CATALYST

European VET Excellence Centre for Leading
Sustainable Systems and Business Transformation

THE CATALYST
"INSPIRE & ENABLE" CONCEPT

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THE CATALYST "INSPIRE & ENABLE" CONCEPT

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About the project

The CATALYST project "European VET Excellence Centre for Leading Sustainable Systems and Business Transformation" is designed with strong vision and motivation to contribute to realisation of the European Green Deal and the new Industrial and SME Strategies.

The **main goal** is with the **establishment of united CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence in 5 countries** (North Macedonia, Greece, Austria, Germany and Portugal) to give support, create an educational offer to tackle personal and organisational development, and to embrace transformation in SMEs, enabling and inspiring them to re-think and re-design their business models, co-creating and sharing between educational and business organisations.

The main project outputs are:

1. 5 CoVEs and CATALYST Network anchored the European VET ecosystem;
2. 70 VET courses for up-skilling professionals and students (Enable component);
3. Co-create and disseminate applied knowledge inspiring business-education partnerships involving students, professionals and SMEs (Inspire component);
4. Create CATALYST Platform which will unite all CoVEs on European level;
5. Implement VET trainings, pilot-project with SMEs and applied joint research projects in selected sectors according to the national S3;
6. Raise awareness of the potential CATALYST CoVEs have and increase the demand and attractiveness of VET.

The project fosters innovation and applied knowledge in approaches of learning and tailor-made VET program via the "Enable component", as well as support of SMEs to create sustainable businesses via the "Inspire component".

The main focus will be addressing sustainability from an organisational, social and economic perspective. There are a lot of new technologies constantly developed, but what is lacking in Europe is the strong support provided in the business sector to bravely accept the proposed changes and sustainability leadership to lead these processes. We will build the CoVE on our mutual experience and vision of how professionals and industry can perform in a more sustainable way.

This document is created to elaborate the concept of the CATALYST CoVE, its position, components and the establishment of the CATALYST Network.

The CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence

The CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) is created with strong vision and dedication to contribute to leading sustainable systems and business transformation in Europe.

The main idea of **united CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence in 5 countries** is to give support, create an educational offer to tackle personal and organisational development and to embrace transformation in SMEs, enabling and inspiring them to re-think and re-design their business models, co-creating and sharing between educational and business organisations.

Upskilling and re-skilling are crucial for long-term and sustainable growth, productivity and innovation and therefore a key factor for the competitiveness of businesses of all sizes, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The aim is providing VET learners with the right skills to work more effectively and take advantage of advanced technologies. Through the "Enable and Inspire" component it is expected to have positive impact and decrease the identified obstacles.

The CATALYST CoVEs are envisioned to be 'catalyst' on national, regional and European level, to 'enable' change and to 'inspire' transformation of individuals and SMEs toward more sustainable systems and societies.

This Center of Vocational Excellence has several innovative aspects, also seen as ambitions:

- To **enable useful knowledge, that can be applied in SMEs** and with this contribute to their transformation as learning organisations adopting sustainable business models.

- To **anchor the sustainability aspect of the CATALYST CoVEs** from the creation, and during the project work toward continuation of the Centres after finishing the project, as well as initiating new CATALYST CoVEs in other European countries after finishing the project.

- To apply the CO-IN Model (collaborative and innovative partnerships) between educational and business organisations in co-creation of knowledge and with this supporting the knowledge triangle.

- To raise awareness of the importance of the topics of Sustainability and Management in the business sector using the **CATALYST Journal** as a tool, and to stimulate the demand for VET in the business sector.

- To establish opportunities for education, collaboration and networking through the **CATALYST Platform**.

- To positively influence on **the employability of the VET learners**, their career progress and potential to manage sustainable businesses.

- To inspire SMEs and VET learners (professionals and students) to be courageous and serve as **exemplary sustainable leaders** in their environments.

- To **support SMEs to manage knowledge and intellectual capital** and with this enhancing their productivity and sustainable performance.

The 'Inspire' and 'Enable' Components

The CATALYST CoVEs will be positioned on national level and united through the platform and the Network on European level, with the aim to address pressing societal challenges, and providing innovative approaches in enabling VET learners (professionals and students) to have high quality education and get the needed support and inspiration to help SMEs in their business transformation.

CATALYST project is based on two pivotal components – "Enable" and "Inspire" – that are integral to achieving sustainable systems and transforming businesses. Both components are essential for the CATALYST CoVEs that will be established in this project, with strong peer-learning processes, capacity building and improving the human capital in several workshops and coaching sessions.
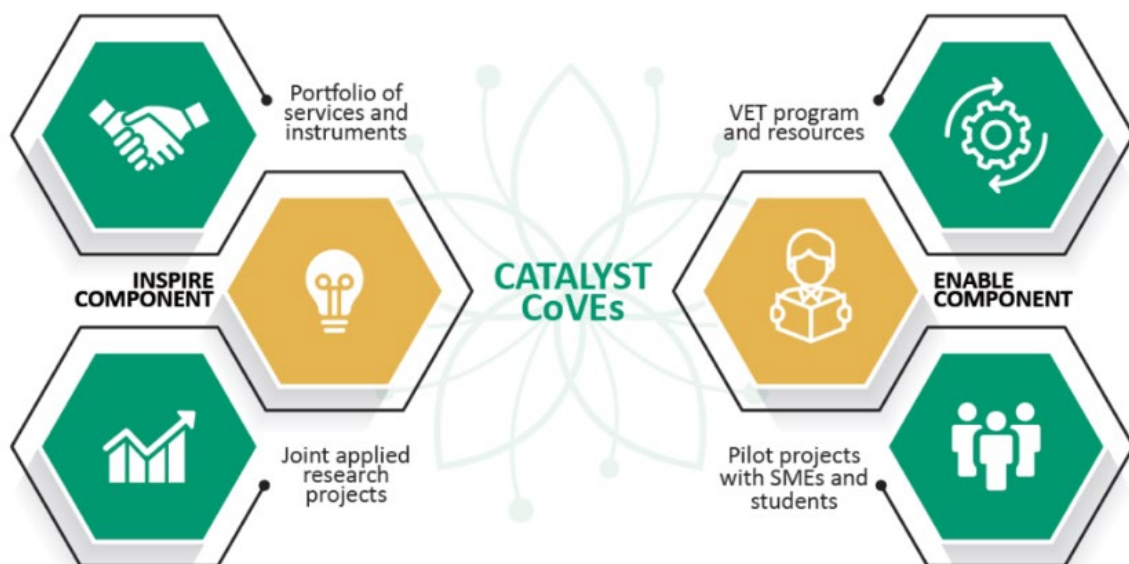
Figure 1 The 'Inspire' and 'Enable' Components

The CATALYST project arises from the need to increase the competences of students and professionals and support SMEs to embrace sustainability challenges and contribute to a greener and circular European economy. The "Enable" component plays an essential role in the CATALYST project and its activities will result in a VET Program "Leading Sustainable, Systems and Business Transformation" for EQF levels 4 – 8, consisting of at least 70 courses, among which:[1]

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[1] The full list of courses will be developed further and will be communicated on the CATALYST website.

- **Personal skills** – sustainable lifestyle, solving complex problems, entrepreneurial skills, systemic thinking, communication skills, sustainable leadership;

- **Sustainable business skills** – CSR 2.0., managing intellectual capital, knowledge management, building sustainable brands, innovation management, collaboration and Teamwork;

- **Leading Sustainable Systems** – sustainable business models, establishing collaborative-innovative partnerships (CO-IN), contributing to the triple helix, strengthening the eco-innovation system, developing learning organisation.

To ensure optimal learning outcomes for learners, the development process and established course curricula will center on incorporating feedback from professionals and SMEs. This will involve leveraging digital tools and gamification, that have proven effective in enhancing learning experiences. By integrating these contemporary pedagogical approaches, CATALYST can provide an engaging and dynamic learning environment that meets the evolving needs of learners. Also, as part of this component and enabling the learning process training and learning materials, as well as supporting resources.

Very important aspect of the "Enable" component is co-creation of new knowledge by applying the CO–IN Model. This component will **support knowledge triangles, collaboration between educational and business organisations, with applied joint research projects**. Especially valuable in this process is the participation of professionals from business organisations in the development process.

The e-learning modules will be developed in synergies between educational and business organisations (large and small companies), in accordance with relevant European strategies, policies, management and leadership standards and competency models, as well as European Qualification Framework, which will provide for its wide geographical range of applicability, transnational recognition and a long-term actuality and sustainability. In addition, specially designed learning environment will meet the needs of VET learners with initial high professional knowledge, providing flexibility and innovative approaches, and with this supporting the creation of European Education Area. All developed training and learning materials will be available through the CATALYST platform will be set with open access and disseminated to the potential VET learners, enabling them to freely access them.

The 'Inspire' component will consist a portfolio of instruments and services which aims to support the SMEs and enable business-education partnerships. The 'Inspire' component targets the dedication to implement the new skills in real life scenarios, working closely in collaboration with SMEs. This opportunity will be especially valuable for students, who through these experiences will gain practical knowledge and enhance their employability.

In the Portfolio of instruments and services, a number of services and activities are envisioned. Some examples are providing mentorship and guidance for SMEs in applying new concepts in their organisations, serving as supporting mechanism and having in place the inspirational component, organising implementation of joint applied research project via the CATALYST platform, tools and resources such as: "Ask an expert", Glossary, Practicum with case studies and best practices, etc.

The aim of the activities in the 'Inspire' component is to help organisations and provide support. For instance, mentor SMEs on sustainability methodologies and support them in creating tailor-made sustainable solutions for their SME, organise competition and selection of best sustainability solutions developed by SMEs and professionals applying the new competencies and facilitate the process of collaboration and pilot projects implementation.

The **connecting CATALYST platform, CATALYST Network[2] and CATALYST Journal are central project outputs** and serve as a **bonding medium of the two "Enable" and "Inspire" components**. At its final stage of development this platform would represent an **international web-based and open-access medium** where the developed courses and digital tools, as well as the other resources would be easy reachable and utilised by identified target groups.

❀ CATALYST platform

The CATALYST platform will be an open-access platform that enables easy access to the CATALYST results: CATALYST Journal, CATALYST Network, CATALYST educational offer and CATALYST portfolio of instruments and services for SMEs. Students, professionals and SMEs are invited to join the online courses in the "Leading Sustainable, Systems and Business Transformation" program, attuned to virtual up-skilling and online knowledge sharing with more experienced experts and professionals from the field.

The CATALYST platform has the capacity to insure sharing of knowledge, provide training opportunities for students and professionals, as well exchanging practices and support the CATALYST community of relevant stakeholders. The Platform is envisioned as a tool for communication, collaboration and networking among the relevant stakeholders, providing opportunities for membership on the platform and forums among the members.

❀ CATALYST journal

The CATALYST journal will provide insight to the newest trends in sustainability in Europe, with special focus on applied research and good practices from SMEs and VET organisations. The international journal "*Interdisciplinary Approach toward Sustainability*" (IAS) will focus on broad aspects of sustainability. It fosters discussion on interdisciplinary approaches for sustainability in natural, technical and social sciences and practices. IAS aims to establish an effective channel of communication and provides a vehicle for dissemination and exchange of information between academics, researchers, professionals, policy-makers and educators and all others interested in challenging thinking about the complexities of sustainability and innovative sustainable solutions.

