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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
INTRODUCTION	6
1.0 METHODOLOGY EXPLAINED.....	7
1.1 Introduction to the projects program	7
1.2 Business Plan	16
1.3 Strategic funding	28
1.4 Ideation Workshop.....	32
1.5 BRANDING SUPPORT METHODOLOGY	38
1.6 BRANDING PROGRAM: EVOLUTION AND INNOVATOR FEEDBACK.....	39
2.0 THE INNOVATION SUPPORT SCHEME.....	39
2.1 Innovation assessment and needs diagnosis	40
2.2 Business model and business plan development	41
2.3 Impact and sustainability guidance.....	43
2.4 Strategic funding and investment readiness.....	44
3.0 INNOVATION SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED TO SELECTED INNOVATORS	45
3.1 Pramtech. Radar Sensor Technology for Infrastructure Resilience	46
3.2 GECOSistema / SaferPlaces. AI Platform for Flood Resilience Innovation	48
3.3 Build Green Group. Empowering Sustainable Development	51
3.4 SingularGreen. Nature-based Solutions and Natural Pools.....	52
3.5 HYDS. Multi-Risk Climate Hazard Solutions	56
3.6 Aventour Albania. Sustainable tourism platform	59
3.7 Śliwa & Doboś Architekci.....	60
3.8 Solumar	62
3.9 Waltr (France). Emission tracking services.....	64
4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND LINKAGES	66
4.1 Summary of scheme outcomes and successes.....	66
4.2 Contribution to WP5 objectives	67
4.3 Synergy with WP7 (Finance).....	68
4.4 Innovation Support Services: Evolution, implementation, and sustainability	68
REFERENCES	72
ANNEX 1: EXAMPLE – PITCH DECK FEEDBACK SUMMARY (SAFERPLACES).....	77
ANNEX 2: EXAMPLE- BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS DOCUMENTS	79
ANNEX 3: BRANDING PROGRAM EXERCISES	82
ANNEX 4: EXAMPLE- SINGULAR GREEN DECK	89
ANNEX 5: BRANDING PROGRAM INTRODUCTION	90

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Building on lessons learned from the Horizon 2020 BRIGAD project (grant agreement 700699, 2016–2020), which evidenced that technical excellence alone is insufficient for sustainable market uptake without dedicated support for market outreach, business development, and dissemination, ARSINOE established a competitive innovation support scheme under Work Package 5 (WP5). The scheme targeted two pipelines of solutions: (i) innovations implemented within ARSINOE's Case Studies (CSs), and (ii) additional climate-resilience innovations identified through two rounds of Open Tender calls. Together, these routes ensured a diverse portfolio of high-potential solutions aligned with regional adaptation needs.

To ensure sustainability during the project lifetime and beyond, evidence collected through BRIGAD and ARSINOE consistently showed that innovators require explicit funding strategies and hands-on preparation for funding schemes. Accordingly, the support scheme incorporated a structured programme for grant and investment readiness (call pipeline mapping, eligibility screening, proposal scoping, milestone planning, and review), delivered alongside branding, market, and business development support.

The support scheme was conceived and delivered by BRIGAD Connect (BRC) and its affiliated partner The Funding Company (TFC), transferring BRIGAD's practitioner know-how into ARSINOE. Selected innovators received in-kind expert consultancy tailored to their stage and needs, spanning: business strategy, branding and marketing communication, funding strategy and investor readiness, and guidance on preparing applications for public funding programmes.

A transparent process underpinned selection and delivery. First, innovations were sourced via the two Open Tender calls and the CS pipeline. Second, candidates were prioritised based on engagement and relevance to ARSINOE, then assessed using a clear methodology that combined:

- an Innovation Readiness assessment (business/market, customer, technology, team/IP, and funding readiness),
- a 360-Degree Scan to identify gaps in strategy, evidence, and go-to-market, and
- stepwise Branding Support (audience definition, value proposition, key messaging, and investment materials) to translate technical value into credible market narratives.

This structured intake and diagnosis led to customised support plans and measurable milestones for each innovator. In total, nine SMEs, start-ups, spin-offs, or independent entrepreneurs were selected to receive comprehensive ARSINOE support. The portfolio covers a diverse range of climate-resilience solutions across Europe and beyond (e.g., flood intelligence platforms, multi-hazard tools, nature-based and infrastructure innovations, sustainable tourism models).

The scheme delivered tangible outcomes: improved business plans and investor-grade pitch decks; refined value propositions and market narratives; clarified growth strategies (including strategic pivots where warranted); identification and pursuit of public and private funding opportunities; and enhanced readiness to engage with investors, municipalities, and customers. Several innovators (e.g., Pramtech, SaferPlaces, HYDS, Aventour) showed interest in funding programmes identified through the support and prepared pitches; others (e.g., SingularGreen, Hyds, Waltr) defined clearer scaling roadmaps and initiated investor outreach. Importantly, the scheme's flexibility, moving from a one-size-fits-all concept to tailored interventions, proved essential for effectiveness, given innovators' time constraints and frequent lack of in-house business development capacity.

This deliverable (D5.3) documents the rationale, process, methodology, and results of the uptake support scheme. It demonstrates how evidence from BRIGAD shaped ARSINOE's approach, how the two Open

Tender calls and CS pipeline fed a competitive selection process, and how the combined methodology (readiness diagnostics, 360-scan, branding and funding-readiness programme) translated project outputs into market-ready and investable solutions. The report also clarifies the scheme's contribution to WP5 objectives and its linkages to WP7 (sustainable finance) and WP8 (exploitation and replication).

INTRODUCTION

Climate-resilient innovation is at the heart of the ARSINOE project (Climate Resilient Regions Through Systemic Solutions and Innovations). Work Package 5 (WP5) aims to build a portfolio of innovations and provide targeted support schemes that bridge the gap between technological development and real-world uptake. Within WP5, Task 5.4: “Support schemes for innovators in achieving uptake” was dedicated to assisting the developers of the project’s case-study innovations and selected external solutions (via Open Tenders) to advance market readiness and mobilise resources for scale-up.

This deliverable (D5.3) reports on the implementation and results of the uptake support scheme at project Month 48 (M48). The scheme operated from M24 to M48, with a setup and intake phase in M24–M29 and hands-on delivery in M30–M48. The programme was designed and carried out by BRIGAD Connect (BRC) and its affiliated partner The Funding Company (TFC), ensuring both entities are explicitly referenced for grant compliance and attribution.

Innovators (SMEs, start-ups, spin-offs, universities, or individual entrepreneurs) involved in ARSINOE’s case studies and in the two rounds of Open Tender calls were invited to apply for advanced mentoring and consulting support (selected innovators, but also the ones that wanted to commercially exploit their innovation but did not make the open tender selection). Following a transparent selection based on engagement, relevance, and readiness, nine innovators were selected to receive in-kind consultancy. The cohort spans diverse domains: from climate-risk data platforms and multi-hazard tools to nature-based infrastructure and sustainable tourism, reflecting the breadth of ARSINOE’s innovation portfolio. Each innovator followed a tailored Innovation Uptake Support Programme delivered by BRC and TFC across the operational window (M30–M48), with intensity and scope calibrated to need and stage.

To maximise impact beyond technical development alone, the scheme was aligned with WP8 on exploitation and sustainability (e.g., pathways for replication and outreach) and designed to integrate funding readiness from the outset. Alignment with WP7 (sustainable finance) was ensured through: (i) use of the same funding-scheme pipeline reviewed with WP7 (e.g., Horizon Europe, LIFE, Interreg, relevant financial instruments), (ii) cross-checks against guidance produced under Task 7.4 (hybrid financial reporting model) and Task 7.5 (manual on sustainable finance), and (iii) case-by-case validation with WP7 focal points where innovators’ contexts required additional programmes. In other words, the funding opportunities oriented to innovators in Task 5.4 were drawn from and consistent with the funding landscape and criteria developed under WP7, with any justified additions documented and aligned to the same sustainability and eligibility principles.

This report is structured as follows. Section 1 describes the methodological approach of the support scheme, including the innovation assessment framework (readiness diagnostics, 360-degree scan) and specific services (business planning, branding and market narrative, funding advisory and investor readiness). Section 2 provides case-by-case accounts of the support provided to each selected innovator, detailing the baseline, interventions, and outcomes/next steps. Section 3 offers conclusions, lessons learned, and cross-linkages to WP5 objectives, WP7 financial tools, and WP8 exploitation efforts. The Annexes contain supporting materials (e.g., feedback reports, readiness assessment templates, pitch-deck guidance, funding-readiness checklists) that substantiate the findings of this deliverable.

1.0 Methodology explained

Glossary

Business Case:	A financial feasibility study which (exclusively) contains the necessary information to decide whether to invest (time, capital, or both) in a business or project.
Business Model:	A description and overview of the proposed revenue streams for a product or service.
Business Plan:	A comprehensive document describing amongst other things the company strategy, the technological description, the financial viability and strategy and the market analysis. Includes all contents of a business case and the business model.
Funding Scan:	The process of assessing all options for public funding.
Quick Scan:	An entry questionnaire that assesses the current state of the innovator.

Summary of the methodology

The ARSINOE Innovation Support Scheme follows a clear, step-by-step methodology to help climate-resilience innovations move from early ideas towards market and funding readiness. The process is intentionally described in simple, non-academic language so that public authorities, SMEs and other stakeholders can easily understand how the support works. Figure 1 provides a visual overview of the main steps and Figure 2 provides the core actions undertaken.

ARSINOE Innovation Support Scheme.

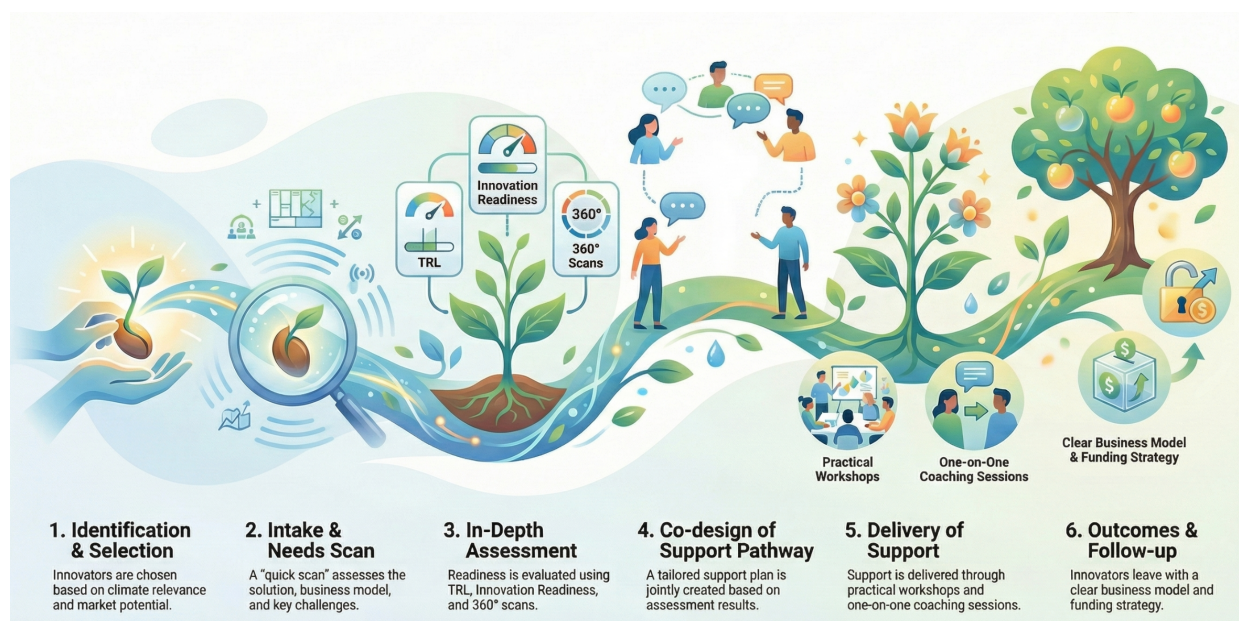


Figure 1 Visual overview of the main steps of the methodology.

Step 1. Identification and selection of innovators

Innovations were first identified through ARSINOE Case Studies and Open Tenders. From this larger pool, a smaller group of innovators was selected for the Support Scheme based on their relevance for climate resilience, their potential for market uptake, and their level of engagement. This ensured that the available resources were focused on innovations with a realistic chance to progress.

Step 2. Intake meeting and quick scan of needs

Each selected innovator was invited to an intake meeting. During this conversation, the team and the support providers jointly explored the current situation: the solution, the target customers, the team, the business model, and the main challenges. A short “quick scan” helped to capture this information in a structured way and to understand what kind of support would be most useful.

Step 3. Innovation assessment (TRL, Innovation Readiness, 360° scan)

Building on the intake, each innovation was assessed using a combination of established tools:

- Technology Readiness Level (TRL) to understand how mature the technology is, from basic research to a fully operational system.
- An Innovation Readiness Framework to assess the broader business and organisational aspects (for example market understanding, team capacity and partnerships).
- A 360-degree scan to identify strengths, weaknesses, risks and practical needs from different angles (technical, business, organisational and financial).

This assessment provided a clear, shared picture of where the innovation stands at the moment and what needs to happen next. It also ensured that decisions about support were based on evidence, not only on subjective impressions.

Step 4. Co-design of a tailored support pathway

On the basis of the assessment results, the support team and the innovator jointly designed a tailored support plan. Instead of offering a fixed, identical programme for everyone, the methodology allows the content and intensity of support to be adapted to each innovator’s situation. For example, some teams needed more work on clarifying their value proposition and business model, while others needed support on branding and on how to approach investors and funding programmes.

The tailored support pathway always drew on four core elements of the methodology:

- Support process. The overall sequence of intake, assessment, co-design, delivery and follow-up.
- Innovation assessment. The structured analysis of technology and innovation readiness, using TRL and related tools.
- Business plan and branding. Helping innovators to translate their idea into a clear business model, business plan and market-oriented narrative.
- Strategic funding and investment readiness. Identifying suitable public and private funding opportunities and helping teams prepare the necessary materials (for example pitch decks and proposals).

Step 5. Delivery of support services (workshops and coaching)

The agreed support plan was then implemented through a combination of workshops and one-to-one coaching sessions. Depending on the needs of each innovator, this could include:

- Developing or refining the business model and business plan.
- Strengthening branding and communication, so that the solution can be explained clearly to non-technical audiences such as municipalities, investors or customers.
- Mapping funding and investment opportunities and preparing applications or investor-ready pitch decks.

Throughout this phase, the emphasis was on practical, hands-on work with the innovator's own materials, rather than on theoretical training. This made the scheme directly useful for busy SMEs and start-ups.

Step 6. Outcomes and follow-up within the ARSINOE portfolio

At the end of the support trajectory, each innovator left the scheme with improved clarity about their market, value proposition and business model, stronger communication materials, and a better understanding of relevant funding and investment routes. In summary, the methodology combines a structured sequence of steps with a high degree of tailoring to each innovator. This makes it robust enough for EU-level reporting, while remaining easy to understand and directly applicable for non-academic stakeholders such as public authorities, SMEs and investors.

Innovation support scheme: Core actions

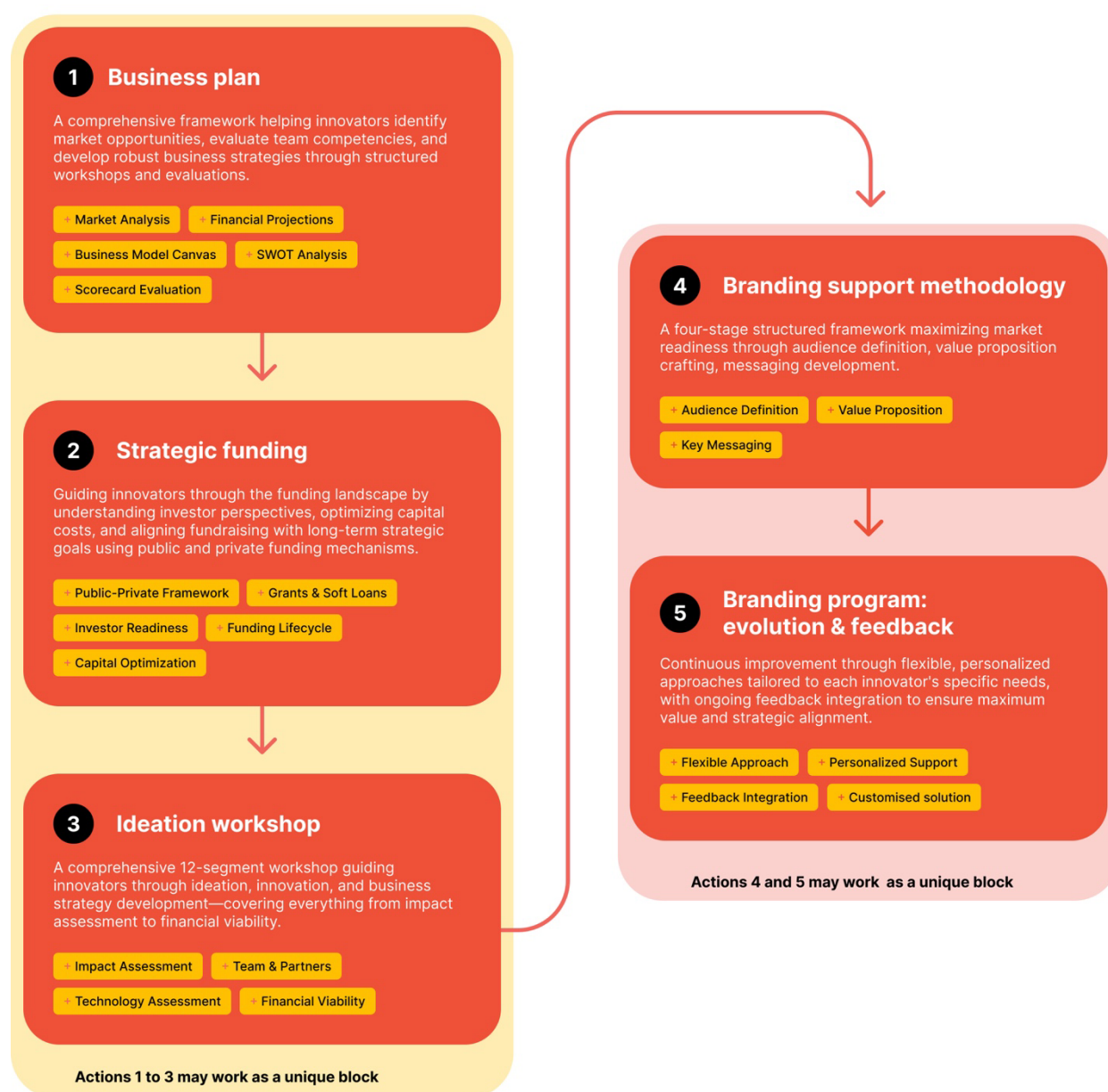


Figure 2 Innovation support scheme core actions.

1.1 Introduction to the projects program

The recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlights that the consequences of climate change are pervasive and are causing significant harm to ecosystems, human systems, and infrastructure. The impacts of climate change are resulting in significant losses and damages to both nature and people, beyond what would be expected from natural climate variability (IPCC, 2022). In response, ARSINOE has set out to harness innovation for climate adaptation across a range of key systems, including biodiversity, flooding, sea level rise, droughts, water scarcity, heatwaves, and deforestation. ARSINOE aims to create ecosystems that provide solutions to climate change adaptation in nine regions across Europe, offering start-ups and innovators the opportunity to develop their ideas into sustainable businesses that can contribute to climate adaptation.

Development

Developing and bringing an innovative solution to the market is a complex process that involves multiple stages. The first stage is the stand-up phase, where an innovator is fascinated by the concept of discovery, an idea of closing a perceived or identified gap related to fulfilling the needs of end users, or related to streamlining processes. For instance Circular startups (CSUs), who pursue platform-based circular innovations and sharing/trading business models that cater to B2B, B2C, and C2C marketplaces (Henry et al., 2020). However, startups encounter various internal and external barriers as they pursue their business goals. Internal barriers can include financial, human, or relational capital, while external barriers may relate to markets, institutions, and other parts of their ecosystem. This is particularly challenging as startups often try to solve new problems in uncertain conditions, with an unidentified market where demand and competitive forces are unknown (Skawińska & Zalewski, 2020).

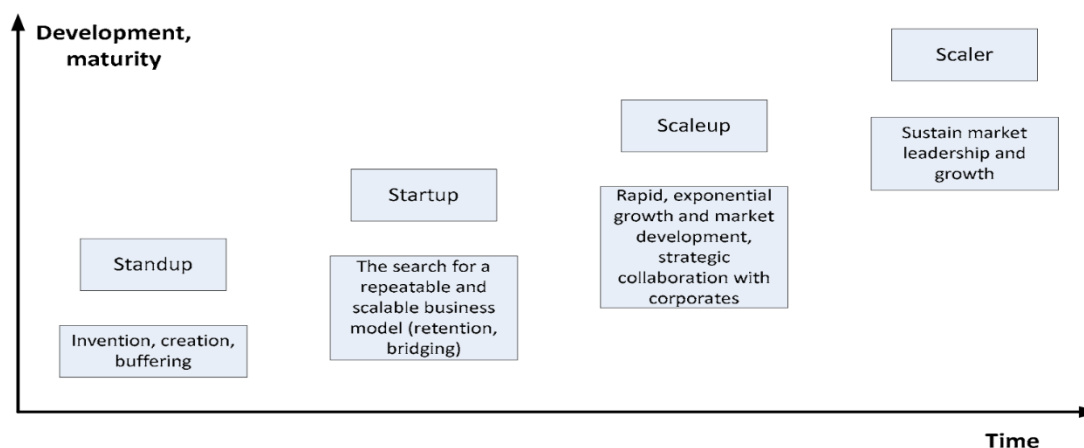


Figure 3 Startup development stages (phases)

The subsequent phase of company development is the startup, which involves launching a microventure aimed at perfecting and selling the previously created innovations. The startup's primary objective is to meet the evolving needs of customers and increase company value by introducing new products or services that leverage innovative technologies. Startups are also focused on expanding their market share both domestically and globally by implementing growth strategies that involve increasing productivity, enhancing creativity, and developing new applications of existing technologies (Autio, 2020). Some startups, as a result of rapid, exponential headcount, and revenue growth transform into, so-called scale-ups (Picken, 2017).

Need for support

Studies have shown that 58% of startups fail in their first three years, with only 14% still in business after five years. The risk is particularly high for startups that are focused on the development of new technologies, known as New Technology Based Firms, which have even higher failure rates (Cantamessa et al, 2018; Grimaldi et al, 2011; Wennberg et al, 2011; Ortín-Ángel and Vendrell-Herrero, 2014). Cantamessa et al. identified several categories of failure among startups, grouping them into the SHELL categories: software, hardware, environment, liveware (organization), and liveware (customers). The software category relates to the business plan, hardware refers to the product or service offered, and the environment encompasses competitors and other stakeholders. There are various reasons why startups fail, but the main cause of failure (35%) is a lack of or an inadequate business plan. The second-highest cause of failure (28%) is a lack of business development, and the third-highest cause (21%) is running out of cash.

