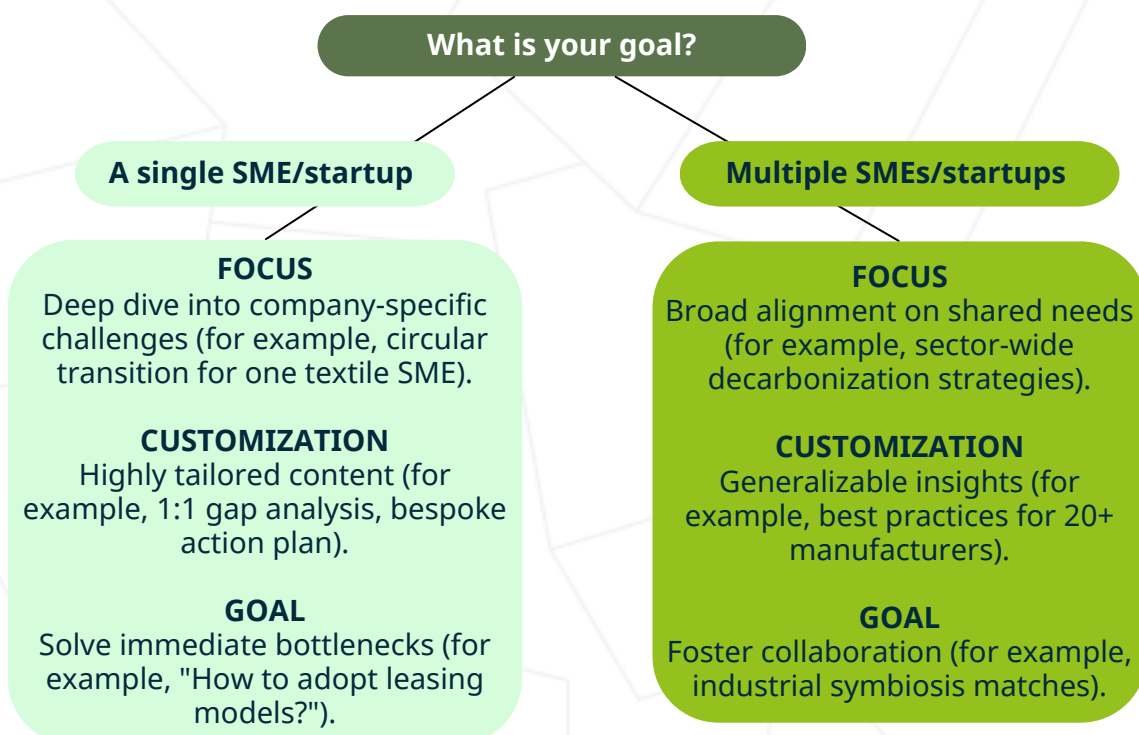
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Step 1: What type of target group are you planning this workshop for? Adapt based on your cluster's capacity and strategic goals.



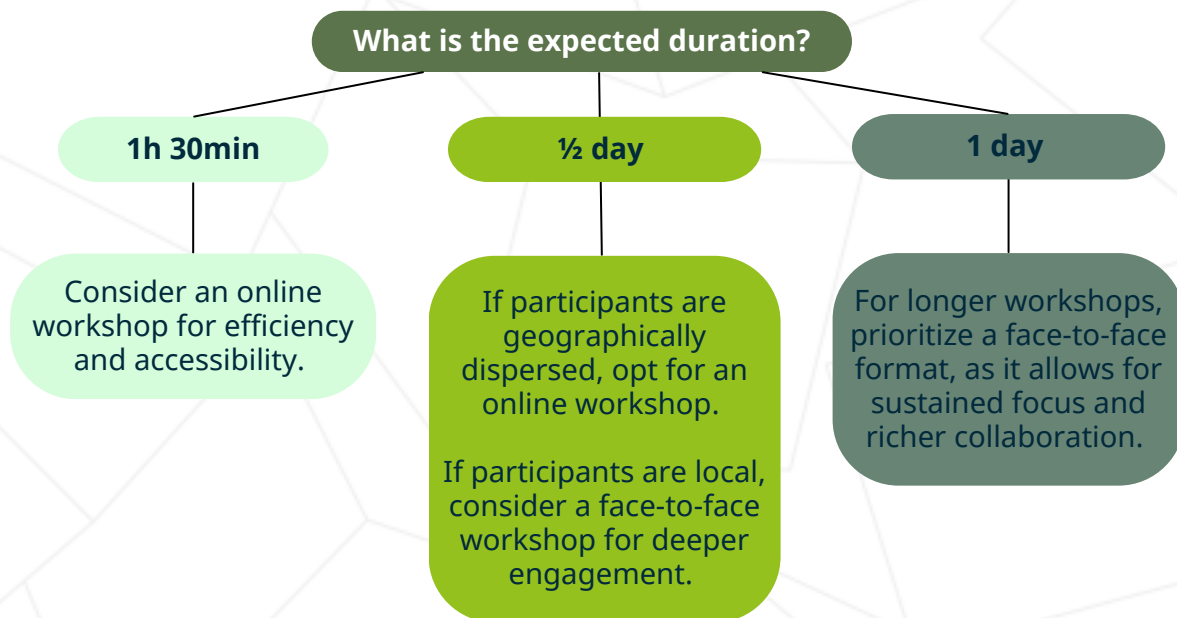
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Step 2: What is the goal of the workshop? The objectives will differ depending on your focus.



