

Business models related to Green Infrastructure

Training Module 3

Deliverable D.T4.2.3 Module for training on possible business models and society participatory engagement.

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The LUIGI project

The Interreg Alpine space project LUIGI (Linking Urban and Inner-Alpine Green Infrastructure - Multifunctional Ecosystem Services for more liveable territories) brings together 14 partner institutions and 26 observers from Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, and Switzerland with the aim of strengthening the link between mountain ecosystems and urban centres at the foot of the Alps through sound economic and social exchanges.

By recognising the pressures on Alpine ecosystems and the services they deliver to wider areas beyond mountain regions, the project aims to strengthen the link between mountain ecosystems and urban centres at the foot of the Alps. The project's objective is to recognise and valorise the joint benefits of a GI network between mountain/rural and urban areas, as well as their potential for sustainable economic development based on natural resources and ecosystem services, ensuring a higher quality of life and better urban environments for people living in urban centres.

Work Package 4 of the LUIGI project focuses on education and training for sustainable management of green infrastructure elements in LUIGI model regions, leveraging knowledge from the Alpine region and beyond.

Introduction

GI & biodiversity finance

In recent year, the impacts of human behaviour on nature have become increasingly clear, as have human dependence on a healthy environment.

The loss of biodiversity requires to be halted by means of a composite set of interventions involving both governments at different levels and the private sector.

With the aim of preserving nature's inherent value and enhancing its sustainable management, as well as halting biodiversity loss, economic policies and decisions can be implemented for delivering:

- *“no more harm to biodiversity”*: by decreasing the flow of capital into activities that have negative impacts on biodiversity, and,
- *“positive impacts on biodiversity”*: by increasing capital flows into conservation and sustainable management of natural capital, which can be achieved by private, return-seeking capital directed toward activities that have positive impacts on biodiversity (green financial products), and by enacting and implementing fiscal policies and incentives by national and subnational governments.

Green infrastructures are a strategically planned networks of natural and semi-natural areas that are designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services, including water purification, air quality, recreational space, and climate mitigation and adaptation (EU COM/2013/0249). Green and blue (aquatic) spaces, as well as other physical features, can be found in both rural and urban settings.

In a changing landscape countryside, for example, traditional meadow orchards that are highly biodiverse can persist in a low-intensity managed state for centuries and are frequently reserves of rare or locally important fruit trees. However, meadow orchards are endangered and have been rapidly disappearing over the last 50 years. With so many different and often unusual fruit varieties, and the surplus sold locally, protecting and conserving meadow orchards is both financially and environmentally beneficial. Farms, especially orchard meadows, must remain profitable for their owners in order to be preserved in the future. We'll show you some interesting, creative, and slightly different business models that can help farms maintain or even increase their profits.

Aims and objectives of this module

The globalization of the world economy, population growth, and the impact of climate change are all posing new challenges to business. The dynamics of market changes determine new perspectives that businesses must follow quickly and innovatively. To be flexible, competitive, and innovative are virtues that ensure success. Among many other things, agriculture is a prime example of a set of economic activities of unique social and environmental importance. Agriculture's primary goal is to ensure sufficient food security. Farming, on the other hand, serves other socially important functions, such as aesthetic and natural value of cultural landscape and environmental functions such as soil renewal, biodiversity, ecological connectivity, mitigation, and adaptation to climate change. The conservation of agriculture contributes to the vitality and population of rural areas through economic and social cooperation. However, success is measured not only in terms of profit and within the LUIGI project, but also in terms of the enhancement of the Ecosystem services (ESS) provided by Green Infrastructure (GI) elements present in natural, semi-natural and rural environment, on agricultural land, and in urban environments such as parks. Creation and maintenance of GI is related to the loss of any potential exploitation of the region. Several business opportunities are available to boost the GI's overall economy and, as a result, its acceptance by the community. They range from traditional to innovative GI products, as well as short value chains and unique tourist offers. Highly biodiverse ecosystems can survive in a low-intensity controlled state for centuries in a rapidly changing climate, and they are often reserves of rare or locally important plant and animal species. Many of them, however, are threatened and have been rapidly disappearing in the last 50 years, such as forests, bogs, and meadow orchards. To preserve all variations of the environment in the future, business management models must remain profitable for their owners and managers. Here we will present interesting, innovative, and slightly different business models, that can help such farms maintain or even increase their profits.

Therefore, the aim of the module is to equip teachers, trainers with:

- **knowledge on establishing a profitable business** that have positive impacts on biodiversity is modern, resource-efficient, and competitive
- **examples of well adapted business modules** in natural and semi-natural environment, rural environment, agricultural environment, and urban environment.

Methods that support managers in different environments in developing their business in a sustainable way, which means being more profitable while still benefiting the local society and maintaining or increasing natural and cultural values.

Students should be able to do the following after completing the module:

- Learn about the function, goal, and application of green and biodiversity financial instruments.
- Identify a green infrastructure and its potential multiple benefits to individuals, society, and the economy
- Understand the concept, structure, and functions of green/sustainable/GI-based businesses
- Measure the financial and non-financial performance of a company
- Frame a sustainable/green/GI-based business model and apply it to concrete regional situations
- Effectively and critically use a business model canvas/framework to set up and assess the economic, ecological, and societal potential of GI-based innovative businesses and start-ups
- Set up a basic idea of a green/GI-based start-up and assess its financial and non-financial sustainability

Who is this module for?

This module is designed for trainers, teachers, lecturers, and instructors who work with green infrastructure elements in all fields. Therefore, for all those who will pass on their knowledge of how to boost business models related to GI elements.

Business trainers, teachers, lecturers, instructors can find all the vital information on GI business and teaching strategies to help easily and understandably pass on knowledge from the field of business. Nowadays, having business skills, in addition to agricultural knowledge or biodiversity conservation management, is extremely important.

Targeted training and workshop participants

The aim is to focus on target groups of young farmers, landowners, and entrepreneurs who have prior knowledge and experience in the field of agriculture, both production and processing, or who are just getting started in this sector.

Suggested educational method

The course can be taught through classes/lectures and a workshop aimed at developing a business model. To reach the aim of this module, we propose three activities which can be combined or conducted separately:

- an introductory lecture (Activity 1),
- an inspirational lecture giving examples of “alternative” already existing business models for the relevant GIs of the region (Activity 2) and
- a workshop for developing business models (Activity 3).

Activity 1 includes one or more introductory classes/lectures on pro-biodiversity finance and business models. This is followed by an inspirational lecture (Activity 2) presenting a list of “alternative” business models adapted to the specific GIs identified in different pilot regions. Activity 3 will require participants to work in smaller discussion groups and use a specific model for developing and accessing a specific business idea. With the help of worksheets, participants will try to develop their own business model that is suitable for their products and area. Discussion will be open for exchange of ideas and experience.