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[2] The CATALYST Network is elaborated in the next part of this document.

The Collaborative-Innovative (CO-IN) © Model

In order to establish and maintain collaboration between education and business organisations the Collaborative-Innovative Model will be employed.

The Collaborative-Innovative (CO-IN) © Model is a unique model, designed to establish and enhance collaborative and innovative partnerships and enable achieving sustainable growth of all participating organisations. It supports the knowledge-based economy and increases the competitiveness and innovation of organisations that invest in research and development, co-create and share new knowledge and strengthen the capacities of the human capital according to their needs.

This effective model enables communication and long-term cooperation among different relevant stakeholders (industry, government, educational institutions, professional associations and NGOs). It is an effective tool in addressing complex social, economic, and environmental problems.

The CO-IN© Model has been validated by:

• The European Commission in 2018, by co-funding an Erasmus+ project: All4R&D, aiming to accelerate research, innovation, knowledge and technology transfer through enhancing strategic academia-industry alliances.

• The European Conference on Knowledge Management in 2020, receiving 1st prize for the Knowledge Management and Intellectual Capital Excellence Awards with the winning case: "Innovative Model for Development of Learning Organisations Through KM and Intellectual Capital".

• The European Commission in 2022, by funding the multi-million project CATALYST. The core aspect of the project is applying the CO-IN© Model, which directly fosters knowledge triangles, and enables the collaboration between educational and business organisations.

The Coordination, IECE, was recognised and awarded as Winners in 2020, receiving the 1st Place for Knowledge Management and Intellectual Capital Excellence Awards. They presented their winning case: "Innovative Model for Development of Learning Organisations Through KM and Intellectual Capital". Also, they are selected as champions for their Innovative Education and University-Business Collaboration.
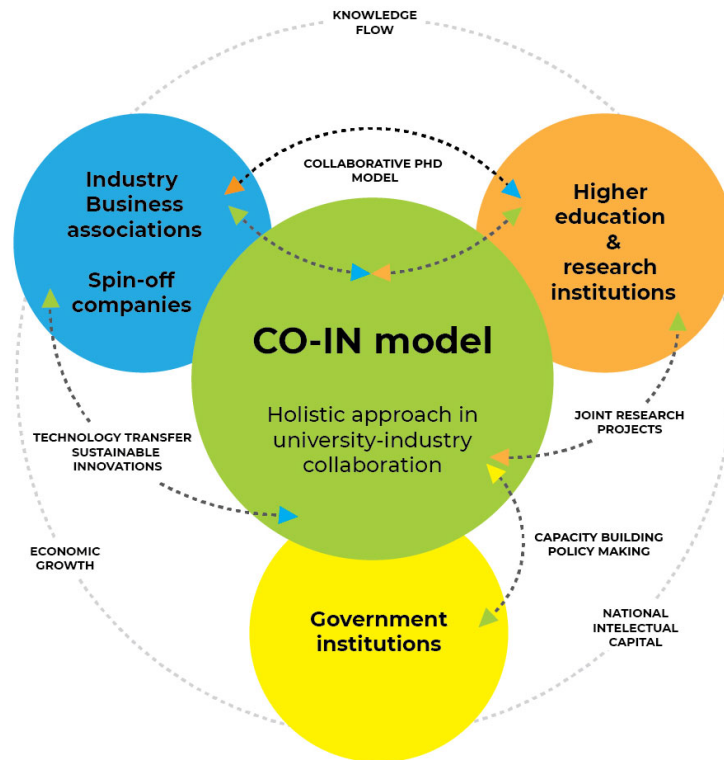
Figure 2: The CO-IN© model

The aim of the CO-IN© Model is to build sustainable systems and develop sustainable business models, contributing to the triple helix, strengthening the eco-innovation system and supporting the establishment of learning organisations and entrepreneurial universities.

The effects and benefits of the CO-IN© Model are:

• Building an innovation eco-system supporting the knowledge triangle through collaboration and strategic partnerships;

• Closing the gap between demand and offer in the labour market and bridging the valley of death;

• Supporting the development of sustainable businesses companies, from traditional companies to learning organisations;

• Added value from education and research by creating useful knowledge;

• Adopting a holistic approach to solving complex, open and connected problems, providing guidance via frame innovation methodology;

• Effective tool in addressing complex social, economic, and environmental problems.

Impact of the CATALYST CoVE

The desired impact of the project is the established CoVEs to be 'catalyst' on national, regional and European level, 'enable' change and 'inspire' and transformation of individuals and SMEs toward more sustainable systems and societies.

The main target group (professionals, students and SMEs) needs will be achieved by improving their knowledge and skills and grow their potential to create sustainable solutions and transform their organisations toward circular economy with **multi-level approach**:

Personal level – empowering professionals and students with skills they need to tackle multi-dimensional complex problems and provide support in doing this through the interactive part of the CATALYST platform.

Organisational level – developing more open, collaborative, and explorative organisational cultures, supporting the transformation of SMEs, creating sustainable and innovative solutions, transforming their business value in sustainable manner toward green economy.

Systemic level – the project CATALYST will have a short- and long-term impact on the direct beneficiaries and with this will enable a change in their environments, which will lead to positive change on societal level as well. This project has a bottom-up approach and by influencing on the growth and development of individuals and organisations, will also positively influence on systemic level.

The **extra impact** that CATALYST has on the long-term can be observed and measured with the number of new business models introduced, number of sustainable and social entrepreneurship businesses established, the implemented systems for managing knowledge and intellectual capital in SMEs, and with this increasing the number of learning organisations. Indirectly, CATALYST is supporting the realisation of the European policies and positively influencing on the environment and the climate.

2

Positioning the CATALYST CoVEs

Creating our CATALYST story

Two workshops on the topic "We create our Catalyst story" were conducted online:

1. Online workshop: Shaping the CATALYST 'Enable & Inspire' Concept", 2nd of February 2023, 11:00-13:00
2. Online workshop: „Shaping the CATALYST 'Enable & Inspire' Concept", 16th of February 2023, 12:00-13:30

The aim was to develop a common story that supports the project partners in presenting the project in a way that makes the benefits tangible and experiential for the target group and arouses their interest on different levels: informative, sensual and emotional. The aim is to foster connection and loyalty and increase willingness to invest. Ultimately, the story should influence people and motivate them.

„The story you tell can be what makes or breaks your initiative."[3]

Why storytelling?

The origins of storytelling go back to the earliest beginnings of humanity and originated around the campfires of our ancestors. Neuroscientists and psychologists have been intensively studying the effect of storytelling in recent decades. Their basic finding is that the human brain has evolved with the help of stories and thus responds more strongly to them than to rational arguments and logic. Stories work with emotions, which is why our brains respond primarily to information that is wrapped up in emotions. Stories that are charged with emotions allow us to experience them and inspire us. In this way, stories also help us build relationships with others, retain input and become active. The important thing, then, is to take the listener on a motion journey and not only let them share the storyteller's own feelings, but above all to show empathy towards their situation. In this way - according to the neurosciences - the brains of the storyteller and the listener connect and tick similarly at that moment. This is the point of departure to create a common way forward. [4]

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[3] https://www.circulardesignguide.com/post/narrative

[4] Gottschall 2012; Stephen et al. 2010; https://medium.com/ideo-stories/how-to-tell-stories-that-influence-people-and-inspire-action-bd1db98d1a01#.6wg1ck5gt

Methodology

In recent years, the CSCP has developed and tested a method for strategic storytelling. It is inspired by well-known storytelling approaches[5] and has been further developed and adapted for CSCP projects and clients. The approach comprises the following steps:

1. As a basis, all images and story elements which are already available are collected
2. This is followed by an introduction to storytelling, its benefits and key elements.
3. Next step is a group work on storytelling canvases which comprise the main elements of storytelling and help to focus.
4. After this first phase, there is a deliberate pause to let the condensed story elements take effect. Each participant creates their own story on this basis as a homework assignment with the help of another canvas. The core idea is to use visuals when creating an own storyboard in order to add a new perspective to the storyline and concepts that someone has developed for a project, product or service.
5. The individual stories are presented and discussed in a joint workshop and the group works out the common focal points and the red thread of the story.
6. This is the material for PPTs, videos and other communication materials.

Steps 1-3 were the subject of the 1st online workshop, step 4 was carried out in small groups as homework and the subject of the 2nd workshop was the presentation of the homework and the discussion (step 5). The next step 6 will be the transfer of the results into the Enable and Inspire concept, e.g. into PPTs or explanatory videos (input for WP 3). The basis for all material collections was a Miro Board.

Workshop 1

1. Collection of images and story elements which were already available

In the run-up to Workshop 1, all materials that already exist for the story of the project were collected. These were e.g. the logo, the currently existing PPT for the presentation of the project, excerpts from the application as well as pictures representing the project or elements of the project.

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[5] E.g. https://themoth.org/share-your-story/storytelling-tips-tricks; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UE3OufWmnMY; https://www.circulardesignguide.com/post/narrative; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qlis4-kV7zE; https://visme.co/blog/7-storytelling-techniques-used-by-the-most-inspiring-ted-presenters/; Denning 2021

Associated terms could also be noted down. These were collected in the Miro Board and presented to the participants in the workshop:

Figure 3: What we have so far

2. Introduction to storytelling, its benefits and key elements

In the second step, the most important elements of storytelling were presented in a PPT. There are many different guides and methods to storytelling, but for Catalyst the CSCP has selected five essential steps or tips that help creating a great story.[6]

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[6] These elements are derived from the sources listed in footnote 3.

Tip 1: Find the message. What's the point – every story needs a reason.

What is the core of every story? What inspires and connects people? It is neither what someone does nor how someone does it. People are inspired by why someone does something. This is why every story should pay attention to the reason behind someone's actions. That's its beginning, its origin and its core. What is the reason for the existence of a project (business/activity/…)?

Against this background, the storyteller needs to ask him- or herself: What message do I want to convey with my story - what do I want the audience to learn from it? A nice example for this is a slogan by Ikea: "We want to create a better everyday life for the many people." A good way to find out if someone has a message is to tell in one sentence – this is also called "bar exam": Try out your story on colleagues or friends in a bar: "If you can't keep your colleagues' attention in a bar, it's because you don't know the point of your story."[7]

Tip 2: Know your ingredients. Create structure and suspense

Hero (Ingredient 1)

Every good story needs a hero, but the audience should be able to identify with him. As a rule of thumb, it is better to choose a hero that is a member of the target group and not the storyteller him- or herself – this helps the audience to identify. The person that tells the story rather takes on the role of mentor, supporting or guiding the hero (i.e. the customers) on their journey. This is how the audience builds trust and recognizes the value of the offering. Of course, it's still possible and even recommendable to relate to the hero (the target group) personally: A story should show what the storyteller has in common with the target group/participants. What experiences have led him or her to help the target group/participants with their problems? What has he or she learned, how has he or she grown?

Goal (Ingredient 2)

When someone wants to tell a good and engaging story, he should ask some critical questions: Why should the story be told at this specific point in time? What does the storyteller want to achieve with it?