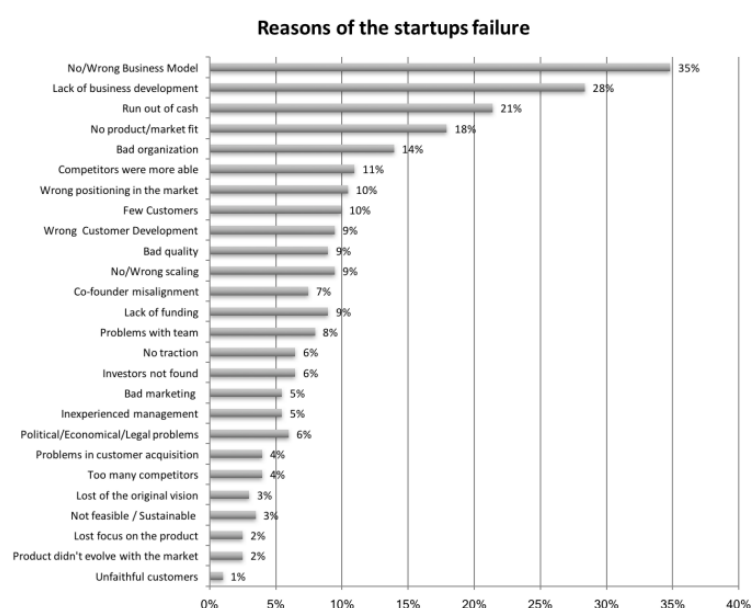


Figure 4 The reasons why startups fail (Cantamessa et al., 2018)

ARSINOE mission

The ARSINOE programme aims to bridge the gap between invention and successful implementation, with a focus on creating high-quality business plans and securing financing. To achieve this, the programme provides innovators with standardized guidelines and a flexible approach to developing a business plan. The program assists innovators in identifying relevant funding options and connecting with potential investors through the Climate Innovation Window. This platform aims to connect innovators, end-users, qualified investors, and grant and fiscal incentives advisors throughout Europe. The ultimate goal is to successfully introduce climate adaptation innovations that can aid in the battle against natural disasters.

This document outlines the process and methodology to transform ARSINOE innovations into fundable businesses and describes the guidance of these businesses to acquire funding. This deliverable consists of different parts:

- Support process
- Innovation assessment

- Business plan
- Strategic funding

Support Process

Innovation, the act of bringing a concept from ideation to market, comes with myriad challenges. ARSINOE is committed to assisting innovators in overcoming these hurdles by delivering bespoke consultation and support services that facilitate the growth and sustainability of innovations. This chapter outlines the scope of the support services provided by BRIGAD CONNECT, with the subsequent chapters offering a more detailed discussion of each service.

ARSINOE focuses on nine distinctive case studies, each grappling with climate change-related challenges and striving to unearth innovative solutions. Although each case has unique elements, the support required to foster their respective innovations remains broadly similar. Consequently, ARSINOE has designed a standardized, yet flexible approach to its innovation support services. However, before an innovation can benefit from these services, it must be selected as a part of ARSINOE's Portfolio of Innovations via our Open Tenders for Innovation process. Upon acceptance into the portfolio, funds are allocated for providing innovation support services.

Our services commence with a compulsory intake process, during which startups present their innovations and are evaluated across five dimensions of business readiness: customer, technology, business model, intellectual property, team, and funding. The specifics of this process are covered in the section, 'Innovation Assessment.' Should a startup score highly enough, a comprehensive qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the business opportunity is conducted by the innovation support team in collaboration with the startup, using methodologies like the Business Model Canvas and SWOT analysis. The findings of these evaluations guide the selection of appropriate workshops and coaching to assist the startup.



Figure 5 ARSINOE approach to innovation support services.

Innovation Assessment

Each case study which is part of the ARSINOE project has its own climate challenges. For example, the Canary Islands have to deal with increasing droughts and Southern Denmark is affected by raising sea levels. Since each case study has its individual demands, the open calls are tailored for each case study, but follow a standardized procedure from application to acceptance. The open calls will be published at a European level, with the aim to:

- Identify promising or mature innovations to be included in ARSINOE's Portfolio of Innovations, in the ARSINOE regional Innovation Packages and in the Climate Innovation Window
- Take stock of trustworthy climate innovations from across Europe
- Select the most suitable ones for implementation in our case studies

The application consists of a pitch deck, explaining the problem and proposed solution, background information regarding the team and the business case. Each application is assessed using a standardized scoring mechanism, central part of this mechanism is the Innovation Readiness Framework, developed by Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm. This assessment provides a comprehensive evaluation of a startup or idea, using a scientifically-informed framework. The framework is roughly based on the Technology Readiness Levels, a widely used method to assess the maturity and readiness of a technology, product, or service for commercialization and deployment. Before elaborating on the Technology Readiness Levels and the Innovation Readiness Framework, we present a figure explaining the pathway from intake to determining the demand for consulting services.

Pathway Intake – Defining Demand

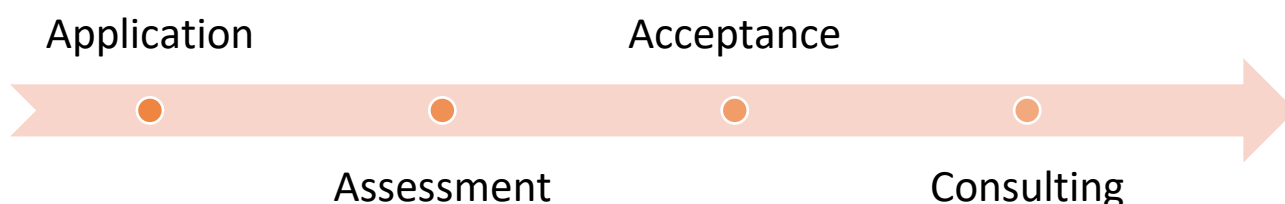


Figure 6 Path intake image

Technological Readiness Level

The TRL methodology is developed by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the TRL framework provides a systematic and objective way to evaluate the readiness of a technology based on nine levels of maturity, ranging from basic research to full operational system (Mankins, 1995; Olechowski, 2015). The TRL framework considers nine levels of technology readiness, each with increasing levels of maturity and readiness for commercialization. The nine TRL levels are the following:

Basic Research (TRL 1) The technology is in the early stages of development, with no proven concept or prototype. This level represents basic scientific research, where the focus is on understanding the fundamental principles of a technology and exploring its potential applications.

Applied Research (TRL 2) The technology is in the applied research phase, where the focus is on developing a proof of concept or prototype. This level represents the development of a proof of concept or prototype, but the technology is not yet ready for testing in a relevant environment.

Laboratory Development (TRL 3) The technology is in the laboratory development phase, where the focus is on testing the prototype in a laboratory setting. This level represents the development of a functional prototype, but the technology is not yet ready for testing in a relevant environment.

Component and/or Breadboard Validation (TRL 4) The technology is in the component and/or breadboard validation phase, where the focus is on testing the prototype in a relevant environment. This level represents the development of a functional prototype, and the technology is ready for testing in a relevant environment.

System/Subsystem Model or Prototype Demonstration (TRL 5) The technology is in the system/subsystem model or prototype demonstration phase, where the focus is on demonstrating the technology's technical performance in a relevant environment. This level represents the development of a functional prototype that has been demonstrated in a relevant environment, but the technology is not yet ready for full-scale production.

Technology Insertion (TRL 6) The technology is in the technology insertion phase, where the focus is on incorporating the technology into a larger system or application. This level represents the development of a functional prototype that has been demonstrated in a relevant environment and the technology is ready for full-scale production.

System Development and Demonstration (TRL 7) The technology is in the system development and demonstration phase, where the focus is on developing a full-scale system and demonstrating its technical performance in a relevant environment. This level represents the development of a full-scale system that has been demonstrated in a relevant environment, but the technology is not yet ready for operational use.

Operations Readiness (TRL 8) The technology is in the operations readiness phase, where the focus is on integrating the technology into a real-world operational environment. This level represents the development of a full-scale system that has been demonstrated in a relevant environment and the technology is ready for operational use.

Actual System/Service (TRL 9) The technology is at the highest level of maturity and is being used in the real-world operational environment. This level represents the full integration of the technology into a real-world operational environment, and it is being used to perform its intended function.

Innovation Readiness Framework

The Innovation Readiness model builds upon the knowledge of the Technology Readiness Levels and assesses startups on a scale from 1 to 9 in six key areas of 'innovation' development, described below.

Customer Readiness Level: It is well known that customers are a prominent source of information that is critical to developers in reducing uncertainties inherent in the development of new technologies. Uncertainty in this development is contributed by numerous sources, of which two are major: technology and market (Chong & Cheng, 2010). An empirical study suggested that early reduction of both market and technical uncertainty has a positive impact on the success rates of startups, defined as new product developments. Research has shown that innovations were more likely to succeed when they were based on carefully defined customer needs (i.e., a market factor) than those based on new technological opportunities (Verworn et al., 2008).

Technology Readiness Level: The technology readiness of an innovation is important since it describes the state of readiness of the solution, see also the above explanation.

Business Model Readiness Level: To design a business model is a key decision for every entrepreneur. Conceptualizing the expected activities and opportunities of a business idea enables you to refine and pivot your idea later on (Osterwalder, 2004).

IPR Readiness Level: Protecting your innovation through intellectual property is another key success factor of startups. Research showed that IP protection is not only a success factor of startups, but also results in a higher return on investment. (Youndt et al., 2004; Kitts et al., 2001)

Team Readiness Level: A study published in Sustainability found that access to human capital is one of the key success factors of startups in the EU. The study analysed data from the 2015 European Startup Monitor, selecting thirteen countries with a sufficient number of respondents. The analysis was done with multivariate statistical methods (Skawińska & Zalewski, 2020).

Funding Readiness Level: As we have seen, a lack of funding is one of the main reasons why startups fail. That directly points to the importance of funding, especially funding that matches the phase of development of a startup. Research indicated that there is a direct, positive relationship between the security of funding and startup success (Krishna et al., 2016).

Summary

The Technological Readiness Level (TRL) methodology provides a systematic and objective way to evaluate the maturity and readiness of a technology based on nine levels, ranging from basic research to full operational system. The Innovation Readiness model builds upon TRL and assesses startups on a scale from 1 to 9 in six key areas of innovation development: customer readiness level, technology readiness level, business model readiness level, IPR readiness level, team readiness level, and funding readiness level. These areas are important factors in determining the success of startups, as they contribute to reducing uncertainty, refining and pivoting ideas, protecting intellectual property, accessing human capital, and securing funding that matches the phase of development. This has the following benefits:

- Structure - your innovation development process
- Visualize and measure - the status and progress of ideas
- Guide - the process and do the right thing at the right time
- Communicate - more effectively with all stakeholders
- Manage - your portfolio of ideas in different stages more effectively

1.2 Business Plan

As stated in the introduction, developing a solid Business Plan is one of the crucial aspects to survive as a start-up and use the existing business opportunity. A Business Plan enables you as innovator to identify potential risks, mitigate those risks and adapt to the market circumstances. Planning furthermore gives you the opportunity to identify market needs before investing time and capital in a business idea. One of the vital aspects of the Business Plan is evaluating the team's competencies, organizational structure and analyse the competition. Many of the reasons why start-ups fail can thus be identified in the early stage when an idea is turning into a Business Plan. The Funding Company presents innovators and start-ups the right tools to turn an idea into a Business Plan by guiding innovators in their development process and providing them the right tools to assess the potential of their idea. When a start-up or innovator has developed a Business Plan, TFC performs an evaluation identify if the innovation has enough business potential to become a healthy business.

This chapter describes and demonstrates the proven and standardised Business Development approach. The Business Development approach helps innovators and start-ups to turn their ideas into marketable services and technologies. In the Business Development process, we help innovators to:

- Identify and analyse target markets.
- Define the market need.
- Communicate with the target market.
- Develop a business model.

Aspects of a Business Plan

Market size and growth potential: The size and projected growth of the market in which the business plans to operate is an important indicator of its potential for success. This can be measured by research into the market size, trends, and projected growth (Scott, 2018).

Competitive landscape: A thorough analysis of the competitive landscape in the market is crucial to understanding the potential for success of the business plan. This can be measured by research into the number and strength of competitors, market share, and competitive advantage (Porter, 1980; Kim, 2018).

Product or service differentiation: The uniqueness and differentiation of the product or service offered is an important factor in determining the potential for success of the business plan. This can be measured through research into the product or service features, patents, and trademarks (Christensen, 1997; Tidd et al., 2016).

Financial projections: Accurate financial projections are a key indicator of the feasibility and potential for success of the business plan. This can be measured through the use of financial models and analysis of key financial metrics such as revenue, costs, and profitability (Tidd et al., 2016).

Sales and marketing strategy: A well-crafted sales and marketing strategy is crucial to the success of the business plan. This can be measured through research into the target market, target customer segments, and sales channels (Kotler et al., 2002; Tidd et al., 2016).

Management team: A strong and capable management team is a key indicator of the potential for success of the business plan. This can be measured through research into the team's experience, qualifications, and track record (Scott, 2018; Tidd et al., 2016).

Risk and uncertainty: The level of risk and uncertainty associated with the business plan is an important indicator of its potential for success. This can be measured through research into factors such as market volatility, regulatory environment, and technological uncertainty (Knight, 1921; Tidd et al., 2016).

Scalability: The scalability of the business plan is an important indicator of its potential for success. This can be measured by research into the ability to expand the business, increase revenue, and reduce costs (Christensen, 1997; Tidd et al., 2016).

Environmental and social impact: The environmental and social impact of the business plan is an important indicator of its potential for success. This can be measured through research into the business's impact on the environment, labor practices, and community relations (Carroll, 1991; Tidd et al., 2016).

Innovation: The level of innovation in the business plan is an important indicator of its potential for success. This can be measured through research into the newness, originality, and usefulness of the product or service offered (Schumpeter, 1942; Tidd et al., 2016).

Business Plan Workshop

Where the Innovation Readiness Framework gives an indication of the current state of a startup or innovation, a Business Plan is a more elaborate model that addresses the key characteristics of an innovation or startup. The Business Plan Workshop sessions will and can therefore be seen as the core of business development. To be able to maximize the effect of the workshop, it is important that the innovators are familiar with the different aspects and the terminology of a Business Plan. The Business Plan is based on several much-used methodologies and has integrated these in the different sections of the Business Plan. References of these methodologies are included in the Business Opportunity document in Appendix B. The workshop is structured around Strategy, Technology, Social and Financial. By including content on social innovations, social acceptance, environmental impact and disaster resilience indicators, the Business Opportunity Workshop is especially tailored to suit environmental innovations.

The Business Plan workshop goes into detail concerning the activities of the innovators and will form a first version of a Business Plan, give an evaluation of that Business Plan, and provide guidance on improving the Business Plan by use of a workshop. See Appendix B for an outline of the workshop sessions. The first session, the Intake, consists of an interview with the innovators concerning all the aspects mentioned in the Business Plan appendix. By having this intake in a face-to-face interview session instead of a digit intake process, TFC can go into much more detail to truly get the underlying rationale behind strategic decisions and to explain the contents of the Business Plan further. The result of the intake can be seen as a first version of a Business Plan, albeit not a formalised one. TFC will score each part of this conceptual Business Plan as if it were a regular Business Plan, based on the aspects explained in the previous paragraph.

Each of these indicators are divided into different sub-indicators, each of which are scored ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 representing a 'Weak' description of the sub-indicator, and 5 representing an 'Excellent' description and argumentation of the Business Plan section. The scores of these sub-indicators are combined into the general indicators as shown above.

During the Workshop session TFC presents this evaluation to the innovators and explains the different scores, giving feedback on how to improve them along the way. Innovators will get a chance to further clarify parts of the Business Plan and will be advised in how to present or write down the parts in such a manner that the most important information is clear right away. An example of a possible outcome is shown in the figure below.

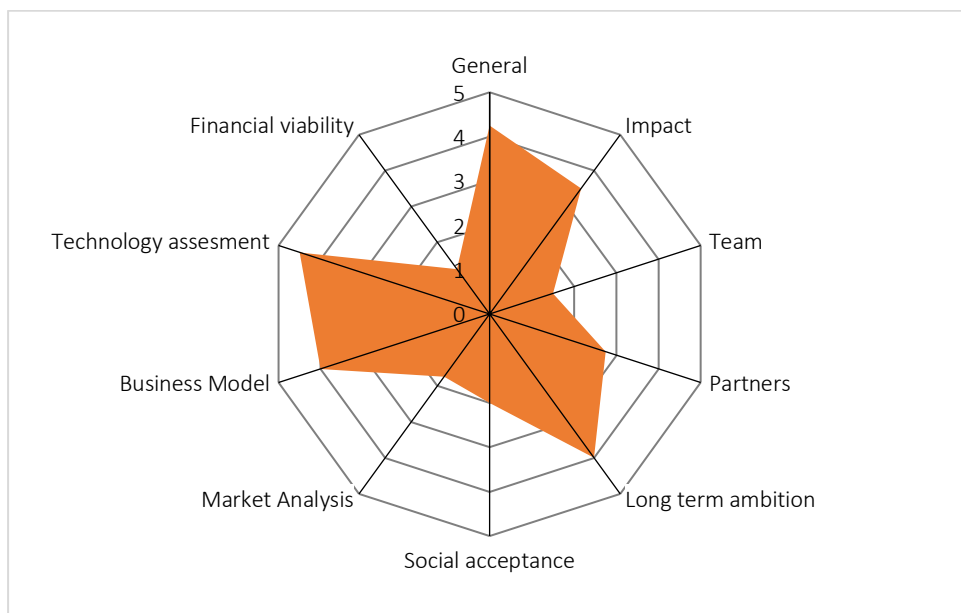


Figure 7 Example of a scorecard

The second part of this session concerns the business model workshop. The innovators will learn how to use the Sustainable Business Model Canvas, a framework that helps innovators better define their target customers, their value propositions for these customers, their revenue streams and more.

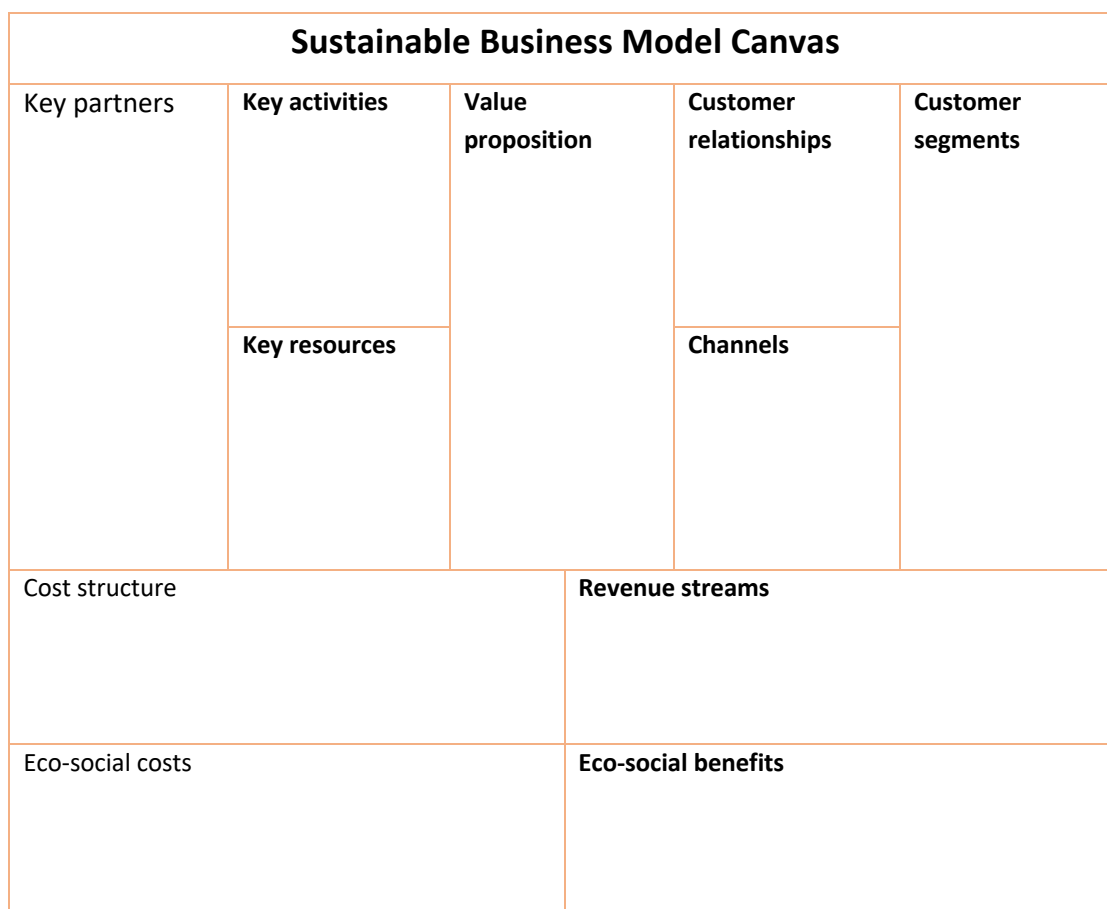


Figure 8 The Sustainable Business Model Canvas, as used by TFC (Adapted from Joyce & Paquin, 2016).

During the workshop, BRC/TFC explains why the Sustainable Business Model Canvas can help them defining these different aspects, how these should interpret them and how the different parts of the Business Model Canvas can be used to improve their Business Plan. For instance, having a clear list of the Value Propositions that an innovation can offer, will help in determining who all the competitors are; these competitors are not just the technological competitors, but everyone that provides the same value. In such a way, the Business Model Canvas is very helpful in improving the Business Plan.

At the end of the Business Plan Intake and Workshop sessions, innovators thus have their first Business Plan, have a better understanding of the value and contents of such a Business Plan, have an evaluation and with that an overview of their strengths and weaknesses, and have had advice how to improve the weak parts of their Business Plan. They have also worked with the first tool they can use themselves to improve and evaluate parts of their Business Plan in the form of the Business Model Canvas.

Environmental & Societal Impact

Defining impact: Five dimensions

Within the landscape of impact assessment, the process of gauging "impact" is indispensable to ascertain the social and environmental implications birthed by innovations. The assessment of impact caters to several objectives spanning the investment lifecycle, encompassing the forecasting, strategizing, monitoring, and evaluation of impact. Furthermore, this measurement is instrumental in disclosing impact and maintaining effective communication with a spectrum of stakeholders.

To conduct a comprehensive impact measurement, analysts employ a variety of methodologies designed to align with their objectives. These methodologies can be broadly classified into four categories: anticipated return, theory of change and logic model, mission alignment, and experimental & quasi-experimental techniques. While these methods will be discussed in detail in the subsequent sections, we first underscore the fact that impact signifies a change in outcome attributed to an organization's activities.

This alteration in outcome can produce both positive and negative repercussions, either intended or unintended. Given that all our actions inevitably imprint upon people and the planet, a critical examination of the properties of impactful actions becomes paramount. To facilitate this understanding, we delve into the five dimensions of impact performance, which are elaborated upon in the following sections.