What is green infrastructure (GI)?

Since there is no widely recognised definition of Green infrastructure GI in the scientific community, we decided to adopt the EU definition and approach within the LUIGI project. According to the European commission, a Green infrastructure is a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features that are designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services such as water purification, air quality, recreational space, and climate mitigation and adaptation (COM/2013/0249). It incorporates green spaces (or blue space in the case of aquatic ecosystems) and other physical features in terrestrial (including coastal) and marine areas. On land, GI is present in both rural and urban settings. It also supports a green economy, creates job opportunities and enables landscapes to recover from biodiversity losses.

Green Infrastructure can provide both socio-economic and conservation benefits at different scales – from local or regional (e.g. wildlife overpasses, migratory corridors, floodplains) to continental (e.g. Pan-European Ecological Network). It is made up of a variety of natural and artificial elements at different scales, from protected core areas to sustainable use buffer zones and green urban and peri-urban spaces (CEEweb).

GI can help us reduce our dependence on 'grey' infrastructure, which is often more expensive to build and maintain for the same function. Grey infrastructure, such as water and wastewater treatment plants, pipelines, and reservoirs, is human-engineered infrastructure that can damage the environment and biodiversity.



A schematic presentation of Green infrastructure elements in the landscape (European Commission, 2013)

The concept of ecosystem services (ESS) is often used to describe the importance of GI. Humans benefit from ecosystems in terms of environmental, social, and economic benefits (MEA, 2005). Humans depend on these services, but the valuation of these life-supporting services is a challenging task. However, only healthy and functioning ecosystems can sustainably provide these services. There are multiple ways to classify, measure, and assess ecosystem services, as described in the LUIGI report WP1.1.1A by Giombini and Egarter Vigl (2020).

Activity 1: An introductory lecture; Can business and biodiversity go hand in hand?

Biodiversity is the foundation of ecosystem services to which human well-being is intimately linked. In addition to biodiversity, different environments, from natural and semi-natural environments through rural and agricultural environments to urban environments, biodiversity varies and changes. Every environment plays a unique role in the grand scheme of things. Furthermore, specific environments provide specific and critical provisioning and regulating ecosystem services, such as food, fibre, and fuel provision, carbon sequestration, water purification and soil contaminant reduction, climate regulation, nutrient cycling, provide habitat for organisms, are sources of pharmaceuticals and genetic resources, regulate floods, and serve as the foundation for cultural heritage (FAO, 2015). However, many of them are under threat by human pressures such as urbanisation, agricultural intensification, and land abandonment for more profitable land uses.

This activity gives an overview of pro-biodiversity businesses – the definition, description, guidelines for development, and the policy supporting them. The short introductory lecture based on this knowledge should provide participants with a basis for why, in addition to the economic benefit, their company should concentrate on biodiversity. Below you can find information on the pro-biodiversity market, as well as literature sources to help you prepare a convincing introductory lecture.

Any icebreakers or atmosphere-setting questions/activities are useful before beginning the lecture. You can assess the mood and awareness of the participants on the subject, or you can pique their interest. For example:

1. Bring typical landscape pictures from the area the participants are from

Ask them to choose one that:

- clarifies what you expect from the workshop or
- demonstrates what you want to save for or improve in the future or
- better describes your environmental identity and why

Request that they introduce themselves and hold up the photograph, explaining why they choose it.

1. Create a living scale

You'll need a wide enough room for all of the participants to stand in a row.

Tell and show them:

one end of the line represents the business's goal of benefit, while the other represents the business's goal of environmental protection. Assign them to a spot based on how much they agree or disagree with the claims. Since this is not an exam, all of the options are truthful and therefore appropriate.

After they have stopped moving, you should inquire as to how the two extremes and the centre have arrived at their current location. (You might want to do the exercise again after the lecture to see if you had any impact on their thinking.)

1 Policy - linking biodiversity and business

Climate change and environmental degradation have been identified as an existential threat to Europe, prompting the EU to launch The European Green Deal in 2020 in order to make the EU's economy more sustainable. To address these challenges, Europe will develop a new growth strategy that will turn the EU into a modern, resource-efficient, and competitive economy, according to this plan.

The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 is a key component of the EU green deal, addressing key drivers of biodiversity loss such as unsustainable land and sea use, overexploitation of natural resources, pollution, and invasive alien species. This new strategy emphasizes the importance of biodiversity as a key component for restoring the EU's economy by providing immediate business and investment opportunities. It also aims to incorporate biodiversity considerations into the EU's overall economic growth strategy.

Assets are referred to in economics as measurable quantities that are commonly referred to as capital. Natural capital is one of them, and it is a relatively new concept. Natural capital sometimes has a market price, but it also has a social value. The accounting price is the difference between the market price and the contribution of natural capital to social well-being. It is frequently quite large, and for a capital good, it reflects the contribution of its flow of services to social well-being over its lifetime (Dasgupta Review, 2021).

To date, most estimates of natural capital accounting values have left out the benefits of green spaces that ecosystems provide to humans. They have gone even further in ignoring the mental health advantages that people get from being in green spaces.

Any of the above-mentioned *accounting prices* can be captured if businesses adopt an asset management approach in which their income and wealth are based on long-term natural capital conservation. This is also one of LUIGI's main objectives, which joins a slew of other recent attempts to achieve such an ambitious and socially desirable goal.

Traditionally, the private sector's main positive contribution to biodiversity conservation has been to provide funds for conservation activities carried out by governments, NGOs, or community organizations through taxes or charitable contributions. The second traditional approach was to reduce existing businesses' negative impacts on biodiversity through mandatory or voluntary measures such as government regulations, binding voluntary agreements, or pressure from NGO advocacy campaigns. However, one of the main conclusions of the IUCN report (Bishop, Shell International Petroleum Company, & IUCN-The World Conservation Union, 2008) is that governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) cannot meet the biodiversity challenges alone and that it is critical to involve the private sector business community in biodiversity conservation efforts.

Today, there is a growing awareness of businesses' reliance on biodiversity, the existence of natural capital risk, and the negative consequences that these risks can have across supply chains (see: WBCSD *Business Ecosystem Valuation*, *EU Business@Biodiversity*).

Biodiversity financing mechanisms have traditionally been classified as either polluter-pays (PPP) or beneficiary-pays (BPP). The basic idea behind both principles is that the price of a manufactured good or service should fully reflect the total cost of production, including any costs incurred as a result of environmental degradation.

- **PPP** can be implemented voluntarily or with government intervention through consumer awareness, corporate social responsibility, or risk mitigation strategies.
- **BPP** provides revenue generated from the beneficiaries of biodiversity or ecosystem services.