Conflict (Ingredient 3)

Stories are about conflict, because stories without conflict tend to be boring. Conflict arises when "subjective expectations" (of the hero) meet "objective reality".[8] One example is a SME manager who wants to make his business more sustainable, but faces cost restrictions, confusing legal requirements and change-avoiding staff. So, conflict arises from resistance that prevents the hero (and his team or company) from achieving the goal.

Dramaturgy (Ingredient 4)

Dramaturgy starts from the actual situation, shows possibilities for change and also the future state. This can also be described as a development from the normal (actual situation including specific details, emotions, and the challenge) to an explosion that disrupts the normal (a solution such as USPs, product, service, project) and finally to a new normal (future state, that is impact or vision containing a progress report).

One example is Steve Jobs when he introduced the iphone: He was talking about smart phones being not really smart (description of the normal), he presented the iphone as solution (the explosion: a computer in the pocket), and he outlined the new normal: this device will change the way of communication.

Resolution (Ingredient 5) – Solution based storytelling

Challenges are an essential part of every great story. Thus, it is important to describe the challenge, but also to show how the target group can do better (describing visions, best practices).

Tip 3: Fill the story with life – adding emotions

In order to attract the audience emotionally, stories should be personal and authentic. One tool for this is to describe characters and use some specific details for this, like drawing a picture with words. Personality does not necessarily need to be tied to the person that tells the story. It can be a story of a colleague, project partner, workshop-participant or a client. It is also possible to create personas who are telling the story like as if the audience would meet them on the street.

Authenticity can be created by starting with something personal that the storyteller feels comfortable with, e.g. talking about expectations, hopes and fears or best practices. Inspiration can

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[8] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UE3OufWmnMY

be found everywhere - in the own family or organizations, peer group, in contact with customers, in the newspaper.

Tip 4: Become a sculptor – lean storytelling: reduce, keep it simple and stay focused

Refining a story is a process of editing, of constantly taking away pieces. It is necessary to continually cut to ensure that the story is focused on the central theme. As IDEO storyteller Neil Stevenson says, "Storytelling is like sculpting, where you carve away to reveal something beautiful."[9]

Also, it's a process of continuous improvement. Lean storytelling means following a learning loop including writing, telling and learning. With each loop, the story becomes more accurate, because it not only conveys the storyteller's own intentions, but also takes into account the feedback from the target group.

Tip 5: End with a positive takeaway – Create a shareable end

At the end, the audience needs something positive to go on, a positive key takeaway. This can be a basic insight, but also a call or an incentive to think further about a topic. It is also possible to outline possible follow-up steps. In any case, it should be something new and innovative that relates to the audience. Ideally, it is also a hook for a next conversation.

The tips and elements of storytelling were summarised on Miro (fig. 2) so that the participants had the opportunity to recall them during the following group work.

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[9] Neil Stevenson on https://www.ideou.com/blogs/inspiration/chasing-creativity-the-never-ending-journey

Figure 4: Key elements of storytelling

3. Group work on storytelling canvases which comprise the main elements of storytelling and help to focus

The next step was to work out the basic building blocks of the CATALYST story using canvases in three break-out groups that were put together at random. The participants could choose whether to work on only one of the canvases presented in the following or both and had 35 minutes to do so.

The storytelling canvas from "Design a better business" was used as the basis for Canvas 1, but slightly modified and adapted for the project.[10] Canvas 2 was created by CSCP. Both take up the essential core elements of good stories (the tips presented above):

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[10] https://www.designabetterbusiness.tools/tools/storytelling-canvas

The CATALYST "Inspire & Enable" concept

Storytelling Canvas

Outcomes
Raising awareness, perception
changes, policy change, etc.

1

Subject
What is the story about?

Goal / Vision / Impact
What do you want to achieve with your story?

Audience
What's the goal of your story?
What are the needs of the target group?

Before	**1. Setting the Scene**	**2. Make your Point**	**3. Conclusion**	**After**
What does your audience think, feel, know, want before they know your story?	What introduction does the audience need, what needs to be explained?	The wow moment for the audience: the solution (USP, product, service, project)	What is the end of your story? What is the conclusion? What is your call-to-action?	What does your audience think, feel, know, want after they know your story?

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Figure 5: Storytelling Canvas 1

The ingredients of your story

2

Message	Main Character / Hero	Setting / place / tone & other characters
Guiding questions and thoughts: *What inspires and connects people? For people, it is not so crucial what we do or how we do it. People are inspired by WHY we do something.* *What should explicitly NOT be the message?* *What should be the message?* *What is the message of CATALYST story in one sentence?*	*Rule of thumb: You are not the hero of the story, but others are, e.g. pioneers, experts, potential participants, …*	
Problem / Challenge / Conflict	**Solution / resolution**	**Positive take away**

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Figure 6: Storytelling Canvas 2

The following pictures show the results of the three group works:

Storytelling Canvas

Outcomes
Raising awareness, perception changes, policy change, etc.

Concrete implementation
New normal: more sustainable future, based on NEW CONCEPT such as circular economy.
What kind of transformation
Change the public policies, Put the people in the center of the decisions re. quality of life.

1

Subject		Goal / Vision / Impact		Audience	
What is the story about?		What do you want to achieve with your story?		What's the goal of your story? What are the needs of the target group?	
Learning by sharing knowledge European Pioneers who share their Knowledge for a sustainability. Working together for sustainability. Transformation Excellence, High culture and quality of behavior		Awareness razing : importance of the project, sustainability management. Small companies to see that also benefits them. SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION		Small companies (FOR TODAY) Managers Personal level Researchers. PHD students >>> Different stories for different target groups integrating into a support network for sustainability transformation	

Before	1. Setting the Scene	2. Make your Point	3. Conclusion	After
What does your audience think, feel, know, want before they know your story?	What introduction does the audience need, what needs to be explained?	The wow moment for the audience: the solution (USP, product, service, project)	What is the end of your story? What is the conclusion? What is your call-to-action?	What does your audience think, feel, know, want after they know your story?
have you had contact with the audience before?		True cost of not being sustainable and stay as you are		information
• What is relevant for SMEs concerning the many regulations (overwhelming) • Customer perspective is important for SMES		You can be very sucessful and a become even a frontrunner if you invest in sustainabiltiy	CATALYST offerings: open course for education	raised level of knowledge feeling less alone
access to knowledge is not given yet		You can collaborate with other that are on the same track (the CATALYST project helps you to connect and buld a network	platform journal	being able to exchange and collaborate
Prices and competitiveness in combination with sustainability		having awarness of sustainability and the content behind it (the steps to sustainability and understand the components	CATALYST Network	
difficulty to "change" people in the companies (their mindset)		even small steps are better than nothing at all		
sharing experiences and expertise from other countries and markets				

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Figure 7: Group 1 - Find your story!

Storytelling Canvas

1

Outcomes
Raising awareness, perception changes, policy change, etc.

transformation of business models

raising awareness

applicable knowledge and competences to achieve the SDGs

engage different stakeholders + help them learn from each other

Subject
What is the story about?

Excellence: We want to create a high quality offer

promoting sustainable behaviour of the target group

transformation to successful legacy

tell a story of a happy person!

target group as role models, starting a movement

Change can be positive! Sustainable behaviour can bring many positive aspects to us

Goal / Vision / Impact
What do you want to achieve with your story?

changing minds

showing an alternative

We want to create a culture, where people are happily connected to a network, change of norms

One stop shop: we provide training, access to literature, …

impact on personal level changes in organisations

Let the target group find their potentials: create their own visons and goals, we support them

highlight connection between environment social and economic sustainability

SDGs

systemic change towards sustainability

Audience
What's the goal of your story?
What are the needs of the target group?

Connect with your TG, get them where they are

Vision

give the target group tools they need to achieve a higher level of sustainability

define first steps, get orientation

TG needs their own vision and find their own journey

Before	**1. Setting the Scene**	**2. Make your Point**	**3. Conclusion**	**After**
What does your audience think, feel, know, want before they know your story?	What introduction does the audience need, what needs to be explained?	The wow moment for the audience: the solution (USP, product, service, project)	What is the end of your story? What is the conclusion? What is your call-to-action?	What does your audience think, feel, know, want after they know your story?
fears regarding the challenge of doing business more sustainably	We can help and support you to find your individual way	There are people/institutions who can help you! Let's do this together	Everybody can and should start with doing business more sustainably	They know the first steps of their journey towards sustainable business
unsecure because of many new political regulations	From challenge to vision	Collaboration	small steps procedure	Become a member of the Catalyst network
need to align to system, regulations, environment	TG: pressure to act - how can you do this?	The transition to sustainability is for the benefit of the target group		Feel inspired and hopeful: THere is a reliable partner and community very close to them
tendency for strategic partnerships		In the short and long term you can save costs		

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Figure 8: Group 2 - Find your story!

Storytelling Canvas

Outcomes
Raising awareness, perception changes, policy change, etc.

1

Subject
What is the story about?

SME employee
--> Catalyst helps to overcome challenges

Goal / Vision / Impact
What do you want to achieve with your story?

inspire

you're not alone, Catalyst can help

Audience
What's the goal of your story?
What are the needs of the target group?

Before What does your audience think, feel, know, want before they know your story?	**1. Setting the Scene** What introduction does the audience need, what needs to be explained?	**2. Make your Point** The wow moment for the audience: the solution (USP, product, service, project)	**3. Conclusion** What is the end of your story? What is the conclusion? What is your call-to-action?	**After** What does your audience think, feel, know, want after they know your story?

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Figure 9: Group 3 - Find your story!

The ingredients of your story

Message

Guiding questions and thoughts:
What inspires and connects people? For people, it is not so crucial what we do or how we do it. People are inspired by **WHY** we do something.

What should explicitly NOT be the message?

What should be the message?
> inspire to start the journey --> you can change something

What is the message of CATALYST story in one sentence?

Main Character / Hero

Rule of thumb: You are not the hero of the story, but others are, e.g. pioneers, experts, potential participants, ...

> SME employee

Setting / place / tone & other characters

> CEO as villain (old-fashioned)

> regional coffee chain

Problem / Challenge / Conflict

> sustainable transformation is needed but absent

> denial: employees would like to change the company but CEO is old-fashioned and not super open to changes

> CEO agrees that employee suggests a plan and s/he needs help for it

> coffee residuals

Solution / resolution

> Catalyst educational program

> Catalyst network

> coffee residuals have a lot of antioxidants that can be used in cosmetics

> Catalyst network connects SME + Start-up solution

Positive take away

> old-fashioned CEO opens up to new ideas

> expanded consumer groups through sustainability

> food waste can be a valuable raw material

> increase revenue through sustainability

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Figure 10: Group 3 - Find your story!

The groups chose very different approaches: Group 3 in particular differed in that they chose a concrete person with a concrete case (coffee chain employee) on the basis of which they acted out the story. This met with great approval from the participants.

4. Homework: Developing an own story

With the rough framework of the key elements of the Catalyst story from Workshop 1, the respective partners from the five Catalyst core countries were now to form five national teams and create their story as homework. The reason why the group was split into national teams was that the target groups, the culturally influenced images and also the language probably differ somewhat in each country, but it is precisely these aspects that should awaken resonance with the story.

