



CATALYST

European VET Excellence Centre for Leading
Sustainable Systems and Business Transformation

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

European CATALYST CoVE and the Five National Centres of Vocational Excellence

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Executive Summary

This plan sets out how the results of the CATALYST project — the platform, 70 VET courses, specialisation programmes, the Network, the Magazine and five national Centres of Vocational Excellence — will be sustained beyond EU funding. Its central idea is simple: **a protected core that continues regardless of new funding, and a growth layer pursued through a concrete pipeline of new projects built on the existing platform.**

The sustainability model in brief

- **A guaranteed baseline.** The coordinator (IECE) covers maintenance of the platform and website for at least five years. The courses stay free and open, the Network and Magazine continue, and each national CoVE keeps a named contact point.
- **Growth built on the platform, not beside it.** Partners sustain and improve the platform by embedding it in new projects rather than creating new platforms. Two Capacity Building proposals involving P1 - IECE and P14 – CRETHIDEV already do this, keeping the platform populated and channelling resources toward its upkeep and further improvements.
- **Potential revenue streams.** Platform access and existing courses are free; charging applies only to new or moderated courses, in-person training, certification and added-value services. This reconciles the partners' different national approaches under one consistent rule.
- **Regional and thematic reach.** The Western Balkans, via the Circular Economy Hub, is a defined growth audience, alongside national adaptation and translation of the offer to all 5 countries.
- **Voluntary, low-overhead governance.** No new legal entity is required; continuation rests on a shared Memorandum of Understanding, national MoUs, and regular open Network meetings, with all key sustainability questions agreed (Section 17).

At a glance

What is guaranteed	Platform & website online ≥ 5 years (IECE); free courses; Network & Magazine; national contact points.
What drives growth	New projects on the platform; fee-based services on top of free content; Western Balkans reach;
Funding basis	Coordinator-covered maintenance + EU/national projects (two CB proposals submitted) + market-based income.
How partners commit	Shared MoU + national MoUs; voluntary cooperation; no new legal entity at this stage.
How success is tracked	Shared indicators (Section 9): availability, users, new projects, membership, funding, MoUs.

About this document

This Sustainability Plan sets out how the results of the CATALYST project will be carried forward beyond the period of EU funding. It brings together **the European-level sustainability strategy** for the CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) with **the national sustainability plans** prepared by the five national CoVEs in North Macedonia, Greece, Austria, Germany and Portugal.

The document is structured in three parts plus annexes:

- **Part A** describes the European CATALYST CoVE — what it is, the results to be sustained, the minimum that continues without new funding, the target groups served, how the consortium is opened to new partners, and the shared governance, funding, indicators and action plan that underpin continuation.
- **Part B** presents a fuller summary of each national CoVE's plan in a common structure.
- **Part C** contains a one-page Memorandum of Understanding expressing the partners' commitment, together with the consortium's agreed positions on the key sustainability questions.
- The **Annexes** reproduce each national CoVE's full sustainability plan as submitted.

Note: Several national plans state that their content represents strategic directions and planned activities rather than firm commitments, and that realisation depends on the availability of suitable funding and partner capacity. That qualification applies throughout this document.

PART A The European CATALYST CoVE

1. The CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence

The CATALYST project — “European VET Excellence Centre for Leading Sustainable Systems and Business Transformation” — is designed with a strong vision and motivation to contribute to the realisation of the European Green Deal and the new Industrial and SME Strategies. Its main goal is the establishment of a united CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence across five countries (North Macedonia, Greece, Austria, Germany and Portugal): to give support, create an educational offer that tackles personal and organisational development, and 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 European CATALYST CoVE is envisioned as a **central hub and catalyst for sustainable business transformation in Europe**. It serves as the foundation for a collaborative community focused on driving sustainable, resilient and equitable outcomes. National CoVEs, tailored to local contexts, extend this vision by adapting offerings to specific regional needs and target groups. The initiative is guided by four core values — **competence, collaboration, caring and commitment** — which underpin its mission to equip organisations and individuals with the knowledge and skills for lasting sustainable change.

The CoVE is built around two pivotal components — “**Inspire**” (mentorship and guidance for SMEs in applying new and sustainable concepts) and “**Enable**” (a portfolio of VET courses for up-skilling professionals and students in sustainability, management, leadership and transversal skills).

CATALYST in numbers

5 Centres of Vocational Excellence	70 free, open-access VET courses	1,844 learners enrolled	359 course certificates issued
15 Business Pilot Projects	15 Network events (394 participants)	16+40 consortium + associated partners	4.28/5 mean learner satisfaction

Web presence: projectcatalyst.eu · catalystplatform.net

2. Vision, Goals and Impact

2.1 Long-term vision

Once project funding ends, the European CATALYST CoVE aims to remain a permanent reference point and shared infrastructure connecting the five national CoVEs and the wider CATALYST Network. Its long-term vision is to sustain a living community of practice — VET providers, universities, SMEs, industry associations and policymakers — that continues to drive the green and digital transitions through accessible, high-quality vocational education.