3

Step 3: How long do you expect this workshop to be? The duration will depend on your objectives and the level of depth you plan to explore.



4

Step 4: What is the level of expertise your target group has on this topic? Understanding this will help you adapt the content and format accordingly .



Use the answers from steps 1–4 to determine the optimal format:

- Online workshops are ideal for shorter durations, dispersed participants, or beginner-level topics requiring structured guidance.
- Face-to-face workshops work best for longer durations, local participants, or advanced-level topics requiring collaboration.

2.2 Workshop structures

USE CASE #1 - Online webinar (1h 30min)

Before the workshop

- Invite one qualified business and sustainability advisor as speaker.
- Prepare workshop materials, including presentation slides.

During the workshop

- Introduction and ice-breaker (10 minutes).
- Overview of green transition challenges and opportunities for the SMEs (10 minutes).
- Expert presentation on key green transition strategies relevant to the SMEs (30 minutes).
- Interactive session: SMEs share their current sustainability practices (30 minutes).
- Q&A and wrap-up (10 minutes).

After the workshop

- Share workshop materials and expert contact information.
- Send a follow-up survey to gather feedback and identify areas for further support.

USE CASE #2: Hybrid ½ day workshop

Before the workshop

- Conduct a needs assessment survey to understand SMEs' specific challenges and priorities regarding green transition.
- Develop tailored content based on survey results and cluster focus.
- Invite qualified business and sustainability advisors as speakers or facilitators.
- Prepare workshop materials, including handouts and presentation slides.
- Set up a collaborative online platform for sharing resources and fostering post-workshop engagement.

During the workshop

- Introduction and ice-breaker (30 minutes).
- Overview of green transition challenges and opportunities for the SMEs (45 minutes).
- Break-out sessions: SMEs discuss potential implementation strategies with ENDURANCE's tools (60 minutes).
- Group presentations and discussion (30 minutes).
- Q&A and wrap-up (30 minutes).

After the workshop

- Share workshop materials and expert contact information.
- Organize follow-up peer-to-peer learning sessions.
- Provide individual consultations for interested SMEs.

USE CASE #3 : Face to face workshop (1 day)

Before the workshop

- Conduct a needs assessment survey to understand SMEs' specific challenges and priorities regarding green transition.
- Develop tailored content based on survey results and cluster focus.
- Invite qualified business and sustainability advisors as speakers or facilitators.
- Prepare workshop materials, including handouts and presentation slides.
- Set up a collaborative online platform for sharing resources and fostering post-workshop engagement.

During the workshop

Morning

- Introduction and ice-breaker (30 minutes).
- Overview of green transition challenges and opportunities for the SMEs (60 minutes).
- Interactive session: SMEs share their current sustainability practices (60 minutes).

Afternoon

- Break-out sessions: SMEs develop draft transition plans with ENDURANCE's tools (120 minutes).
- Group presentations and feedback (60 minutes).
- Q&A and wrap-up (30 minutes).