The canvas or template for the homework looked like this:
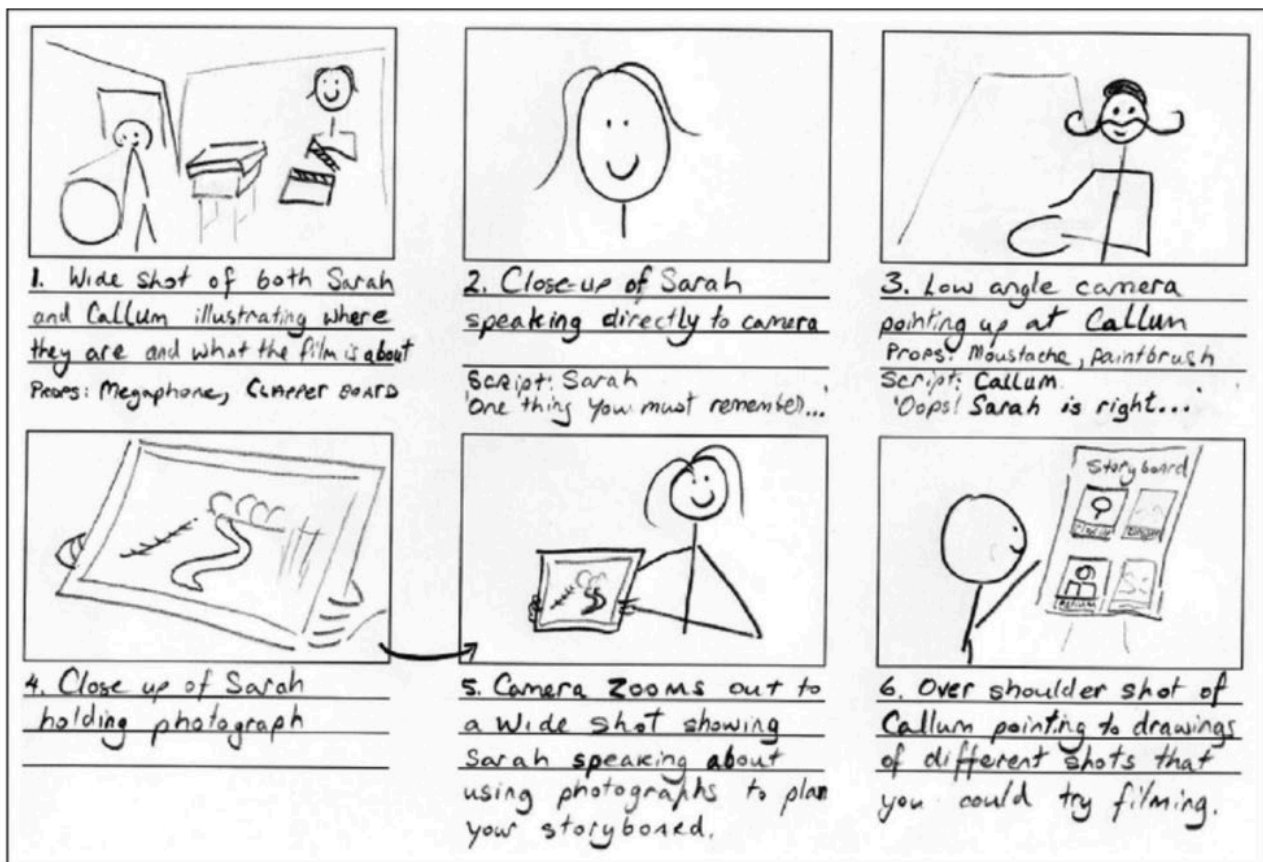
Figure 11: Template for storytelling homework

Workshop 2

5. Bringing together the core elements from the homework

Each group had inserted their homework storyboard on Miro and presented it there, screenshots are inserted in the document in the following. Where the font is very small, the texts of the stories are inserted under the picture. The respective highlights and special features are listed.

Homework North Macedonia: Create your storyboard!

Andrea is director of a construction company with 150 employees operating western Balkans. She is facing daily pressure (business, legal, environment, time, money). She is overwhelmed with the expectations and she feels burnout.

Andrea is worried that compiling the new legislative might cost the company their income and it will be a challenge to run a successful business.

Andrea learns about CATALYST CoVE and becomes member of CATALYST Network. Then she enrolls into several CATALYST courses. Andrea is amazed of the high quality content and its applicability.

Andrea transfers her experience with the CATALYST project and encourages her colleagues to take in the activities. Her team engages in applied research projects and finding solutions how to make their company's processes more sustainable.

Andrea and her team initiate changes in their business, looking forward to establish more sustainable business model. They are very dedicated and inspired to pursue their vision.

One year has passed and Andrea and her team are celebrating their success. They publish their story in the CATALYST Journal, hoping to serve as example for other companies.

Figure 12: Story team North Macedonia

Story:

Andrea is director of a construction company with 150 employees operating western Balkans. She is facing daily pressure (business, legal, environment, time, money). She is overwhelmed with the expectations and she feels burnout.

Andrea is worried that compiling the new legislative might cost the company their income and it will be a challenge to run a successful business. Andrea learns about CATALYST CoVE and becomes member of CATALYST Network. Then she enrolls into several CATALYST courses. Andrea is amazed of the high quality content and its applicability. Andrea transfers her experience with the CATALYST project and encourages her colleagues to take in the activities.

Her team engages in applied research projects and finding solutions how to make their company's processes more sustainable. Andrea and her team initiate changes in their business, looking forward to establish more sustainable business model. They are very dedicated and inspired to pursue their vision.

One year has passed and Andrea and her team are celebrating their success. They publish their story in the CATALYST Journal, hoping to serve as example for other companies.

Highlights:
- Excellence: Catalyst is a good partner – you can get a lot from it and people are satisfied after they have joined
- Catalyst creates an impact at three levels: individuals, business/organisations and the system.
- Future outlook (one year has passed) gives a long-term perspective

Figure 13: Story team Germany

Story: *A managerial "couple" (Tom and Hannah) work for a classic family-owned company from the German food industry and produce XXX. They have a lot of vegetable fibre residuals that end up as waste. one of their employees, has privately started to lead a more sustainable lifestyle for a while and has recently dedicated himself to the topic of zero waste. He does not like the fact that so much waste is generated in the work context and recognises the potential of circular economy strategies. He approaches the managers and makes it clear that it is crucial for him to be able to identify with the purpose of the company and that sustainability is part of it for him.*

After a meeting with the staff and an intensive exchange with Markus, the managing directors Hannah and Tom realise that they have to move with the times, not least in order to remain viable as a company and to retain or attract qualified employees. In the process, they encounter obstacles:

- *The company owner and some long-time employees are reluctant to change (mindset, financial & personal capacities)*
- *At the same time, they also notice that the pressure from outside is growing and that a number of regulations, management systems and approaches are in place. They do not know where to start.*

They are looking for help and get an invitation to a network meeting of a project CATALYST, which is very appealing to them: they seem to understand the problems smaller companies have to deal with. They register via the contact form and learn more about the CATALYST educational programme, the CATALYST network, etc. and see that they offer individual solutions to their concerns.

In various workshops, they get to know Ana, a researcher from Northern Macedonia, Rui, a textile producer from Portugal, and Thomas, an IT service provider from Austria. Guided by Ana, they jointly develop a plan for a pilot project in which they pass on the fibre scraps from food production to Rui, who uses them to make a new textile material. Thomas can back the whole thing up with the necessary IT infrastructure and help both companies prepare well for the digital product passport and the EU's Green Claims Initiative that are about to come soon. Ana also points out financing possibilities for such projects, suggests bringing a doctoral student on board and works out an individual training plan with each company to be able to position themselves in the field of sustainability beyond the pilot project.

Tom and Hannah from Germany present these plans to the owner and staff of their company and are able to convince the sceptics. They realise that with the support of CATALYST, business innovation is possible, that there is financial aid, that new sustainable business models and thus revenue streams are feasible, which in turn increases their competitiveness on the market.

This participation and the further engagement within CATALYST support them a lot to receive the necessary expertise, connect with other pioneers and widen their network.

All the heroes are seen speaking to other people and passing on their knowledge at further workshops.

Highlights:

- Very concrete case that shows how different organizations from different sectors and countries can work together
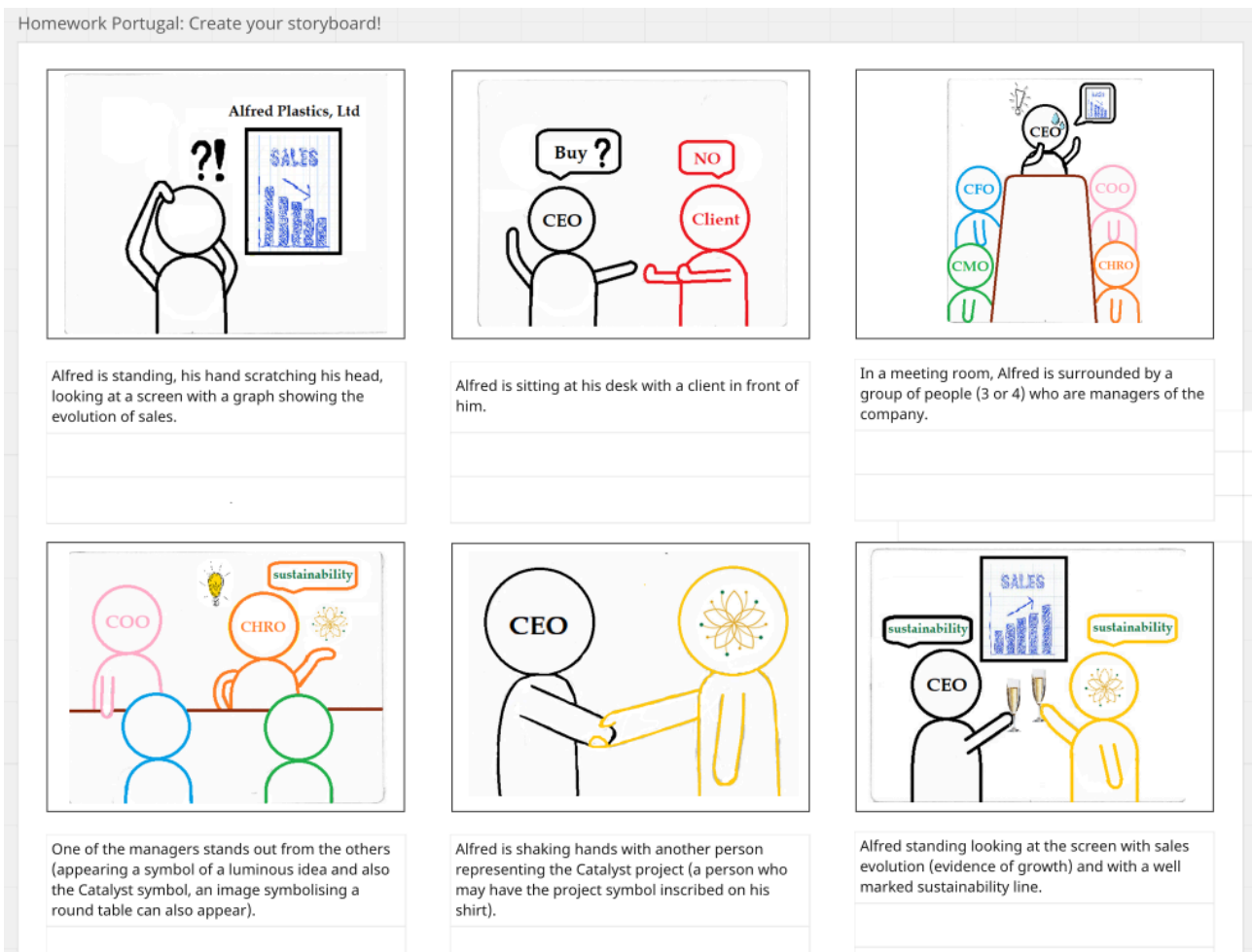- Enable (training) and inspire (common pilot project) components are being addressed

Figure 14: Story team Portugal

Story:

Alfredo is the CEO of Alfred Plastics, Ltd.