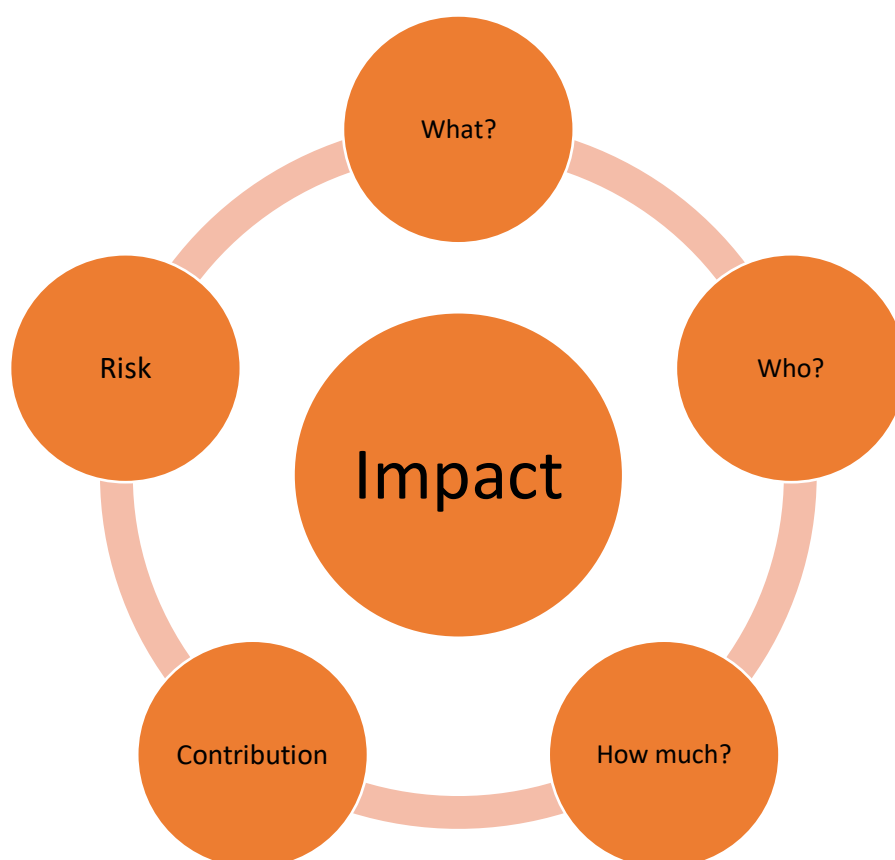


Figure 9 Impact performance analysis dimensions.

What?

The first dimension, '**What?**' captures the nature of the outcomes generated by the innovation. Outcomes are the changes, benefits, or any other effects experienced by stakeholders as a result of interacting with the innovation. When analyzing the 'What?', it is important to consider the following elements (Choudhury et al., 2019):

1. **Outcome Level:** The degree or intensity of the outcome as perceived by stakeholders when they engage with the innovation. These could be positive or negative, and intended or unintended. Understanding this element is crucial as it provides insights into the real-world implications of the innovation.
2. **Outcome Threshold:** The minimum level of outcome that stakeholders consider as positive or beneficial. Any result below this threshold might be seen as negative or insufficient. This helps define the 'success' criteria from the stakeholders' perspective and can serve as a benchmark for the innovation's performance.
3. **Importance of Outcome:** The value or significance the stakeholders attach to the outcome. Often supported by data, third-party research, and other sources, it gives a clear understanding of what outcomes matter the most to stakeholders, enabling the innovator to align their objectives accordingly (Parmar et al., 2010)
4. **Alignment with Global Goals:** This assesses how the innovation's outcomes align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or other globally recognized objectives. Demonstrating this alignment can be useful for attracting support and funding, particularly from investors and organizations that prioritize these goals (SDG Compass).

The 'What?' dimension sets the foundation for the rest of the impact analysis. By clearly identifying and understanding the outcomes, stakeholders can effectively measure and communicate the impact of their innovation. Moreover, this understanding can guide the evolution and refinement of the innovation to maximize its positive impact and minimize any negative effects.

Who?

The second dimension, '**Who?**' identifies the stakeholders who experience the outcomes of an innovation. Stakeholders can include customers, employees, suppliers, investors, community members, or any other individuals or groups that interact with or are affected by the innovation (Jenni et al., 2014; Jamali, 2008). Understanding the 'Who?' dimension is crucial for several reasons:

1. **Stakeholder Classification:** Identifying and categorizing the different types of stakeholders who are impacted by the innovation. By understanding who the stakeholders are, an organization can ensure that its innovation caters to their specific needs and preferences, enhancing its effectiveness and value.
2. **Geographical Boundaries:** The geographical areas where the stakeholders experience the social and/or environmental outcomes of the innovation. Recognizing these boundaries can help in understanding the innovation's reach and adaptability, and it can inform decisions related to scaling and localization.
3. **Level of Outcome:** By examining the level of outcome before and after engagement with the innovation, one can better understand the direct impact of the innovation on the stakeholders. This comparison provides tangible evidence of the innovation's effectiveness.
4. **Stakeholder Characteristics:** The socio-demographic and behavioral characteristics of the stakeholders allows for a deeper understanding of who the innovation serves. This segmentation

can inform tailoring of the innovation and its deployment strategy to better meet the needs of specific stakeholder groups.

Understanding the 'Who?' dimension not only informs the design and delivery of the innovation but also shapes the communication and engagement strategies. The more precisely an organization can identify its stakeholders, the better it can tailor its innovation to meet their needs and communicate its value proposition effectively.

How much?

The dimension '**How much?**' forms an integral part of the impact analysis as it quantifies the extent of the outcomes, serving as a vital tool to measure the overall impact of the innovation. While the 'What?' dimension tells us the type of outcome and 'Who?' reveals the affected stakeholders, 'How much?' delves into the magnitude of these effects (Seelos and Mair, 2017). There are three key factors in the 'How much?' dimension:

1. **Scale:** This refers to the total number of stakeholders who have experienced the outcome. It's crucial in determining whether the innovation has a widespread impact or if its influence is more localized.
2. **Depth:** This indicates the extent to which the innovation changes outcomes for its beneficiaries. To calculate depth, a comparison is made between the outcome level at the baseline (before the innovation was introduced) and the outcome level after the innovation's implementation.
3. **Duration:** This denotes the length of time the stakeholders experience the outcome. Duration is essential to understand the sustainability and long-term effectiveness of the innovation.

'How much?' can be used to benchmark against other similar innovations, industries or historical data to understand if the innovation is making a significant difference in its domain. This dimension can also be vital for making strategic decisions, prioritizing resources, and tailoring interventions to maximize impact. It is important to note that the data for 'How much?' can be collected through various methods, such as direct observations, surveys, interviews, or third-party research. The chosen method should depend on the nature of the innovation, the stakeholders involved, and the resources available for the impact assessment.

Contribution

The '**Contribution**' enables us to determine whether the outcomes generated by an innovation would not have occurred without the innovation itself, or whether they would have been less significant or slower to materialize. Essentially, it is about establishing the causal link between the innovation and the outcomes, or the degree to which the innovation is responsible for the observed changes. In impact assessment, it is not enough to demonstrate that positive changes have occurred; it is also necessary to show that these changes are directly attributable to the innovation. This helps avoid over- or underestimating the impact of the innovation, ensuring a more accurate and reliable assessment. There are three key factors in the 'Contribution' dimension:

1. **Directness:** The level to which outcomes can be directly attributed to the innovation.
2. **Comparative advantage:** The contribution of the innovation compared to other possible solutions.
3. **Counterfactual analysis:** Rating the outcomes against a scenario where the innovation did not exist.

Different methodologies, such as counterfactual analysis, can be used to evaluate 'Contribution.' These methodologies usually involve comparing the observed outcomes with what would have happened in the absence of the innovation. It's a complex task that often requires careful design and rigorous analysis.

Risk

The 'Risk' dimension assesses the likelihood that the expected impact will differ from the actual impact. These differences could arise due to a range of factors, including changes in the external environment, unexpected reactions from stakeholders, implementation challenges, among others. Incorporating 'Risk' in impact assessment allows for a more nuanced and realistic understanding of the potential impact of an innovation. It ensures that the assessment is not overly optimistic or based on ideal scenarios, but takes into account the uncertainties and complexities of real-world situations (UNEP, 2004). There are three key factors in this dimension:

1. Identification: effectiveness of identifying potential risks that could affect impact.
2. Estimation: accuracy of estimating the likelihood and potential impact of identified risks
3. Management: effectiveness of strategies developed to manage risks.

Risk assessment typically involves identifying potential risks, estimating their likelihood and potential impact, and developing strategies to manage these risks. It's an ongoing process that needs to be integrated into the entire lifecycle of the innovation, from design to implementation and beyond.

Impact measurement

Impact measurement efforts serve a number of different objectives throughout the investment cycle. We found that measurement efforts can be logically grouped into four key measurement objectives:

- Estimating impact: Conducting due diligence pre-investment
- Planning impact: Deriving metrics and data collection methods to monitor impact
- Monitoring impact: Measuring and analyzing impact to ensure mission alignment and performance
- Evaluating impact: Understanding post-investment social impact of an intervention or investment

Impact investors employ a number of methods to pursue the objectives outlined above. Below we elaborate on theory of change, logic models and mission alignment methods:

- Theory of change and logic model explain the process of intended social impact. Specifically, logic model is a common tool used to map a theory of change of an organization, intervention, or program by outlining the linkage from input, to activities, to output, to outcomes, and ultimately to impact.
- Mission alignment methods measure the execution of strategy against mission and end goals over time; examples include social value criteria and scorecards used to monitor and manage key performance metrics.

Expected return metrics consider the anticipated social benefits of an investment in relation to its costs, discounted to the present value. Examples of such metrics include Social Return on Investment (SROI), Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR), and Economic Rate of Return (ERR). Theory of change and logic models are tools used to articulate the intended social impact of an organization, intervention, or program. Logic models map the chain of inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and ultimately impact, providing a visual

representation of how the intervention is expected to generate social change. Mission alignment methods assess the execution of a startup's strategy in relation to its mission and end goals over time. Social value criteria and scorecards are commonly employed to monitor and manage key performance metrics aligned with the startup's mission. Experimental and quasi-experimental methods involve conducting evaluations after the fact, using randomized control trials or other counterfactual approaches to determine the impact of an intervention compared to the status quo. These methods provide robust evidence of impact by isolating the intervention's effects from external factors.

By understanding the objectives and utilizing appropriate impact measurement methods, we can effectively assess the social impact of startups at different stages of the investment cycle. This understanding helps align investments with desired outcomes, optimize performance, and make informed decisions. Moreover, impact measurement encompasses five dimensions of impact: outcome, who, how much, contribution, and risk. These dimensions provide a comprehensive understanding of the outcomes generated by a startup, the stakeholders involved, the scale of impact, the extent of the startup's contribution to the outcomes, and the associated risks.

Our support services concentrate on theory of change and logic models and mission alignment methods to analyse the social impacts of innovations in their specific contexts (case studies) and generate the desired social change over time. In order to monitor the social change, we use mission alignment methods such as scorecards to monitor and manage key performance metrics of innovations. Below we discuss a few methodologies to measure impact.

Three step assessment



Figure 10 Three step assessment image

Theory of change: Overview of methodologies

The Theory of Change (ToC) models provide a comprehensive framework for strategic planning and impact assessment, which can be instrumental for startups aiming to bring about significant change within their ecosystem. These models allow startups to outline their desired outcomes, define long-term goals, and then work backward to identify necessary preconditions. Here are a few models that have been recognized in the literature:

Logic Model: This classic model breaks down change into a linear sequence of inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). It's practical and straightforward, and it allows startups to plot their efforts and anticipate their impact in a structured manner.

Outcome Mapping: Unlike the linear approach of a logic model, outcome mapping (Earl, Carden & Smutylo, 2001) focuses on behavioral changes of the actors in the system. This approach might be beneficial for startups working in social innovation where their success is strongly related to changing attitudes, behaviors, or perceptions.

Dynamic ToC: Also known as Systems-based ToC, this model acknowledges the nonlinear and interconnected nature of social and economic systems (Rogers, 2014). It is designed to accommodate feedback loops and emergent outcomes, which makes it particularly useful for startups operating in complex, interconnected sectors like clean energy or public health.

Nested Theory of Change: This model consists of smaller Theories of Change (nested ToCs) that contribute to an overall larger change (Taplin & Clark, 2012). This model may be useful for startups that have multiple initiatives or products, each aiming to make a specific impact.

In conclusion, the choice of a ToC model depends on the nature of the startup, the complexity of the ecosystem it operates in, and the type of impact it aims to achieve. By using these models, startups can be more strategic about their actions and more deliberate in their impact.

Mission alignment: Impact compass

In an era where business extends beyond mere profit-making, an increasing number of startups endeavor to be socially innovative, seeking to address and solve pressing societal issues while also maintaining economic viability. This dual focus presents new challenges in terms of evaluation and measurement. Traditional metrics, primarily focused on financial performance and market penetration, may not capture the comprehensive value that these innovative entities bring to the table. As we venture further into this territory, it becomes paramount to evolve our assessment techniques to encapsulate the broader spectrum of impacts that these businesses can and do have. In response to this need, the Center for Social Innovation has conceptualized a novel tool for gauging impact: The Impact Compass.

The Impact Compass is predicated on the understanding that the impact of a socially innovative startup extends beyond financial returns and market shares. The tool constitutes a visual representation of six key dimensions: beneficiaries, service, depth, scale, mission alignment, and temporality. Each dimension offers a unique perspective, allowing stakeholders to assess a venture's performance in a comprehensive and nuanced manner, thereby ensuring a more holistic approach to evaluation.

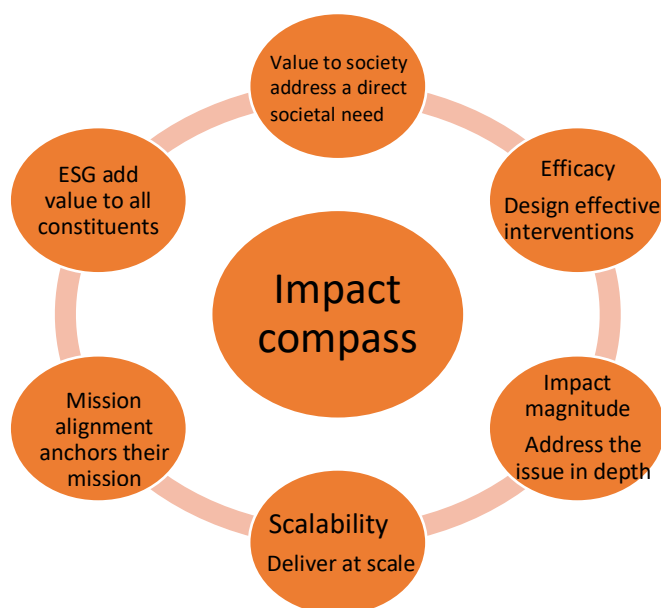


Figure 11 Impact compass image

Social Return on Investment

The Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a refined version of the traditional Return on Investment (ROI) formula that incorporates elements of social impact. When calculating SROI, the typical monetary gains in the traditional ROI formula are substituted with a quantification of social impact value. Thus, $SROI = (\text{Social impact value} - \text{cost of investment}) / \text{cost of investment}$. The key challenge in this model is the quantification of social impact value.

Consider, for example, a project that promotes healthier lifestyles; a decrease in healthcare costs might be a measure of its social impact value. Similarly, if a company facilitates the creation of 100 new jobs, the salaries from these roles could contribute to the social impact value. If an innovation prevents a village's destruction, the tangible monetary worth of that village could be quantified as the social impact value.

The SROI serves as a critical measure for social innovations, which are not chiefly driven by the quest for profit. It offers a quantifiable metric that enables comparison of the effectiveness of various social innovations, helping stakeholders decide if they warrant investment. Thus, for investors interested in social innovations, the SROI is a tool that cannot be understated.

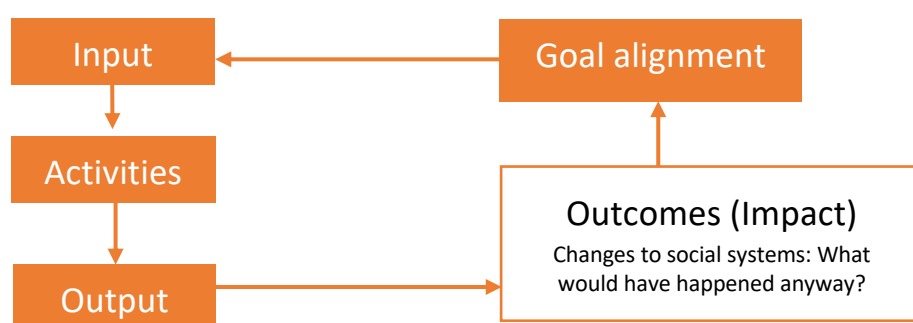


Figure 12 Social Return on Investment image

1.3 Strategic funding

As shown in the introductory chapter, having insufficient funds is the 2nd most occurring reason why start-ups fail. The most important part of acquiring funding, having a high-quality Business Plan, has been highlighted in the previous sections. This chapter describes the next step: guiding innovators on the acquisition of finance. One of the key aspects of acquiring funds is to be able to understand the perspective of the investor, whether it is a public or private investor, and to get an overview of the different categories of investors. Only by understanding the interests and perspectives of your preferred investors, are you able to convince them to invest in your innovation; something which holds true for both public and private investors. Innovators furthermore need to understand the different kinds of funding schemes (such as grants or equity investments) and they should have an understanding of funding options that are suitable for them.

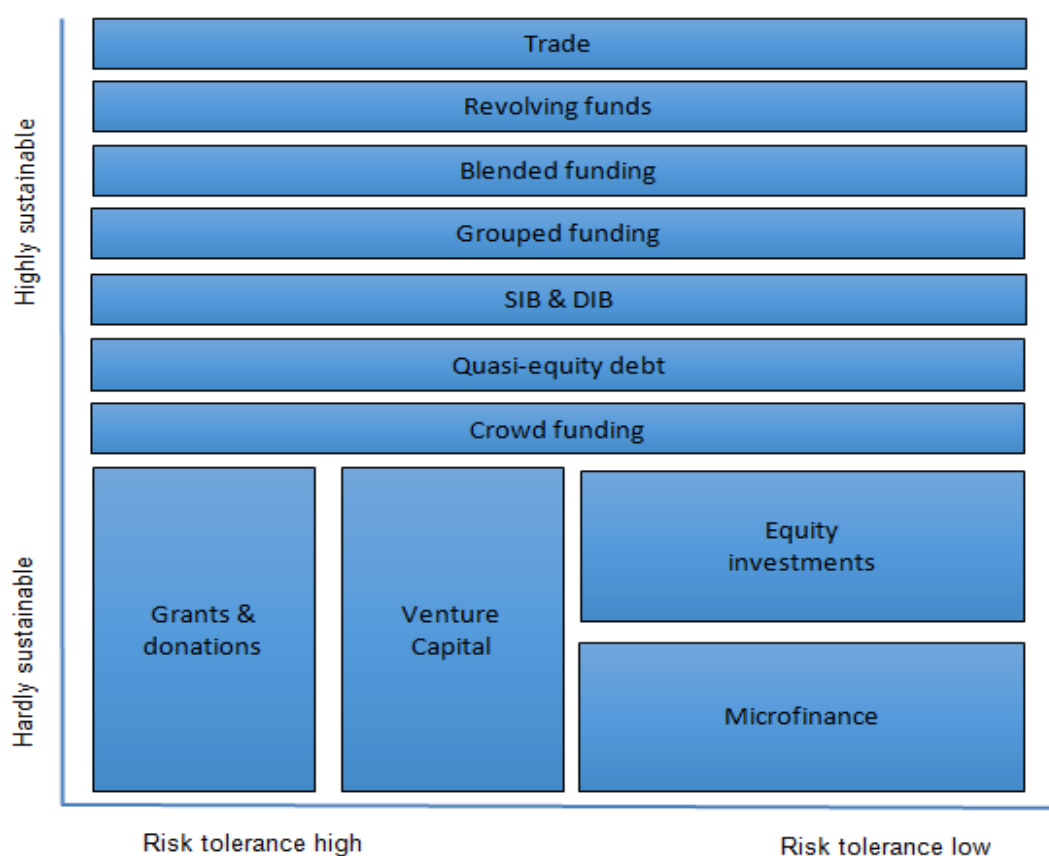


Figure 13 The public-private investment framework

Strategic Funding Support

At the heart of our Strategic Funding approach is the recognition that strategy and funding are inextricably linked, implementing a strategic vision requires financial resources, while fundraising

necessitates a robust strategic plan. With this understanding, we provide a comprehensive and integrated solution that addresses both sides of this entrepreneurial coin.

Our approach to strategic funding is rooted in versatility, catering to startups and innovators across various technology domains, business sectors, and company sizes. Rather than prescribing a one-size-fits-all solution, our primary focus is on posing the pertinent questions that funding agencies, banks, or equity investors are likely to ask about your business, technology, and financial prospects. We believe that informed questioning lays the foundation for sound strategic planning and funding decisions.

One of our key principles is optimizing the cost of capital for innovators. To achieve this, we often kickstart the funding journey with public funds, which offer several advantages. Public funds, including grants, soft loans, and tax incentives, are not only cost-effective but also do not necessitate equity dilution. We meticulously orchestrate the fundraising process, from preparing the necessary documentation for funding proposals to guiding innovators through the entire funding lifecycle. This approach empowers our clients to focus on their core strengths: building and scaling their businesses.

In the ever-evolving European startup and innovation ecosystem, our "Strategic Funding" services serve as a strategic compass, guiding entrepreneurs toward securing the financial backing they need to turn their vision into reality. We are committed to helping startups and innovators navigate the complex funding landscape, ensuring that they not only acquire public and private funding but also do so in a manner that aligns with their long-term strategic goals.

Below the process of strategic planning, integrated with funding strategy:



Figure 14 Strategic planning and funding strategy processes

Innovation Readiness Framework

Customer	Level
Widespread product sales that scale.	9
First products sold and increased structured sales efforts.	8
Customers in extended product testing or first test sales	7
Benefits of the product confirmed through partnerships or first customer testing.	6
Established interest for product and relations with target customers.	5
Confirmed problem/needs from several customers or users	4
First market feedback established.	3
Identified specific needs in market.	2
Hypothesizing on possible needs in market.	1

Technology	Level
Actual Technology system proven in operational environment	9
Actual Technology system completed and qualified through test and demonstration	8
Technology prototype demonstration in an operational environment	7
Technology demonstration in a relevant environment	6
Technology validation in relevant environment	5
Technology validation in laboratory	4
Analytical and experimental proof-of-concept of critical function and/or characteristics	3
Technology concept and/or application formulated	2
Basic principles observed	1

Business	Level
Business model is final and is scaling with growing recurring revenues that results in a profitable and sustainable business	9
Sales and metrics show business model holds and can scale Business model is fine-tuned to explore more revenue options	8
Product/market fit and customers payment willingness demonstrated Attractive revenue vs cost projections (validated by data and sales)	7
Full business model incl. pricing verified on customers (by test sales)	6

Parts of business model tested on market and canvas updated First version of revenue model incl. pricing hypotheses Verified competitive position/uniqueness through market feedback	5
First version of full business model in canvas (incl. revenues/costs) First projections to show economic viability and market potential	4
Draft of business model in canvas (excl. revenues/costs) Described market potential and complete competitive overview	3
First possible business concept described (e.g. NABC) Identified overall market and some competitors/alternatives	2
Hypothesizing on possible business concept, little knowledge or insight into market and competition	1

Intellectual Property	Level
Strong IPR support and protection for business. Patent granted in relevant countries and maintained in force	9
IPR strategy and IP management fully implemented. More complete assessment of freedom-to-operate.	8
All relevant IPR filed (e.g. additional patents). Patent entry into national/regional phase.	7
IPR/patent strategy implemented and supporting business. Positive response on filed applications Initial assessment of freedom-to-operate (or landscape)	6
Draft of IPR/patent strategy in place to use IPR for business. Filed first complete patent application (or other IP registrations)	5
Confirmed if protection possible and for what (e.g. patentability). Decided why to protect certain IPR (business relevance).	4
Detailed description of possible key IPR Initial search of technical field and existing IPR.	3
Identified different forms of possible IPR that you have. Ownership is clarified and you clearly own/control IPR.	2
Hypothesizing on possible IPR you might have (patents, software, copyright, trade secrets)	1
Funding	Level
Investment obtained. Additional investment needs and options continuously considered.	9
There is corporate order and structure enabling investment. Term sheet discussions with interested investor(s).	8
Team presents a solid investment case incl. status and plans. Discussions with potential investors on-going around an offer	7

Improved investor presentation in place incl. business/ financials. Decided on seeking private investors and initial contacts taken	6
Investor oriented presentation and supporting material tested. Applied for and secured additional larger funding (soft or other).	5
Good pitch and short presentation of the business in place. Plan in place with different funding options over time	4
Well described business concept and initial verification plan. First small soft funding secured.	3
Description of business concept. Defined funding needs and options for initial milestones.	2
Initial business idea with vague description. No clear view on funding needs and options	1
Team	Level
High performing, well-structured team and organization, maintained and performs over time.	9
Management and CEO in place. Professional use of board/advisors. Activated plan and recruitment for building long term team.	8
Team and culture is fully in place and proactively developed. Updated plan for building necessary team on longer term.	7
Complementary, diverse and committed team with all necessary competencies/resources incl. both business and tech.	6
Initial founding team with main needed competencies. Team agrees on ownership and roles and has aligned goals	5
A champion is present. Several needed competencies in place. Initiated plan for recruiting or securing additional key resources.	4
A few of necessary competencies/resources are present. Defined needed competencies/resources (and plan for finding).	3
Insight and first idea on necessary competencies or external resources (e.g. partners).	2
Little insight into the need for a team (typically an individual) Lack of necessary competencies/resources.	1

1.4 Ideation Workshop

Introduction

Creating an innovation is a difficult task. Inventing a new technology, creating new combinations of existing technologies, finding different uses for a technology, or creating new markets costs a lot of time, determination and investments and requires expertise, creativity and much dedication. To be able

to successfully launch and sustain an innovation, however, the technology itself isn't sufficient; you also need a good business plan. But what is a business plan, and why is it important? This document functions as a 'business plan 101', to explain why it's needed, and what it entails. It also provides useful tips and tricks for writing the business plan.