After the workshop

- Share workshop materials and expert contact information.
- Organize regular follow-up meetings to track progress and provide support.
- Facilitate mentorship programs pairing experienced companies with those just starting.
- Create a cluster-wide green transition working group to continue collaboration.
- These workshop formats can be adapted based on the specific needs of the cluster and the participating SMEs.

3. ORGANISING YOUR WORKSHOP CONTENT

3.1 Green transition focus

Introducing green transition topics to your audience can be overwhelming, as the transition needs to happen at various levels, and the skills set needed to navigate such transition is expanding.

In the table below we highlight key topics that could be of interest when designing your workshop programme.

TOPICS	FOCUS
1. Energy efficiency and resource optimization	• How to reduce energy consumption through efficient lighting, building insulation, and heating systems. • Strategies for optimizing processes to minimize waste and required inputs. • Adoption of renewable energy sources and technologies to lower carbon footprints.
2. Circular economy principles	• Designing products for reuse, recycling, and reduced material inputs. • Implementing waste management strategies, such as reusing materials or collaborating with other companies for waste exchange. • Exploring circular business models that extend product lifecycles and reduce environmental impact.
3. Sustainable finance	• Accessing green finance opportunities and understanding sustainable investment criteria. • Learning how to meet reporting requirements for sustainable finance, such as ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) standards. • Developing realistic sustainability targets and KPIs to align with funding opportunities.

TOPICS	FOCUS
4. Digital technologies for sustainability	• Leveraging digital tools (for example, IoT, AI) to optimize energy use, reduce emissions, and improve logistics efficiency. • Exploring digital solutions that integrate sustainability into business operations, such as carbon accounting software or smart energy management systems.
5. Cross-sector / cross-border collaboration	• Understanding synergies between sectors and countries to optimize efficiencies in value chains. • Explore potential collaborations outside the usual network.
6. Skills development and workforce adaptation	• Training employees on green practices and sustainability principles to build capacity for innovation. • Addressing skill gaps in areas like ESG reporting, circular economy strategies, and energy transition technologies.
7. Environmental management systems (EMS)	• Implementing systematic processes to monitor and reduce environmental impacts while increasing operational efficiency. • Using EMS frameworks to comply with environmental regulations and improve sustainability performance.
8. Policy awareness and advocacy	• Understanding local, regional, and international policies that impact SMEs' green transition efforts (for example, European Green Deal). • Encouraging SMEs to engage in policymaking processes to influence regulations that support their sustainability goals.
9. Consumer demand and market opportunities	• Identifying emerging opportunities in clean technology, energy efficiency, and sustainable tourism sectors. • Adapting products or services to meet growing consumer demand for sustainable solutions.

3.2 ENDURANCE's workshop tools

To help you navigate these four scenarios, we have compiled a set of useful tools and canvas included in our '[Pathways to Green Innovation: Acceleration Scenarios for EU Clusters](#)' handbook that can inspire you when designing the content of your workshop. Here are a few examples of how to use some of them in your workshops.

QUESTION TO ADDRESS IN THE WORKSHOP	NAME OF THE TOOL	DESCRIPTION
<i>How can I identify and prioritize the stakeholders to involve in my future project/venture?</i>	<u>Actor map canvas</u>	The actor map canvas is a visualization tool used to identify stakeholders you are trying to reach. It is a tool for mapping actors that surround the project/new venture and those that could potentially become a partner, user or supporter.
<i>How can visualize the flows of materials, energy, information and money in a new or future product-service system?</i>	<u>System map canvas</u>	The system map is a visual representation of the system behind the innovation, whether it be a service or a product. It helps take on a systemic view of the solution and see connections between the different actors that might otherwise not have been perceived. It also maps out the flow of materials, energy, information and money throughout the system.
<i>How can my new venture operate in the existing business environment?</i>	<u>Network analysis canvas</u>	This canvas is designed to aid us in the analysis and understanding of a given business network.
<i>How can your company integrate sustainability into its business model while enabling SMEs to transition towards Green Deal objectives?</i>	<u>Business model canvas</u>	This is a tool to guide SMEs and startups in developing, refining, and scaling their business models effectively.
<i>How can I characterize the ecosystem in which I am involved to enable system change interventions?</i>	<u>Innovation ecosystems canvas</u>	In this canvas, we expand upon primary considerations such as the elements, relations, synergies, the overall function, the value model, scaling engine, and impact assessments that are relevant for whole systems change.
<i>How can I check if there are ethical risks in a digital solution?</i>	<u>Digital ethics canvas</u>	This tool helps to identify ethical risks in a digital solution, determine priorities and design mitigation measures.