Value has to be generated from a GI, which must be quantified in economic or financial terms, either directly or indirectly. Value can derive from the use of biodiversity and ecosystem services embedded in or depending on a GI (use), or some other (non-use) reason of a GI:

- mechanisms based on **use values** raise finance from actors that will directly use the ecosystem they are paying for (such as direct ecosystem services fees), or as compensation for the degradation of an ecosystem (such as offset markets);
- mechanisms based on **non-use values** raise finance primarily from motivations that are not derived from the use of an ecosystem, such as philanthropy.

The two types of mechanisms are not mutually exclusive: rather, they can be associated to each other within a single business with the goal of generating more financial flows while also contributing to its *financial sustainability*.

2 Pro Biodiversity Business - definition

Several concepts have developed in the last 15 years to address the issue of enterprises that generate financial returns while also contributing to the conservation of natural capital or the preservation of biodiversity. One noticeable case is the IUCN report (Bishop et al., 2008) which defines Pro Biodiversity Business (PBB) as *“PBB is a commercial enterprise that generates profits via activities which conserve biodiversity, use biological resources sustainably, and share the benefits arising from this use equitably.”* Therefore, PBB recognizes the benefits of protected nature and its biodiversity and integrates it into the business model. Consequently, PBB constantly strives to minimise the negative impact of its business while increasing the positive contribution it makes to biodiversity (Volles, Maeso Velasco, & Gattenlohner, 2019). This concept can be complemented by other consistent approaches and definitions, such as the significant literature addressing the dependence on, risks posed by, and opportunities of biodiversity for businesses and economic sectors (TEEB, 2012). Additionally, lists of existing tools for promoting the green economy through business models and associated business opportunities, as well as comprehensive approaches and support instruments, have been developed, which analyse alternative green business model types in depth (GIZ, 2015).

3 Pro Biodiversity Business - description

PBBs have a wide range of options and are not limited to a specific business sector, in accordance with the mentioned approach to linking economics, finance, and biodiversity (Volles et al., 2019). PBBs can be classified as primary producers (agriculture, forestry, fishing etc.); secondary producers (wholesale, trading etc.); tertiary producers (advisory services, tourism, ecological management etc.). PBBs can range in size from one-person companies to small family-business to large corporations with hundreds of employees. PBBs are not necessarily newly established companies; however, an existing company can become a PBB by modifying its practices to be more biodiversity friendly.

PBBs open up new avenues for balancing private and public interests in biodiversity (Bishop et al., 2008; RSPB, 2009; UNEP, 2010; Volles et al., 2019). PBBs, for instance, can generate revenues through cap-and-trade or tradable quota systems, resource user fees, pollution taxes, competitive tendering of management services and concessions, certification and labelling of environmental performance, issuing and use of performance bonds and bonuses. PBBs have the potential to be established in the following business sectors (Bishop et al., 2008):

- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Non-timber forest products
- Fisheries and aquaculture
- Biocarbon
- Payments for watershed protection
- Bioprospecting
- Biodiversity offsets
- Biodiversity management services
- Ecotourism
- Recreational hunting and sport-fishing

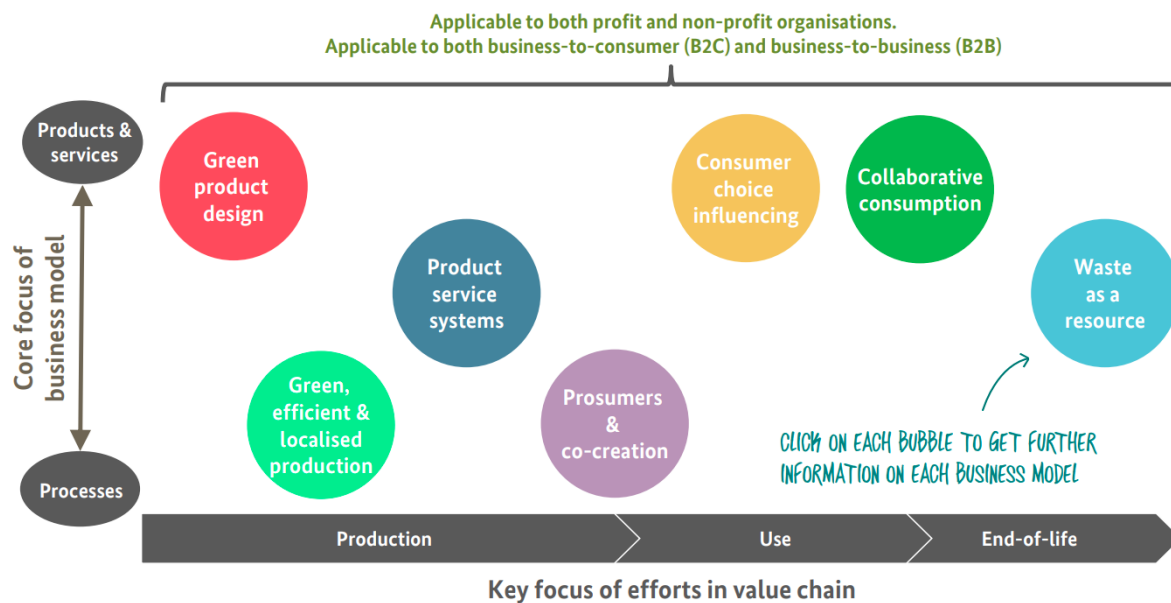
4 Guidelines for Pro biodiversity business

Guidelines for PBB development produced as part of the ECO KARST project (Volles et al., 2019) provide the following overview of aspects that contribute to the business's biodiversity and success:

- PBB is aware of its impact on nature and actively reduces negative impacts.
- PBB cooperates with the existing structures on the local level and strives for cooperation between producers, processors, and service providers. PBB promotes regional development by focusing on development of local added value.
- PBB is aware of and respects the existing laws and regulations.

Additionally, businesses can assess their dependence on biodiversity and natural capital and implement appropriate measures to include biodiversity aspects into their value proposition, risk management system, and to capitalize on the potential offered by emerging markets for biodiversity and ecosystem services, as well as by public policies (TEEB Business, 2012).

Specific Green Business Model categories have been developed and thematically organised based on a set of significant variables as shown in the picture below (GIZ, 2015):



Examples of PBBs based on a selected green infrastructure element are presented in the following section.

Activity 2: Business models – examples for inspiration

This activity aims to motivate young farmers, landowners, managers, and entrepreneurs to learn from the experiences of others who have achieved success. Numerous examples of economically viable established business models using various GI elements and environments as a source of information for the lecture are provided below.

To better test the participant's knowledge and experiences, start the class with some questions and a discussion in which they can participate. You can inquire about their ideas, knowledge, interpretation of traditional farming, or characteristic of good farming or conscious farming.