Importance

As good business plan is essential for the success of an innovation and survival of a firm. Not only will a business plan force you to make choices on strategy, marketing and financial aspects that will determine, along with the technological aspect, the success of the innovation, but it is also required to get the necessary funding to survive. This may seem strange, since it seems like we live in the Golden Age of startups, where there are more start-ups than in the years before. The Kauffman Index of Startup Activity, the leading startup index for the US, rose in 2016 to a level of 0.38 (Kauffman, 2016). This indicates that their broadest measure of startup activity is now above the U.S. historical average from the last twenty years. Forbes even stated that "a new era for entrepreneurs and startups has begun" (Forbes, 2013)

However, it is no secret that the vast majority of the startups fail. According to Forbes, this number is as high as 90% (Forbes, 2014). Scientific research, such as research by Grimaldi et al (2011), Wennberg et al (2011) and Ortín-Ángel and Vendrell-Herrero (2014) show that of these firms, those based on new technology (New Technology Based Firms), have even higher death rates. This is especially true for firms based on academic research, due to the novelty and radicalness of their technology.

Funding is especially important in the long run. A common term amongst startups is the 'valley of death' as shown in the figure on the right. While most startups can obtain funding for testing and developing their prototype, funding is hard to obtain during a commercialization, when results are still little and finances are low. It is therefore of utmost importance that there is a funding strategy in the early development stages of a new firm.

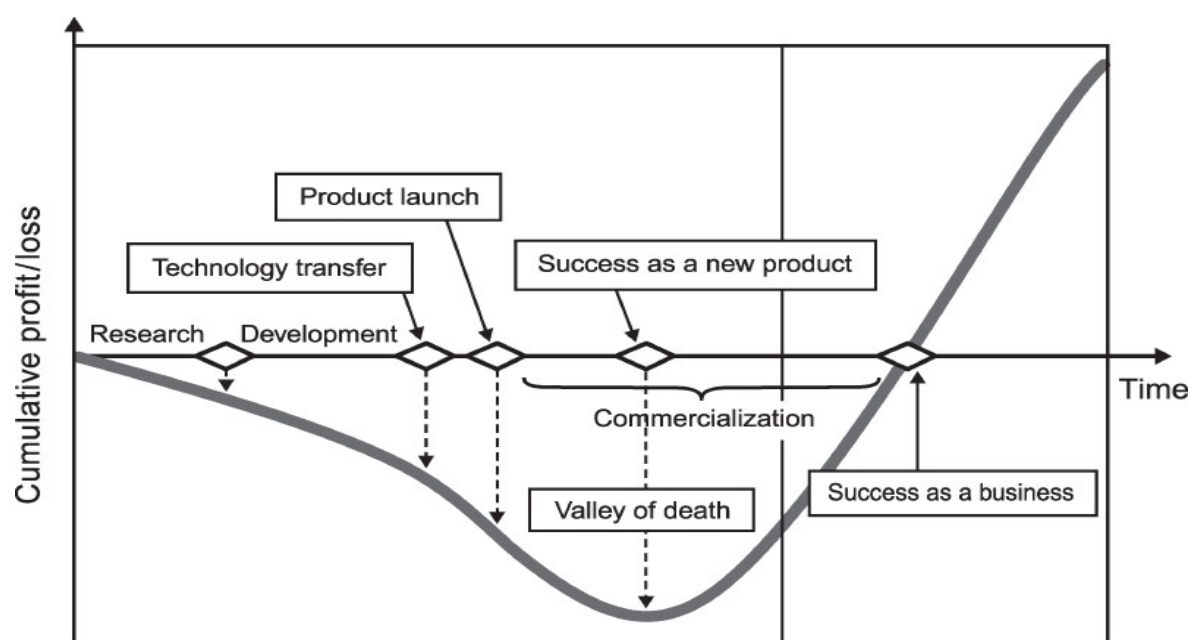


Figure 15 The 'Valley of Death' (Osawa and Miyazaki, 2006)

Workshop

This workshop is designed to guide you through the process of ideation, innovation, and business strategy development. Whether you are an entrepreneur, a business leader, or a creative thinker, this workshop will provide you with a structured framework to bring your innovative ideas to life and build a robust business model around them. In this workshop, we will explore various segments that are critical for the success of your innovation project. Each segment represents a key aspect of the business canvas, helping you create a comprehensive and actionable plan. By the end of this workshop, you will have a clear understanding of your innovation's purpose, its potential impact on practical, environmental, and social aspects, the strengths of your team, and how to build essential partnerships. You will also delve into long-term goals and strategies, adoption and social acceptance strategies, market analysis, the business model, technology assessment, and financial viability.

Segment 1: General Aspects of the Innovation

1.1 Purpose:

- Define the overarching purpose and objectives of your innovation.
- Specify the problem or need that your innovation addresses.

1.2 Technology:

- Describe the core technology or solution at the heart of your project.
- Explain what makes your technology unique and relevant in the market.

1.3 Expected Results:

- Outline the tangible outcomes and benefits that your innovation aims to achieve.
- Identify specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure success.

Segment 2: Impact

2.1 Practical Impact:

- Explore how your innovation will solve practical problems or pain points.
- Highlight potential improvements in efficiency, convenience, or effectiveness.

2.2 Environmental Impact:

- Analyze the environmental implications of your innovation.
- Consider sustainability, eco-friendliness, and resource conservation.

2.3 Social Impact:

- Delve into the social consequences of your innovation.
- Discuss how it may positively or negatively affect communities or society.

Segment 3: Team

3.1 Available Expertise:

- Introduce your team members and their relevant expertise.
- Highlight the skills, knowledge, and experience that each member brings.

3.2 Responsibility Allocation:

- Define roles and responsibilities within your team.
- Ensure clarity on who is responsible for critical tasks and decisions.

3.3 Accountability:

- Establish mechanisms for accountability and decision-making.
- Discuss how your team will address challenges and adapt to changes.

Segment 4: Partners

4.1 Available Associates and Assets:

- List current partners, collaborators, and resources at your disposal.
- Explain their contributions to the project.

4.2 Missing Associates and Assets:

- Identify any gaps in partnerships or resources.
- Discuss what is needed to fill these gaps.

4.3 Required Associates and Assets:

- Specify the ideal partners or resources required for success.
- Explain how these additions will enhance your project.

Segment 5: Long-term Ambition

5.1 Goals:

- Define your innovation's long-term goals and objectives.
- Consider both short-term and long-term milestones that will lead to success.

5.2 Strategy:

- Outline the overall strategy for achieving your goals.
- Discuss potential challenges and mitigation plans to ensure resilience.

5.3 Timeline:

- Create a timeline that maps out the project's development and growth.
- Highlight critical milestones, deadlines, and phases of implementation.

Segment 6: Adoption and Social Acceptance

6.1 Legitimacy:

- Explore strategies to gain legitimacy and trust within your target audience.
- Discuss regulatory compliance, certifications, and industry standards.

6.2 Visibility:

- Develop a plan to increase the visibility of your innovation.
- Identify marketing and promotional strategies to raise awareness.

6.3 Profile:

- Define the desired public profile for your innovation and brand.
- Discuss branding and reputation management strategies.

Segment 7: Market Analysis

7.1 Market Definition and Segmentation:

- Clearly define your target market and its various segments.
- Analyze the size, demographics, and characteristics of each segment.

7.2 User Needs:

- Identify the specific needs and pain points of your target users.
- Explain how your innovation addresses these needs effectively.

7.3 Competition:

- Analyze the competitive landscape within your market.
- Identify key competitors, their strengths, weaknesses, and market positioning.

Segment 8: Business Model

8.1 Cost Structure:

- Break down the costs associated with your innovation project.
- Discuss strategies for managing expenses and optimizing resource allocation.

8.2 Revenue Streams:

- Identify potential sources of revenue for your innovation.
- Determine pricing models, sales channels, and monetization strategies.

8.3 Entry Strategy:

- Explain how your innovation will enter the market successfully.
- Consider partnerships, distribution channels, and initial sales strategies.

Segment 9: Technology Assessment

9.1 Feasibility:

- Evaluate the technical feasibility of your innovation.
- Discuss potential technical challenges and solutions to overcome them.

9.2 Novelty:

- Highlight the novelty and uniqueness of your technology or solution.
- Consider intellectual property (IP) protection and strategies.

9.3 Risks:

- Identify technological risks and potential obstacles.
- Develop contingency plans to address unexpected challenges.

Segment 10: Financial Viability

10.1 Pricing: - Determine pricing strategies for your products or services. - Consider competitive pricing, value propositions, and pricing models.

10.2 Volume: - Estimate sales volume and market penetration targets. - Discuss strategies to achieve and sustain sales levels.

10.3 Profits: - Project financial outcomes, including revenue, expenses, and profits. - Create financial models and forecasts to guide decision-making.

Segment 11: Presentation

11.1 Prepare a concise and engaging presentation that summarizes key points from each segment. 11.2 Present your innovation, its potential impact, and the business model to the workshop participants.

Segment 12: Reflection

12.1 Facilitate a reflective discussion among participants. 12.2 Collect feedback on the workshop content, format, and overall experience. 12.3 Identify next steps and actionable items to move your innovation project forward.

1.5 BRANDING SUPPORT METHODOLOGY

The Branding Support methodology was developed as a structured framework comprising four comprehensive stages, designed specifically to maximize innovator market readiness and ensure strategic alignment with investor and customer expectations. This methodology provided a clear and systematic approach, enabling innovators to build robust and differentiated brand identities.

- **Step 1: Defining your audience for strategic engagement**
This initial stage focuses on precisely identifying and deeply understanding target audiences. Innovators are guided through comprehensive market analyses and customer segmentation exercises. The goal is to equip innovators with detailed audience profiles, enabling them to craft targeted marketing strategies and effectively engage potential customers and stakeholders.
- **Step 2: Crafting your unique value proposition**
In this critical stage, innovators are supported to articulate a compelling and distinct value proposition. Workshops and tailored activities enable an innovator to clearly differentiate their offerings from competitors, ensuring their value proposition resonated strongly with targeted market segments and stakeholders. The resulting strategic clarity is pivotal in securing market differentiation and competitive advantage.
- **Step 3: Developing impactful messaging**
This stage emphasizes creating powerful and memorable messaging strategies. Innovators collaborate closely with support experts to develop concise and persuasive messages that resonated deeply with their identified audiences. The goal is to ensure consistent, impactful communication that clearly conveyed each brand's unique value, facilitating better brand recall and strengthening market positioning.
- **Step 4: Creating a compelling pitch deck for success**
The final stage culminated in developing professional and persuasive pitch decks. Innovators receive targeted guidance on how to effectively communicate their unique value propositions, competitive advantages, and strategic opportunities. The resulting pitch decks are structured to attract investor interest, secure funding opportunities, and enhance broader market engagement. This stage significantly increases the innovators' preparedness and confidence in investor interactions and market presentations.

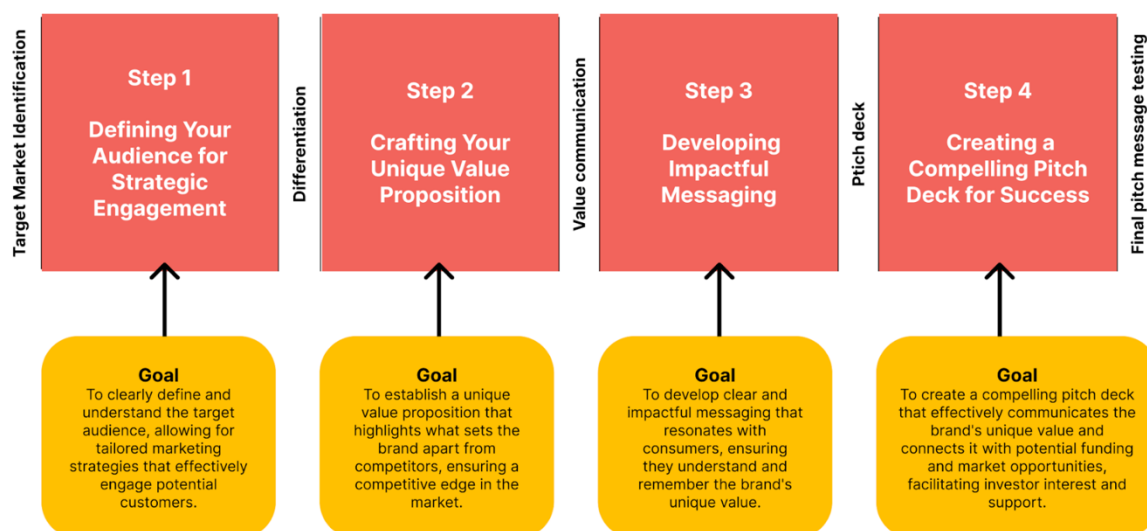


Figure 16 Branding support methodology steps

1.6 BRANDING PROGRAM: EVOLUTION AND INNOVATOR FEEDBACK

The branding program was initially [designed with a structured approach](#) of four sessions per innovator, focusing on market analysis, value proposition definition, development of key messages, and preparation of investment materials. However, after the pilot phase with two innovators, it became clear that this rigid scheme did not always meet the specific needs of each project. **Therefore, a more flexible and personalized approach was adopted, tailoring the program from the very first conversations to ensure that each innovator can follow it effectively and gain the value they truly need.**

The feedback from the innovators has been very positive, highlighting the strategic adaptation to their teams, processes, and objectives. Some have even expressed the intention to continue with the process they started and have highly valued the impact that the branding approach has contributed to the direction of their projects.

2.0 The Innovation support scheme

The ARSINOE Innovation support scheme was implemented through a structured methodology as described in the previous chapter, combining best-practice tools in innovation assessment, business development, impact planning, and strategic funding. The support approach builds upon proven frameworks (such as the Technology Readiness Levels and the Innovation Readiness Framework) and is tailored to the specific context of climate resilience innovations.

The methodology can be summarized in four key components:

- (i) an initial innovation assessment and needs diagnosis
- (ii) business model and plan development support (incl. branding support)

- (iii) impact and sustainability guidance, and
- (iv) strategic funding and investment readiness support.

Each of these components is detailed below.

2.1 Innovation assessment and needs diagnosis

At the start of the support scheme, each innovator involved in the process underwent a thorough intake assessment (interview) to determine their current stage of development, strengths, and priority needs. This intake process was essential to define the demand for support and to customize the consultancy services for maximum effectiveness. The assessment combined qualitative interviews with quantitative tools:

- Technology Readiness Level (TRL) Evaluation. The technical maturity of the innovation was gauged using the standard TRL scale (1–9). TRL provides a systematic way to evaluate a technology’s maturity from basic principles (TRL 1) up to a proven operational solution (TRL 9). All innovators in the scheme had already progressed beyond basic research; for context, most were in the prototype demonstration to operational testing range (approximately TRL 5–7) at scheme outset. This understanding helped align support actions (e.g. validation activities or demonstration planning) with each innovation’s development phase.
- Innovation Readiness Framework (IRF) Assessment. To go beyond technical readiness, ARSINOE applied a comprehensive Innovation Readiness Framework evaluating six key dimensions of innovation development: Customer readiness, Technology readiness, Business model readiness, Intellectual Property (IPR) readiness, Team readiness, and Funding readiness. Each dimension is scored on a scale from 1 to 9, analogous to TRL, indicating the maturity of that aspect (see Annex 1 for the detailed framework criteria). For example, customer readiness ranges from hypothesizing customer needs (level 1) to having widespread paying customers and scalable sales (level 9), while funding readiness ranges from basic concept phase funding (level 1) to securing sufficient growth funding (level 9). By assessing all six dimensions, a “readiness profile” or scorecard was created for each innovator. This highlighted critical gaps, for instance, some innovators had high technical maturity but low business model readiness or weak funding readiness, which then informed the focus of support sessions
- Pathway intake interview: The support team (consultants from Brigaid Connect/TFC) conducted structured interviews with each innovator’s team. This intake workshop covered strategic aspects such as the innovator’s value proposition, target markets, revenue model, team composition, and challenges faced. By discussing these topics, rather than a simple questionnaire, the consultants could better capture each innovator’s context and immediately begin co-designing the support plan. Common initial findings included the need to refine market focus, articulate a clearer business model, or improve communication of impact, all of which directly mapped onto the IRF dimensions.

Using the results of the TRL and IRF assessments, a tailored support plan was formulated for each innovator. Typically, innovators with lower business model or customer readiness scores were scheduled for intensive business model coaching, while those with lower funding readiness were prioritized for funding strategy and investor matchmaking support. This diagnostic step ensured that subsequent support was targeted and efficient, addressing the specific barriers preventing each innovation from achieving wider uptake (it should be noted

that the Innovation Readiness Framework used in ARSINOE is an adaptation of methods from previous EU innovation support initiatives such as BRIGAD). The benefits of this structured approach include the ability to visualize and measure progress across multiple dimensions, provide guidance on doing the right tasks at the right time, and communicate effectively with stakeholders about an innovation's status.

2.2 Business model and business plan development

A central pillar of Task 5.4 was to convert technically promising, case-study-driven innovations into credible market offerings with viable business models and execution plans. Evidence from BRIGAD (2016–2020) and early ARSINOE scoping showed that many climate-resilience solutions originate from research-oriented teams with limited business development capacity. Consequently, ARSINOE's Innovation Support Service complemented technical progress with structured business planning and commercialisation support, ensuring that each selected innovator could articulate a compelling market logic, quantify value creation, and plan for sustainable growth.

The approach combined a diagnostic–co-design–validation cycle. Following a brief readiness and needs assessment, innovators were guided through iterative business model design (using the Business Model Canvas), targeted market and competitor analysis, and financial planning (basic projections, cost structure, and break-even reasoning appropriate to stage). One-to-one coaching and document reviews translated these building blocks into improved business plans (or upgrades to existing plans). Where relevant, this strand interfaced with funding readiness activities (e.g., aligning the plan with the requirements of public programmes and investor expectations) and with the branding support strand to ensure consistency between the commercial strategy, narrative, and investment materials.

Business plan support

Each innovator was either assisted in drafting a formal business plan or, if one existed, given detailed feedback to enhance it. A solid business plan is crucial for startup survival and growth, as it forces the team to identify potential risks, market needs, and resource requirements in advance. Key aspects covered in the business plan support included:

- Market analysis. Defining the target market, estimating its size and growth potential, and identifying customer segments. For example, innovators had to quantify the climate adaptation market niche they address and analyze trends (e.g. increasing flood risk driving demand for SaferPlaces' platform). Market size and growth projections were used as indicators of potential success.
- Competitive landscape. Assessing existing solutions and competitors, and articulating the innovator's unique value proposition or competitive advantage. This analysis followed frameworks like Porter's forces to ensure the start-up understands its positioning.
- Business Model Canvas development. The TFC support team employed the Business Model Canvas (BMC) as a tool to iterate and refine each innovator's business model. The BMC covers key elements such as value propositions, customer segments, channels, revenue streams, key activities, resources, and partners. By mapping out these elements, gaps and assumptions became clear. For instance, one innovator (SaferPlaces by GECOSistema) had a draft BMC which was reviewed: its strength was a concise overview of the business, but it was suggested to improve the visual clarity and incorporate more graphics or icons for each section. The support team recommended enhancements to ensure the BMC effectively communicates the innovation's story to investors and partners.

- **Financial planning.** Although many of these early-stage innovators did not yet have significant revenues, TFC introduced basic financial projections into the business planning. This included outlining revenue models (e.g. subscription fees, licensing, service contracts), cost structure, and break-even analysis under various scenarios. Such planning helps demonstrate economic viability to funders and identifies how much capital might be needed for scale-up.
- **Team and organizational planning.** Evaluating the team's competencies and organizational structure was part of the business plan review. The support scheme encouraged innovators to identify gaps in their team (for example, lack of marketing expertise or financial management) and consider strategies to fill them, whether through hiring, partnerships, or advisory boards. Many reasons start-ups fail (such as lack of necessary skills or poor management) can be mitigated by early recognition and action, which a business plan process facilitates. Multiple one-on-one business coaching sessions were conducted. In a workshop setting, general principles were taught (e.g. how to clearly define a value proposition or how to conduct market sizing), and then innovators worked individually with TFC on their specific plans. The outcome for each innovator was a significantly improved business plan document or canvas, which in turn made them more attractive and prepared when approaching funders or partners. In some cases, the iterative process also helped innovators pivot or sharpen their business strategy (for example, SingularGreen deliberated whether to focus on one flagship product versus a broader suite, see Section 3.4, and the business model discussions were central to this strategic decision). Overall, this business development support ensured that each innovation had a credible plan for deployment and growth, aligning technology solutions with real market needs and viable operational models. The emphasis was on transforming technical innovations into sustainable businesses capable of delivering climate resilience impacts in the long term.

Branding support

As an outcome of the needs analysis, five innovators also expressed their interest in branding support. The ARSINOE Branding Support Service was designed as a strategic capacity-building intervention aimed at significantly enhancing innovators' market readiness and positioning through targeted brand development. Recognizing the critical role of effective branding in innovation uptake, the program offered structured yet adaptable guidance, enabling innovators to clearly communicate their unique value propositions to investors, customers, and stakeholders.

The support methodology comprised four comprehensive stages:

1. Audience definition and strategic engagement

Innovators received detailed assistance in identifying and deeply understanding their target audiences through rigorous market analyses and customer segmentation exercises. This enabled them to design tailored engagement strategies that effectively connected their innovations with relevant market segments.

2. Development of unique value propositions

In collaborative workshops, innovators were guided to articulate compelling, differentiated value propositions that highlighted distinct competitive advantages. This stage ensured clarity and precision in how innovators presented their innovations, significantly strengthening their appeal to investors and customers alike.

3. Creation of impactful brand messaging

The service provided expert support in formulating clear, memorable, and impactful brand messages. Innovators refined their communication strategies to resonate powerfully with targeted audiences,

facilitating stronger brand recall, improved market positioning, and enhanced stakeholder engagement.

4. Preparation of professional investment materials

Innovators received dedicated support to develop professional and persuasive decks (or strategic brand programs to develop them), designed specifically to attract investor interest and facilitate funding acquisition. These materials clearly communicated innovators' market potential, competitive advantages, and strategic business opportunities, increasing their confidence and capability in investor and partner interactions.