QUESTION TO ADDRESS IN THE WORKSHOP	NAME OF THE TOOL	DESCRIPTION
<i>How can your company support clusters/SMEs in overcoming challenges and seizing opportunities in the Green Deal transition?</i>	<u>Sustainability SWOT analysis</u>	This is a tool to help businesses assess and enhance their sustainability strategies, ensuring resilience, compliance, and long-term growth.
<i>Who are the key stakeholders impacted by your organization, and how can your company tailor sustainable solutions to meet their needs?</i>	<u>User personas</u>	This is a tool for helping businesses gain deep insights into their target customers, refine their products/services, and improve marketing and customer engagement strategies.
<i>How can you know in which areas of digital transformation your company is already well positioned and which areas still have optimization potential?</i>	<u>Digital transformation assessment</u>	The results will help companies understand where they are on their digital journey. This will enable them to identify the main topics that are of particular importance
<i>How can I build a successful twin transition strategy?</i>	<u>Twin transition roadmap canvas</u>	This tool allows companies to define why and how they want to start a transition that combines digitization and sustainability.
<i>How do I drive innovation and collaboration in my organisation? Outside-in, Inside-out or a combination</i>	<u>Open innovation</u>	This tool gives three perspectives on how to perceive and work with the innovation process in a company. It also helps cluster managers give the best guidance for SMEs and startups if they know their way of thinking.

3.3 Using the tools in practice

Supporting start-ups and SMEs in their green transition can take various forms, depending on the company's goals, the sector they operate in, and their current level of sustainability. The ENDURANCE Handbook offers valuable tools for cluster managers to address different aspects of this transition. To achieve the best outcomes for the companies involved, it is recommended to combine and adapt these tools. Below are two examples of how combining tools can enhance outcomes for companies.

Example 1: Enhancing sustainability in SMEs business models

One or a group of SMEs is seeking to enhance their business model by incorporating innovation for sustainability. To assist them in this endeavor, they need to understand their "sustainability value," identify their position within the "wider ecosystem," and develop a "business model" that integrates the value of sustainability. Through a workshop, cluster managers can support SMEs using the following combination of tools:

1. Value Mapping

The Value Mapping tool helps companies create value propositions that support sustainable business models. It encourages creativity and dialogue about values, potential conflicts, and positive aspects the SME wants to emphasize. This tool aids in developing a clear purpose and mission statement for the SMEs.

2. Ecosystem Mapping

To ensure that the SMEs' business model considers their broader impact, it is crucial to help them think beyond their network and understand the wider ecosystem. Based on the purpose or mission statement from the Value Mapping exercise, SMEs are encouraged to explore the actors in their surrounding ecosystem. Using the Ecosystem Mapping tool, SMEs identify all possible actors and how they connect to their value proposition. This tool helps SMEs pinpoint the five most important actors for their business model.

3. Business Model Canvas

The Business Model Canvas is a valuable resource for cluster managers to enhance sustainability within SMEs. It helps identify opportunities, evaluate performance, foster cooperation, strategize, and effectively communicate sustainability initiatives. The insights from the Value Mapping and Ecosystem Mapping tools feed directly into the Business Model Canvas. Utilizing these tools before engaging with the Business Model Canvas ensures that the SME has considered their sustainability value and incorporated key stakeholders from the wider ecosystem.

Outcomes from using combination Value Mapping, Ecosystem Mapping and Business Model Canvas are:

- A defined purpose for the SME based on the value they provide.
- A better understanding of the key stakeholders needed to deliver this value.
- A more sustainable business model to move forward with.