As an experienced entrepreneur, he got used to seeing his sales continuously in traditional markets for years. However, in recent months he has noticed a seemingly inexplicable drop in the penetration of his products into new, more competitive, and demanding markets in terms of sustainability. Even he verified that lately, sales in this segment have fallen dramatically.

One day Alfredo receives in his office the visit of a potential client purposely invited by Alfredo because she is the leader of a significant retailer in these new markets where his company faces significant commercial failure. His wish is that there can be a partnership that will reverse the trend. At the meeting with the client, which was going very well, the client asked him how the sustainability indicators were going. Alfredo, surprised, replies that Alfred Plastics, Ltd is very sustainable. But as he did not have a report to show, the disappointed client decided to finish the negotiation.

After this frustrating meeting, Alfredo, apprehensive, meets with the middle managers and asks:

- How is the sustainability of the company?

Some assume they have heard about the subject but recognize that they still know little about it. Others, more sceptical, report that sustainability should not be the company's concern because it will interfere with and disrupt its routines.

Realizing the importance of taking an enlightened and firm position, Alfredo wants to know when and how it will be possible to elucidate the subject, preferably adapted to the company's needs.

It is then that the chief human resources officer (CHRO) mentions that recently he had attended the roundtable of a project – the CATALYST Project – having been convinced about the possibility of it providing an excellent training program that is right to the needs of the company.

The entrepreneur and president of the company (Alfredo), pleased with the idea, immediately contacted the CATALYST team to start a strategic partnership that will put his company on the path of innovation and sustainability of Alfred Plastics, Ltd.

Highlights:

- Very clear visual language and address of business
- Film script style supports visual imagination
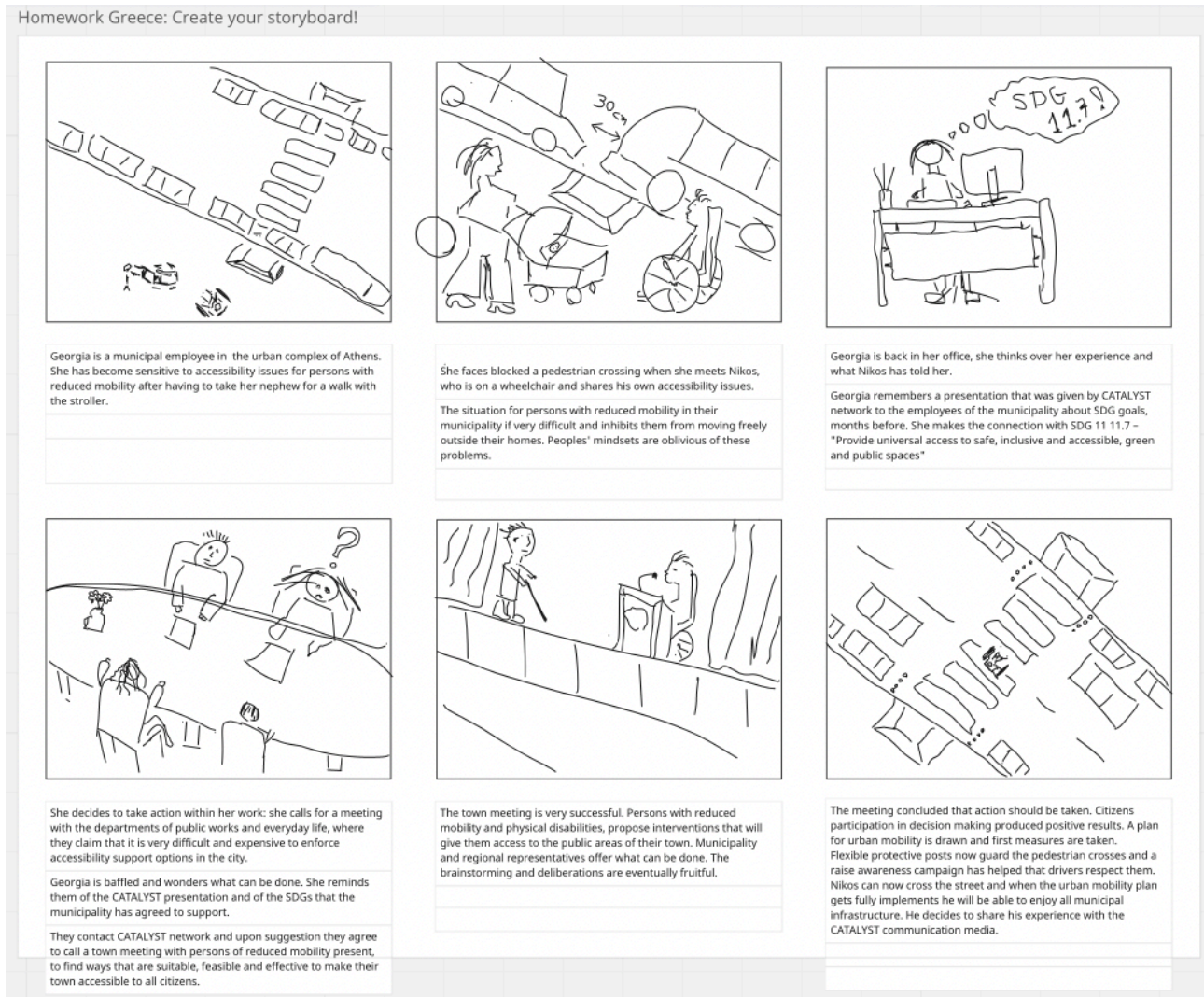- Film script

Figure 15: Story team Greece

Story: *Georgia is a municipal employee in the urban complex of Athens. She has become sensitive to accessibility issues for persons with reduced mobility after having to take her nephew for a walk with the stroller.*

She faces blocked a pedestrian crossing when she meets Nikos, who is on a wheelchair and shares his own accessibility issues. The situation for persons with reduced mobility in their municipality if very difficult and inhibits them from moving freely outside their homes. Peoples' mindsets are oblivious of these problems.

Georgia is back in her office; she thinks over her experience and what Nikos has told her. Georgia remembers a presentation that was given by CATALYST network to the employees of the municipality about SDG goals, months before. She makes the connection with SDG 11 11.7 – "Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces"

She decides to take action within her work: she calls for a meeting with the departments of public works and everyday life, where they claim that it is very difficult and expensive to enforce accessibility support options in the city. Georgia is baffled and wonders what can be done. She reminds them of the CATALYST presentation and of the SDGs that the municipality has agreed to support. They contact CATALYST network and upon suggestion they agree to call a town meeting with persons of reduced mobility present, to find ways that are suitable, feasible and effective to make their town accessible to all citizens.

The town meeting is very successful. Persons with reduced mobility and physical disabilities, propose interventions that will give them access to the public areas of their town. Municipality and regional representatives offer what can be done. The brainstorming and deliberations are eventually fruitful.

The meeting concluded that action should be taken. Citizen's participation in decision making produced positive results. A plan for urban mobility is drawn and first measures are taken. Flexible protective posts now guard the pedestrian crosses and a raise awareness campaign has helped that drivers respect them. Nikos can now cross the street and when the urban mobility plan gets fully implements, he will be able to enjoy all municipal infrastructure. He decides to share his experience with the CATALYST communication media.

Highlights:

- Catalyst is not only for business, but also for other organisations and institutions (here: public sector).
- Link to SDGs is highlighted - important framework to which our work should be related.

Figure 16: Story team Austria

Story: *Willy, 40 years old, father of two teenagers, "old-fashioned", he is working for 15 years in the sales department of a SME company. Willy notices a necessity for change - especially in his job life, encouraged through his children, who are Friday for Future activists.*

Through the eyes of his children, he recognizes many environmental problems in his company - there is no recycling of waste, no one is turning off the lights during the night, the boss is coming to the office via helicopter; all his colleagues are commuting to the firm via their private cars, too much paper is printed, etc.

Willy is so experienced that he recognizes the problem areas, but he misses the knowledge on how to tackle these problems in order to transform the company to a more sustainable one.

Willy searches for sources of education, so that he can learn on how to tackle the problems and how to initiate a system change in his company. He searches and finds Caty List, who is born in North

Macedonia, lives in Austria, has a Greek father and a German Mother and Portuguese grandparents and is an international motivator and guidance giver on sustainability education offers.

Caty List walks the way with Willy, provides him advice and knowledge and shows him the right direction into a more sustainable future for his company.

After Caty List has shown him the way, Willy knows know how to tackle the environmental problems in his company and how to transform it into a more sustainable one.

Key Message: Be the change, be the Catalyst.

Highlights:

- The professional design and humor appeal to all
- The embodiment of Catalyst as a concrete "European" person is special
- The placement of the label in the visual language

Conclusions from group discussion

In the final discussion, a number of aspects were highlighted in the overall view of the five storyboards, which should be decisive for the Catalyst story:

- Show the actual state: overwhelming expectations from different sides;
- Show CATALYST as the disruption to the actual state as it offers individual and innovative solutions that are shaped in a way that the solutions can be implemented on the ground, the excellence aspect of the CATALYST project is important;
- Show benefits of CATALYST: CATALYST finds solutions, business innovation, learn about sustainable business models, learn and exchange within a network, establish new revenue streams and become more resilient for the future, change at three levels (individual, organization, system);
- CATALYST shall change minds
- Show the future state after one year in the CATALYST project;
- Storyline style: light and joyful, not too complex but also fun (humor component is important!)-,
- Show the European background;
- Define the steps, tools, and support very concretely;
- Be aware of cultural backgrounds: have 1 main story but think about having 2-3 specific stories for different countries, target groups or settings;
- The storyboard of Austria was liked very much as it already covers many key elements. The idea came up to have this story developed further as the main story and letting the persona CATALYST travel through the different partner countries.

This storytelling work will lay the ground for the development of the Enable and Inspire concept and will be transferred to PPTs, potential explainer videos, and so on.

3

Establishing the CATALYST Network

About the CATALYST Network

On the following pages the concept for the creation, development and maintenance of the CATALYST Network are presented.