Alternatively, you can prepare a questionnaire sheet with some guiding questions to show them how to take notes during the presentation:

- **What makes a business successful?**
- **Which ideas are most similar to your vision?**

1 Natural and semi-natural environment

1.1 Protected areas & Tourism potential

Protected areas are recognized by natural, ecological, or cultural values. There are several types of protected areas, and the level of protection varies depending on the enabling laws of each country or the regulations of the international organizations involved. Protected areas are generally defined as areas where human presence limits natural resource availability.

Protected areas are critical for biodiversity conservation because they often provide habitat for threatened and endangered species. Protection aids in the preservation of ecological processes that would perish in the most intensively managed landscapes. We can ensure the rich diversity of plants, animals, and habitats in Europe for future generations by protecting our natural heritage.



Protected areas of different natural, ecological, and cultural values (Photo by form PxHere)

Hiking, biking, guided tours, wildlife photography, survival in nature, local heritage tourism, fishing, bird watching, and other activities are ideal for developing nature tourism in these areas. The employment of people from local communities benefits the region and expands opportunities for community tourism. Trails and routes of varying lengths and difficulty levels cater to the needs of ecotourists of all skill levels and ages. It also aids in producing festivals that can contribute to local development goals, raise awareness about local qualities and attract larger or novel target groups.

The Bavarian Forest in Germany is the country's first and largest classified national park, as well as the country's oldest, having been established in 1970. Its abundant wilderness, which has flourished despite human interference. The park promises a breath-taking landscape, majestic, extensive hiking and biking trails, mirror lakes, sports opportunities, a fascinating tree-top walk, and much more.

www: <https://www.nationalpark-bayerischer-wald.bayern.de/english/>

1.2 Education in nature – learning paths and open-air museum

Knowledge is the most powerful tool for understanding the natural values of the environment. We can protect and manage the environment more effectively if we understand how it works. That is why learning about the environment in nature can be especially beneficial.

Nature itself is a great outdoor classroom. This form of learning or cognition is to be established as learning paths or open-air museums that can tell unique stories that teach to see, understand, and respect the environment. Such learning can be brought closer to all age groups, from children to the elderly, and can be adjusted to their abilities and skills. Paths that have been meticulously planned and laid out reveal the unique characteristics and exceptionalities of the natural environment that visitors walk through. These attractions are especially emphasized in nature parks, so visitors will never be bored with themed trails in the parks.

2 Rural environment

2.1 Fruit, wine, cheese road

Fruit, wine, and cheese roads form a community in a well-rounded environment with similar characteristics. These roads represent highly connected communities and provide a unique visitor experience. Usually, we connect such roads with different festivals, such as crop maturity or other important production milestones. Although these roads are relevant throughout the year, farmers will welcome visitors and offer them home-grown and home-made delicacies that vary throughout the year during these times.



Wine and fruit roads (Photo by form PxHere)

2.2 Agrotourism

Globally, tourism is a growing economic activity. This is also true for tourist farms. More and more people want to taste the originality of the rural environment and nature. Agricultural tourism has also become a necessary means for many small farms to survive and earn a more stable income. Agrotourism activities can provide a completely separate source of income as well as benefits to surrounding communities and rural areas in need of diversified sources of income.

Agritourism can also be upgraded to **Ecotourism** which caters to tourists in the natural environment without damaging it or disturbing habitats. This form of tourism involves visiting fragile, pristine and relatively undisturbed natural areas.

Rural tourism, which focuses on actively participating in a rural lifestyle, is another way to improve agritourism. It could be a type of ecotourism. Rural tourism allows for the creation of a non-agricultural source of income for rural dwellers. The added income from rural tourism can also contribute to the revival of lost handicrafts and folk arts.

2.3 Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship is a form of entrepreneurship that uses its products and services to address social issues and generate social benefits. Through their activities, social enterprises contribute to the innovative solution of social, economic, environmental, and other social problems, as well as the employment and social inclusion of vulnerable groups (Socialno podjetništvo, 2020).

The essential difference between classic and social enterprises is the very purpose of establishing a social enterprise. A social enterprise is not established to make a profit, but to perform an activity that has long-term positive social effects in accordance with the principles of social entrepreneurship. These principles are non-profit, membership equality, and voluntarism.

Social enterprises are part of the social economy. Social enterprises, cooperatives, companies for the disabled, employment centres, non-governmental organizations (associations, institutes, institutions, or foundations) that work for the benefit of their members, users, or the larger community and produce marketable or non-marketable products and services comprise the social economy (Volkman et. Al, 2012).

2.4 Community Supported Agriculture

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a substitute for today's industrial food system, in which consumers have no idea where their food comes from. By re-establishing the partnership between producers and consumers, a community based on trust and quality can be established. Farmers want to know who will eat the food they grow. The purpose of CSA is to return **food security** to farmers, to preserve cultural seed, the appearance of the cultural landscape, biotic and cultural diversity, and to influence the preservation of local added value, to assist the weak and to actively contribute to a better tomorrow (Brown in Miller, 2008).



Society can profit by establishing a partnership between producers and consumers based on sales of locally grown seasonal fruit and vegetables (Photo by form PxHere)

The benefits of such a partnership could be (Birtalan et. al., 2019):

- the food for customers/consumers is produced by a farmer with a face and a name,
- customers/consumers eat seasonally and locally,
- customers/consumers pay exactly as much for food as it costs to produce it, and
- producers/farmers reduce the market value (margin) of food (food becomes something that valued in other ways than money).

2.5 Didactic farm

A didactic farm is an educational farm, i.e. one that passes on traditional knowledge to visitors and serves as a getaway through the countryside. The farm provides an opportunity for children to “language learning” by serving as a container for words, sounds, noises, and actions as well as to learn about the origin of food and the relationship between agricultural products and food. Didactic activities are prepared separately for children of different age groups. The main activity is to introduce children to work and life on the farm. Children will gain a better understanding of animals and plants as a result, as well as a positive attitude toward nature. During the visit, the children are offered farm-made products and are taught about the production and processing processes.



Orchard meadows can be used as a playground or an outdoor classroom (Photo LUIGI photo collection)

2.6 Themed celebration of children's birthdays

The themed celebration of children’s birthdays is primarily intended for city children. Themed celebrations, like didactic farm, can consist of various activities that allow children to become familiar with farm work and get to know all of the farm animals better – feeding them, petting them, and riding them.

2.7 Holiday care

Summer holiday begins at the end of June in several European countries, and children are free until September. Most families take a week or two off from work. However, in their spare time, children would spend time with their grandparents or take part in various organised activities. One of these organized activities could take place on a farm.

Children have an active, fun, and educational holiday, (e.g., five days to a week). Helping you with daily chores tailored to your farm orientation. Getting to know animals, feeding and caring for them is an unforgettable experience. Alternatively, you can prepare and create different materials, or play fun games with water, balls, etc. Children also enjoy assisting with farm chores, cooking, and baking. You could also offer to help build the forest dwelling or sleep in a hayloft.