Example 2: Support SMEs in their digitalization strategy

One or a group of companies is seeking to digitize their business while also pursuing sustainability goals and new business opportunities. To assist them in this complex task, it is

crucial for them to understand the business "network" they operate in, the "digital value" they aim to add, and how to define their "transition to digitalization." Through a workshop, cluster managers can support SMEs using the following combination of tools:

1. Actor Map Canvas

The Actor Map Canvas aims to identify and map stakeholders based on their sector and level of importance. Starting with this tool encourages SMEs to brainstorm the key aspects of their business in relation to stakeholders. Facilitators should prompt companies to consider stakeholders related to digitalization. This tool will help SMEs identify the core stakeholders around which to build their digitalization strategy.

2. Value Mapping Tool

The Value Mapping Tool assists companies in crafting value propositions that support sustainable business models, including digitalization. Facilitators should encourage a focus on digitalization. Through creativity and dialogue based on the core stakeholders identified, SMEs can focus on values, potential conflicts, and the positive aspects of their digital strategy. This tool supports the development of a clear purpose and mission statement for the SMEs.

3. Twin Transition Roadmap Canvas

The Twin Transition Roadmap Canvas allows companies to define why and how they want to start a transition that combines digitization and sustainability, ensuring that all involved are aligned towards the same goal. Using insights from the Actor Map Canvas and the Value Mapping Tool, SMEs can develop a clear mission statement based on the key stakeholders impacted by their digital strategy. These inputs enable a more concrete and actionable twin transition roadmap to potentially embed into the SMEs' business model or digital strategy.

Outcomes from using combination Actor map canvas , Value Mapping Tool and Twin Transition Roadmap Canvas are:

- A clear focus on key stakeholders to develop their digital strategy around.
- A defined purpose for the SME based on the value they provide through digitalization.
- A more concrete and actionable twin transition strategy.

4. GROUP ACTIVITIES

4.1 Icebreakers

Icebreakers are short interactive activities designed to break down barriers between participants and to set a positive tone for the workshop. They also reveal shared interests or challenges related to the workshop's theme, and (very important), encourage participation from quieter attendees.

But why should you use them in your green transition workshops for SMEs and startups? First of all, they help to build trust. Collaboration (especially if it is cross-sectoral) requires openness, and icebreakers help strangers connect quickly. Second, as participants arrive with diverse perspectives, a well-designed icebreaker can align mindset by framing the day around shared goals (for example, "Why does the circular economy matter to you?"). and, last but not least, it boost engagement, as fun, low-stakes activities prime the brain for active learning versus passive listening.

It is important to know what the key principles for effective icebreakers are:

- *Keep it relevant:* tie the activity to the workshop's theme, for example, invite participants to share one waste stream their business wants to eliminate.
- *Respect time:* the icebreakers activity should last between 5 and 15 minutes maximum, enough for participants to get to know each other without taking up too much of the workshop's learning time.
- *Inclusivity matters:* icebreakers ensure that everyone feels comfortable and respected, allowing them to participate without fear of exclusion or judgment, so avoid overly personal or competitive tasks.

To help you in organizing a successful workshop, here is an example of an icebreaker to be used in the context of your workshop.

Icebreaker: How has climate change personally impacted your life?

Objective

Encourage workshop participants to share their personal experiences with climate change to create emotional connections and to foster commitment to the challenges of the green transition.

Instructions

1. Start by discussing with participants the value of personal stories in gaining an

understanding of the impact of climate change and how the sharing of these experiences comes part collective action and deepen the relevance of the workshop.

2. Give participants a few minutes to reflect on how climate change or extreme weather events have affected their lives or the lives of people they know, and encourage them to think about specific events they have experienced, witnessed or felt strongly about, emotions they have felt, or challenges they have faced due to it.

3. Ask each participant to briefly share their story, with 2-3 minutes per person.

4. Conclude the activity by summarizing common themes or surprising insights from the shared stories. Emphasize how these personal experiences illustrate the urgency and diversity of climate impacts.

Why this works

- Personal storytelling bridges the psychological distance of climate change by making it relatable and immediate.
- Sharing in small groups fosters trust and encourages open communication.
- Highlighting one story per group ensures focus while keeping the activity manageable within time constraints.

Time required

Approximately 20 minutes: 5 minutes for reflection, 15 minutes for group sharing.

Materials needed

None.

4.2 Group Activities

Introducing fun and interactive group activities can significantly boost participant engagement and strengthen teamwork. Creative grouping methods are particularly effective in workshops, as they foster interaction and create a more focused and collaborative environment.