2.2 Goals

- **Sustain the shared assets** — keep the CATALYST Platform, courses, specialisation programmes, Network and Magazine available and relevant beyond the project.
- **Connect the national CoVEs** — maintain a European layer that links and amplifies national activities while respecting local autonomy.
- **Grow the community** — expand the Network with new members, partner countries, influential organisations and satellite CoVEs to build critical mass.
- **Secure continuation funding** — pursue new EU and national projects, the Pact for Skills, and complementary market-based revenue.
- **Support policy and industry** — position CATALYST results as a resource for EU and national skills, green-transition and SME policies.

2.3 Impact in 3–5 years

Across the five countries, the CoVEs collectively aim to: continuously train hundreds of additional learners through the platform and national pathways; support SMEs in adopting circular, resource-efficient and sustainable business models; embed CATALYST content into VET, lifelong-learning and capacity-building programmes; and feed evidence and recommendations into national and European skills strategies.

2.4 Alignment with EU and national priorities

The CoVE's vision aligns directly with the European Green Deal (climate neutrality by 2050, the transition to a circular economy, and sustainable jobs and skills), the European Skills Agenda and the Digital Europe agenda. At national level, the CoVEs connect these priorities to local strategies — from North Macedonia's Smart Specialisation Strategy and Roadmap for Circular Economy, to Portugal's National Smart Specialisation Policy, to Austria's Plan T tourism strategy and 2040 climate-neutrality goal.

3. Results to be Sustained

At the June 2025 sustainability workshop, partners reached a strong consensus on the results that should be carried forward. The December 2025 EU-level workshop reaffirmed these priorities and added the business pilot projects as a learning and service offering.

Result	Why it matters and how it is sustained
CATALYST Platform (English)	The central, open-access, web-based medium that hosts the courses — a long-lasting archive and library of knowledge. Maintenance covered by the coordinator (IECE) for at least five years after the project ends (see Section 5.2).
Courses & content	70 VET courses addressing topics often missing from conventional education — digital transformation, sustainability, circular economy, leadership. Remain available to learners; can be reused, adapted and translated by partners with attribution.
Specialisation programmes	Green Entrepreneurship; Personal & Organisational Growth; Circular Economy. Can be formalised, validated and re-delivered nationally.
Business Pilot Projects (BPPs)	Structured pilots with SMEs/startups — retained as both a learning method and a chargeable service offering.
CATALYST Network	394 participants across 15 events during the pilot, with a wider membership across 11+ countries. Sustained through regular open meetings, events and the Magazine; the basis for new proposals and partnerships. Partners have agreed to meet on every 6 months, held at least 3 networking activities per year, 2 issues of the Magazine per year
CATALYST Magazine (Prospectus)	A dissemination and engagement vehicle; continued as a periodic publication open to partner and participant contributions.
National CoVEs & the European Centre	The institutional embodiment of CATALYST in each country, united under the European Centre — see Part B.

4. Governance and Stakeholder Engagement

4.1 Legal form

At this stage, **no formal legal entity** will be established for the European CATALYST CoVE. The CATALYST idea will continue to operate on the basis of **voluntary cooperation, shared values and mutual benefit** among participating organisations. A European association or NGO (modelled on examples such as Greenovet) was discussed as a possible future option should the partners choose to formalise; it is not a requirement for continuation.

4.2 How partners commit

Commitment is expressed through a shared Memorandum of Understanding (see Part C) and, at national level, through MoUs, founding/contributing-member structures and partnership agreements described in the national plans. Partners are free to integrate CATALYST results into their own future initiatives, proposals and collaborations, with differing levels of involvement understood and accepted.

4.3 Network meetings and coordination

- Regular open Network meetings to share initiatives and build critical mass, coordinated within the Network.
- The coordinator (IECE) maintains the website and platform and acts as the central contact point.
- National CoVEs keep one another informed of role changes, new partners and funding opportunities.

4.4 Stakeholders to keep engaged

Across the consortium, the priority stakeholder groups are: SMEs and start-ups; VET providers, universities and educators; industry associations, chambers of commerce and sectoral bodies; ministries and public agencies (education, economy, environment, digital); and the other Erasmus+ CoVEs with which CATALYST seeks synergies.

5. Funding and Financial Sustainability

5.1 Funding sources

- **EU programmes** — Erasmus+ (CoVE calls, Forward-Looking Projects, Capacity Building), Horizon Europe, Interreg, Digital Europe, IPA and EIT initiatives.
- **The Pact for Skills** — highlighted as a route to strategic networking, partnership expansion and future funding through large-scale partnerships.
- **National and regional programmes** — VET, innovation and recovery funds in each country (e.g. Greece 2.0 / NSRF-ESPA, German federal and regional programmes).
- **Market-based income** — training and certification fees, consultancy, business pilot projects and tailored corporate offers, complementary to grants.
- **Foundations, sponsorship and own resources** — CSR-oriented companies, sustainability foundations and partners' in-kind contributions.