Different and active activities at holiday care on farm (Photo by www.prulekija-on.net on the left and Photo by form PxHere)

2.8 Revival of traditional fruit processing

Revival of traditional processing and/or farming activities that connect the past with the present and preserve a vivid memory of a pleasant life as it was once known. There are numerous advantages to reviving and displaying traditional ways of life from the past. The first and most important consideration is cultural preservation for younger generations. There is also an economic aspect - a special offer that not everyone has – that can bring extra income with good promotion. The Brda prunellas, a golden-yellow medallion the size of a larger coin, is one of the more well-known in Slovenia (Kogej, 1990). And, as one would expect, the brandy was made from plum peels. Madonna figs, cadon peaches and pear stalks were also dried in a similar way. Aside from prune production, bird hunting, olive growing, chestnut sales, silkworm breeding, and many other activities that were almost forgotten among the Brice have all but disappeared from today's way of life.

Prunella production was once unique to the Brda region, but it has since vanished. Prunes were processed in a unique and long-forgotten manner. Shaped into golden-yellow medallions the size of a large coin, with a spicy sour-sweet taste. Prunes were regarded as a delectably tasty but prohibitively expensive specialty, almost entirely destined for export. There are only a few people left who know how to make prunellas, and one of them is the Zahišar Family.



Plum peeling requires dexterity. The best peelers can peel a plum with a single stroke. (Photo Daniel Rojšek).



Sulphuring prunellas is a critical step that must be completed before they can be produced. Following that, the plums are dried, and the pits are removed. The meat is then compressed together and the edges are rounded. (Photo Daniel Rojšek).

3 Agricultural environment

3.1 Direct sale

Direct sales began to expand in the 1980s in more developed parts of Europe. As income on farms began to decline, farmers began to look for solutions to increase it. Consumers, on the other hand, were growing dissatisfied with modern agriculture and wanted to deal directly with the producer (healthy, fresh, natural food, care for the environment...).

We are familiar with various types of direct sales or sales channels. Farms typically deal with the following:

- **Home sales** are the simplest form of selling agricultural products and products on the home farm.
- **Sales to self-customers** (self-collection) is usually used in crops that require a lot of work in terms of harvesting. The prices of these products are usually lower than those in the market and other types of direct sales.
- **Road standby or tourist points** of interest are suitable for farms that are located near busy roads or tourist attractions. It is necessary to obtain the consent of the landowner and the local community where the sale is taking place before proceeding with the sale.
- **Home delivery** - for this method of sale a suitable vehicle for product delivery is required. It is agreed with customers in advance that ordered products will be delivered to their home.
- **Sales at various fairs and events** are infrequent. He sells more to these farmers and can be a good advertisement for direct home sales.
- **Market sales** are usually done on daily basis with a specific date in mind. The farm, on the other hand, gains regular customers as a result of this sale. Sales of rules must be agreed upon with the market manager.
- **The mobile store** operates similarly to sales at a mobile stand, with multiple locations in the same location. Even in a traveling store, prior permission from the landowner and the local community where the sale will take place is required.
- **Sales through advertisements** - different channels can be used for advertising, e.g., radio, magazines, bulletin boards...
- **Online sales** have been gaining ground recently. In addition to the individual offers, web portals with a combined offer also appear. Mostly provide information on products and where they can be purchased.



Fresh fruit sale at the farmers market on the left (Photo: LUIGI photo collection) and on the right a crate full of apples (Photo by form PxHere)

3.2 Processed fruit, vegetable, and herbs sale

Processing home grown food such as fruit, vegetables, and herbs aims to make products more marketable and attractive to potential consumers, as well as to give the processed food a longer shelf life. Fresh produce can go through numerous types of processing, including canning, drying, cooking, and juicing. There is a wide variety of processed food products like juice, dried fruits, cider, vinegar, spirits and brands, jams and spreads, pickled vegetables, compotes, desserts, fruit leather, syrup, candied fruit, chips, pie fillings, dried herbs for tea blends are all available. By pressing the traditionally harvested and unsprayed fruits and vegetables, **character-rich varietal and blended juices** could be produced, contributing to a sense of local identity and creating a “taste of the valley” that would appeal to GI visitors as an individual and relatively inexpensive treat or gift.



Products of processed locally grown apples (Photo by form PxHere)

Unfortunately, traditional management remains a somewhat profitable business, as the production only allows for low profits. **Fruit juice** can also be brewed into cider and other similar drinks, and the pomace left over after pressing fruits can be used for **fruit cider/vinegar preparation**. Today, **naturally, and carefully dried fruit and vegetables** are a sought-after food - a traditional pleasure for in-between, for hikers or during the winter season. Specialties such as apple rings, pear slices, and prunes, dried in a modern dryer under sanitary and energy-saving conditions, appeal to new customers in markets, farm shops, or delicatessen shops, enabling the economic use of fruit from the fields. In modern, low temperature dryers, vitamins are largely preserved and make dried fruit a valuable food. The special quality of the dried fruit produced permits profitable marketing.



Dried apples (left) and fruit leather (right) (Photo by form PxHere)

3.3 Innovative, less known, and special processing

In addition to well-known fruit processing methods there are innovative, lesser-known, and special ways of fruit processing. Let us list a few interesting and relatively new fruit products that may inspire you to develop a brand-new additional offer among established products. Fruit leather, granola, gluten free apple flour, walnut spreads and flips, dried fruit coated with chocolate, herbal pacifier, disposable tableware and biodegradable packaging and straws made of apple pomace are among them. Other products include dried herbs and spices, mushroom production, wooden tableware, and packaging.

Gluten-Free Apple Flour, as one of the innovative business models by AlpBioEco project. The idea of this business model is to produce and sell apple flour, which is a gluten-free, vegan, and organic alternative to other flours.

<https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/alpbioeco/en/activities-results/innovative-business-models/gluten-free-apple-flour>

3.4 Business gifts from home-grown produce and products

Business gifts are a unique and innovative way to upgrade traditional processed fruit sales. Instead of classical business gifts such as calendars, notebooks, umbrellas, pens, chocolates and so on, you can offer healthy and home-grown and home-processed products like dried fruits, fruit brandy, fruit jams and other products from your farm production like herbal teas, honey products, nuts, dried meats, and cheeses. Aesthetically pleasing and natural packaging adds value to the products. It's a good idea to have a few different packages of business gift combos on hand. An even better idea is for the client to create his own version of a business gift.



Business gifts made from different produce and products (Photo form Kmetija Podpečan)

4 Urban environment

4.1 City market

The market is a place that many call the heart of the city. Morning hustle and bustle, shopping errands, loud talking, a warm smile and the smell of authenticity. This is the invaluable value of the markets. And, at a time when the importance of local production and home-grown food is being emphasized, the operation of markets with their simple selling method is even more critical.