By working in smaller, well-structured groups, participants are more likely to contribute actively, share diverse perspectives, and leverage their unique skills. This collaboration not only enhances problem-solving and decision-making but also promotes trust, communication, and cooperation. Ultimately, group activities serve as a powerful tool for team building and driving innovation.

In addition to the ENDURANCE tools mentioned above, we also want to provide you with a series of collaborative group activities to encourage and foster mutual learning without losing focus on sustainable development.

Activity #1: Sustainability vision mapping

Objective

Explore collective aspirations for a sustainable business future, fostering creativity and collaboration among participants.

Instructions

1. Begin by explaining the importance of envisioning a sustainable future. Highlight how collective aspirations can inspire actionable solutions and align participants toward shared goals. For example, mention how green transitions require innovative thinking and collaborative effort.
2. Distribute sticky notes, markers, and a large wall chart (or use a digital whiteboard tool like Miro for online workshops). Divide the chart into sections such as "Energy Transition," "Circular Economy," "Climate Action," or "Sustainable Supply Chains" to guide participants' thinking.
3. Ask participants to individually reflect on the following prompt: "What is your vision for a sustainable business future? Think about innovations, practices, or transformations that could make your business or industry more sustainable." Encourage them to write one idea per sticky note (or virtual post it).
4. Participants place their sticky notes on the chart under relevant sections. If conducting an online workshop, participants can drag and drop virtual notes onto a shared digital board.
5. Once all notes are placed, divide participants into small groups (4-5 people) to review the chart together. Each group identifies recurring themes, surprising ideas, or innovative visions from the sticky notes.
6. Invite each group to share their observations with the entire workshop. Highlight common themes across groups and encourage participants to discuss how these visions could translate into actionable strategies.
7. Summarize key insights from the activity and emphasize the importance of aligning these visions with green transition initiatives. If applicable, connect these ideas to workshop goals such as sustainability planning or strategy development.

Why this works

- Encourages participants to think creatively about sustainability challenges and opportunities.
- Builds a sense of shared purpose by visualizing collective aspirations.
- Provides a foundation for deeper discussions on actionable green transition strategies.

Time required

Approximately 30–40 minutes: 5 minutes for reflection, 10 minutes for placing notes, 15 minutes for group discussion, and 10 minutes for plenary sharing.

Materials needed

- Sticky notes and markers (for in-person workshops).
- A large wall chart divided into thematic sections (or digital whiteboard tools like Miro for online workshops).

Activity #2: Digital green solution pitch

Objective

Spark creativity and innovative thinking about green digital transformation by encouraging participants to propose actionable digital solutions that reduce carbon emissions.

Instructions

1. Begin by introducing the concept of green digital transformation. Highlight how digital technologies can drive sustainability by reducing emissions, optimizing energy use, and enabling circular business models. Share examples like smart energy management systems, IoT-enabled waste reduction, or AI-powered logistics optimization to inspire participants.
2. Provide participants with 2 minutes to brainstorm and develop a concise 30-second pitch for a digital solution. Prompt them with the following question: “What digital solution could your company implement to significantly reduce its carbon emissions? Think creatively about tools, platforms, or technologies.” Encourage participants to focus on practical ideas that align with their industry or expertise.
3. Divide participants into pairs and ask them to share their pitches with each other. This step allows them to refine their ideas through feedback and discussion. Encourage pairs to identify strengths in each pitch and suggest improvements.
4. After pair discussions, ask each pair to select the most innovative idea between them.

These selected pitches will be presented to the entire workshop group. Each presenter has 30 seconds to pitch their idea.

5. As pitches are shared with the group, the facilitator highlights common themes, innovative approaches, or surprising insights. For example, you might point out recurring ideas around energy efficiency or unique applications of AI in sustainability.

6. Conclude by encouraging participants to reflect on how these ideas could be implemented in their own companies or industries. Discuss potential barriers (for example, cost, scalability) and opportunities for collaboration.

Why this works

- Promotes creative thinking by challenging participants to develop actionable solutions under time constraints.
- Encourages peer-to-peer learning through pair discussions and group sharing.
- Sparks innovation by focusing on practical applications of green digital technologies.