5.2 Sustaining the platform and website

The maintenance of the CATALYST Platform and the project website will be covered by the coordinator, IECE. This is the foundational commitment of the sustainability model: it guarantees that the platform and website remain online and accessible for at least five years after the project ends, independently of whether further funding is secured. On this basis, the platform's continued availability is a **commitment, not a contingency**.

Beyond baseline maintenance, the partners pursue two complementary objectives: keeping the platform **populated with active users**, and securing additional funding to **improve and expand it** — in particular by embedding AI-based solutions (for example an AI learning companion and intelligent course navigation). The agreed mechanism for both is to **build new projects on the existing platform rather than create new ones**, so that each new initiative brings users, content and a share of resources to the same shared infrastructure.

Where substantial upgrades or new functionalities are developed, related costs may be **shared among the partners or covered within the projects that require them**, proportionally to involvement or benefit. Partners are encouraged to include the CATALYST platform as an existing tool in their new proposals; a ready-to-use explanation for this purpose is provided in Section 10.

5.3 Concrete continuation funding already in motion

Continuation is not only planned but already underway. Two Capacity Building proposals have been submitted that explicitly build on the CATALYST platform rather than starting new platforms:

- **Circular construction (P1 - IECE-led)** — a submitted Capacity Building proposal in the field of circular construction that will use and build upon the existing CATALYST platform, broadening its content and user base.
- **P14 - CRETHIDEV Capacity Building project** — a further Capacity Building project that includes the use of the CATALYST platform within its activities.

This approach — reusing the platform across successive projects — simultaneously keeps it **populated with users**, generates **extra resources for its sustaining and improvement**, and demonstrates clear EU added value by capitalising on results already developed with EU funding.

5.4 Charging rule — what is free and what is paid

Use of the CATALYST platform and its existing courses is free of charge. Partners do not charge users for accessing the platform or the asynchronous, open-access course content already developed under the project, in line with Erasmus+ rules on EU-funded education materials.

Charging applies **only to new activities and added-value services** that go beyond the open materials — specifically: **newly developed or moderated courses, in-person training and workshops, certification, consultancy and tailored services.**

Where a partner wishes to **use course materials** developed by **another** organisation for such commercial purposes, they must inform the original author or trainer and obtain consent, formalised through a mutual memorandum of understanding. Materials may be used, adapted and translated into national languages with the authors acknowledged and referenced.

This rule resolves the apparent difference between national approaches: the open materials and platform access are free everywhere (consistent with Portugal's and Germany's position), while fee-based certification, in-person delivery and services (as described by North Macedonia, Greece and Austria) are permitted precisely because they are new or added-value activities, not resale of the grant-funded materials.

6. Continuing the CATALYST Offer

The European offer that national CoVEs continue to draw on includes:

- **Courses, training & programmes** — open-access online modules, plus optional paid certification and tailored training.
- **Resources** — toolkits, guides and templates hosted on the platform.
- **Services** — mentoring, consultancy and capacity building.
- **Business Pilot Projects** — applied work with SMEs and start-ups.
- **CATALYST Network** — events, peer learning, joint proposals and working groups.
- **Events** — workshops, webinars and conferences, including the Final International Conference (23 April 2026, Skopje).
- **Know-how for establishing and leading CoVEs** — transferable to new regions and projects.

7. Target Groups — Who We Reach and What We Plan

During the pilot phase the Centre engaged five distinct target groups, reaching approximately 1,720 individuals. Sustainability means continuing to serve these groups and deepening the offer for each. The plan below builds directly on what the Centre has already done.

7.1 VET teachers, trainers and in-company mentors

Teachers and trainers were engaged during the pilot as course authors and deliverers, as BPP mentors and supervisors, and as hackathon jurors. Going forward, the Centre will actively approach **teachers in VET schools**: inviting them to follow the courses, use selected materials in the classroom, and join Training-of-Trainers activities for continuous professional development. The suggested proposal text in Section 10 positions the platform explicitly as a free CPD resource for VET trainers.

7.2 Students — higher and secondary education

Students were the Centre's largest engaged audience, through higher-education enrolment, multi-disciplinary BPP teams, and the secondary-school hackathon in Skopje where **91% of participants rated the event 4 or 5 out of 5 and around 70% reported considering studies or a career in the field**. The Centre will continue to approach both **university students** (via partner institutions and the platform) and **high-school students** (via the Youth Ideas hackathon model and school partnerships), using applied, hands-on formats that have proven to shift career intentions.

7.3 Professionals and managers

Professionals and managers were reached mainly through the course catalogue and the Network events (the largest webinars drew more than 65 participants). The Centre will keep serving them with self-paced courses, paid certification, executive-style short formats and the Network's expert-led sessions — the formats working professionals engage with when they cannot commit to a full course.