A colourful offer of locally grown food (Photo by form PxHere)

4.2 Milk machine

The milk machine is a modern vending machine that provides fresh and raw milk to everyone. It is stored at 4°C and it is not heated or treated in any way and is bottled only when ordered. Information on the current shipment of fresh milk is posted on the milk machine. In the event of deviation from the established procedures, the machine stops working, this is especially true if the machine's milk is older than 24 hours or if the milk exceeds a certain temperature. There are already a plethora of such devices in Europe, particularly in Italy.



Milk machine on the left (Photo form Žurnal24) and cracklings machine on the right (Photo by Sobotainfo.com)

4.3 Picnic area and Picnic basket rentals

Picnics, as one of the most common outdoor activities that allows families and friends to bond and spend time together, have gradually grown in popularity in comparison to other outdoor activities. Picnics not only provide a great opportunity for family and friends to bond, but also for them to relax and soak up the sun. People look for a picnic area with associated equipment such as a picnic blanket, tables and benches, a fireplace, and a children's playground when they want to get away from the city. You ensure a carefree picnic relaxation with an offer of homemade cuisines and delicacies in the picnic basket. It is best to have a variety of picnic cuisine packages. Customers can then select their preferred option.



The area of orchard meadows is appreciated by visitors and tourists and can be rented as a picnic site. (Photo form PxHere)

Activity 3: WORKSHOP - Basic steps of a business model development

This module provides information required to create a good business model. Students are guided from the generation of good ideas, through selection and evaluation, to the creation of a business plan and the search for a founding partner. The roadmap encourages the development of new GI-related business models and aids in the improvement of existing ones. Local entrepreneurs and the long-term viability of GI elements are encouraged. In terms of business model development, you can apply the examples listed above and develop or simply adapt them to your own specific on-site conditions.

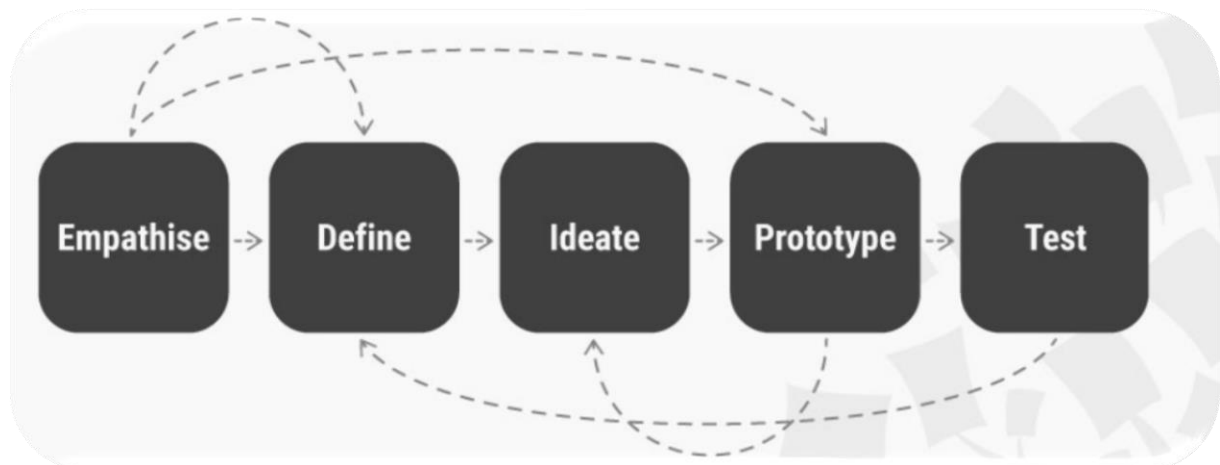
1 Business model development

Introduction

A significant amount of effort must be put into the planning process in order to create a successful and long-lasting business. Previous chapters discussed what pro-biodiversity businesses are and provided examples of them. In this section, we will go over the steps that any business shell should take when planning its future activities.

Finding opportunities

A good idea is the foundation of any business opportunity. The previously listed descriptions, resources, and examples serve as a basis. At this point, any form of “design thinking methods” as an approach is solving problems and creating game-changing innovations, or “structured conversational process” that can help to first broaden the view on the business opportunities and later focus on the best opportunity(es). You can use the five-stage Design Thinking model proposed by the Hasso-Plattner Institute of Design at Stanford to find good business opportunities (Integration design foundation).



5 Stages in the Design Thinking Process (Photo form Interaction design foundation)

Five step design thinking process (based on the Design Thinking model proposed by the Hasso-Plattner Institute of Design at Stanford):

1st Step: Empathise

The first stage is to gain an empathic understanding of the problem you are trying to solve. This means finding out more about the area of concern through observing, engaging, and empathizing. Empathy allows us to set aside our own assumptions about the world in order to gain insight into users and their needs. At this stage, a great amount of information is gathered to use during the next stage and to develop the best possible understanding of the users, their needs and the problems that underlie the development of a product.

2nd Step: Define a problem

During the Define stage, the information you have created and gathered during the Empathise stage is put together. This is where you will analyse your observations and synthesise them. The Define stage will help gather great ideas to establish features, functions, and any other elements. You will also start to progress to the third stage, Ideate, by asking questions which can help you look for ideas for solutions.

3rd Step: Ideate

In the third stage, designers are ready to start generating ideas. Understanding users and their needs means you have analysed and synthesised your observations in the Define stage and ended up with a human-centred problem statement. Now is the time to start thinking outside the box to identify new solutions to the problem statement you have created. There are many ideation techniques, such as Brainstorm, Brainwrite, Worst Possible Idea, and SCAMPER that are used to stimulate free thinking and to expand the problem space. It is important to gather as many ideas or problem solutions as possible.

4th Step: Prototype

Now you will produce several inexpensive, scaled down versions of the product or specific features found within the product, to investigate the problem solutions generated in the previous stage. Prototypes may be shared and tested among small groups of people. This is an experimental phase, and the aim is to identify the best possible solution. By the end of this stage, you will have a better idea of the constraints inherent to the product and the problems.

5th Step: Test

In the final stage, test the completed product using the best solutions identified during the prototyping phase. The results generated during the testing phase are often used to redefine one or more problems and inform the understanding of users, the conditions of its use, how people think, behave, and feel, and to empathise. Even during this phase, alterations and refinements are made to rule out problem solutions and derive as deep an understanding of the product and its users as possible.

Market evaluation

The first step in the business plan preparation process is to evaluate planned product or service market opportunities and dangers. For example, pro-biodiversity businesses may have a good reputation but may face constraints due to the sensitive environments in which they operate. In this manner, identified opportunities have to be further considered to identify the most important factors and concerns. SWOT and similar analysis are useful methods at this level.