Time required

Approximately 25–30 minutes: 2 minutes for brainstorming, 5 minutes for pair sharing, 10 minutes for group presentations, and 8–10 minutes for wrap-up discussion.

Materials Needed

- None required for face-to-face workshops (just open space for pairing).
- For online workshops, use breakout rooms for pair sharing and a shared platform (for example, Zoom or Teams) for group presentations.

Activity #3: Circular economy challenge

Objective

Demonstrate circular economy principles through a hands-on, interactive activity that fosters creativity and problem-solving.

Instructions

1. Begin by introducing the concept of the circular economy. Explain how it differs from the traditional "take-make-dispose" model by emphasizing reuse, refurbishment, recycling, and waste reduction. Share examples of circular products or systems (for example, modular furniture, refillable packaging) to inspire participants.

2. Divide participants into small teams (3–5 people each). Encourage diversity in team composition to bring varied perspectives and expertise into the activity.
3. Provide teams with the following task: “Redesign a common product to make it more circular. Consider ways to extend its lifecycle, reduce waste, or create value from its end-of-life materials.” Examples of products could include a coffee cup, smartphone, or office chair.
4. Distribute basic prototyping materials such as paper, markers, tape, scissors, and recycled items (for example, cardboard boxes, bottle caps). For online workshops, participants can sketch their ideas digitally or use collaborative tools like Miro.
5. Allow teams 15–20 minutes to brainstorm and create quick prototypes of their redesigned product. Encourage them to think creatively about circular strategies such as modular design, repairability, or material innovation.
6. Each team presents their circular design concept to the group in 2–3 minutes. They should explain: how their redesign aligns with circular economy principles, the environmental benefits of their solution and any challenges they foresee in implementing it.
7. After each presentation, provide constructive feedback by highlighting innovative elements and suggesting ways to refine ideas further. Encourage group discussion to generate additional insights.
8. Conclude by summarizing key themes from the activity and connecting these ideas to real-world applications in green transition initiatives. Discuss how businesses can adopt these principles in their operations.

Why this works

- Encourages creative problem-solving by challenging participants to think critically about product design and sustainability.
- Provides a hands-on approach that makes abstract concepts tangible and engaging.
- Fosters collaboration and teamwork while stimulating innovative thinking.

Time required

Approximately 45–60 minutes: 5 minutes for introduction, 15–20 minutes for brainstorming/prototyping, 20 minutes for presentations, and 10 minutes for wrap-up discussion.

Materials Needed

- Basic prototyping materials (paper, markers, tape, scissors).
- Recycled items for added creativity (for example, cardboard boxes).

5. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In this section, we provide you with additional support documents that can help you organize green transition workshops efficiently.

5.1 Workshop checklist

Follow this checklist so that you don't forget anything when preparing your workshop:

1. Have you clearly defined the workshop's purpose and objectives?

Ensure you understand what you aim to achieve and how it aligns with your broader goals.

2. Have you identified your target audience?

Determine who should attend based on relevance to the workshop's goals.

3. Have you set a date and time for the workshop?

Choose a date and time that works well for all stakeholders.

4. Have you selected a suitable venue or platform?

Ensure the venue or platform is suitable for the number of participants and provides necessary amenities.

5. Have you prepared a detailed agenda?

Create a structured plan including timings for presentations, discussions, and activities.

6. Have you invited speakers and participants?

Confirm speakers and send invitations to participants with all necessary details and access links, if applicable.

7. Have you arranged for necessary technology and equipment?

Ensure all necessary tools are available and tested for both online and face-to-face formats.

8. Have you organized catering (if applicable)?

Arrange for refreshments if the workshop is face-to-face. Take into account the sustainability of the offering by serving local and proximity products and minimizing waste.

9. Have you designed and printed necessary materials?

Prepare any physical or digital materials needed for the workshop. Try to minimize printed paper documents as much as possible.

10. Have you conducted a pre-workshop rehearsal?

Test all equipment and run through key parts of the agenda to ensure smooth execution.

5.2 Workshop feedback survey

Here is an example of a satisfaction survey that you can send to participants after the workshop to gather feedback on the activities carried out:

Thank you for attending our green transition workshop!