7.4 SMEs and host organisations

Across the 15 Business Pilot Projects the mean SME usefulness rating was **4.67 / 5, with every host SME reporting the deliverables as applicable**. The Centre will continue to recruit SMEs into BPPs, tailored training and consultancy, with sector anchors in each country (mould industry in Portugal, construction in North Macedonia, tourism and start-ups in Austria, SMEs in the German-speaking region, and agri-food/construction/tourism in Greece).

7.5 Government and public-sector representatives

Public engagement during the pilot included the North-Macedonian Ministry of Economy and Ministry for EU Integration, a German national roundtable in the NRW circular-economy ecosystem, the Greek Forum on Vocational Excellence, and Portuguese policy bodies. The Centre will deliberately approach **governmental representatives** — ministries and agencies for education, economy, environment and digital — positioning CATALYST as a credible, evidenced vehicle around which skills and sustainability policy conversations can be organised, and connecting to instruments such as the Pact for Skills.

Target group	What we plan	Primary channel
VET teachers & trainers	Classroom use of materials; Training-of-Trainers; CPD recognition	VET providers, platform

Target group	What we plan	Primary channel
University students	Course pathways; BPP teams; specialisation programmes	Partner universities, platform
High-school students	Hackathons; awareness of green careers	School partnerships, Youth Ideas model
Professionals & managers	Courses, certification, Network events	Platform, Network, executive formats
SMEs	BPPs, tailored training, consultancy	Sector anchors, chambers, direct outreach
Government representatives	Policy dialogue; evidence; Pact for Skills	Ministries, agencies, forums

8. Opening the Consortium — Partnership as a Growth Strategy

One of the clearest ways to continue and expand CATALYST is to **open the consortium to new partner organisations**. The CATALYST Centre actively invites business and educational organisations interested in leading sustainable systems and business transformation to join. New partners contribute to and benefit from the Centre by participating in educational opportunities and co-creating solutions, engaging in applied research and innovation, sharing expertise and resources within the Network, and seeking synergistic and business opportunities.

8.1 For educational organisations

Educational partners can co-create complementary courses on the platform, propose and run applied-research projects on real-world problems, and act as mentors within the Network. In return they gain access to industry expertise and contemporary workplaces, enhanced research and collaboration opportunities, professional development through mentoring and peer exchange, and recognition and visibility within the sustainability and business-transformation community.

8.2 For business organisations

Business partners can propose or join applied-research collaborations, share knowledge and network across Europe, access and develop talent through work with students, and validate the quality and industry-relevance of the educational offer. The benefits include practical problem-solving and innovation, access to talent and future employees, market expansion and new funding routes, networking and knowledge exchange, and a structured path to sustainable business transformation.

8.3 How new partners join

New partners are welcomed through **voluntary cooperation and a memorandum of understanding or support letter**, starting small and growing. Opening the consortium widens reach, brings fresh content and audiences, and strengthens every new funding proposal.

9. Promotion and Partnerships

Awareness post-funding is maintained through the CATALYST website and platform, partner websites and channels, social media, newsletters, the Magazine, and participation in events and national skills initiatives. Success stories, testimonials and case studies are used to demonstrate impact. Chambers of commerce, professional associations, sectoral bodies, universities and local media help amplify reach.

10. Synergies with Other Initiatives

10.1 Building new projects on the platform

The central, **agreed mechanism for sustainability** is to embed the CATALYST CoVE in new project proposals — **building on the existing platform rather than creating new ones**. This keeps the platform populated with users, channels additional resources toward its maintenance and improvement, and demonstrates clear EU added value by capitalising on results already developed with EU funding. Partners have prepared a **ready-to-use explanation** that can be inserted directly into the relevant sections of new applications:

Suggested text for new proposals

EU added value: “The project will build on and further utilise the outcomes of the CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE), demonstrating strong EU added value by capitalising on results already developed through EU-funded cooperation and facilitating their wider uptake and transfer in new institutional and regional contexts.”

Methodology / Training of Trainers: VET teachers and trainers are encouraged to use the CATALYST CoVE platform for continuous professional development, upgrading competences in sustainability and supporting the integration of green skills into VET programmes.

Cost efficiency: asynchronous, non-moderated courses on the platform are offered free of charge; any new or moderated courses delivered by CATALYST partners are budgeted transparently as seminars or staff costs, preventing double funding or transfer of funds between partners.

10.2 Continuation projects already in motion

This is not theoretical. The coordinator has **submitted a Capacity Building proposal on circular construction** that will reuse and build upon the CATALYST platform — expanding its content into a new thematic area while keeping a single shared infrastructure. In parallel, **CRETHIDEV's Capacity Building project** also incorporates use of the platform. Each such project adds users, content and a contribution to the platform's sustaining and improvement, including the ambition to embed **AI-based solutions**.