The proposed methodological framework is based on the SWOT analysis. The **SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats)** analysis is considered a useful tool for the strategic planning process of environmental management. This aids in identifying critical management strategy factors:

- **The strengths** of a plan may be the advantages or the benefits that arise from an already implemented plan.
- **The weaknesses** are the obstacles that should be avoided to respond sufficiently to designed goals.
- **The opportunities** indicate the benefits arising from the plan and
- **The threats** show the barriers that will have to be overcome for the implementation of the plan (Nikolaou et al., 2011)

Market research and competitive analysis

Market research assists you in locating customers for your company. Competitive analysis can assist you in making your company stand out. Combine them to find a competitive advantage for your small business (U.S. Small Business Administration). To better understand opportunities and limitations to gain customers, gather demographic information like population data on age, wealth, family, interests, or anything else that is relevant for your business. Answer the following questions to get a good sense of your market, according to the US Small Business Administration:

- **Demand:** Is there a desire for your product or service?
- **Market size:** How many people would be interested in your offering?
- **Economic indicators:** What is the income range and employment rate?
- **Location:** Where do your customers live and to what extent can your business have a reach?
- **Market saturation:** How many similar options are already available to consumers?
- **Pricing:** What do potential customers pay for these alternatives?

Other market considerations include related products and services that are already available. They can be used to simulate competition, synergies, or simply as an indicator of what is possible in the target market.

Consider analysing the most relevant businesses topics such as:

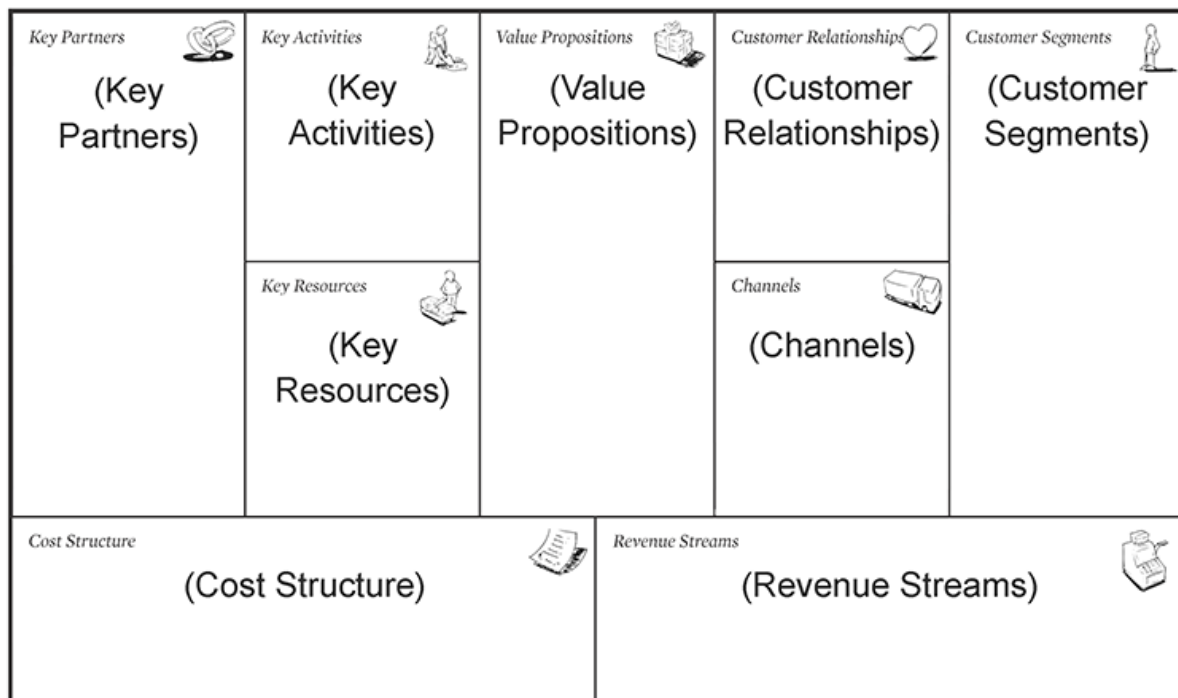
- **Market share** - who created and is(was) leading the business, how is it organised, who performs each task.
- **Strengths and weaknesses** – how the business was launched and how it penetrated the market
- **Your window of opportunity** to enter the market – how the business was financed and what revenue is it creating
- **The importance of your target market to your competitors** - can it be used for synergies or lessons learned?
- **Any barriers** that may hinder you as you enter the market
- **Indirect or secondary competitors** who may impact your success

Business model development

Once an idea is crystallized and basic market research is done, further tweaking of the business plan must be done. Business models outline how a venture can deliver services or benefit customers and capture sufficient revenue to continue its operations. The success of a business is measured in terms of financial profitability. A business model can also be considered as the framework for achieving successful valuation. Green infrastructure quantification will result in a positive change for the natural urban environment.

This is still considered an invention phase, and tools such as a Business model canvas can be useful. By defining Customer Segments, Value Propositions, Channels, Customer Relationships, Revenue Streams, Key Activities, Key Resources, Key Partnerships and Cost Structure, one can obtain a much more holistic view and see where further changes are necessary. Iterations are used to describe this process, which may include “on the street” testing of hypotheses.

The BMC (Business Model Canvas) is an internationally established strategic management and lean start-up template for developing new business ideas and documenting existing business models. It is widely used by early-stage entrepreneurs, organisations, and academics. The BMC is intuitive, quick to learn, and free. Therefore, it is well-suited for those involved in the delivery of green infrastructure.



www.businessmodelgeneration.com

The templates here are made available on the same CC license terms as the original canvas.

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Nine elements of the Business Model Canvas (Photo from Businessmodelgeneration.com)

Appealing business name and product brand

Name of the business and its trademark is the first frontier for the customers therefore it is very important to select it wisely. Previously described process of business focus development is a good foundation and will harvest good ideas. Use related words in a creative way and be descriptive, but not too general or vague. Keep it as simple as possible and have in mind possible scaling-up of your business. Once suitable names are picked, their availability has to be checked since they may already be used, trademarked or web-domain registered. For the finally selected, a name and proper registration need to be decided and corresponding cost, time and efforts are to be integrated into the business plan.

Building a brand and developing a strong brand identity takes time and involves much more than a slogan and a logo. By following 5 steps you will come up with some brand name ideas that will work for your business:

- **Creating a brand avatar** - find ideal customer for your brand's products.
- **Creating a brand archetype** - what your brand will mean or represent.
- **Generating brand name ideas** - generate brand name ideas.
- **Checking brand name availability** - use word association to brainstorm brand name ideas.
- **Testing your brand name** - check the availability of your best brand name ideas.