We kindly ask you to fill in the following satisfaction survey, necessary for the evaluation of the workshop and the improvement future sessions. This survey will take less than 5 minutes.

1. On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the overall organisation of the workshop?

1 - Very poor, 5 - Excellent.

2. On a scale of 1-5, how clear and well-structured was the presentation of the information?

1 - Very unclear, 5 - Very clear.

3. On a scale of 1-5, did the speakers/facilitators explain the topics in an engaging way?

1 - Not engaging at all, 5 - Very engaging.

4. On a scale of 1-5, how valuable was this workshop for your daily work and activities?

1 - Not valuable, 5 - Extremely valuable.

5. Which topic was most useful to you?

- Circular business models.
- Cross-sector collaboration.
- Digital tools for sustainability.
- Ecosystem/policy strategies.
- Other: _____.

6. What could be improved? (Select up to two)

- More practical examples/case studies.
- Longer Q&A/discussion time.
- Better pre-workshop materials.
- More interactive activities.
- Other: _____.

7. Would you be interested in follow-up activities?

- Yes, I would like deeper training on: _____.
- Yes, I am interested in peer exchanges/networking.
- No, but keep me informed about future events.

8. Any additional comments or suggestions?

Thank you! Results will help shape our next workshops.

5.3 Example of half-day workshop agenda (3-4 Hours)

Theme: Circular Business Models & Cross-Sector Collaboration.

Format: Adaptable for online or in-person.

Time	Activity	Details
09:00-09:15	Welcome & Icebreaker	Quick poll: "What's your biggest circular economy challenge?" (Mentimeter/Slido).
09:15-09:45	Keynote: Why Circular Economy?	15-min talk + 15-min Q&A. Local success story (e.g., industrial symbiosis case).
09:45-10:30	Breakout 1: Circular Business Model Lab	Groups use a canvas tool to adapt their business to CE (e.g., leasing, recycling).
10:30-10:45	Coffee Break + Networking	Structured networking: "Find someone from a complementary sector."
10:45-11:30	Breakout 2: Digital Tools Demo	Live demo of a CE tool (e.g., material flow tracker, blockchain for waste).
11:30-12:00	Action Planning & Next Steps	Participants share one commitment (e.g., pilot a CE model, join a working group).
12:00	Closing & Feedback Survey	Distribute the 8-question survey.

5.4 Example of full-day workshop agenda (6-8 Hours)

Theme: Building a Green Ecosystem: From Strategy to Action.

Format: In-person (with hybrid options).

Time	Activity	Details
09:00-09:30	Registration & Networking	Participants map their CE interests on a shared board.
09:30-10:00	Keynote: Policy & Business Alignment	Speaker from government/cluster shares regional CE incentives.
10:00-11:00	Deep Dive 1: Circular Design	Hands-on session: "Redesign a product for disassembly"(groups of 4-5).
11:00-11:15	Coffee Break	
11:15-12:30	Deep Dive 2: Cross-Sector Matchmaking	Speed-dating format: "Waste producers meet recyclers" (10-min rotations).
12:30-13:30	Lunch with Thematic Tables	Tables labeled by topic (e.g., "Digital CE," "Policy Advocacy").
13:30-14:30	Digitalization Lab	Rotating stations: IoT sensors, AI for waste sorting, digital product passports.
14:30-15:30	Ecosystem Mapping Exercise	Groups map local stakeholders (use Miro/Lucidspark for virtual).
15:30-15:45	Break	
15:45-16:30	Action Pitch Session	Teams pitch one collaborative project (e.g., shared recycling hub).
16:30-17:00	Wrap-up & Feedback	Voting on top ideas + distribute feedback survey.

5.5 Supplementary materials

Here are some other useful materials you can use in your workshops:

- With this template [here](#), you can collect the signatures and contact details of the participants in order to follow up with them later.
- This template [here](#) will serve as an example to help you prepare your workshop presentations. It shows how to combine several tools using a case study as a common thread, among other things.
- Do you need to learn more about the ENDURANCE acceleration topics and scenarios? Don't worry, [here](#) are the learning materials developed within the project.



The ENDURANCE project has been co-funded by the European Union (2023-1-ES01-KA220-VET-000158027).

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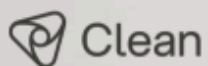
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