10.3 Regional reach — the Western Balkans

A specific growth pathway is the **Western Balkans**. Through the national CoVE in North Macedonia and its synergy with the **Western Balkans Circular Economy Hub**, CATALYST broadens its reach to new users across the region, with circular economy as a leading theme. This regional dimension matches the project's existing work to a fast-growing audience and strengthens the case for continuation funding.

Beyond these, partners map synergies with other Erasmus+ CoVEs, forward-looking projects and the Pact for Skills, and align activities with national green-transition, digitalisation and skills strategies — to complement rather than duplicate existing infrastructure.

11. Measuring Sustainability — Indicators

To track whether the plan is working, the consortium will monitor a small set of shared indicators. These are deliberately lightweight so they can be maintained without dedicated funding, and reviewed at the regular Network meetings.

Indicator	What it tracks	Target direction
Platform availability	Uptime of platform and website (coordinator-maintained)	≥ 5 years
Active users / enrolments	Learners accessing courses on the platform	Growing
New projects using the platform	Funded projects that build on the platform	≥ 2 live, more submitted
Network membership	Members of the CATALYST Network	From 333, growing
External funding secured	Grants/projects sustaining or improving the platform	Increasing
National MoUs signed	Formalised national and partner commitments	All 5 CoVEs
Magazine issues published	Continued dissemination vehicle	≥ 1 per year
External funding secured	Grants/projects sustaining or improving the platform	Increasing

Note: Targets indicate direction of travel rather than contractual figures; partners may set numeric values once baselines from the final project period are confirmed.

12. Action Plan (Short, Medium and Long Term)

The action plan distinguishes immediate Year-One steps from the medium- and longer-term work that builds the centre's future.

Objective	Action	Timeline
[Short] Keep the infrastructure live	Coordinator (IECE) hosts and maintains the platform and website; partners add platform links on their sites.	2026 – ongoing (≥ 5 yrs)
[Short] Keep the community active	Launch monthly open Network meetings; publish the next Magazine issue; confirm national contact points.	From 2026
[Short] Formalise commitment	Sign the shared MoU; conclude national MoUs and partner agreements.	2026
[Short] Embed platform in new bids	Use the suggested text (Section 10.1) in all relevant new proposals.	2026 – ongoing

Objective	Action	Timeline
[Medium] Land continuation funding	Secure the submitted circular-construction and CRETHIDEV Capacity Building projects; lead further Erasmus+/Forward-Looking bids.	2026–2027
[Medium] Grow regional reach	Expand users across the Western Balkans with the Circular Economy Hub; translate/adapt courses nationally.	2026–2028
[Medium] Improve the platform with AI	Use new-project funding to embed AI solutions (e.g. learning companion, smart navigation).	2026–2028
[Long] Scale the offer & services	Develop fee-based certification, in-person training and services on top of the free open content.	2027–2029
[Long] Consider formalisation	Revisit whether a European association/NGO is warranted once activity and funding justify it.	2028+

PART B The National CoVEs

Each national CoVE has prepared a sustainability plan against a common template (vision and alignment, governance and stakeholders, resources, cost structure, funding, offer, promotion, synergies, partnership and collaboration, and an action plan). The summaries below preserve each centre's own approach and emphasis; each centre's full plan as submitted is reproduced in the Annexes.

1. North Macedonia

COMMITMENT LEVEL	INSTITUTIONAL ANCHOR	LEAD THEME	FUNDING BASIS
Strong — coordinator-led	IECE, with CEIM & SBC	Circular economy; Western Balkans	Own resources + EU/national projects

Lead	Institute for Business Excellence and Circular Economy (IECE) — project coordinator
National partners	CEIM (Entrepreneurship & Management Development); SBC (Small Business Consortium)
Synergies	Western Balkans Circular Economy Hub, INOVA, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Engineering Chamber
Focus	Circular economy, intellectual capital and sustainable business transformation for the Western Balkans

Vision & alignment

Position the CATALYST CoVE as a recognised Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Business Transformation in North Macedonia and the wider Western Balkans, established as a key stakeholder providing education, services, support and partnerships to business, academic and public-sector organisations, with an active presence at national and international events on business sustainability.

Over 3–5 years: become a benchmark for VET excellence with strong ties to the Ministry of Education and Science, regional centres and public institutions; deliver continuous online and in-person education through the platform; serve as a centre of applied knowledge and a reliable partner for business associations; and support companies via three routes — direct collaboration (pilot projects and consulting), integration into new projects, and specialised programmes on Circular Economy and Intellectual Capital. Aligned with the national Smart Specialisation Strategy and the Roadmap for Circular Economy.

The national CoVE builds on demonstrated results: the Factory Karposh circular-construction pilot (CEIM) and the Youth Ideas for Sustainable Buildings hackathon (IECE and CEIM with the Faculty of Civil Engineering), where 17 secondary-school teams produced 17 concept designs and around 70% of participants reported considering studies or a career in the field.