The task of conceptualising the network was assigned to the Sustainable Development Solutions Network SDSN given its extensive experience in creating and managing networks for sustainable development. The SDSN mobilizes the world's academic and research institutes and leverages their strengths to help realize the SDGs and the Paris Agreement. It pursues its mission by working with over 1,700 member institutions in countries around the world, organized into 37 national networks and 13 regional networks. To develop the present document, the SDSN drew on its experience and lessons learned over the past decade, analyzed best practices of similar existing networks, and reviewed academic articles on networks planning and management. Given the collaborative nature of the CATALYST Network, ownership creation among CATALYST partners and bottom-up development of the Concept are given a central role.
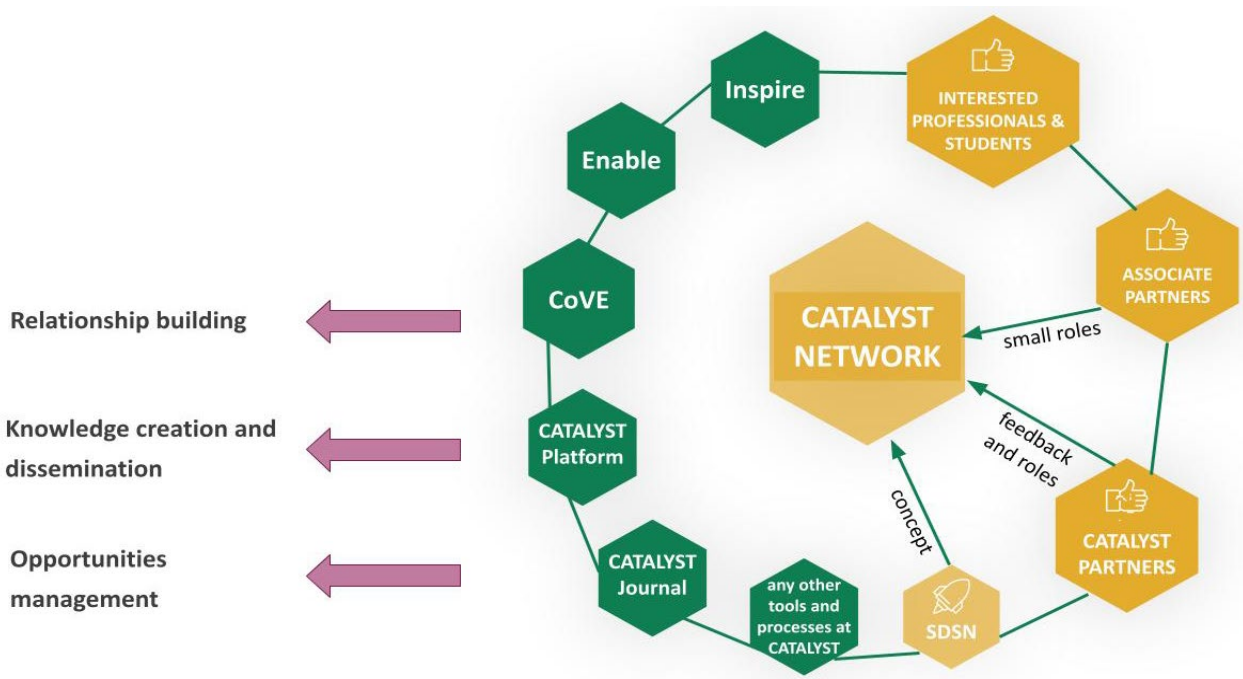
Networks: Getting Started

Networks, also called partnerships or platforms, are often set up in pursuit of an objective that is common to all its members. The network provides benefits for all participants who leverage each other's strengths. Their functioning relies on the equality of its members, horizontal organizational structure, inclusive membership structure and clear guidelines for membership, such as established mechanisms for joining or leaving the network.

Networks can be either personal or institutional. Networks can consist of participants with similar interests and skills, where focus is on sharing good practices and lessons learned. Alternatively, members can be diverse, bringing different skills and perspectives to the network.

While there are many success factors of networks, the following ones are particularly relevant in the context of sustainable development:
- ❖ trust between participants built through repeated interaction;
- ❖ effective engagement;
- ❖ equitable sharing of benefits & risks and clearly articulated roles & responsibilities.

Networks can be an efficient tool to develop solutions to complex issues. Several advantages can be observed across networks:
- ❖ Efficient and rapid information exchange;
- ❖ Bringing together different perspectives and expertise through diverse stakeholders;
- ❖ Reduced redundancies, coordinated action and balanced trade-offs;
- ❖ Improved resilience to change
- ❖ Pursuit of joint initiatives and fundraising efforts
- ❖ Greater visibility and outreach
- ❖ Extra resource in personal career development

Setting CATALYST Network up for Success

Vision and Objective

CATALYST Network is a **bonding medium** between the "Inspire" and "Enable" components.

The **objective** of the CATALYST Network is to **engage stakeholders** and create synergies by applying the **CO-IN Model** and enhancing the **knowledge triangle**.

CATALYST Network = all project partners, associate partners, interested professionals and students

The CATALYST Network is a space for:
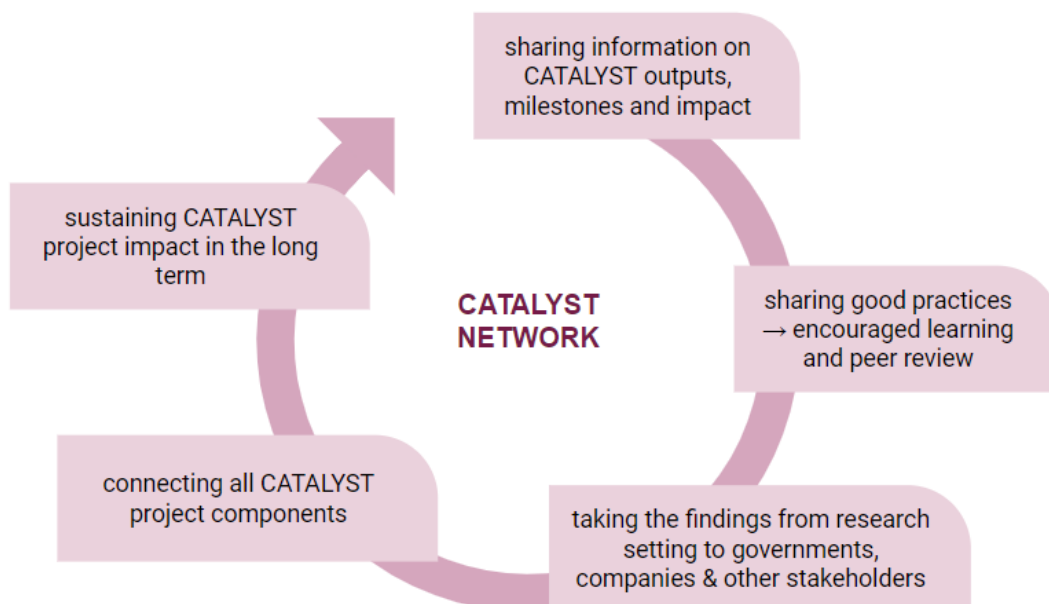
Figure 17: CATALYST Network. Source: SDSN

The role of the CATALYST Network as a **bonding medium of the Enable and Inspire components** of the CATALYST CoVEs.
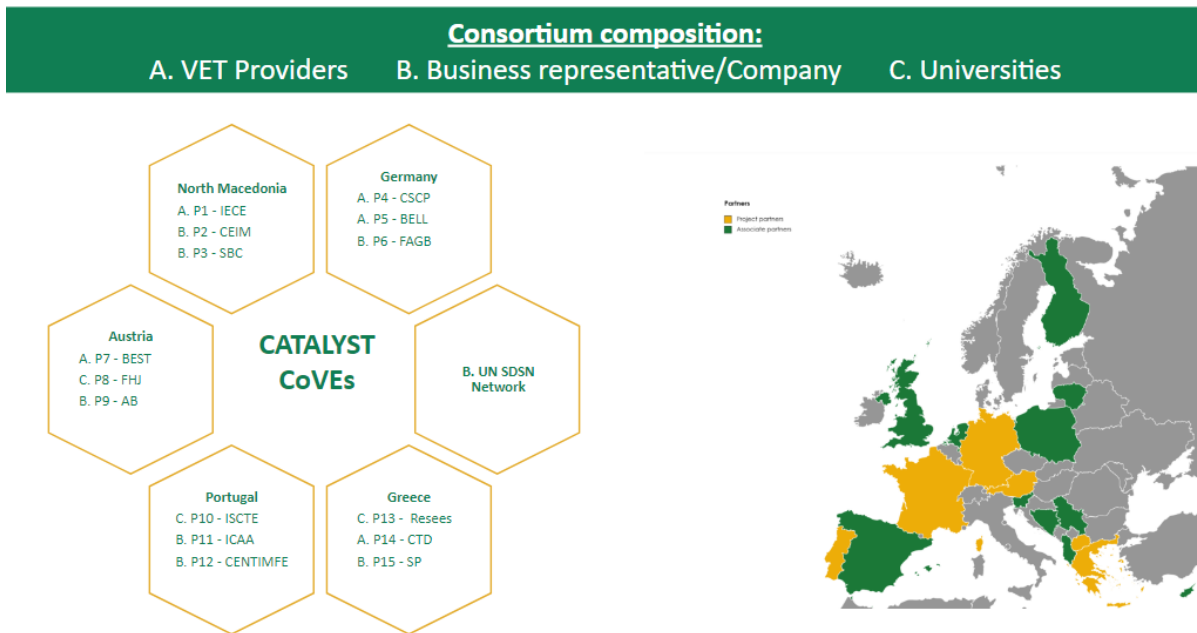
Figure 18: CATALYST Consortium

Value Added

To create change, networks "must develop comprehensive influencing strategies which encompass relationship management, knowledge management, and opportunities management." (Creech, 2017).

The CATALYST Network focuses on creating value for its members and stakeholders through:

a. *Relationship building*

- ❖ Access to stakeholders who otherwise would not be so easy to get in touch with, e.g. in different sectors
- ❖ Access to professionals based all across Europe
- ❖ Building relationships between professionals sharing similar interests, but coming from different context, providing opportunities for internationalisation of their organisations, etc.
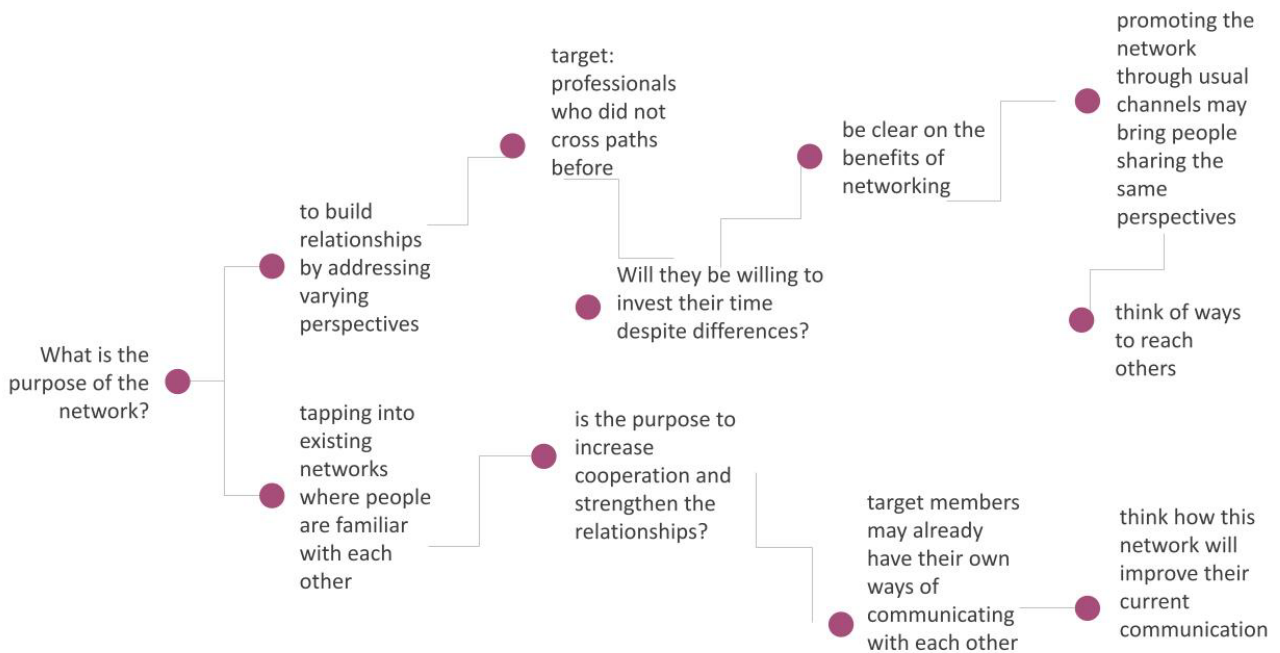
Figure 19: Relationship building strategies based on the network's purpose.
Source: SDSN, adapted from Creech (2017).