Overall, the Branding Support Service significantly elevated participating innovators' abilities to strategically position themselves within their respective markets. The tailored, flexible approach ensured each innovator received actionable, customized support aligned with their specific needs and capacities.

2.3 Impact and sustainability guidance

Beyond commercial viability, ARSINOE's support scheme also incorporated guidance on articulating and measuring the environmental and societal impact of the innovations. Given ARSINOE's mission to build climate-resilient regions, it was important that the supported solutions not only have a sound business model, but also demonstrable benefits for communities and ecosystems. This dual focus on profit and purpose aligns with the growing emphasis on sustainability and impact investment in the innovation landscape.

Impact plan development

Innovators were introduced to frameworks for defining and tracking their impact. A commonly used approach in the support was the "Dimensions of Impact" (as adapted from social impact assessment methodologies), asking: what is the intended impact (the outcome itself), who experiences it (target population or environment), how much impact (scale and intensity), contribution (the innovation's role versus baseline or alternatives), and risk (likelihood that impact will differ from expected). By systematically addressing these questions, innovators refined their understanding of how their product or service contributes to climate resilience. For example, Aventour Albania (one of the case innovators) defined its impact in terms of sustainable tourism: What: fostering eco-friendly tourism practices; Who: local communities and international eco-tourists; How much: expected increase in local tourism income and conservation awareness; Contribution: introducing novel self-guided tour platform supporting biodiversity; Risk: potential low adoption if travel patterns change. Such articulation not only helps in mission-driven decision-making but is also valuable when communicating with grant programs or impact investors who prioritize environmental and social returns.

Impact measurement and KPIs

The support team advised innovators on identifying Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for impact. This included both technical KPIs (e.g. number of floods predicted by a platform, reduction in assessment time) and outcome KPIs (e.g. reduction in damages or people reached with climate alerts). Innovators like HYDS, which provides multi-risk climate hazard solutions, were encouraged to develop KPIs around how their tool improves emergency response times or mitigates losses, as these metrics strengthen the case to customers and public authorities. In some cases, methodologies such as Social Return on Investment (SROI) were introduced conceptually, to help innovators consider how to quantify the social value created in monetary terms. While a full SROI analysis was beyond the scope for most, understanding this concept prepared innovators to engage with future funders who may request evidence of socio-environmental return.

Theory of Change and scaling strategy

For the more mature innovations, consultants facilitated discussions on their Theory of Change: mapping out how their innovation leads to long-term resilience outcomes through a chain of activities and intermediate results. This helped ensure that as the business scales, it remains aligned with ARSINOE's climate resilience objectives. Moreover, the support scheme linked innovators with WP8 experts to discuss scaling strategies and replication of their solutions in other regions (leveraging ARSINOE's network for potential pilot expansions or new user groups). This horizontal learning across case study regions was an added benefit of the scheme's integration with WP8's outreach and replication tasks. By integrating impact and sustainability considerations into the support scheme, ARSINOE ensured that the innovations are not only market-ready but also mission-ready, poised to deliver tangible resilience benefits in line with European Green Deal priorities and capable of attracting funding sources that value sustainability (such as green funding instruments or impact investors). This approach supports the long-term exploitation and legacy of project innovations, a primary goal of WP8.

2.4 Strategic funding and investment readiness

Securing appropriate funding is often one of the biggest challenges for innovators transitioning from prototype to scaled implementation. Accordingly, a significant portion of the ARSINOE uptake support scheme was devoted to strategic funding guidance: helping each innovator to navigate the landscape of grants, investors, and other financing options, and to improve their readiness to obtain funding. This component of the support scheme was closely linked to ARSINOE's sustainable finance activities (WP7) and exploited the expertise of partners in strategic funding consulting. The support provided was structured into a stepwise process, covering both public funding (grants) and private funding (equity or investment). The approach can be summarized in four stages, which were presented to innovators as the "Funding Readiness Journey".

1. **Funding readiness preparation.** Objective: Ensure the innovator is well-prepared to apply for public funding opportunities. Activities: Consultants conducted a market readiness evaluation and business plan analysis for the innovator's solution, and performed a market analysis to validate the market need and sizing. The outcome of this stage was a clear understanding of which public funding programs (e.g. Horizon Europe, national innovation grants) are most relevant to the innovator and confirmation that prerequisite elements (e.g. a solid business plan, letters of support, initial traction data) are in place. For instance, after this stage, Pramtech recognized it needed to strengthen its value proposition and gather pilot data before approaching Horizon Europe Green Deal calls.
2. **360-Degree funding scan.** Objective: Identify specific suitable grant opportunities and explore potential private funding avenues in a comprehensive manner. Activities: The support team performed a deep dive into the organization's strategy, goals, and partnerships, ensuring a 360° view of its development roadmap. Based on this, a scanning exercise searched for relevant upcoming calls (EU, national or regional grants) and also considered private funding options such as innovation competitions, accelerators, or seed investors that align with the innovator's domain. This scan was "360-degree" in that it looked at all angles of funding, not only obvious choices but also less traditional sources. Each innovator was guided through relevant funding options for them. For example, SaferPlaces (GECOSistema) was pointed to EU Space Agency programs and insurance sector innovation funds as additional opportunities beyond the known climate innovation grants.

3. **Kickstart funding applications.** Objective: Actively support the innovator in applying to the most promising funding schemes identified. Activities: Consultants provided advice on specific application requirements and evaluation criteria for each target grant. They reviewed potential projects e.g. Pramtech discussed the scope of a potential Eurostars project with the guidance of the support team, focusing on R&D collaboration to expand into new markets (Eurostars encourages international partnerships and was suggested as a fit for Pramtech's goals).
4. **Venture capital readiness & Investor outreach.** Objective: Prepare innovators to secure private investment (equity or venture capital) and guide them through the initial outreach to investors. Activities: This involved a multi-faceted coaching on investor readiness. Innovators received support to refine their pitch decks and investment narratives, clearly articulating market problem, solution, traction, team, and financial projections, to appeal to investors. The team conducted mock pitch sessions and provided constructive feedback. For instance, in the case of SaferPlaces, TFC reviewed their existing pitch deck and agreed on improvements to highlight technology readiness and market potential. Additionally, consultants advised on identifying and approaching suitable investors (sometimes leveraging their own networks). They helped innovators segment potential investors by type (angel, VC, corporate fund) and interest area, what milestones to achieve before approaching certain VCs, and how to handle initial meetings. For innovators like SingularGreen and SaferPlaces, a timeline for investor outreach was discussed, recognizing that aligning outreach with internal readiness (and not rushing unprepared) is important. In SaferPlaces' case, it was decided to postpone major investor approaches to early 2025 to allow the company to focus on ongoing contracts and strengthen their market position. The support team remained available to coach through negotiations if any investor discussions progressed towards term sheets (covering basics of deal terms, valuation, etc.).

Overall, this strategic funding support significantly improved each innovator's ability to secure financing appropriate to their stage. It combined immediate practical assistance (finding calls, reviewing proposals) with capacity-building (teaching the innovators how to approach funding strategically). The scheme's linkage to WP7 provided additional resources, such as the draft Manual on Sustainable Finance (ARSINOE Task 7.5), ensuring that innovators were aware of cutting-edge financial instruments (e.g. green bonds, blended finance opportunities) and the importance of aligning with environmental, social, governance (ESG) criteria in their funding strategy. Notably, a mindset was instilled that different funding sources match different phases of development. For instance, grants for early-stage R&D, accelerators for validation stage, and venture capital for growth and that funding readiness involves matching the right type of funding to the current needs. By the end of the support programme, all nine innovators had developed clearer roadmaps for funding, whether that meant having an action plan for further business plan development, pipeline of grant submissions, a refined investor pitch ready, or connections made to potential funders.

3.0 Innovation Support Services provided to selected innovators

In this section, the support provided to each of the six selected innovators is described in detail. For each innovator, we outline the background of their innovation, the specific challenges or needs identified, the consultancy and coaching actions undertaken through the ARSINOE support scheme, and the outcomes or next steps resulting from this assistance. The nine case-specific sub-sections correspond to the participants of the support scheme:

- 3.1 Pramtech (Ireland). Millimeter-wave radar sensing for infrastructure monitoring.
- 3.2 GECOSistema/ SaferPlaces (Italy). AI-based flood risk analytics platform.
- 3.3 Build Green Group (Albania). Sustainability-focused research and consulting organization.
- 3.4 SingularGreen (Spain). Nature-based solutions and natural swimming pool technology.
- 3.5 HYDS (Spain). Multi-risk climate hazard early warning solutions.
- 3.6 Aventour Albania (Albania). Eco-tourism platform for sustainable regional tourism Each sub-section provides a narrative of the engagement, including meeting dates and participants where relevant, and summarizes the support activities (aligned with the methodology in Section 2) that were delivered.
- 3.7. Śliwa & Doboš Architekci (Poland). Riverbank protection.
- 3.8. Solumar (Bulgaria). Focused gas filtering technology, emission reduction.
- 3.9. Waltr (France). Emission tracking services.

3.1 Pramtech. Radar Sensor Technology for Infrastructure Resilience

Innovation overview

Pramtech is a start-up developing millimetre-wave radar sensors to monitor the condition of critical infrastructure assets under stress from climate change. The technology enables high-resolution, remote detection of structural damage and deformation. Applications include monitoring bridges, roads, and rail networks for early signs of damage (e.g. cracks, strain) as well as measuring water levels and flood impacts on infrastructure. At the time of entering the support scheme, Pramtech's project was in early stages: they had a working prototype but limited field deployment. The company had applied to ARSINOE's earlier open tender for innovations but was not selected for funding under that call. However, the tender review panel expressed interest, and an academic partner suggested other funding avenues (such as Horizon Europe). This indicated that while Pramtech's core technology was promising, it needed further development and support to reach market application.

Initial needs assessment

The intake assessment (June 2024) with Pramtech's founder (Martin) and the support consultants identified key needs in funding strategy and business case development. Technologically, Pramtech was around TRL 4-5, lab-validated and preparing for pilot tests, but the company lacked experience in attracting investment or customers at this stage. Their prior funding had come mainly from grants plus personal and angel investments. The innovator was uncertain whether to pursue additional grants or equity financing next, and how to make the project attractive to either type of funder. The IRF assessment highlighted a gap in Funding Readiness and Customer Readiness: no paying customers yet and a need to articulate a clearer value proposition to infrastructure asset owners (the target market).

Support provided

Over a series of tailored sessions, ARSINOE provided Pramtech with guidance in the following areas: Funding strategy and Investor readiness. In the first meeting, Pramtech inquired whether the support scheme itself offered any direct funding or investment. It was clarified that ARSINOE's support was in-kind consultancy, not a grant, and that the appropriate type of external funding (grant vs. investment) depends on Pramtech's needs and stage of development. The consultants analyzed Pramtech's situation

and advised that since the product was pre-revenue and still proving its market fit, non-dilutive funding (grants) would be ideal to finance further R&D and pilot deployments, avoiding early equity dilution. However, they also discussed the expectations of investors for when the time comes: for example, investors generally seek a well-defined business case with evidence of market traction. The concept of pre-revenue investment was explored, acknowledging it is possible but tends to come with higher risk and thus lower valuations for the company. This helped Pramtech understand that if they sought venture capital too early, they might have to give up significant equity, so it might be wise to pursue grants or strategic partnerships first.

Identification of funding opportunities

The team performed a 360-degree funding scan (as described in Section 2.4) tailored to Pramtech. Given the nature of the technology, European innovation programs were a prime target. The consultants and Pramtech discussed opportunities like the Eurostars program (for which Pramtech could partner with a research institution to get co-funding for product development), EIC Accelerator (a highly competitive but well-funded EU instrument for deep-tech start-ups), and national grants in Ireland focusing on infrastructure resilience. Horizon Europe collaborative calls in climate adaptation and smart infrastructure were also flagged. In particular, since an academic on the ARSINOE tender panel had already suggested Horizon 2020 (now Horizon Europe) opportunities, the support team helped Pramtech map out relevant upcoming calls and advised on building a consortium if needed. They also connected Pramtech with that academic to explore joining a consortium proposal as the SME technology partner.

Branding support

Another meeting focused on Pramtech's business model and commercialization roadmap. While the technical idea was strong, Pramtech needed to clarify who the paying customers would be (e.g. infrastructure owners like municipalities or transport authorities, engineering firms, insurance companies for risk monitoring) and how to price the solution (sensor hardware sales vs. data service subscriptions). TFC helped Pramtech outline a basic business model canvas. A critical discussion was on demonstrating market need and urgency: since Pramtech addresses climate-induced infrastructure risks, the team was advised to gather data or case studies on infrastructure failures or costs that could be avoided with better monitoring. This strengthens the value proposition for customers and funders alike by quantifying the problem.

Investor outreach preparation

Although immediate focus was on grants, the scheme also prepared Pramtech for eventual investor outreach. The consultants provided a template pitch deck and reviewed Pramtech's first attempt at one. They gave feedback on highlighting the technology's unique aspects (e.g. millimeter-wave radar advantages over traditional sensors), protecting intellectual property (Patents – Pramtech was encouraged to file a patent or at least ensure freedom-to-operate, touching on IPR readiness), and including a clear ask (how much funding is sought and for what milestones). Potential investor leads were also suggested, such as Imec.xpand, a Belgian fund with expertise in engineering and chip technology, which might have higher risk tolerance for a sensor hardware startup. By recommending such niche investors, the support helped expand Pramtech's network beyond the typical climate-tech VC list.

Alternative pathways: The scheme kept an open mind to alternative opportunities for Pramtech. For example, partnerships with larger engineering companies were discussed as a way to pilot the technology on real projects, which could later lead to investment or acquisition. Also, since Pramtech's founder had an academic connection, leveraging university lab facilities or student projects was suggested to advance development at low cost while also demonstrating support (this could be mentioned in grant proposals to show capability).

Outcomes and next steps for Pramtech

As a result of the support, Pramtech developed a clearer funding roadmap: they planned to submit an application to the Eurostars program in late 2025 (partnering with a university from Belgium, facilitated by contacts from the support team) and planned a submission to a national innovation scheme in early 2025. The business plan was refined with a sharper definition of target market and milestones. Pramtech also reported gaining a better understanding of how to position its innovation in terms of impact: emphasizing how improved monitoring could prevent costly infrastructure failures exacerbated by climate change, thus contributing to climate adaptation goals. They intended to continue pursuing the leads and strategies developed with ARSINOE's support, and remain in contact with the TFC for occasional advice beyond the project if needed.

3.2 GECOSistema / SaferPlaces. AI Platform for Flood Resilience Innovation

Overview

GECOSistema is an established Italian environmental engineering company (with ~15 years in operation) that has developed an innovative spin-off product called SaferPlaces. SaferPlaces is an AI-driven digital platform for flood risk prediction and intelligence. It integrates high-resolution geospatial data, climate data (e.g. from Copernicus), and advanced hydrological modeling to create digital twins of urban areas for flood simulation. The platform's aim is to make flood risk information readily accessible to a wide range of users, democratizing data that was traditionally siloed. Key features of SaferPlaces include real-time flood scenario simulations on the cloud, tailored resilience measures recommendations, and user-friendly interfaces for sectors like emergency management, urban planning, insurance, and infrastructure finance. By the time of the support scheme, SaferPlaces technology was fully developed and market-ready. In fact, it had already been recognized within ARSINOE by being selected in the second round of ARSINOE open tenders (receiving pilot funding through that mechanism). The company was thus poised for market introduction and scaling.

Initial needs assessment

Unlike some other innovators, SaferPlaces (backed by GECOSistema) had a relatively mature setup with existing clients testing the platform and prior accelerator experience. However, the intake meeting identified their key need as investment and scaling support. SaferPlaces had not yet raised external equity investment and was looking to do so to accelerate growth. They sought assistance particularly with pitch refinement and investor outreach. Additionally, even with a ready product, they recognized a need for marketing and communication improvements to broaden their user base. The IRF profile for SaferPlaces was strong on Technology and Team readiness, and moderate on Customer readiness (some paying clients in pilot phase, but not yet scaling). The area to improve was Funding readiness and Business model clarity for investor audiences.

Beyond these immediate investment needs, the intake discussion revealed additional requirements aligned with deepening client understanding and strategic prioritization:

- **Segmentation and audience clarity for SaferPlaces.** GECOSistema needed detailed buyer profiles, use-cases, and decision criteria to better understand SaferPlaces' diverse target client base.

- **Competitor benchmarking using visual models.** The company had previously attempted table-based comparisons and found them hard to interpret; the programme's spider-chart approach was assessed as clearer and more actionable.
- **Depth over familiarity.** Although GECOSistema had encountered customer persona exercises in the past, they were conducted "very lightly." The company welcomed a more rigorous and visual methodology, finding it "very interesting to start defining and detailing this exercise" as it would "help them understand their clients much better."
- **Strategic timing and prioritization challenge.** The team highlighted high workload demands, asking, "With so many tasks, how should we prioritize branding?" Their client portfolio included one main flagship project alongside several smaller initiatives, which required a pragmatic approach to allocating resources effectively. Support provided.

The ARSINOE support scheme engaged closely with SaferPlaces through multiple coaching sessions between June 2024 and early 2025, focusing on:

- **Pitch deck review and enhancement.** One of the first actions was to review SaferPlaces' existing investor pitch deck. The team agreed to go slide by slide and provide constructive feedback. The feedback covered content and storytelling: ensuring the problem statement (urban flood losses) was compelling and backed by numbers, the solution was clearly differentiated (AI + digital twin approach vs. traditional models), and the market size was convincingly quantified (global urban flood risk analytics market, etc.). TFC suggested SaferPlaces highlight their traction such as any city pilot projects or accolades (they had participated in climate accelerators) early in the deck to build credibility. They also noted that given GECOSistema's background, the deck could benefit from a sharper focus on the spin-off company's identity and growth plan, rather than the parent consultancy's history. In terms of design, it was recommended to use more visuals (maps of flood simulations, screenshots of the platform) and avoid overly technical jargon for investor audiences. Over a couple of iterations, SaferPlaces significantly improved their pitch deck, making it both appealing and comprehensive for investors, as was the objective set out.
- **Business model and scaling strategy.** The support scheme facilitated strategy discussions on how SaferPlaces should scale. There was a strategic question whether to grow SaferPlaces as a separate start-up seeking venture capital, or to keep it within GECOSistema's structure. TFC helped GECOSistema's leadership weigh pros and cons: spinning off could attract dedicated investment and agility, but also requires building separate operations; keeping it inhouse ensures stability but might limit growth pace. Ultimately, they leaned toward treating SaferPlaces as a start-up entity for pitching purposes, while leveraging GECOSistema's resources. The revenue model was examined. SaferPlaces considered a SaaS (Software-as-a-Service) model for city clients and a data licensing model for insurance. The support team analyzed these models' scalability and advised testing pricing strategies. They also pointed out the potential for recurring revenue (annual subscription by municipalities, for instance) which investors favor for predictability.
- **Investor targeting and outreach plan.** TFC and SaferPlaces compiled a list of steps to take in order to do a thorough outreach to potential investors. Timing was a key part of the plan. Recognizing SaferPlaces' team had many ongoing commitments (they were finalizing product features and executing contracts), the group decided it would be strategic to initiate investor outreach in early 2025 rather than immediately in 2024. This would allow SaferPlaces to accumulate more user success stories and perhaps secure one or two paying city clients, strengthening their case. In 2025, SaferPlaces shared their renewed pitchdeck with TFC. They agreed to share it with potential investments to collect feedback and see whether they are interested. While the concept and

potential impact were compelling, specific feedback from investors highlighted critical development areas:

- Detailed breakdown and allocation clarity of the requested €2 million investment, specifying percentages and concrete milestones.
- Strengthening commercial validation by including letters of intent, testimonials, or additional detailed case studies to address modest initial traction (€400K in 2024).
- Clarifying the feasibility of projected rapid growth from €400K to over €8 million, detailing a robust go-to-market strategy, customer acquisition plans, and partnership approaches.
- Articulating clear technological differentiation, specifying patents, proprietary algorithms, and unique capabilities to highlight competitive advantage.
- Developing a clear and detailed international expansion strategy beyond the Italian market, including targeted markets, entry strategies, and associated timelines.
- Providing clarity on potential exit scenarios, strategic or financial buyers, and exit timelines.
- Comprehensive risk assessment and mitigation strategies addressing technological risks, market acceptance, regulatory challenges, and scalability concerns.

Branding support

GECOsistema possessed customer persona knowledge but had implemented it lightly, lacking the methodological depth needed for strategic client analysis and scaling. In Workshop 1, BRC introduced the four-step branding methodology: (1) audience definition, (2) value proposition, (3) messaging, (4) investment/sales materials, and aligned it to SaferPlaces' growth and investment objectives. Concretely:

- **Session 1 – Introduction and Client Prioritization**

Objectives: Present methodology for market segmentation and customer personas; define criteria to prioritize branding efforts.

Activity: Review of client portfolio structure, with one main client (SaferPlaces) and several secondary clients, discussing a pragmatic and scalable approach to resource allocation.

Outcome: Agreed on a phased approach: first consolidate branding for the main client, then gradually extend to secondary clients, validating the relevance of each persona.

- **Session 2 – Key Message Development**

Objectives: Refine value proposition messages based on prior exercises and feedback.

Activity: Workshop on developing value propositions, comparative analysis, and creating adaptable messaging for different clients.

Outcome: Draft messages for SaferPlaces and an adaptable framework for other clients, ensuring clear and consistent communication.

- **Branding Deliverable – Dossier/Deck**

Creation of a structured, visually clear dossier/deck integrating approved messages and workshop insights, designed for different audiences while highlighting the value proposition of the main client in an accessible way.

Relevant, agile outcomes: SaferPlaces now has structured client analysis with comprehensive personas for SaferPlaces, establishing a systematic methodology that can be replicated across their portfolio. They developed a refined dossier-deck and improved their investor readiness positioning. The programme

helped them move from superficial client understanding to deep, actionable market insights. The upcoming phases focused on refining messaging and creating specialized professional pitch materials based on these solid foundations, significantly enhancing their ability to communicate SaferPlaces' value to investors and broader market audiences.

By the end of the project, SaferPlaces had made concrete progress toward their scaling goals. They had a polished deck, a clear fundraising strategy and they are currently activating licenses. Internally, GECOSistema was aligning resources to possibly spin off SaferPlaces as a startup for the investment round. On the funding front, SaferPlaces was preparing an application for the EIC Accelerator in 2025, a significant step that could bring both grant and equity support if successful.

3.3 Build Green Group. Empowering Sustainable Development

Innovation overview

Build Green Group (BGG) is an Albanian organization founded in 2015 focusing on sustainability, environmental research, and community empowerment. BGG operates primarily as a consultancy and project implementer in areas of sustainable development and digital innovation. Its mission is to foster scientific research and sustainable practices, especially engaging youth. Over the years, BGG has produced numerous reports, organized environmental events, and conducted training programs. In 2024, its strategic priorities included topics like environmental justice and grassroots innovation. Unlike other innovators in the scheme, BGG is not a start-up with a single product, but rather an organization offering various services and looking to develop technological solutions within its projects (e.g. automated environmental sensors, GIS training platforms). BGG's inclusion in the ARSINOE support scheme was somewhat unique: the team was interested in exploring collaboration with ARSINOE partners to possibly commercialize some of their project outputs or enhance their capacity to access funding.

Needs assessment

A meeting with BGG's representative (Anjeza Sinani) and TFC was the primary engagement for intake. The agenda covered introductions, an overview of BGG's work, and discussion of possible collaboration/support. From this meeting, it became clear that BGG's needs were exploratory: they were interested in how the ARSINOE support could help them develop any product or service for commercialization. However, BGG primarily functions as a consultancy and training provider, without a specific proprietary innovation (aside from project-based tech solutions).