Governance & stakeholders

An MoU between IECE, CEIM and SBC will define each partner's role, with further MoUs considered for key external partners. An updated stakeholder map builds on existing contacts.

Engagement with the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Economy, INOVA, the Engineering Chamber and Faculty of Civil Engineering, regional development centres and municipalities; a hackathon model is used to deepen collaboration with companies.

Resources

Human resources provided primarily by IECE (which maintains the platform and social media), with defined roles for CEIM and SBC. No new physical infrastructure is required — existing partner premises are used.

Cost & funding

Basic costs covered from partners' own resources, with platform costs shared and additional project funding pursued. Revenue mix: public funds (EU and national) as the primary stream, plus training/workshop fees, business pilot project services and consulting. Targeted programmes: Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, Interreg, IPA — including a possible Capacity Building project.

Offer

Some of the CATALYST course catalogue via the platform, with selected in-house courses also placed on other educational platforms. In-person trainings and workshops, a direct offer for larger companies, and specialised CE and Intellectual Capital programmes delivered jointly with CATALYST partners.

Synergies & partnership

Strong synergy with the Western Balkans Circular Economy Hub; complementarity with technical sciences; potential revival of a joint Master of Management and Engineering. Openness to new collaboration, strengthened cooperation across the CATALYST Network, and formalisation via MoU or a Joint Activity Plan.

Action plan (1–3 years)

- **2026 (Q1–Q2):** add platform links on partner sites; internal dissemination of content; begin communications campaign.
- **2026 (Q2–Q3):** internal team trainings on platform content; sign MoUs between partners and with key external partners.
- **2026–2028:** embed CATALYST in new applications (Erasmus+, Horizon, Interreg, IPA); deliver trainings, pilots and consulting with companies from the hackathons and CE Hub network.
- **2026–2027:** publish selected courses on other educational platforms.

2. Greece

COMMITMENT LEVEL	INSTITUTIONAL ANCHOR	LEAD THEME	FUNDING BASIS
Committed via MoU; some parts developing	AUEB Lifelong Learning Centre (KEDIVIM)	Green skills & business transformation	Diversified: ~40–50% grants, fees, consultancy

Lead	Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB) — Lifelong Learning Centre (KEDIVIM)
Partners	Greek CATALYST partners incl. CTD and SPOROS
Focus	Sustainability-oriented business transformation, circular economy and innovation management; micro-credentials
Status	Vision, funding and offer well developed; some governance details still being finalised

Vision & alignment

The Greek CoVE will continue through a dedicated **MoU among the Greek partners**, anchored institutionally in the **AUEB Lifelong Learning Centre (KEDIVIM)**. It aims to become a permanent national reference point for green skills and business transformation, embedding CATALYST courses into AUEB's lifelong-learning portfolio and expanding micro-credentials aligned with European standards.

Targeted 3–5-year impact: national positioning and visibility; synergies with other Greek CoVEs (joint pathways and cross-CoVE micro-credentials); hosting Greek CoVE outputs on the CATALYST platform; SME transformation; and contributions to national VET reforms.

Governance & stakeholders

An **MoU between current partners** establishes the initial membership; all CATALYST partners and current associated members become full members of the CoVE. Each partner appoints one representative to a **management board**, and the CoVE remains open to additional partners and to collaboration with other CoVEs through agreement.

Stakeholders to engage include the food/agri-food, construction, tourism/HORECA and technology sectors; other Greek CoVEs and KEDIVIM as VET providers; and national bodies (links noted to the General Secretariat for VET & Lifelong Learning, CEDEFOP and the Pact for Skills).

Resources

Delivery uses the CATALYST platform and KEDIVIM infrastructure, funded through KEDIVIM fees and in-kind contributions; the management board oversees coordination. A lean model relies on existing AUEB facilities and outsourced administration rather than new hires.

Cost & funding

Revenue streams: EU and national funds (Erasmus+ CoVE and Forward-Looking Projects, Horizon Europe, EIT, Digital Europe, NSRF/ESPA, Greece 2.0); training fees and executive education; consultancy and advisory services; and supplementary memberships and sponsorships.

Target revenue mix: approximately 40–50% EU/national grants, 25–30% training and executive education, 15–20% consultancy, and 5–10% sponsorships and memberships — reducing reliance on any single source.

Cost-efficiency rests on using existing AUEB facilities and shared services rather than new infrastructure, outsourcing KEDIVIM administration, digital/hybrid delivery to lower cost-per-learner, an ecosystem staffing model (adjunct faculty and CATALYST experts), and public–private living labs in place of dedicated facilities. Identified financial risks — over-reliance on competitive grants, escalating operational costs, and uncertain learner/partner uptake — are mitigated through diversified funding, phased lean growth, and regular market assessment, monitored via KPIs such as cost-per-learner, share of external funding and resource-utilisation rates.