b. Knowledge co-creation and dissemination

❖ Innovative methods (do the same things but do them differently), e.g. through collaboration between educational and business organizations

❖ Better communication between CATALYST partners and stakeholders involved in different components will lead to improved knowledge sharing, learning from each other, peer review.

c. Creating and sharing opportunities

Membership in the CATALYST Network will allow people to access new opportunities and processes, such as:

❖ Contributing to draft findings

❖ Co-organising an event

❖ Securing best speakers, co-authors, reviewers, references

❖ Obtaining letters of support

❖ Opportunity to receive an early bird fee for a paid event

Members may be given an option to apply to these opportunities via a Google Form.

CATALYST Network will provide unique benefits for all groups of CATALYST stakeholders. A list of benefits could be added to the website/flyer/Platform under a tab "for you"[11]:

1) SMEs and professionals - access to information, specialized networking and training; opportunity to pilot ideas for new, innovative business models; participation in applied research projects; access to events; access to best practices in sustainable development;
2) Students and high school students - access to education related to the needs of SMEs;
3) Business and professional associations - shared knowledge (benefits in joint knowledge);
4) Educational organizations - opportunity to "foresee" the educational needs in different programmes/areas/courses, Training of Trainers, adapting their educational programmes;
5) Government agencies, ministries and public enterprises - learn about the needs of professionals and SMEs' qualifications and adapt the public policies respectively;
6) CATALYST partners - improved communication among partners, better understanding of what partners engaged in other components are doing, better knowledge sharing, faster progress;
7) CATALYST associate partners - access to information, specialized networking and specific training programs, potential research projects, funding possibilities;
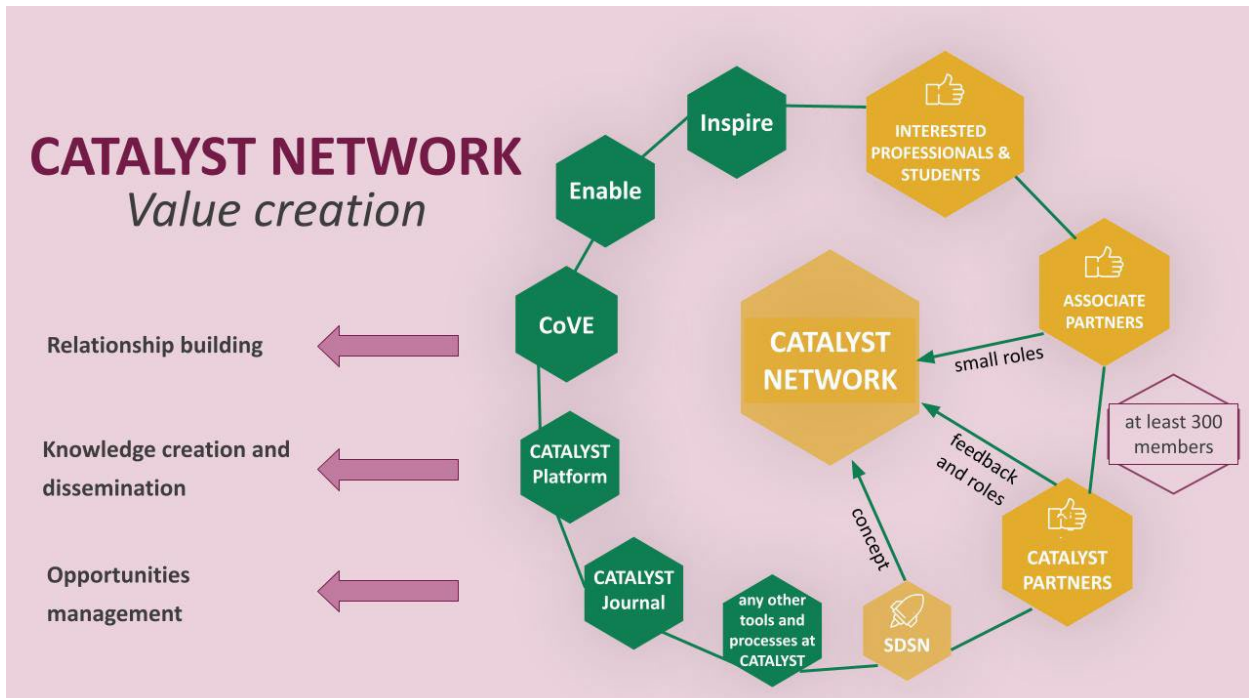8) European added value - contact to other sustainable SMEs in Europe.

Figure 20: CATALYST Network - Value creation. Source: SDSN

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[11] See an example of a "For you" section on the website of the European Sustainable Development Network: https://www.esdn.eu/for-you

Joining the CATALYST Network

CATALYST Network membership is open to all interested professionals, students in the field of sustainable development, be it in the public, private sector or academia.

In the application form, interested individuals will have an option to choose an affiliation (institution/company/student/… + name of the organization) OR "none of the above" (to account for people in transition phase).

Accession Rules

In terms of accession, following features are recommended:

- ❖ network to be as organic and flexible as possible
- ❖ flexible membership: no application process - automatic subscription model (through a form)
- ❖ no revision of subscriptions, immediate acceptance
- ❖ membership driven by interest (the information that is shared, opportunities it provides): As the activities grow, people will want to stay in the loop and purposely send information to our network.
- ❖ bottom-up model and creation of value overtime

Member profile creation

Once the CATALYST Platform is set up, Network members may be able to create their profile by:
- ❖ Exporting a LinkedIn profile
- ❖ Manually completing the information.

Member profiles may include a section "Interests" and "Reach out to me for…" to facilitate interaction between Network members.

Exit Rules

Exiting the CATALYST Network is a straightforward and simple process.
- ❖ Once the CATALYST Platform is set up - include the option to "Exit the Network";
- ❖ Before the CATALYST Platform is set up - exit the Network by unsubscribing from the Newsletter.

Introductory material to inform and guide members

During the workshops on the Enable and Inspire components held in February 2023, partners indicated the need for guiding new CATALYST Network members who are interested in the project but do not know where to start. A well-designed introductory material will serve that purpose by providing short, easy to understand information about CATALYST, the Network and the Platform. Such material could be also used to promote the CATALYST Network.

Such "Welcome Pack" (name TBC) could have a dedicated section on the CATALYST Platform, including:

- ❖ FAQ: how to use CATALYST and the Network to the fullest extent?
- ❖ List of partners who specialise in relevant areas and are able to provide support if needed (==> Assign partners who will reply to members' queries)
- ❖ Forum for members (peer learning), e.g. chat function under different "questions" (similar to Quora)
- ❖ Short videos and posts explaining the rules, benefits of joining, resources available, and tips on how to make the best use of CATALYST.

While Platform is not yet developed, partners can create a Google Form where members can submit questions. This will help to create the FAQ section.

Member Engagement

Other networks established with the objective to foster sustainable development may provide useful information for the development of the CATALYST Network. The table below compiles best practices of selected networks in Europe. Partners may also consider engaging with these networks, if relevant.

Activity	Description
Webinars	
Online workshops	Online dynamic workshops where participants can share their expertise.
Capacity building workshops	An example could be biannual capacity building workshops for new members on how to make the best use of CATALYST and the CATALYST Network membership.

Events to disseminate results externally	Events to disseminate results externally will provide greater visibility on the members' work and can be an opportunity to create synergies with other projects similar to CATALYST.
Annual conference	The CATALYST Network could organize an annual event/conference to present CATALYST solutions/members' achievements. This would allow the members to share knowledge within different partnership fields. Best practices may be recognised and members may be awarded a certificate of best practices (e.g., "promotion and development of the SDGs"). Such events may be in person or online. Network members can propose to organise the event. See an example of an annual forum for SDSN network members to showcase solutions here.
Coffee Chats	Coffee Chats are informal meet ups to boost interaction between members[12]. Coffee Chats may include: ❖ Sharing news and updates from members ❖ discussing specific themes selected ahead of the Coffee Chats The name "Coffee Chats" may be changed (e.g., using a word play with "Catalyst", "Coffee",…).
Spotlights	Spotlights provide an opportunity to engage CATALYST Network members and help them feature their work to a wider audience[13]. ❖ Spotlight "Partner of the month" ❖ Spotlight "Champion in X field" ❖ Other Members can submit their applications for the spotlights via a Google Form. The applications may be reviewed on a regular basis (e.g., monthly, depending on the frequency of the spotlight) by a dedicated CATALYST partner. Questions to include in a Spotlight application form may include: ❖ What is the name of the initiative/project/research you would like to share with CATALYST Network members? ❖ Please provide a brief description of the initiative/project/research (including key message, lessons learned and impact) - e.g. max 200 words

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[12] See an example for a coffee chat by the European Basic Skills Network, EBSN Cafe: https://basicskills.eu/upcoming-ebsn-cafe-in-november/

[13] See an example of a spotlight series by the European Sustainable Development Network: https://www.esdn.eu/media/spotlight

	❖ Please provide one catch phrase (1 sentence) on the key takeaway message of your initiative/project/research ❖ Please provide any relevant links (if any) ❖ TBC - any question regarding membership on the Platform (to tag people etc.) ❖ I express my interest in being featured on the CATALYST Network Spotlight and would like to receive the needed information on the next steps via email.
Earning titles	Earning titles is a way to acknowledge particular effort by some members, e.g. "Catalyst Ambassador". The acknowledged members may be listed on the CATALYST website
Calls for funding	Publishing and centralizing wide range funding opportunities (including research projects) is a good way to attract and keep new members.
Calls for abstracts for CATALYST Journal	
Arising opportunities for collaboration with other organisations	One of the benefits of being a member of the CATALYST Network is access to processes and opportunities that would be more difficult to attain (and be aware of) for individual institutions. Once the Network is consolidated and stakeholders are familiar with it, exclusive opportunities for members or opportunities for collaboration may arise. These may be shared via email or posts on the CATALYST Platform etc.
Interest groups	On the CATALYST Platform, members may be given an option to join "Groups", thematic groups for members sharing a common interest (see section *3.5.7. CATALYST Platform*).