The ARSINOE team identified that BGG might benefit from general capacity building in funding strategies and innovation management if they were to pivot toward product development. BGG highlighted some tech-related activities BGG had done (like a platform to centralize environmental data, and offering GIS courses). These indicated BGG's potential to package some offerings (e.g., a digital environmental data platform) as an innovation.

Support discussion and outcome

During the initial meeting and follow-up communications, the support team provided advice but also assessed alignment. Key points were:

- Exploring product development: Brigaid Connect introduced how their support typically aids organizations with a specific innovation (product or service) in becoming marketready. BRC's role in helping with funding strategies, grant application reviews, and investment preparation, emphasizing the focus on technological innovations was explained. BRC inquired whether BGG had any particular technology or product

they wanted to commercialize beyond their consultancy services. BGG’s “technological solutions” were mostly project-based and that aside from consultancy, they hadn’t spun off a distinct product line yet. For instance, BGG had automated some sensors for a metallurgy data project and built a data platform, but these were implemented within donor projects, not as standalone products for sale.

- Potential collaboration focus: The conversation then shifted to what support might be relevant. BRC highlighted BGG could still benefit from services like pitching, financial strategy, etc., if they decided to develop one of their concepts into a scalable innovation. BGG was advised to internally discuss and identify a specific area (for example, a web platform for environmental monitoring or a digital education tool derived from their GIS courses) that could be turned into a product. If such focus was determined, ARSINOE could then help shape a business plan and funding approach around it.
- The session concluded with two action items. BRC has send BGG a presentation and more information on the support services (so BGG could fully grasp what was on offer), and BGG would confer with her team to pinpoint their needs or potential innovation idea for collaboration. After internal deliberation, BGG came back with the realization that their core activities remain centered on consultancy and research services rather than developing a marketable product. Essentially, the innovation support services offered by ARSINOE (geared toward product/service commercialization) did not neatly align with BGG’s current model. In a concluding note, it was acknowledged that ARSINOE’s support, being focused on technological innovation, might not add significant value to an organization whose output is largely reports and grant-funded projects. As such, the decision was made that BRC would not pursue intensive innovation support with BGG going forward. Nevertheless, light guidance provided. Even though a full support trajectory was not executed for BGG, the interaction was constructive. BGG gained insights into how they might consider shaping a future innovation (should they develop one) and got contacts for possible future advice.

They were also indirectly guided to other opportunities: for example, ARSINOE partners suggested BGG could tap into capacity-building programs for NGOs or seek partnerships in Horizon proposals as a local implementation expert. Conclusion for BGG: Build Green Group’s case highlighted the importance of alignment between the innovator’s profile and the support scheme’s offerings. While BGG’s sustainability mission resonated with ARSINOE, the lack of a concrete innovation to scale meant there was no clear pathway for intensive support. This case was documented in the scheme’s report to illustrate boundary conditions of the support scheme. It was designed for entities with innovations aiming for market uptake, rather than general environmental organizations.

The outcome was a mutual understanding that BGG would continue its work through traditional means (grants and consultancies), and ARSINOE’s WP5 support would concentrate on those innovators who had distinct products or services to bring to market. The transparent communication and decision in this case ensured resources were efficiently allocated to where they could make the most impact.

3.4 SingularGreen. Nature-based Solutions and Natural Pools

Innovation overview

SingularGreen is a Spanish company specializing in integrating nature with architecture essentially, bringing green solutions into built environments. They offer various innovative products and services, such as “Green Shades” (patented

vegetated shading systems) and dew-irrigated green roofs that use dew condensation for watering, reducing the need for external irrigation. SingularGreen is also known for designing natural swimming pools, which are ecofriendly alternatives to traditional chlorine pools. A signature component is their “Natural Clear Filter” technology that maintains pool water quality biologically. SingularGreen had developed a range of such nature-based solutions (NbS) and even spun off a new venture called SingularBlue focused specifically on commercializing the natural swimming pool systems.

Initial needs assessment

The key challenge for SingularGreen was strategic focus: they had multiple innovative products and were unsure whether to scale the company as a whole (branding around being NbS integrators) or to concentrate on one product line for expansion (such as the pool technology). In the first meeting (held in late 2024), SingularGreen’s representatives and BRC discussed the company’s direction. The support team identified that SingularGreen needed assistance with business strategy development, particularly in making this crucial decision about where to focus resources for growth. The IRF assessment indicated that technology readiness was high (products were working and patented) and customer readiness moderate (some sales achieved, though mostly in local markets). The dimensions that needed work were business model readiness (how to structure the business for scale) and funding readiness (if external capital was needed to grow, especially for the new spin-off).

Support provided

BRC provided:

- in-depth branding workshops focused on clarifying corporate identity, market positioning, and identifying key target audiences.
- Shifted methodology mid-programme to accommodate limited CEO availability, directly providing draft value propositions and key messaging for SingularGreen to refine during focused sessions.
- Developed a clear and actionable brand pitch aimed explicitly at enhancing sales activities and market engagement.

The sessions included a strategy expert to guide SingularGreen. They facilitated a discussion on SingularGreen’s two main pathways: (1) Holistic brand expansion: growing the SingularGreen brand with all its green solutions, or (2) Flagship Product scaling: narrowing down to one product (like Natural Pools via SingularBlue) to scale aggressively. TFC used tools like SWOT analysis for each pathway. For the holistic approach, a strength was having a diversified offering (hedging against market changes), but a weakness was diluting effort and brand message. For the focused approach, a strength was the clear niche dominance potential (they have unique tech in natural pools), but a risk was betting the company’s future on one product. They also considered market trends: the demand for chemical-free swimming pools was rising in Europe, indicating a potentially ripe opportunity if they focused there.

Decision and plan

SingularGreen leaned towards prioritizing the natural swimming pool market as their growth engine (hence the creation of SingularBlue dedicated to it). The support team concurred that this product had a strong unique selling point and global market potential (converting existing pools to natural pools with minimal reconstruction, something only SingularGreen could do effectively). Therefore, the advice was to develop a strategy where SingularBlue would seek external funding or partnerships to quickly capture this market, while SingularGreen’s other products would continue but with less emphasis on rapid expansion. TFC outlined immediate next steps: conduct a market study for natural pools in target geographies (perhaps Germany, France – where interest in eco-pools is high), refine the business model for that segment (direct sales vs franchising installation, etc.), and protect the IP (ensuring the Natural

Clear Filter tech is patented internationally, which it was in progress). SingularGreen had decided that SingularBlue would indeed be the vehicle for pool solutions, aiming to transform the conventional pool market. TFC helped outline a roadmap to investment for SingularBlue: what milestones to hit (e.g. certain number of pilot conversions of pools), and preparations such as a dedicated pitch deck for SingularBlue highlighting how it leverages SingularGreen's years of expertise but is essentially a new focused company.

Branding support

The support also touched on marketing strategy. Since SingularGreen's products appeal to both B2B (architects, developers) and B2C (homeowners for pools), TFC recommended segmenting and tailoring marketing. For instance, for the pool product, aligning with eco-tourism lodges or sustainable hotels could be a quick win market (this aligns with possibly WP8 exploitation where case studies in Mediterranean tourism might pilot such pools). They also advised establishing demonstration sites, e.g., one showcase natural pool that potential clients can visit. The ARSINOE network was useful here: discussions occurred about possibly demonstrating a natural pool in one of ARSINOE's case regions or events, as a way to draw attention. The branding support offered by BRC included a paced sequence of diagnostics, strategy co-design, and artifact delivery. Each session below lists objectives, inputs, activities, decisions/outputs, and follow-ups to evidence progress and ensure continuity.

- **Session 1 – Portfolio and Opportunity Overview**

Objectives: Establish a baseline for the company's branding activities, review its current portfolio and pipeline, identify immediate areas of focus, and explore potential product/service positioning strategies.

Activity: Participants conducted a structured review of the existing portfolio and mapped current opportunities, discussing different approaches to positioning offerings in the market.

Outcome: A structured approach for evaluating branding and product differentiation was agreed upon, and an initial overview of potential opportunity clusters was established, providing a foundation for subsequent workshops.

- **Session 2 – Organisational Capacity and Participation**

Objectives: Assess the team's capacity to support branding initiatives, clarify roles and responsibilities, and ensure alignment on participation in the branding process.

Activity: The team reviewed organisational structure and task distribution, discussing frameworks for branding execution and ensuring clarity on who contributes to corporate versus product branding decisions.

Outcome: A clear participation framework was defined, setting expectations for team involvement, and providing a foundation for consistent branding activities across projects and products.

- **Session 3 – Brand Architecture and Focus**

Objectives: Clarify the scope of the branding program, evaluate brand architecture options, and identify the primary focus areas for the brand.

Activity: Participants assessed potential approaches, comparing master brand versus sub-brand strategies, and prioritized primary market segments to guide brand development.

Outcome: A master brand approach was adopted, allowing for coherent sub-brands; primary target segments were identified, and a draft brand architecture map was created to guide the next steps in brand development.

- **Session 4 – Data Sprint for Positioning and Messaging**

Objectives: Collect and structure market and user data to inform positioning and messaging strategies for the brand.

Activity: Requirements for meaningful data collection were defined, tasks were assigned to the team, and information was gathered on market dynamics, competitors, and customer insights.

Outcome: A completed evidence set provided a clear understanding of the market and users, forming the basis for informed messaging and positioning decisions in subsequent workshops.

- **Session 5 – Value Proposition and Messaging Alignment**

Objectives: Develop draft content that aligns with market narratives and refines the company's value proposition and messaging framework.

Activity: Co-creation sessions were held to review and edit value proposition statements and messaging, refining tone, key benefits, and evidence to support claims.

Outcome: A fully approved value proposition and messaging framework were established, along with a clear sales-oriented deck structure to support commercial communications.

- **Session 6 – Finalising Brand Architecture and Dossier/Deck**

Objectives: Consolidate insights from previous sessions, finalise the brand architecture, and structure the brand dossier/deck for external presentation.

Activity: The team finalised the brand architecture (main brand and sub-brands), mapped content for each section of the presentation, and agreed on a visual direction and provisional asset plan.

Outcome: The brand architecture and content map were finalised, key communication elements and tangible benefits were defined, and plans were set for maintaining the brand and developing supporting case study materials.

Methodology adaptations

The original four-session concept assumed founder-led participation. In practice, limited executive time required an agile, consultant-drafted approach: experts pre-prepared propositions and messaging; sessions focused on review, decision, and internalisation. This preserved learning while maintaining velocity. The adaptation also clarified brand vs. communication vs. identity, emphasising the CEO's role in small organisations.

By the end of the support SingularGreen finalized a professional [brand pitch document](#), which effectively conveys their unique market position and the strategic value of their innovations. This document was completed and designed by BRIGAD Connect, consolidating and elevating all conclusions reached throughout the branding process. They also clarified the strategic decision to focus branding primarily around SingularBlue (natural swimming pools), positioning the company for potential external investment and increased market penetration.

Funding advice

Regarding funding, since SingularGreen did not yet have an equity investor, they asked about how to fund the growth of SingularBlue. The support team discussed options: seeking a strategic partner (maybe a pool manufacturing company or a landscaping firm) versus approaching green-tech venture capital. The company was encouraged to first bootstrap through early sales if possible (since building natural pools generates revenue per project) but to consider external funding for scaling manufacturing of the filter component if needed. A rough plan was made that once they have a handful of successful installations and user testimonials, they could approach specialized investors in the sustainable home and garden sector. In the interim, ARSINOE pointed them to some EU and national innovation grants for nature-based solutions, which could support further R&D (for instance, improving the dew-irrigation roof tech or monitoring systems for the pools).

SingularGreen's case underscores how strategic coaching can help an innovator decide where and how to innovate. Sometimes the challenge is not a lack of ideas, but too many ideas, and support is needed to allocate limited resources effectively. With ARSINOE's help, SingularGreen is set on a more focused path that plays to their strengths.

3.5 HYDS. Multi-Risk Climate Hazard Solutions

Innovation overview

HYDS is a Spanish company providing multi-risk, impact-based early warning solutions for weather and climate hazards. Their services cover a range of natural threats including flooding, wildfires, extreme precipitation, and snow, offering clients predictive analytics and decision support tools. HYDS's products are mature and already in use by various clients like municipalities, water agencies, and industrial companies for climate risk management. Essentially, HYDS has an operational platform that can integrate data and models to produce risk forecasts and has been deployed in multiple contexts. By 2024, HYDS was a small company but with global ambitions, they aimed to expand beyond Spain into larger markets (e.g., the United States) and scale their impact.

Initial needs assessment

HYDS entered the ARSINOE support scheme with a different profile compared to some start-ups: they had already raised capital previously (likely through a seed funding round) and were not immediately seeking funds. Instead, their leadership expressed that their current focus was on improving branding and market positioning to enable global expansion, rather than on near-term fundraising. In a meeting with HYDS, it was clarified that HYDS felt they had sufficient funds for now but needed to strengthen their presence and outreach to penetrate new markets. The support scheme's assessment noted HYDS's needs in branding/marketing strategy and in planning for eventual future funding for growth. HYDS faced challenges related to brand visibility, market positioning, and strategic branding. Their primary concern was that without a clearly differentiated brand, they risked becoming perceived as a generic "white-label" service provider rather than a leading innovator in climate risk forecasting.

Support provided

The ARSINOE support team tailored their assistance for HYDS to focus on marketing strategy, while also providing information on funding opportunities that could be considered down the line. The plan included a review of HYDS's current branding materials (website, brochures, messaging) and competition in the global market. HYDS's challenge was to differentiate themselves in the broader market of climate risk solution. The support advised HYDS to emphasize their unique selling points: for example, if HYDS's tools are faster to deploy or offer multi-hazard integration in one platform, these should be front and center in messaging. Additionally, to enter the U.S. market, they discussed possibly rebranding slightly or tailoring the messaging to that audience (perhaps highlighting any usecases or compliance with international standards that U.S. clients care about). The following support was delivered:

- Tailored branding sessions emphasizing the importance of establishing a clear, differentiated brand identity.
- Introduced agile exercises for market analysis, competitor benchmarking, and core value articulation to streamline strategic branding efforts.
- Supported HYDS in navigating internal resistance from the sales team towards branding efforts, ultimately guiding the CEO to develop a flexible, multi-year branding roadmap.

Branding support

The branding support offered by BRC included a paced sequence of diagnostics, strategy co-design, and artifact delivery. Each session below lists objectives, inputs, activities, decisions/outputs, and follow-ups to evidence progress and ensure continuity.

- **Branding Meeting 1**

Objectives: Introduce the programme and contextualise previous interactions, including ARSINOE-Smart Cities workshop and inclusion in ARSINOE case studies alongside SingularGreen.

Key Points: HYDS acknowledged the importance of addressing longstanding brand gaps and considered the programme valuable. Challenges related to timing and prioritisation in the sector were discussed, including the need to balance product development and brand development. Potential risks of weak brand recognition were identified in a general sense.

Decision: Proceed with the programme as an independent starting point for brand development.

- **Branding Workshop 2**

Focus: Discussed feasibility and internal resource management challenges related to implementing branding tasks alongside ongoing business delivery.

Decisions: Schedule follow-up with sales to confirm participation, ensure clarity on strategic positioning, and reinforce the importance of being recognised for their own identity rather than through partner brands.

Internal Reflection (BRC): Original rigid methodology caused drop-offs; programme approach should adapt to each innovator's context.

- **Branding Workshop 3**

Activities: Step-1 exercises were presented using user-friendly templates with examples tailored to HYDS.

Outputs: Priority customer segments, core values, and methodological alignment were defined. HYDS found the exercises valuable and applicable despite time constraints.

- **Branding Workshop 4**

Objective: Assess capacity to continue with branding tasks.

Observations: While the CEO supported brand development, not all team members fully shared this vision. Branding initiatives often require strategic decisions that depend on leadership perspective, and careful planning is needed to balance branding efforts with ongoing operational priorities.

BRC Reflection: It is common for teams focused on delivery to show limited engagement with branding processes. Strong branding, however, remains essential for maintaining visibility, reinforcing company culture, and supporting long-term positioning.

Decision: The CEO confirmed continuation of the programme, with a clear alignment of roles and responsibilities to ensure consistent progress despite differing levels of engagement across the team.

- **Branding Meeting 5**

Objective: Reassess feasibility and align participation.

Outcome: Agreement to move forward, recognising that participants need to perceive value to contribute meaningfully. Engagement would be led by the CEO to ensure consistency.

- **Branding Meeting 6**

Initial Situation: Severe time constraints until early 2026 due to pre-selected commitments in large programmes.

Adaptive Response: Shift from near-term deliverables to a 1-3 year branding roadmap.

Roadmap Intent: Analyse current opportunities, align with available resources, stage milestones, anticipate challenges, and define human-resource implications to create a sustainable plan that protects

brand positioning while ongoing delivery continues.

- **Brand Action – Branding Roadmap Workshop**

BRC prepared a [structured questionnaire](#) covering key strategic areas such as brand history, value proposition, differentiation, audience perceptions, touchpoints, online presence, external opportunities and threats, stakeholders, and success indicators. The questionnaire guided HYDS' reflection and facilitated focused discussion during the workshop.

- **Branding roadmap workshop (8-hour intensive session)**

Objective: Comprehensive co-creation of HYDS's strategic branding roadmap through structured methodology.

Activities: During an [intensive 8-hour workshop](#), all strategic areas identified in the preparatory questionnaire were systematically explored and developed. The session combined analysis, strategic decision-making, and roadmap construction, addressing brand foundations, market positioning, communication strategy, stakeholder mapping, resource allocation, and phased implementation planning.

Output: The conclusions to lunch a comprehensive roadmap, consolidating all workshop conclusions, enabling agile tracking of next steps, responsibilities, and timing; designed to be updated as opportunities materialise. The session conclusions synthesises strategic brand direction, prioritized actions, resource requirements, and milestone sequencing aligned with HYDS's operational realities and growth objectives.

- **Branding roadmap deliverable and strategic rationale**

Purpose: The branding roadmap document was created to address HYDS's specific constraint of severe time limitations until early 2026, while simultaneously providing strategic clarity and actionable guidance for sustainable brand development over a 1–3-year horizon.

Content: The deliverable consolidates all strategic insights, decisions, and action priorities identified throughout the branding support process, structured to accommodate HYDS's ongoing operational commitments while systematically strengthening market positioning.

Output: A visual roadmap enabling agile tracking of next steps, responsibilities, and timing, designed to evolve as opportunities arise.

- **Second branding roadmap workshop**

Following deliverable handover, an additional follow-up session has been added to the previous program to review the proposed action map in depth: analysing, refining, or adjusting proposed initiatives, and developing a detailed implementation calendar. This session will also accommodate any additional points HYDS wishes to address, ensuring full alignment between strategic roadmap and operational execution capacity.

Methodology adaptations

Given the lack of a communications team and limited executive bandwidth, the programme evolved from a fixed, four-step cadence to a flexible, capacity-sensitive model: consultants pre-prepared materials; sessions emphasised decision-making and internalisation; deliverables shifted from immediate collateral to a multi-year brand map. The distinction between brand, communication, and identity was clarified, as was the CEO's pivotal role.

Global expansion strategy

The consultants discussed with HYDS how to strategize the move into international markets. One suggestion was to identify pilot projects or partnerships abroad that could serve as entry points. This could be facilitated through programs like Eurostars, which fund international collaborative projects. For example, HYDS wanted to test their solutions in new regions, they could find a partner (e.g., a city or utility in another country) and apply for Eurostars funding to adapt and demonstrate their system there. Eurostars would fund R&D collaboration, allowing HYDS and the partner to share costs and de-risk the market entry. This was very appealing to HYDS's team as it aligned with their expansion without needing immediate private capital.

Funding outlook and advice

While HYDS did not need to raise capital immediately, the ARSINOE team still provided an overview of future funding considerations. They discussed that if HYDS plans to tackle the U.S. or other large markets, at some point they might consider raising another investment round (either VC or a strategic partner) to finance that growth. Also, BRC emphasized that even though HYDS had prior public funding, they shouldn't rule out additional grant opportunities for specific projects (like climate innovation grants in new sectors) as these could complement their growth without equity dilution. Action Items: The tangible actions included Varsha sending Rafa (HYDS) more detailed information on Eurostars and other relevant funding programs, including links and eligibility criteria.

Additionally, as mentioned, the introduction to the branding expert was to result in a brainstorming session to create a branding improvement plan (likely covering website overhaul, sharper value proposition statements, and targeted marketing campaigns in English for new regions). These were initiated before project end, with BRC expected to deliver some branding guidelines to HYDS.

By project conclusion, HYDS had begun to act on the support they received. They engaged with the branding expert and reportedly found it valuable to get an external perspective on how to present themselves more powerfully in a crowded market. Some immediate outcomes included plans to redesign their website with clearer messaging for international clients and developing case studies in English to share. They also decided to explore a Eurostars application with a potential partner in another European country, seeing it as a smart way to fund a joint project that could open a new market, a direct result of ARSINOE's suggestion.

HYDS is expected to revisit funding considerations in the future (especially if U.S. expansion is pursued), at which point the groundwork laid on defining milestones and understanding investor expectations will serve them well.

Post-program recognition and evaluation of the innovator

Branding support has allowed us to rethink on the company's current capabilities and develop a much more structured and efficient market positioning strategy for the future. Yes, the materials provide a much more refined narrative about hyds' value and concrete actions aimed at raising awareness of the brand (action map) with a focus on short-term viability, something that is essential for our company, which operates in a rapidly changing environment. We believe the interaction with the Brigaid Connect team has been very beneficial in providing clarity to the brand and value at HYDS and has allowed us to define a much clearer path to consider our future strategy in many aspects such as visibility, recognition, and differentiation, which is essential in our technological environment.

3.6 Aventour Albania. Sustainable tourism platform

Aventour Albania is a young Albanian start-up (founded 2023) focused on ecotourism and sustainable travel in the Korçë region of Albania and surrounding areas. Their mission is to promote responsible tourism that supports local communities and biodiversity. Aventour Albania offers tour packages, particularly self-guided tours, that emphasize authentic and environmentally friendly experiences. A key component of their offering is an online booking platform which aggregates these sustainable tour packages for international tourists (with an initial focus on attracting French and German tourists). In essence, Aventour is creating a digital marketplace for ecotours and aiming to brand Albania (and the Balkans) as a destination for eco-conscious travelers.

Initial needs assessment

Aventour Albania, being a relatively nascent company, was in need of foundational business development support. During a first session in April 2025, several needs were identified: (1) refining their business plan, (2) improving their marketing strategy to reach target tourist markets, and (3) guidance on funding opportunities to develop their platform and services. They had an existing basic business plan and website, but it needed polishing to become investment ready. Unlike tech-heavy innovators, Aventour's innovation was more in their business model (curating sustainable tours) and use of digital tools to enable it.

Support provided

The ARSINOE support scheme for Aventour included a business plan review. The support task was to review and provide feedback and make suggestions on this plan. The areas scrutinized included the market analysis (e.g., sizing the ecotourism market in Albania/Balkans, competitive analysis with other tour operators or platforms), the revenue model (commissions from bookings, etc.), cost structure (guides, platform maintenance), and growth projections (how to scale beyond the initial region). BRC marked up the document with suggestions to make it investor-friendly: for example, clarifying the unique value proposition (perhaps Aventour's local connections or exclusive routes make it stand out), adding data to support their assumptions and improving the structure and language for professionalism and clarity. This feedback was to be sent back to Aventour.

3.7 Šliwa & Doboš Architektci

Innovation overview.