Offer

A mixed model combining open-access online modules with paid certifications and tailor-made corporate training; resources and premium toolkits; mentoring and consultancy; 8–12-week business pilot projects; CATALYST Network participation; events (including premium summer schools and bootcamps); and know-how for establishing and leading CoVEs. The offer is reviewed annually with mid-year monitoring.

Promotion, synergies & partnership

Promotion via the KEDIVIM platform, partner outreach networks, newsletters, social media and events, with strongest outreach to companies and VET providers. Synergies through impact-investing, circular-economy and ecosystem-building activities and a portfolio-company multiplier network, focused on dissemination rather than duplicating educational delivery. Continued collaboration with all Greek partners (with SPOROS providing support at any level); long-term partner commitments to be confirmed.

3. Austria

COMMITMENT LEVEL	INSTITUTIONAL ANCHOR	LEAD THEME	FUNDING BASIS
Conditional — governance defined	BEST & FH JOANNEUM (Founding Board)	Sustainable tourism & start-ups	Within existing programmes; tenders & fees

Lead / partners	BEST and FH JOANNEUM (CoVE Founding Board Members)
Focus	Sustainability in tourism (initial focus) and the start-up ecosystem; later expansion to construction, manufacturing, retail
Website	CATALYST CoVE Austria (best.at)
Status	Clear governance model; continuation conditional on platform access and new funding

Vision & alignment

A national hub for sustainable transformation, beginning with the tourism sector and start-up ecosystem and expanding into other industries where sustainability adoption lags (construction, manufacturing, retail). Target groups span founders/entrepreneurs, SME owners and managers, professionals, and higher-education learners and their educators.

Targeted 3–5-year impact: improved environmental performance among tourism providers and young enterprises; enhanced reputation and competitiveness; job creation in eco-tourism and sustainable services; and empowerment of start-ups to embed sustainability from inception. The CoVE builds on demonstrated pilots — BEST's agile-onboarding (Tandem) and circular-loyalty (Michele's) prototypes and Apfelbutzen's Grazer Eco Festival business-model transformation.

Strongly aligned with Austria's **Plan T** national tourism strategy, the 2023–2024 Tourism Action Plan, and Austria's 2040 climate-neutrality strategy.

Governance & stakeholders

Governance rests on **CoVE Founding Board Members** (BEST and FH JOANNEUM), who hold voting rights over strategy, structure, partnerships and the admission of new members. Other participants are **Contributing Members** — encouraged to engage and propose initiatives but without voting rights or resource entitlements. Third parties may issue formal support letters to join the supporting network.

The Austrian CoVE stays in contact with the consortium and pursues partnerships individually to up-scale the international programme and services.

Resources

No dedicated CoVE staff positions; FH JOANNEUM integrates CoVE activities into its programmes and collaborates with the Green Transformation Academy Austria, using existing facilities in Graz.

Cost & funding

Results are used within partners' ongoing programmes rather than generating dedicated income. New revenue would come from national/international tenders and calls and from fees for in-situ training or consultancy; no membership model is planned. Financial risks identified include rising

staff/energy/technology costs and platform provider dependency — to be mitigated through clear service-level agreements and regular reviews.

Offer

Initial continuation focuses on courses, training and programmes delivered as live training, workshops or lectures in German, on a non-commercial (free, open online) basis, typically once per semester; further offer elements depend on access conditions and new clients.

Synergies, partnership & action plan

BEST has begun connecting its Jugendcolleges (for young people with a refugee/migration background entering the labour market) with CATALYST courses, and the Austrian CoVE will seek synergies with the German CoVE. Interest in continuing collaboration with the international consortium to update and enrich resources.

- **Within 12 months of project closure:** translate/adapt courses and include them in existing partner portfolios (own resources).
- **Ongoing:** marketing via the project website; continued collaboration and shared course implementation where suitable.

4. Germany

COMMITMENT LEVEL	INSTITUTIONAL ANCHOR	LEAD THEME	FUNDING BASIS
Preliminary — funding-dependent	CSCP, with BNW & BELLS	Experiential learning; German-speaking SMEs	Public/foundation (~70%) + services (~30%)

Lead	Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP)
National partners	BNW, BELLS
Focus	German-speaking region; experiential “head–heart–hand” learning; SMEs as primary target group
Status	Framed explicitly as preliminary ideas, dependent on future funding

Vision & alignment

The German CoVE differs by design: CSCP is a Think & Do Tank rather than a conventional VET provider, so its plan is framed as preliminary directions dependent on suitable funding, focused on the German-speaking region (where SMEs prefer native-language content). Establish a focal point for innovative capacity building that strengthens sustainable future skills across systemic, organisational and personal levels. A distinctive ambition is to transform CATALYST online content into physical, experience-based formats (“head–heart–hand”) and to set up a network of “Pioneering Places” / Living Labs.