Communication

Newsletter

A newsletter is a key asset for Catalyst to update its audiences with key outputs and ongoing work. This can be especially important to donors and partners who want to see their work featured. The newsletter can play an important role in bringing attention to several communication tools such as blogs, webinars, events, and op-eds.

Twitter

Twitter account is good for a "personality" and once they have a significant network, and when their decisions are closely monitored by the audience.

LinkedIn page (of the CATALYST project)

The CATALYST project already has a LinkedIn page, but it may be good to reflect how to promote the CATALYST Network on this LinkedIn page. Further, many of CATALYST followers on LinkedIn may be potential CATALYST Network members.

LinkedIn Groups provide a place for Network Members to share their insights and experiences, ask for guidance, and build connections.

CATALYST website

CATALYST website can be used for gathering the most important information and updates on the CATALYST Network (with relevant links) in one place. While adding information on the CATALYST Network to the website, the following may be considered:

- ❖ The general form of expression of interest for different Catalyst components that is already on the website → TBC if this should be maintained/revised/deleted
- ❖ Add a page dedicated to the Catalyst Network: "What is the Catalyst Network?"
    - About Catalyst Network
    - The objectives
    - Examples of activities / impact
    - Testimonies of members
- ❖ On the page for the Catalyst Network, add a link to another page called "Join the Catalyst Network" [alternatively this could be on the same page as "What is the Catalyst Network"]
    - Who can join the Catalyst Network?
    - Why join the Catalyst Network? → a few slogans, short descriptions/bullet points, visualised
    - A link to the "Join the CATALYST Network" flyer, potentially in multiple languages
    - How to Apply? - add a paragraph and link to the application form/subscribe button

Communication tool / chat function

It is envisioned that the CATALYST Platform will include a chat option, which will be used by CATALYST Network for direct communication. If some members are familiar with each other, they may already be using their own communication tools; it is worth exploring this while building the Network.

CATALYST Platform

CATALYST Platform will be the tangible tool for the CATALYST Network. The CATALYST Network will be explained on the Platform in a dedicated section (similar to a dedicated webpage on the CATALYST website).

On the Platform, members may be given an option to join "Groups", thematic groups for members sharing a common interest, e.g. groups of students, groups of people working on X, etc.

Network Expansion

Building the audience

It will be important to gather a database of contacts interested in the CATALYST project and of members and potential members.

This database can be used for keeping the audience informed of events and news related to CATALYST, via a regular Newsletter, but not necessarily. It is mainly to keep track of the size and activities of the audience, as important news regarding the CATALYST project should be, at least in the beginning, shared via pre-existing newsletters, in order not to spam.

"Join the CATALYST Network" flyer

A flyer would make it easy to share information about the benefits of CATALYST Network membership on an ad-hoc basis with stakeholders, or as attachment to regular communication materials. The flyer could be available in multiple European languages to reach more stakeholders and could be accessed from:

- ❖ Link on the "Join the CATALYST Network" page
- ❖ Link on the CATALYST Platform
- ❖ Shared by partners with their own networks (e.g. by email)
- ❖ Shared in the CATALYST Network Newsletter

Drawing on existing networks

- ❖ Engage the initial pool of people who expressed interest in CATALYST (via the current Form of Interest and other outreach to date)
- ❖ Engage CATALYST partners to use their organization's newsletters to share regular news on Catalyst.
- ❖ Engage members to extensively share CATALYST Social Media posts and other information on their personal and professional networks.

Governance, Sustainability and Long-Term planning

Flexibility

The CATALYST Network is designed in a flexible way, meaning that rules, steps and responsibilities may evolve over time.

Co-ownership/bottom-up approach

The present *Concept* was proposed by SDSN, however, the ultimate decisions regarding the Network will be taken by all partners. The *Concept* is a set of suggestions and good practices, which may or may not be implemented, depending on the interest of partners and members.

Regular meetings of CATALYST partners

CATALYST partners can meet on biannual basis to discuss the achievements, responsibilities, strategy and future of the CATALYST Network.

Organizational structure

The objective is to have an organizational structure that is not too strict and reflects the bottom-up/collaborative nature of the CATALYST Network.

The graphic below is an initial representation of the organisational structure.
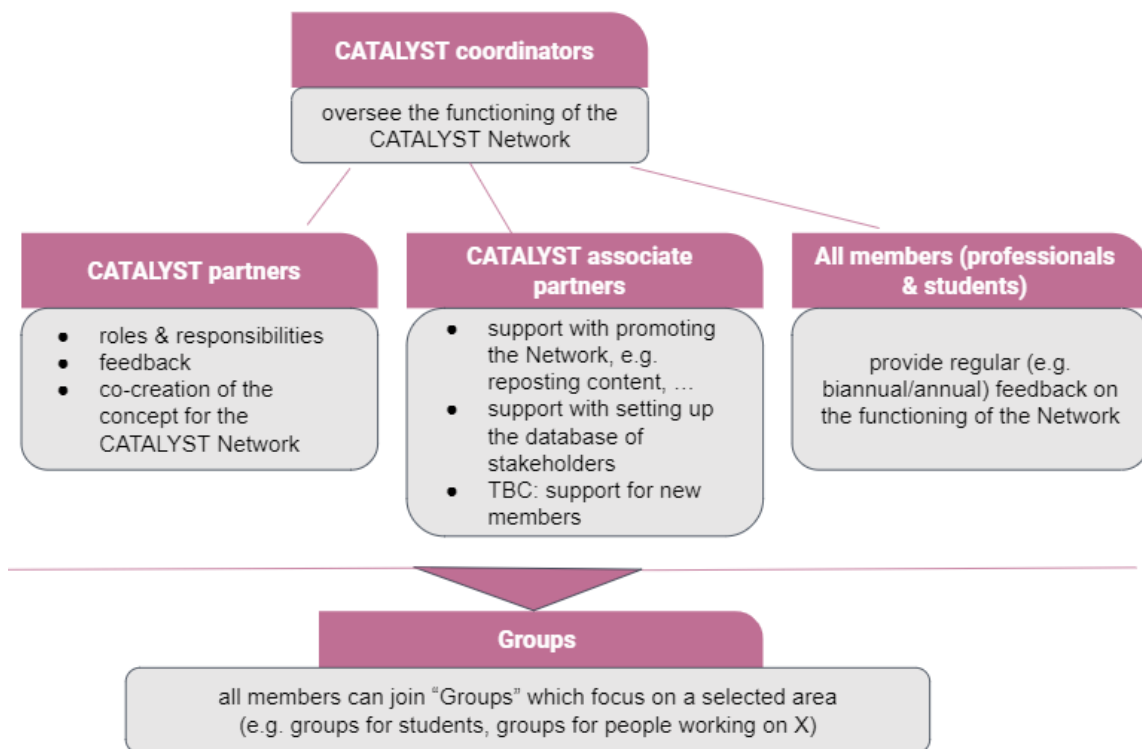

Figure 21: Suggested organisational structure. Source: SDSN

If needed, partners may decide to establish a Leadership Council. At this stage, no clear need for a Leadership Council has been identified, but in the future, a council composed of 5-10 people may be established to facilitate the strategic guidance for the network.

Overcoming challenges in the management of the CATALYST Network

Despite advantages, networks are exposed to several challenges, of which appearance or intensity will depend on their organizational model. The table below enlists potential challenges that may appear given the CATALYST Network's proposed structure. Proposed mitigation measures are assigned to each challenge. These were gathered by partners during the consultation phase and are currently left in their original form.

Potential Challenges	Proposed mitigation measures
Unilateral planning process for a collaborative network	Consultation with partners at an early stage of the planning process: - Presentation & brainstorming - Call for submissions of suggestions via email, following the presentation - Clear decision-making processes necessary or input givers might stop their commitment - Valuable suggestions might still be shared maybe if they apply certain quality criteria in case the project cannot implement them as offer on what else to network on (in line with the call topics)
Imbalanced focus on certain parts of the projects / partner countries	Manage resources/time, improve planning, to-do lists
Low diversity of members and their perspectives [Creech, 2017: "Too often networks bring together people who are the same"]	Different events with various stakeholders to promote the network
Lack of clarity on rewarding voluntary efforts	- Identify possible sources of funding that can support network activities (e.g at events), highlighting direct and indirect benefits to networking participants - Plan to promote the CATALYST Network on national and international events
Ongoing engagement of members	Calendar suggestions to bring in expertise/ knowledge on specific topics; - involvement possibilities in training implementation or other e.g., Coordination with other WPs and tasks

Sustainability after the project ends	This will be developed in the Sustainability Plan for the Catalyst Network
"Trolls" / troublemakers entering the Network	- Screening before admission - clear rules of behavior, if broken, then removal from network
Maintenance of network after Catalyst project ends (to sustain the flow of members and their interest)	- Strong leadership that shows advantages - Team Buildings with network members - Creation of annual event in which members can exchange experiences, invite re-known speakers e.g. EU, OECD etc. - Challenge members to new projects where they can cooperate - Show links and networking opportunities to other CoVes making it a huge network - To consider the implementation of comparative studies (benchmarking) evolving all networks members and provide the results (kind of an assessment tool). Normally SMEs and professionals value this kind of information

Conclusions

The CATALYST Center of Vocational Excellence will be established as a European Center of excellence, with complexity to have the 'Enable' and the 'Inspire' component, supported by the CATALYST Network, CATALYST Journal and CATALYST Platform. The desired impact can be observed on national and European level:

❖ **National level**

The CATALYST CoVEs will be established in North Macedonia, Austria, Germany, Portugal and Greece. The desired impact on national level is to educate and train students and professionals, by providing high quality VET Training modules and Interactive learning materials and methods through the CATALYST CoVEs. We expect that these educational opportunities will be very attractive and will make great contribution in the improvement of the work performance on engineers and managers on national level of the project partner countries.

❖ **European level**

Having in mind the VET Training program will be developed according to the needs of SMEs and professionals and the competence model of the EU regulations and policies, we expect new participants from other countries as well.

Having in mind the potential of the CATALYST CoVEs has, we vision several impact to happen on many beneficiaries, positively influencing the economy, society and the environment**:**

- ✓ **Impact on economy** – The CATALYST project will engage with SMEs and influence on several sectors selected according to the S3 in the country, and with this by generating economic growth, creation of innovative sustainable projects and highly qualified professionals.
- ✓ **Societal impact** – The positive impact can be observed through improving the green skills and with this influencing the quality of life of workers and citizens. Also, capacities will be created to solve challenging real-life problems with high scientific impact and offer innovative and sustainable and safe solutions.
- ✓ **Environmental impact** – The CATALYST project will create competitive advantage for all stakeholders and contribute to business transformation supporting holistic approach towards sustainable use of resources. This impact is relevant for all other countries in the world, because of our connections and interdependence from the environment.

To summarise, CATALYST CoVEs are developed and envision to:
- ✓ **C**hampion in business transformation
- ✓ **A**ccelerate high quality VET education
- ✓ **T**ranscend challenges of SMEs and professionals
- ✓ **A**pplicable knowledge and increased employability
- ✓ **L**ead sustainable partnerships between educational and business orgranisations
- ✓ **Y**ield high returns from investments and effort made in education
- ✓ **S**hape sustainable systems
- ✓ **T**reasure competences for greener and circular economy

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