A clear selling point to a target audience – a pitch

We are living in a fast-paced world and time to effectively communicate your point on any subject is limited. In modern agile business environment, a concept of sales pitch is well established. Although the context may be different depending on the target audience a basic concept of concessive presentation of the key point is the same. So, the efforts of boiling down the business plan description to few clear sentences is never wasted as it may be used to present (pitch) to business partners, financiers, supporters, different stakeholders, and influencers and last but not least customers.



Clarity:
Be clear and concise to maintain attention



Simplicity:
Drop the jargon – speak to be understood



Passion:
Show enthusiasm and engage your "audience"



Practice:
Perfection comes from practice and feedback

The perfect pitch plan by Nordea (Photo form Noerdea)

Partnership evaluation

In the business world, it is said that it is all about the team. However, entering the green infrastructure/pro-biodiversity business area may necessitate public-private partnerships on different levels.

A required participating partner can be defined based on the described business and may include: Farmers/landowners in the area where the GI is located, Managers and operators of GI-elements, Those with food processing facilities, Marketers, and market supervisors, Administrative and advisory bodies, Public representatives such as NGOs and Journalists.

A detailed analysis is recommended for each partner, using a method of choice, with the goal of forming robust partnership and envision possible treats. Furthermore, we must evaluate which partners have the necessary skills, tools, rooms and financial resources to start and complete the task envisioned.

The evolutionary stages of social partnership, as defined by Waddock (1989), are:

- a recognition of the need of partnership,
- initiation of the partnership,
- establishment, and
- maturity.

Partnership creation

Once the partnership structure is defined and participating individuals are identified, it is time to give it legal form. Some of the partners will join a common business venture as business partners, while others will participate based on their interest and no contract will be needed.

The partnership, venture or business must be registered according to the legislation of the country in which it will operate. Additionally, permissions for planned activities and a tax ID must be acquired.

When the business is growing and expanding changes in the partnership will be required. At this point, it is essential to anticipate these changes and envision who will handle them and how they will be handled.

The business plan

Previously, emphasis was placed on quick and easy methods for identifying and defining the business. A detailed business plan, on the other hand, is required for running a successful business and/or applying for financing. All of the pertinent topics have already been addressed, but they must be expanded into specifics for a business plan.

A traditional, very detailed business plan is a comprehensive one and generally consists of:

- **Executive summary** - what your company is and why it will be successful
- **Company description** - provide detailed information about your company
- **Market research and competitive analysis** - good understanding of your industry outlook and target market
- **Organization and management** - describe the legal structure of your business
- **Product or service description** - describe what you sell or what service you offer
- **Marketing and sales** - how you'll attract and retain customers
- **Funding request** - outline your funding requirements
- **Financial projections** - supplement your funding request with financial projections
- **Appendix** - provide supporting documents or other materials

Depending on the requirements of the financier and the structure of the planned business organisation, a Lean-start-up business plan format may be preferable. It elaborates on points from business model canvas in order to answer eventual requests for details. It consists of the following elements:

- **Key activities** – ways in which your business will gain a competitive advantage
- **Key partnerships** - other businesses or services you will work with
- **Key resources** - list any resources you will leverage to create value for your customers
- **Value proposition** - make a clear and compelling statement about the unique value your company brings to the market
- **Customer relationships** - how customers will interact with your business
- **Customer segments** - who your business will serve
- **Channels** - list the most important ways by which you will communicate with your customers
- **Cost structure** - list the most significant costs you will face pursuing it
- **Revenue streams** - explain how your company will actually make money

2 How to get your ideas funded

Financing the business

A new business venture can be financed:

- Funds and cash-flow you and your participating partners have available
- Funding from Family and Friends
- Off-Balance Sheet Financing – lease of equipment and area
- Collecting prepayments (Crowdfunding, Factoring)
- Debt Financing (Bank Loan or Credit Card)
- Equity Financing – (coming from investors, “venture capitalists” or “angel investors”)
- Mezzanine Capital - often combines the best features of equity and debt financing
- EU founding programmes

Funding programmes

Depending on the nature of your business or project, you may be able to apply for one of the EU's various funding programs. There are two different types of funding: direct funding and indirect funding.

- **Direct funding**

The allocation of direct funding capital is managed by the European Institutions. There are two types of funding available: grants and contracts. You can apply for grants and contracts managed by the European Commission on the Funding and Tenders portal.

- **Grants**

Grants are given to specific projects that relate to EU policies, usually following a public announcement known as a call for proposals.

- **Contracts**

Contracts are issued by EU institutions to buy services, goods or work that they need for their operations – such as studies, training, conference organisation or IT equipment.

- **Indirect funding**

Indirect funding is managed by national and regional authorities and comprises nearly 80% of the EU budget, mainly through 5 big funds that come under the umbrella of the European Structural and Investment Funds.

- **Other EU supportive mechanisms**

Access to finances may be enhanced through EIF that provides loans, equity and guarantees to SMEs.

- **EU support for finding an investor**

You can present your project at: European Investment Project Portal (EIPP)-The EU Matchmaking Portal.

EU grants

The EU funds offering thematic grants are:

- European Regional Development Fund – regional and urban development
- European Social Fund – social inclusion and good governance
- Cohesion Fund – economic convergence by less-developed regions
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
- European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

Applying for funding

To access EU grants, you should apply via the relevant regional or national authorities (known as managing authorities) in the member state where you are registered.

You can read more about how EU funding works at https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/how-eu-funding-works_en . Also check LEADER programme of rural development programmes https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld_en and Local Action Groups (LAGs).

EU funds

- COSME Programme
- InnovFin Programme (Horizon 2020)
- Creative Europe
- Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)
- European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI funds)
- European Investment Bank and European Investment Fund

Extensive financing information is published at https://europa.eu/youreurope/business/finance-funding/getting-funding/access-finance/index_en.htm

The development, choice and implementation of alternative green business models depends on several conditions which relate to classical business model assessment schemes (e.g., Greene 2015 & 2020) but also consider the ability of a business model to bring about positive impacts on the environment and society and scale them up, whenever possible and based on a set of evolving success factors (GIZ, 2015, inclusivebusiness.net). Like inclusive businesses, the opportunity to build a better future by providing goods, services, and livelihoods to people living at the bottom of the pyramid on a commercially viable basis, either at scale or scalable, making them part of the value chain of companies as suppliers, distributors, retailers, or customers (inclusivebusiness.net).

Appendix WP4_D.T4.2.3: Green infrastructure (GI) goes Business

In the appendix a collection of business names and ideas from Austria, Germany, France, Italy, and Slovenia is presented. Businesses of three groups were collected in the frame of the LUIGI project:

1. Biodiversity, landscape management and governance,
2. Food and agriculture, and
3. Education and tourism.

Each business idea has a brief description and a web link to more information about the institution or company.

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