The firm's primary innovation is a modular, prefabricated system for riverbank protection. It offers:

- Scalable application across different urban river settings in Europe, from small streams to major city rivers.
- Climate-adaptive features, including rainwater retention and purification, integration of green public spaces, and enhancement of biodiversity (contributing to cooler, more resilient waterfronts).
- A transferable design adaptable to local river conditions and regulatory requirements, allowing the concept to be replicated in various cities.

Currently, Šliwa Doboš possesses:

- A complete conceptual design, with detailed modular plans and specifications ready for prototyping.

- Hydrological and environmental analyses for selected pilot sites (e.g. one in Germany and one in Wrocław, Poland), demonstrating the system's feasibility and impact under local conditions.
- A preliminary business analysis for specific urban locations, outlining potential costs, benefits, and implementation strategies in those areas.

Initial needs assessment

In the session with Śliwa's team, they indicated that they would benefit from:

- Guidance on funding opportunities (grants, investors) to move from concept to a pilot demonstration project.
- Support in refining business documentation (e.g. improving their pitch deck and business plan) to effectively communicate the innovation's value to funders.
- Increased visibility for their innovation among relevant stakeholders, such as city authorities, potential funders, and industry partners.

Support provided

TFC provided the following support:

- Review of business plan and pitch materials. Śliwa's team had sent their pitchdeck to TFC and they have received strategic feedback and suggestions tailored to both investor and grant evaluator expectations.
- Registration on CIW. Registration on the Climate Innovation Window (CIW) platform was completed, creating an online profile to showcase the solution and help connect with potential supporters across Europe.

Funding outlook and advice

Explore public funding programs

The team should actively seek out grant programs at EU and national levels to fund a pilot implementation. For instance, Horizon Europe (including the Adaptation to Climate Change Mission calls) and the LIFE program provide grants for climate adaptation innovations. These could support a pilot or further R&D for the riverbank system. At the national level, Polish agencies like NCBR (the National Centre for R&D) or the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management channel funding to climate projects. Similar mechanisms in other countries (e.g. Germany's environmental innovation grants) can be explored if the team partners with a city or entity abroad. Programs such as Eurostars (for EU SME consortia) or national innovation funds can help take the concept from its current prototype stage (TRL-4) to a pilot (TRL-6). The team should monitor call deadlines and prepare to apply with a strong proposal highlighting the system's climate resilience benefits.

Refine the business plan and funding strategy

It's important to strengthen the business case to appeal to both investors and grant committees. The team should incorporate a clear value proposition: in one sentence, explain how the modular waterfront system solves urban problems (flooding, heat, lack of green space) better than existing solutions. All documentation (business plan, pitch deck) should include evidence and projections: for example, preliminary data on rainwater retention or cooling effects, and a roadmap for achieving a pilot. Emphasize a viable business model (who will pay for or maintain these modules, e.g. city governments, developers,

or water authorities) and the expected return on investment or public value (such as reduced flood damage costs or new recreational areas). The team is advised to tailor their pitch for different audiences: for grants, highlight the public benefits and technical innovation; for investors or city partners, highlight cost savings, regulatory drivers, and potential revenue (e.g. installation contracts, licensing the design, or maintenance services). Ensuring the pitch materials have a compelling narrative (problem-solution-impact) with an explicit ask (e.g. funding needed for a pilot, partnerships sought) will make it easier for stakeholders to understand how to support the project.

Increase visibility and stakeholder engagement

To attract interest from cities and funders, the team should proactively raise the profile of their innovation. Now that they are listed on the Climate Innovation Window, they should leverage that by sharing the profile with potential stakeholders and keeping it updated. Participating in European climate adaptation networks and events will be key. For example, the EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change (which held its 2025 forum in Wrocław) connects numerous cities and regions working on resilience. Engaging with such initiatives can put the team in contact with city officials and experts interested in innovative riverbank solutions. The team can reach out to municipalities (like Wrocław, or the German cities used in their concept visuals) to present the idea in the context of those cities' climate adaptation plans. Attending and presenting at conferences (e.g. European Urban Resilience Forum, ICLEI Resilient Cities congress, or water management seminars) will help showcase the solution to a broad audience of city planners, environmental agencies, and potential funders. They should also consider networking through professional associations in water management and urban planning, and use social media (LinkedIn, Twitter) to share any progress or pilot news. Building relationships with a few champion cities or NGOs could lead to letters of interest or partnerships, which in turn bolster funding applications. Increasing their visibility as a solution provider in climate adaptation will create inbound interest and credibility in the long run.

Plan next steps: pilot and partnerships

Moving from concept to a real-world demonstration is the critical next step. The team should outline a concrete pilot project plan, for instance, implementing the modular system on a selected stretch of riverbank in Wrocław or another interested city. This plan should identify what resources are needed (budget, permits, technical support) and include a timeline (e.g. aiming to install a pilot within 1–2 years). Securing a pilot site will likely require forming partnerships: a city partner to host the pilot (providing a riverbank location and possibly co-funding or permissions), a research partner (like their existing collaboration with AGH University) to monitor and validate the environmental performance, and possibly an industry partner (e.g. a construction or landscaping firm) to assist with fabrication and installation of the modules. It's advisable to formalize these partnerships via letters of intent or MOUs, having committed partners strengthens any funding proposal and also distributes the workload. As part of pilot planning, the team should consider how to measure success (e.g. volume of water retained, temperature reduction, biodiversity improvements, public usage of the space) and plan for maintenance responsibilities. Demonstrating a successful pilot will serve as a powerful proof-of-concept, making it easier to convince more cities and investors. Additionally, the team can explore if the pilot itself can attract co-financing, for example, city climate adaptation funds or corporate sponsors interested in green infrastructure. By executing a well-documented pilot project, Śliwa & Doboš Architekci will not only validate their innovation's impact but also create a showcase that can be used in marketing and grant applications to scale the solution across other European cities.

3.8 Solumar

Innovation overview

Solumar is a deep-tech company specializing in advanced air and gas filtration technologies designed to significantly reduce emissions across industrial, maritime, and oil & gas sectors. Their proprietary system captures 92–99% of pollutants, including particulate matter, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), greenhouse gases (GHGs), and black carbon, using a compact, modular unit that can be retrofitted to various emission sources.

The technology is inspired by principles from aviation engineering, incorporating turbulent airflows, fluid dynamics, water atomization, and low-energy plasma vortexes. This design allows for efficient pollutant capture while maintaining low capital and operational expenditures.

Solumar's mission is to revolutionize emissions reduction by providing innovative, cost-effective solutions that enable industries to achieve sustainability goals without compromising operational efficiency.

Initial needs assessment

During the kick-off meeting, Solumar identified the following support needs:

- Investment readiness: Assistance in preparing for a second investment round, including refining their pitch deck and business model narrative.
- Funding opportunities: Guidance on identifying and accessing public and private funding sources, particularly within the European Union.
- Strategic partnerships: Support in establishing connections with potential partners and stakeholders in Europe to facilitate market expansion.

While interested in broader exposure, Solumar emphasized a focus on support that enhances investor readiness and direct fundraising capacity.

Support provided

The ARSINOE Task 5.4 team offered the following support during the meeting:

- Funding readiness preparation:
 - Pitch deck review: Commitment to review and provide feedback on Solumar's investor pitch deck and business model documentation;
 - Businessplan development.
- Funding landscape overview: Provision of information on relevant EU innovation and sustainability funding programs.

Branding support: Programme adaptation attempt and engagement outcome.

Solumar's case illustrates a common challenge in innovation support: the tension between operational demands and strategic capacity-building. While recognizing the value of branding, the company's operational pace and multiple concurrent priorities limited the time available for strategic initiatives. To address this, BRIGAD Connect proposed an adaptive methodology: consultant-drafted iterations requiring minimal innovator time, short validation calls, asynchronous reviews, and batched feedback, enabling progress on brand development without interfering with core business activities.

Funding outlook and advice

Solumar has demonstrated success in securing initial funding, including a recent investment round with The Catalyst (a joint venture between BP and Masdar). They have also participated in various accelerator programs and received recognition for their innovative technology.

The following advice was provided:

- EU Funding Programs: Explore opportunities within Horizon Europe, LIFE, and Interreg programs that align with Solumar's focus on industrial decarbonization and circular water systems.
- Investor alignment: Tailor the pitch to appeal to mission-driven investors, including impact venture capitalists and green infrastructure funds, by highlighting both financial returns and measurable environmental benefits.
- Market positioning: Emphasize the technology's scalability, cost-effectiveness, and ability to generate recurring revenue through the sale of captured byproducts, such as black carbon.

3.9 Waltr (France). Emission tracking services

Innovation overview

WALTR is a French company with a consolidated presence in the airport sector and a strategic focus on broadening its market reach. The firm's current growth phase highlights the importance of branding and market communication as key enablers. WALTR works on translating its established credibility in the airport sector into clear, compelling narratives adapted to new audiences. During the first branding workshop, the team confirmed the value of implementing a structured branding methodology to support its ongoing market development efforts.

Initial needs assessment

The intake discussion surfaced a set of needs consistent with a sector-diversification pathway:

- Segmentation and audience clarity for the maritime/ports target market (buyer profiles, use-cases, decision criteria).
- Competitor benchmarking using visual and comparable models. WALTR had previously attempted table-based comparisons and found them hard to interpret; the programme's spider-chart approach was assessed as clearer and more actionable.
- Depth over familiarity. Although WALTR had encountered similar exercises in the past, they were conducted "very lightly." The company welcomed a more rigorous and visual methodology to inform positioning and outreach.
- Strategic timing and commitment. WALTR explicitly stated complete availability to work through the programme, viewing it as key to their communication objectives during the maritime push.

Branding support

WALTR possessed customer persona knowledge but had implemented it lightly, lacking the methodological depth needed for strategic market expansion. As a company well-consolidated in airports and planning entry into maritime/ports, WALTR had no structured communication strategy for the new market. Earlier table-based competitive analyses made it difficult to visualise positioning, limiting strategic analysis at a critical expansion moment.

In Workshop 1, BRC introduced the four-step branding methodology: (1) audience definition, (2) value proposition, (3) messaging, (4) investment/sales materials, and aligned it to WALTR's expansion plan. Concretely:

- **Session 1: Initial Branding Meeting**

Objectives: The meeting aimed to introduce approaches for customer segmentation and benchmarking, and to explore opportunities for sector expansion.

Activities: BRC presented a structured four-step methodology for audience and market analysis. Participants discussed the advantages of different analytical tools, such as tables and visual charts, and noted that deeper methodological work was necessary to turn data into actionable insights. The session highlighted the importance of balancing thorough analysis with the time available to the team.

Decisions and Outputs: The group agreed on the next steps to continue developing audience and market segmentation exercises. They established a plan to refine strategies for the target sector without disrupting ongoing operations.

Follow-ups: Waltr completed the segmentation exercises, and BRC scheduled a session to develop and validate value propositions based on the results.

- **Session 2: Workshop on Value Propositions**

Objectives: The workshop focused on reviewing the completed segmentation exercises and translating them into sector-specific value propositions and messaging.

Activities: BRC prepared key messages following a structured framework that moved from problem identification to value, supporting evidence, and proposed solutions. During the workshop, both teams collaborated to refine these messages. They discussed potential gaps, tested hypotheses, and ensured that evidence and examples aligned with the intended messaging. The session emphasized an iterative approach that allowed continuous improvement while staying aligned with overall goals.

Decisions and Outputs: The sector-specific value propositions and messaging framework were approved. The teams agreed on how to present the messages coherently and compellingly for the target audience.

Follow-ups: Waltr provided supporting materials and examples, and BRC integrated these into a comprehensive sector dossier.

- **Brand Deliverable: Sector Dossier**

Following the workshop, BRC developed a specialized sector dossier. The document integrated the approved messages and value propositions and translated previous sector experience into narratives applicable to new contexts. The dossier served as a practical tool for guiding communication and positioning in the targeted sector.

WALTR developed a comprehensive customer and segment analysis for new market areas, including structured market segmentation and a clear understanding of communication needs for different audiences. They applied visual competitor analysis using spider charts, which provided clearer positioning insights compared with previous table-based approaches. This process established a robust foundation for targeted messaging and materials, supporting coherent communication strategies across the relevant markets.

Funding outlook and advice

Given WALTR's immediate priority in market entry and communication for the maritime/ports segment, funding support will be postponed to follow strategic clarity on positioning and offers. In line with WP7 alignment, TFC can upon request:

- Map non-dilutive and partnership-oriented programmes relevant to port innovation and maritime digitalisation (e.g., collaboration pilots with port authorities, innovation calls, and demo

opportunities), alongside private-sector routes (strategic partnerships with integrators/operators).

- Prepare a call-readiness checklist (eligibility, TRL fit, evidence requirements, indicative milestones) that matches WALTR's refined value proposition and target use-cases in ports.

WALTR confirmed: (i) strategic timing is optimal; (ii) the maritime focus is the priority for segmentation exercises; (iii) visual benchmarking tools (spider charts) will be the preferred method; and (iv) commitment to complete all Step-1 exercises ahead of value-proposition and messaging sessions.

4.0 Conclusions and linkages

This deliverable has documented the design, implementation, and results of the ARSINOE Uptake Support Scheme (Task 5.4), which aimed to help a selected group of innovators move closer to market uptake and financing. Beyond providing a factual overview, this concluding chapter reflects critically on what worked well, what did not work as originally planned, and what challenges and opportunities emerged from applying a dedicated methodology for innovation support within ARSINOE.

The experience demonstrates that a structured but adaptive support scheme can meaningfully increase innovators' business, branding, and funding readiness. At the same time, it reveals important constraints, such as limited time availability on the side of SMEs and the need for clear, market-oriented communication that must be taken into account when similar schemes are replicated in future EU projects.

4.1 Summary of scheme outcomes and successes

Over the project period, the ARSINOE Uptake Support Scheme provided tailored support to nine innovators arising from the project's Case Studies and Open Tenders. Each innovator received a customised package of services, spanning innovation readiness diagnostics, business model and business plan support, branding and communication, and strategic funding and investment readiness. This resulted in concrete outputs such as improved business plans and canvases, investor-grade pitch decks, clearer value propositions, and identified funding pipelines. Several innovators (e.g. Pramtech, SaferPlaces, HYDS, Aventour) have already prepared or submitted applications to relevant funding programmes, while others (such as SingularGreen and Waltr) developed more robust scale-up strategies and initiated investor or customer outreach.

What worked well

The combination of tools (Innovation Readiness assessment, 360-Degree Scan, business and branding support, and funding advisory) proved effective as a coherent methodology. It allowed the team to identify gaps quickly and translate them into actionable support pathways.

The high degree of tailoring to each innovator's stage, sector and needs was a major success factor. Moving away from a rigid, identical sequence of sessions to customised support plans significantly increased relevance and impact.

Innovators consistently reported that the scheme helped them to professionalise their market and funding strategies, discover new funding opportunities, and better articulate their value propositions to non-technical audiences (investors, municipalities, clients).

What did not work as intended

The original design of the branding and support programme as a fixed four-session trajectory proved overly rigid. In practice, innovators had heterogeneous needs, and a one-size-fits-all structure limited engagement and effectiveness. Only after piloting and receiving feedback from innovators did the team pivot to a more flexible, tailored approach.

Time constraints on the innovators' side were a recurring limitation. Many SMEs and start-ups struggled to allocate sufficient time for preparation between sessions or for in-depth strategic reflection. This reduced the extent to which some tools (e.g. more advanced market analysis or financial modelling) could be fully exploited within the project timeframe.

Initial communication relied too heavily on project-oriented and technical language, which did not sufficiently convey the concrete business value of participating in the support scheme. This contributed to lower-than-expected response rates at the outset. Only after communication was reframed in strongly market-oriented terms did engagement improve.

Overall, the scheme contributed substantially to the maturation of the supported innovations but also highlighted structural constraints (time, communication, heterogeneity of needs) that must be addressed more explicitly in future schemes.

4.2 Contribution to WP5 objectives

Strategic role within WP5

WP5 aimed to curate a high-quality portfolio of climate-resilience innovations and provide the mechanisms needed to support their uptake. Within this framework, the Uptake Support Scheme functioned as the primary operational instrument to move selected innovations from promising concepts towards market-ready and investable solutions.

Achievements

The scheme helped translate the innovation pipeline generated by the Case Studies and Open Tenders into concrete, more mature business propositions, thereby directly contributing to the objective of building a portfolio ready for uptake.

By equipping innovators with business plans, pitch decks, and funding pipelines, Task 5.4 supported portfolio progression along both technological and market-readiness dimensions, complementing the technical work of other WPs.

Knowledge products developed under the scheme (templates, checklists, guidance documents, and exemplars) provide reusable assets that strengthen WP5's legacy and can be leveraged in future initiatives and by other innovators beyond the original cohort.

Remaining gaps and lessons

While the scheme increased readiness for several innovations, not all reached the same level of maturity. Some require longer-term support beyond the project duration to fully realise funding and market opportunities identified in ARSINOE.

The diversity of sectors and business models proved to be both a strength and a challenge. It enriched the portfolio, but also revealed that WP-level targets must account for heterogeneous trajectories and time horizons: certain innovations (e.g. digital platforms) can move more quickly than infrastructure-heavy or service-based solutions.

Monitoring indicators were put in place to track inputs, outputs and early outcomes (e.g. applications submitted, investor meetings initiated), but systematic collection of post-project impacts (e.g. investments secured, contracts signed) will require continued effort from the consortium and innovators.

Despite these limitations, the scheme overall fulfilled its role within WP5 by demonstrating a viable pathway from project-based innovations to early-stage market uptake and financing readiness.

4.3 Synergy with WP7 (Finance)

The Uptake Support Scheme was designed to be fully consistent with, and complementary to, the work carried out in WP7 on sustainable finance. Funding advisory activities under Task 5.4 used the same funding-scheme landscape and criteria developed in WP7 (e.g. relevant Horizon Europe, LIFE, Interreg and other instruments) and were cross-checked against guidance produced in WP7 tasks.

Positive synergies

The shared funding landscape and common assumptions on sustainability and eligibility ensured that advice to innovators was aligned with project-wide finance strategies.

In several cases, close interaction between the support team and WP7 focal points helped refine opportunities or identify additional programmes that matched specific innovation contexts.

The integration of funding readiness into the support scheme from the outset reinforced WP7's objective of linking innovation to realistic financial pathways, rather than treating finance as a separate, downstream activity.

Challenges and opportunities

Aligning individual innovators' timelines with the calendar of EU and national calls was challenging. Some funding windows opened or closed outside the intensive support period, meaning that not all identified opportunities could be fully pursued within the project timeframe.

The complexity of certain financial instruments and the limited in-house capacity of SMEs to manage them highlighted a need for even closer collaboration between technical, business, and finance experts in future projects.

A clear opportunity for future schemes is to adopt a more explicitly "finance-first" or "finance-aware" design, where WP7-type analyses feed directly into the initial prioritisation and design of support trajectories, thereby maximising alignment between technical development, business strategy, and funding opportunities.

In summary, the collaboration between Task 5.4 and WP7 demonstrated the value of integrating financial thinking into innovation support, while also revealing the need for further operational integration and longer-term follow-up.

4.4 Innovation Support Services: Evolution, implementation, and sustainability

A key added value of ARSINOE lies in the methodology developed and refined through the Uptake Support Scheme. The approach combined established frameworks (e.g. Technology Readiness Levels, an Innovation Readiness Framework) with a 360-degree strategic scan and a modular menu of services (business planning, branding and market narrative, funding readiness).

Methodological evolution: from fixed programme to adaptive pathway.

The scheme was initially conceived as a structured four-session programme focusing on market analysis, value proposition development, messaging, and investment materials. Early pilots revealed that this fixed format did not sufficiently reflect the diversity of innovators' contexts and constraints. Participation and follow-through were hampered by tight schedules and differing priorities.

In response, the methodology evolved towards a highly adaptive and customised approach, where initial conversations and diagnostics informed the design of individual support trajectories. This shift significantly improved engagement and ensured that each innovator received support where it mattered most—whether on funding strategy, market entry, pricing and revenue logic, branding, or investor communication.

Communication strategy: learning to speak the innovators' language

Another important lesson concerned communication. Early outreach relied on project-oriented terminology and generic descriptions of activities, which did not clearly articulate the concrete, business-oriented benefits for innovators. After a systematic review, the communication strategy was reframed in market-oriented language, with clearer value propositions, visual materials, and explicit participant profiles and expectations. This redesign led to a rapid increase in engagement and higher-quality responses, demonstrating that language and framing are critical success factors for similar support schemes.

Key challenges and how they were addressed

Time and capacity constraints within SMEs limited their ability to engage in lengthy or heavily structured programmes. The adaptive design and more focused sessions partially mitigated this, but future schemes should factor in even more flexibility and lightweight tools.

The need to balance individual tailoring with a coherent methodology required continuous learning and iteration within the support team, highlighting the importance of internal governance, reflection, and documentation.

Ensuring continuity beyond the project remains challenging: while innovators left with roadmaps and materials, sustained progression towards scale-up and investment will depend on follow-up support and access to broader innovation ecosystems.

Opportunities and recommendations for future projects

The experience of ARSINOE suggests several practical recommendations for future EU projects wishing to implement similar uptake support schemes:

- Start with a diagnostic-driven, modular methodology that can be tailored from the outset, rather than designing a single linear programme.
- Use market-facing language and visual communication in all outreach to innovators, and make expectations and benefits explicit to align participation and reduce drop-out.
- Integrate finance and funding considerations from the beginning, ensuring close collaboration between technical teams, business developers, and finance experts (WP7-type roles).
- Combine individual support with lightweight peer-learning mechanisms, so that insights from one innovation (e.g. on investor readiness or procurement routes) can benefit others.
- Plan for post-project sustainability, by connecting innovators to existing support networks (such as BRIGAID Connect and the Climate Innovation Window) and by documenting tools and methodologies in a way that can be reused by other consortia.

In conclusion, ARSINOE's Innovation Support Service has not only supported a cohort of climate-resilience innovators, but has also generated a tested and refined methodology for innovation uptake support. The lessons on flexibility, communication,

finance integration, and ecosystem linkages provide actionable guidance for future projects that seek to bridge the gap between technological excellence and real-world climate resilience outcomes.

Innovators' testimonials: Post-program recognition and evaluation of the innovator

1. **Rafa Sánchez-Diezma, CEO HYDS:** *"Branding support has allowed us to rethink on the company's current capabilities and develop a much more structured and efficient market positioning strategy for the future. The materials provide a much more refined narrative about hyds' value and concrete actions aimed at raising awareness of the brand (action map) with a focus on short-term viability, something that is essential for our company, which operates in a rapidly changing environment. We believe the interaction with the ARSINOE program and the Brigaid Connect team has been very beneficial in providing clarity to the brand and value at HYDS and has allowed us to define a much clearer path to consider our future strategy in many aspects such as visibility, recognition, and differentiation, which is essential in our technological environment."*
2. **Petros Masouridis, Business Development Manager at Waltr:** *"The support has provided valuable structure and clarity to how we evaluate our brand and our market positioning. It helped us to better understand the underlying value proposition and connection we aim to establish with our stakeholders. This helps us created better foundations to make our analysis more focused and effective. The provided frameworks and exercises were particularly useful in mapping out our brand identity and positioning. They guided us in defining actionable next steps such as refining our narrative to aligning our core values and target audience. Especially since our goal is to expand to new market segments it is crucial for us to make a solid link with existing success It has deepened our understanding of how to translate our technological and environmental value into a clear and compelling story that resonates with our users and partners."*
3. **Francesca Renzi, COO at GekoSistema (SaferPlaces):** *"The branding support helped us look at our brand from a more strategic and user-centered perspective. It encouraged us to think beyond our usual communication which is more technical, and it helped us reflect on how to better highlight the deeper functional benefits that we deliver to different customers. This makes our brand analysis more focused and strategic. Yes, the templates and exercises provided a clear structure for identifying our core values and differentiators. They helped us prioritize the most relevant aspects of our brand to build stronger messaging and to refine our positioning in different sectors. Overall, the materials represent a very valuable tool that we plan to incorporate into our work. It broadened our understanding of "brand" as not only visual identity, but also the perception and experience that we create for the users. Additionally, we reflected on the meaning of "value", as what our innovation truly brings to the users and not just as technical performance."*

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ANNEX 1: Example – Pitch Deck Feedback Summary (SaferPlaces)

This annex provides a summarized excerpt of the feedback given to GECOSistema's SaferPlaces innovation on their investor pitch deck (as part of Section 3.2 support). It illustrates the type of critiques and suggestions provided through the support scheme's coaching process.

Strengths of existing pitch deck:

- **Clear problem statement:** The deck opens with the pressing problem of urban flooding, using strong statistics (e.g., “€X billion in flood damages annually in Europe”). This effectively sets context.
- **Technical credibility:** Slides describing the AI and data backbone of SaferPlaces convey that the team has robust expertise. The inclusion of the Copernicus data and Google Earth Engine integration signals to investors that the product is built on proven platforms.
- **Initial traction mentioned:** The deck notes acceptance into an accelerator and a pilot with Municipality Y, which adds credibility.

Suggested improvements:

1. **Value proposition & Solution clarity:** Simplify the description of what SaferPlaces offers. Currently, the text is somewhat technical. We recommend a one-liner value proposition early on (e.g., “SaferPlaces is a cloud platform that enables cities and insurers to predict and mitigate flood damage with unprecedented accuracy.”) and then bullet points of key benefits (e.g., high-resolution maps, real-time simulation, cost savings). Use a visual of the platform interface to make it tangible.
2. **Market size and opportunity:** The deck should quantify the market more clearly. For instance, “Global urban resilience market €XX billion by 2025; initial serviceable obtainable market for SaferPlaces is €YY million across Z cities in Europe”. Currently, it mentions potential clients but not the aggregate opportunity. Investors need to see the dollar (or euro) signs – how big can this get?
3. **Competition slide:** Add a comparison matrix or landscape slide. Who are the main competitors or incumbent solutions (e.g., traditional flood mapping consultancies, other startups, insurance in-house models)? Then highlight SaferPlaces' differentiators (e.g., faster, more user-friendly, AI-driven insights, etc.). Right now, the deck assumes investors know there's a gap; explicitly showing why SaferPlaces is a *game-changer* against others will strengthen the case.
4. **Business model & revenue:** Currently underexplained. Outline clearly *how SaferPlaces makes money* – is it a subscription SaaS model per city? A one-time setup fee plus annual license? Any tiered pricing? Also, if there are multiple customer segments (cities, insurance companies, utilities), mention how the business model might cater to each (perhaps enterprise vs. smaller client tiers). This reassures investors that you have a plan to monetize the product, not just deploy it.
5. **Team slide:** Given GECOSistema's long history, leverage that – but focus on the SaferPlaces team's specific experience. E.g., highlight that *Stefano* has 20 years in hydro-modeling, *Francesca* 10 years in GIS and project management, plus perhaps advisors or partners. A group photo or logos of partner institutions could add a human touch. Investors invest in people, so make sure

the team appears strong and committed to this venture (distinct from the parent company's general work).

6. **Ask and milestones:** The current deck doesn't clearly state how much funding is sought and for what milestones. Add a slide near the end: e.g., *"Raising €500k to achieve: 3 city deployments, 1 insurance partnership, and €100k ARR within 18 months."* Break down use of funds (product development 40%, marketing 30%, etc.). Also outline vision milestones (e.g., Year 1 pilot, Year 2 expand Italy & Spain, Year 3 pan-Europe, Year 5 global with X cities). This shows ambition and a plan.
7. **Visual design:** We recommend making the deck more visual:
 - Include an illustrative graphic early (perhaps an example map output showing a flood simulation on a city map – something eye-catching that demonstrates the product).
 - Use icons or imagery on the problem slide (e.g., a flooded street photo) for emotional impact.
 - Reduce text in general; use concise bullet points (we observed some slides are text-heavy, which can be overwhelming).
 - Ensure a consistent color scheme and font (align with SaferPlaces branding if established, or use ARSINOE/ EU color elements subtly to imply credibility by association).

Next steps: GECOSistema will incorporate this feedback and send a revised pitch deck draft. The ARSINOE support team will then review the new version and conduct a practice pitch session (15-minute pitch + Q&A simulation). Additional fine-tuning will follow as needed. The goal is that SaferPlaces' deck and pitch are investor-ready by early 2025, aligning with their plan to approach venture investors and apply to the EIC Accelerator.

(This example annex item demonstrates the depth of feedback provided. Similar feedback documents were produced for other innovators where relevant, such as Pramtech's investor approach, or Aventour's business plan, etc. Due to confidentiality issues, those are not fully reproduced here but follow a comparable format of strengths, weaknesses, and actionable suggestions.)

ANNEX 2: Example- Business Model Canvas Documents

A. SaferPlaces – Business Model Canvas (after ARSINOE support refinement)

- **Key partners:**
 - Climate data providers (Copernicus, national meteorological agencies)
 - Tech partners (cloud provider for simulations, e.g., Google Cloud)
 - Municipalities & civil protection agencies (as both customers and co-developers in pilots)
 - Insurance companies (for distribution partnerships to their clients)
- **Key activities:**
 - Data processing & AI model development (continuously improve flood models)
 - Platform maintenance and cloud operations
 - Marketing & sales (attending smart city expos, direct outreach to city officials)
 - Customer support & consulting (assist cities in interpreting results, customizing local data)
- **Key resources:**
 - Technical team expertise (hydrologists, data scientists)
 - Platform software and algorithms (intellectual property)
 - Computing infrastructure (high-performance cloud computation capacity)
 - Pilot data/results (reference case studies demonstrating effectiveness)
- **Value propositions:**
 - **For cities:** “Flood intelligence at your fingertips” – an easy-to-use tool to predict and manage urban floods, helping prioritize investments and emergency response.
 - **For insurance:** Risk assessment enhancement – high-resolution risk data to price insurance and manage claims proactively.
 - Democratizes advanced flood modeling, which was previously only available via expensive expert studies, into a subscription service.
- **Customer relationships:**
 - Direct and consultative: for city clients, SaferPlaces provides onboarding and periodic review meetings (high-touch model).
 - For smaller clients (e.g., a small town or business), platform is self-service with online tutorials but with available support.
 - Building a community: share best practices among user cities (perhaps via user group webinars).
- **Customer segments:**
 - Primary: City and regional governments (urban resilience planners, water authorities in mid-sized to large cities).

- Secondary: Insurance companies (property insurers looking for improved flood risk data), large property owners (real estate developers, infrastructure operators requiring risk analysis).
- Tertiary future segment: International development agencies or engineering firms (to use platform in their projects).
- **Channels:**
 - Direct sales to governments (via tenders or direct contracts, leveraging existing networks from GECOSistema).
 - Partnerships with consultancies: e.g., engineering firms include SaferPlaces analysis in their services.
 - Online presence: website with demo videos, participation in platforms like Climate-KIC marketplace or ARSINOE's CIW.
 - Conferences and trade shows (smart city expos, insurance tech conferences) to generate leads.
- **Cost structure:**
 - Fixed: Staff salaries (developers, modelers, sales), cloud infrastructure baseline costs, office overhead.
 - Variable: Cloud computing costs scale with number of simulations run (major cost driver), customer acquisition costs (travel, marketing per new client), support costs per client.
 - R&D costs: continuing innovation to stay ahead in AI modeling (could be offset by grants).
 - Aim to maintain a high gross margin SaaS model once developed (software distribution is relatively high margin after initial development).
- **Revenue streams:**
 - Subscription fees from platform access: e.g., annual subscription per city based on population or area covered.
 - Pilot project fees: some clients may start with a paid pilot/feasibility study (one-time revenue, convertible to recurring if they subscribe).
 - Data licensing: insurance companies might pay for periodic data outputs/API access rather than full platform access.
 - Consulting services: offering premium advisory on top of the platform (e.g., customizing models, training) for additional fees.

Notes: This canvas was updated post-support to focus on the most scalable aspects (subscription model) while keeping consulting as a secondary supportive revenue. The ARSINOE team's feedback helped in, for instance, distinguishing customer segments and tailoring the value proposition messaging.

B. Other Innovators' BMC Notes

- **Pramtech:** Developed a mini-canvas focusing on partnerships with infrastructure maintenance firms, value prop of early detection of damage (thus cost savings and safety), customer segment being infrastructure owners and engineering firms, and considering revenue via sensor sales plus monitoring service fees. (Full canvas in Pramtech's internal docs.)

- **SingularGreen/SingularBlue:** Canvas delineated for SingularBlue – key partners are pool construction companies, value prop “chemical-free natural pools that cut maintenance costs by 50%,” customer segment wealthy homeowners and eco-resorts, channels via high-end landscaping architects, revenue from design-installation fees and maintenance contracts.
- **HYDS:** Canvas emphasized their multi-hazard platform, key partners include IoT sensor providers, value prop “all hazards on one platform for proactive action,” customer segment large utilities and governments, revenue via annual licensing with customization fees.
- **Aventour Albania:** Canvas focused on marketplace model – key partners local tour guides and rural communities, value prop “immersive Albanian nature and culture in a sustainable way,” customers eco-tourists from Western Europe, channels mostly digital marketing and partnerships with eco-travel agencies, revenue via commission on tour bookings.

ANNEX 3: Branding program exercises

[Market Segmentation →](#)

This analysis allows climate innovation companies to understand which sectors, organizations and customer profiles are best aligned with their offering, considering factors such as their commitment to sustainable development, strategic priorities and their ability to adopt innovative solutions. This segmentation is essential to design customized strategies and maximize impact in the most relevant segments.

Figure 17 Market segmentation exercise introduction

Definitions

1. **Quadrant 1:**
Geographic Regions vulnerable to climate change, industrial hubs or areas with strict sustainability regulations.
2. **Quadrant 2:**
Sectoral and Operational Economic sectors and activities related to climate adaptation and sustainable development, such as infrastructure, energy, agriculture, transportation or manufacturing.
3. **Quadrant 3:**
Organizational Psychographic Corporate values and strategic priorities related to climate.
4. **Quadrant 4:**
Corporate Behavior How companies adopt climate solutions and technological innovations.
5. **Quadrant 5:**
Business Demographics Size and structure of target companies
6. **Quadrant 6:**
Regulatory and Compliance Legal obligations or tax incentives that drive demand for climate innovation.
7. **Quadrant 7:**
Alliances and Ecosystem Relevant collaboration networks and partnerships.

Figure 18 Market segmentation quadrant definitions

Market Segmentation Analysis

1) Geographic E.g.: Countries with advanced green economy legislation, regions with high climate risk (droughts, floods) or cities committed to climate initiatives.	2) Sectoral and Operational E.g.: Companies operating in renewable energy, sustainable construction or that are part of critical supply chains.	3) Organisational Psychographic E.g.: Companies with ESG (environmental, social and governance) objectives, a commitment to carbon neutrality, or an organisational culture focused on innovation.	7) Partnerships and ecosystem E.g.: Companies associated with climate consortia, green investment funds or government initiatives.
4) Comportamiento Corporativo E.g.: Previous sustainability projects, willingness to invest in innovation, history of collaboration with technology start-ups or green financing programmes.	5) Corporate Conduct E.g.: Multinational companies, medium-sized companies with a focus on green transition, or start-ups seeking to scale climate solutions.	6) Regulation and compliance E.g.: Sectors that must comply with emission reduction targets, ISO standards, or take advantage of tax benefits for sustainable projects.	

Figure 19 Market segmentation exercise

Customer persona →

Customer Persona

A customer persona is a semi-fictional representation of your ideal customer, created from real data and market analysis. It includes demographic details, behaviours, needs, and motivations, allowing you to personalise strategies and messages to connect more effectively with your target audience.

Defining customer personas helps us understand how company dynamics influence purchasing decisions, allowing us to tailor strategies to solve their specific challenges and highlight the business value and contribution of the solution offered.

In a B2B context, it's crucial to consider both the individual traits of decision-makers and the needs, priorities, and dynamics of the companies they represent.

To develop effective B2B customer personas, note that if you identify more than one key profile due to significant differences in interest or motivation, it's best to create a persona for each representative group. This ensures a more precise and relevant strategic approach.

To develop effective customer personas in B2B, follow these steps:

- 1. Define the key roles in the decision-making process**
 - a. To whom is this person accountable? Identify the direct decision-makers, influencers, and end users of the product or service within the company. Example: purchasing manager, technical director, operational user.
- 2. Include your business objectives**
 - a. Cost reduction, process optimization, regulatory compliance or innovation? Relate this to your industry and size.
- 3. Include individual and organizational characteristics**
 - a. Role characteristics: hierarchical level, skills required, level of experience.
 - b. Company data: Size, sector, location, business model (B2C or B2B), growth stage.
- 4. Explore their challenges and needs**
 - a. What problems are they trying to solve with your product or service?
 - b. What barriers do they face in making decisions (budget, time, internal approval)?
- 5. Understand their decision process**
 - a. How they evaluate and choose suppliers: What information do they need, what criteria do they prioritize (price, quality, sustainability, support)?
 - b. What are the typical time frames and phases of the process.
- 6. Humanize the person**
 - a. Give a name and a detailed profile of the key role (example: "Maria, Director of Innovation in a medium-sized urban infrastructure company. She is focused on implementing climate adaptation strategies that increase the resilience of the company's projects. She is looking for innovative solutions that integrate sustainability and operational efficiency, but faces budget constraints imposed by financial management. Needs clear environmental impact data and a solid ROI to justify the adoption of new technologies).
- 7. Includes preferred content and channels**
 - a. How do they prefer to consume information (webinars, white papers, demos, etc.) and what channels are most effective for reaching them (LinkedIn, direct email, trade shows)?

Figure 20 Customer persona exercise description

Keep this document alive.

Make sure it reflects changes in your customers' needs, behaviors or priorities, so you can continually adjust your strategies to remain relevant and competitive in the marketplace.

- **Leverage qualitative and quantitative data.**
 - Conduct interviews with current customers, prospects and sales team to gain qualitative insights.
 - Use internal data analysis to identify common patterns among companies you work with.

Figure 21 Customer persona exercise description

 Name (Age) Role characteristics: - Hierarchical level - Required skills - Level of experience. Company details: - Size - Sector - Location - Business model (B2C or B2B) - Growth stage (if applicable)	History: <i>Maria, Director of Innovation at a medium-sized urban infrastructure company. She is focused on implementing climate adaptation strategies that increase the resilience of the company's projects. She seeks innovative solutions that integrate sustainability and operational efficiency, but faces budget constraints imposed by financial management. She needs clear data on environmental impact and a solid ROI to justify the adoption of new technologies.</i> Company goals: Reduce costs, optimize processes, comply with regulations, or innovate? Relate this to their industry and size. List two or three difficulties that they may associate with your product/service.
Challenges and needs What problems are you trying to solve with your product or service? What barriers do they face in making decisions (budget, time, internal approval)? What is your decision-making capacity, or which decision-maker does it depend on?	Decision process Evaluación y elección de proveedores: ¿Qué información necesitan? ¿Qué criterios priorizan (precio, calidad, sostenibilidad, soporte)? Tiempos y fases típicas de sus procesos Interests and channels Favorite content: webinars, technical reports, demonstrations, etc. Preferred channels: which channels are most effective for reaching them (LinkedIn, direct email, trade fairs)?

Figure 22 Customer persona exercise table

[Competitor analysis →](#)

A competitiveness study is key to understanding how your brand is positioned against competitors and what makes it unique. It helps **identify strengths, weaknesses, and market opportunities**, allowing you to differentiate your offer and connect more effectively with your target audience. Moreover, it ensures that brand strategies are aligned with industry trends and customer expectations.

Definitions

1. **Value Proposition:** Differentiation and uniqueness compared to the competition.
2. **Brand Identity:** Visual style, tone, and consistency in communication.
3. **Channels and Presence:** Reach through social media, websites, and other platforms.
4. **Innovation:** Ability to adapt and propose new solutions.
5. **Market Adoption:** Interest and trust from key sectors such as governments, businesses, and communities.
6. **Environmental Impact:** Ability to mitigate climate change, reduce emissions, or increase resilience to climate events.
7. **Technological Innovation:** Level of advancement and originality of climate solutions offered compared to competitors.
8. **Accessibility:** Distribution, availability, and ease of acquiring the product or service.

Figure 23 Competitor analysis description and definitions

Competitor Analysis

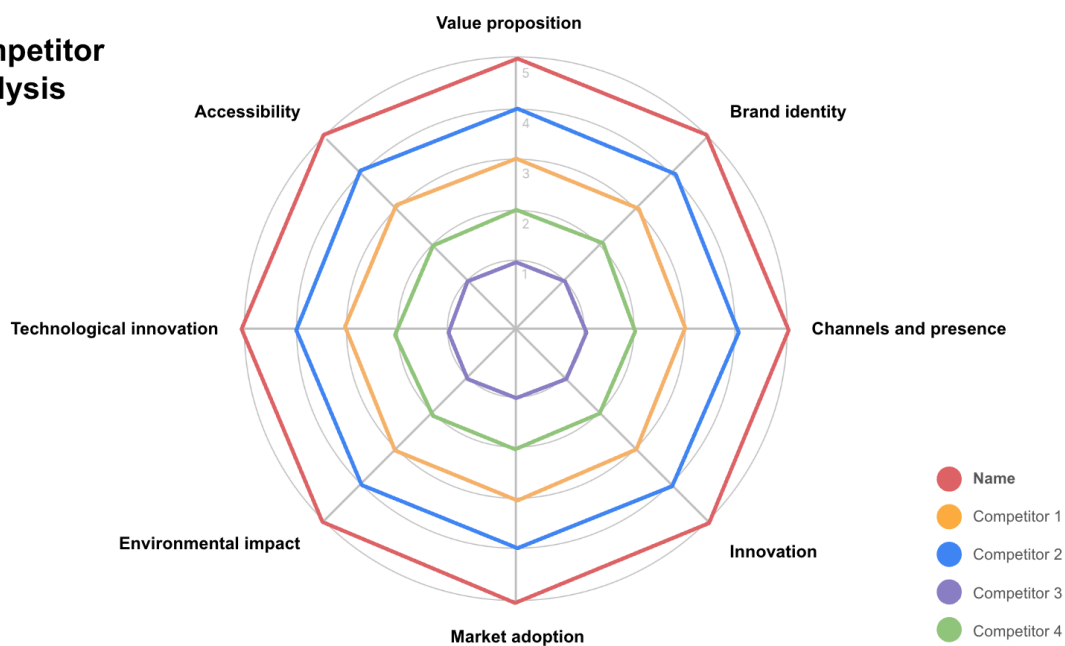


Figure 24 Competitor analysis spider web model exercise

ANNEX 4: Example- Singular Green Deck

[Singular Green Deck →](#)



Figure 25 Pitch deck cover

ANNEX 5: Branding program introduction

[Link to document →](#)

Innovation Support Services: Market perception of innovation

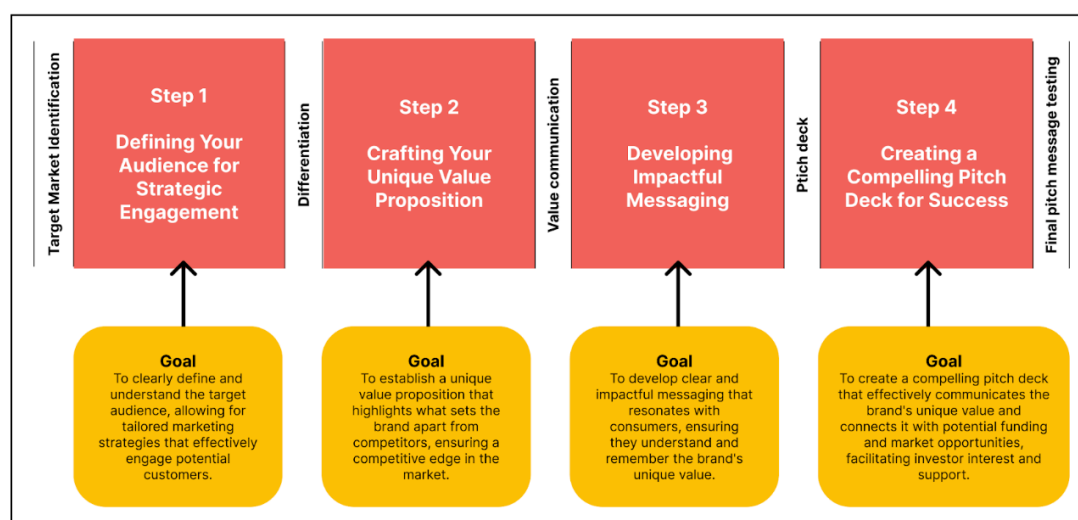
By **BRIGAD CONNECT**

Member in charge: **Off Course**

ARSINOE Project

Innovator: Name of the innovator

[Program overview](#)



Step 1: Target market identification

Defining your audience for strategic engagement

- **Knowing who your customers are and who you are targeting.**
 - Understanding the specific characteristics and needs of your customers is key to developing a brand strategy.
 - **Goal:** Identify key audiences and understand their priorities in order to develop more relevant strategies and messages.

Figure 26 Branding program introduction

- The proposed exercises will enable you to analyse your customers and competitors in an agile way, providing a solid basis for the next phase of work.
- **Exercises:**
 - [Customer Personas](#)
 - [Market Segmentation Analysis](#)
 - [Competitor Analysis](#)

Step 2: Differentiation

Crafting your unique value proposition

- Defining what makes your brand different from the others.
- **Services include:**
 - Unique value proposition workshop
 - Unique value proposition, based on Step 1 conclusions.

Step 3: Value communication

Developing impactful messages

- Creating a clear message and ensuring that consumers understand and remember it.
- **Services include:**
 - Message development workshop
 - Exercise: list of final messages

Step 4: Pitch Deck

Creating a compelling pitch deck for success

- Key to connect the unique value of the innovation with funding and market opportunities.
- **Services include:**
 - Exercise: Structure and content of the pitch deck
 - Design of the pitch deck, sales pitch, info deck, ...

Figure 27 Branding program introduction

Systems Innovation Approach (SIA) addresses the growing complexity, interdependencies and interconnectedness of modern societies and economies, focusing on the functions of the cross-sectoral system? as a whole? and on the variety of actors. The Climate Innovation Window (CIW) is the EU reference innovations marketplace for climate adaptation technologies. ARSINOE shapes the pathways to resilience by bringing together SIA and CIW, to build an ecosystem for climate change adaptation solutions. Within the ARSINOE ecosystem, pathways to solutions are co-created and co-designed by stakeholders, who can then select either existing CIW technologies, or technologies by new providers (or a combination) to form an innovation package. This package may be designed for implementation to a specific region, but its building blocks are transferable and re-usable; they can be re-adapted and updated. In this way, the user (region) gets an innovation package consisting of validated technologies (expanding the market for CIW); new technologies implemented in the specific local innovation package get the opportunity to be validated and become CIW members, while the society (citizens, stakeholders) benefits as a whole. ARSINOE applies a three-tier, approach: (a) using SIA it integrates multi-faceted technological, digital, business, governance and environmental aspects with social innovation for the development of adaptation pathways to climate change for specific regions; (b) it links with CIW to form innovation packages by matching innovators with end-users/regions; (c) it fosters the ecosystem sustainability and growth with cross-fertilization and replication across regions and scales, at European level and beyond, using specific business models, exploitation and outreach actions. The ARSINOE approach is show-cased in nine widely varied demonstrators, as a proof-of-concept with regards to its applicability, replicability, potential and efficacy.



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