Mid-term goals: translate and adapt CATALYST materials into German; leverage content to support businesses 1:1 and to feed into other publicly funded projects; and integrate lessons learned into future capacity-building work — bridging policy (green transition, digitalisation, SME resilience) and practice. Builds on the Krefeld circular rental-model pilot (CSCP) and its implementation roadmap adopted by the host organisation.

Governance & stakeholders

Builds on CSCP's 20+ years and BNW's 30+ years of partnerships — at EU level via the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform and Ecopreneur.eu, and nationally with ministries and NRW networks. Key stakeholders: national/regional ministries, established VET and education partners, and industry associations, chambers and regional networks. Stakeholders are invited to mailing lists and approached individually for follow-up collaborations.

Resources

CSCP assigns a German CoVE representative for at least the first post-project year. No major new infrastructure; on-site services use existing premises (CSCP office, Gut Einern) and online content may be hosted on CSCP/BNW sites. The focus is on content from German-speaking partners; updates every 3–5 years are noted as currently outside the partners' funded scope.

Cost & funding

Potential sources: EU funding (Horizon, Erasmus+, Interreg, EFRE); national/regional programmes (BMUV, BMAS, BMBF, BMWF, NKI, Berlin Senate); foundations and sustainability networks (DBU, Stiftung Bildung & Entwicklung NRW, Brost Stiftung); and commercial income from consulting, coaching, live trainings and pilots.

Potential revenue mix: around 70% public or foundation-based funding and 30% consultancy and coaching services.

Offer

Non-commercial: free access to online courses and resources via the CATALYST platform; internal capacity building and reuse in new publicly funded projects.

Commercial (on demand): live training in English or German; an AI-based learning companion linking company knowledge with CATALYST content; consulting, mastermind, mentoring and coaching for sustainable business transformation; and facilitation of business pilot projects. Primary target group: SMEs; secondary: municipalities and professional-orientation organisations.

Partnerships & 1-year action plan

Continuation of existing partnerships (e.g. FAB.Region, Bergisch Kompetenz, MDZ, Netzwerk Grüne Arbeitswelt, na.wi Berlin, Ecopreneur) and new links with professional training platforms (e.g. Haufe, TÜV Akademie).

- **June 2026:** add a final reference and link to the CATALYST platform on partner websites.
- **June 2026 – May 2027:** reference CATALYST in relevant social posts; reuse course content internally and in fitting projects; use content for internal/onboarding trainings; consider CATALYST in new acquisition efforts.
- **July 2026:** mail all stakeholders to confirm opt-in for related projects.
- **Spring 2027:** offer courses to start-up Centre Krefeld tenants.

5. Portugal

COMMITMENT LEVEL	INSTITUTIONAL ANCHOR	LEAD THEME	FUNDING BASIS
Strong — detailed plan	ISCTE	Skills foresight; mould industry & SMEs	EU/national public funds; free, open access

Brand	CoVE – Future Skills Factory (FSF)
Lead / founders	ISCTE (coordinator), ICAA, CENTIMFE; hosted at the Dinâmia'CET Research Centre
Focus	Skills foresight and observatory for a digital and sustainable future; strong mould-industry and SME focus
Stance	Free, open, non-commercial access in line with Erasmus+ rules

Vision & alignment

The CoVE–Future Skills Factory is a skills laboratory and observatory for a digital and sustainable future in Portugal — supporting public policy, helping education and training systems identify and develop future skills, and engaging regional and sectoral stakeholders, with a strong focus on the mould industry (a leading Portuguese sector, third in Europe for plastic-injection moulds). A direct outcome of CATALYST, it aims to be a national and European benchmark in skills foresight, anticipation and recommendation, embedding foresight methodologies into institutional practice.

Impact is pursued at three levels: macro (integrating findings into national skills/education policy), meso (regional and sectoral cooperation) and micro (supporting companies and workers), aligned with the Green Deal, the European Skills Agenda and CATALYST objectives. The CoVE also intends to encourage higher-education and training institutions to introduce cross-cutting modules on the twin transition. It builds on the SMART-SUB RISK pilot (CENTIMFE and ISCTE), whose risk-management framework an SME reported it could realistically apply in daily operations.

Governance & stakeholders

A three-tier model: **Founding stakeholders** (ISCTE, ICAA, CENTIMFE) form the board of directors and define strategy; **Implementing stakeholders** (e.g. ISCTE Executive Education, ISCTE-Sintra, Audax, IPPS, IPSantarém) deliver and disseminate; and **Consulting stakeholders** (e.g. IAPMEI, IEFP, ANQEP, INA, ANI, SDSN Portugal) advise and connect to firms. Roles overlap, and engagement is formalised through MoUs and partnership agreements.

Partnerships are built at EU level (European Skills Agenda, Green Deal, Digital Europe) and nationally (qualification frameworks, sectoral skills councils), positioning the CoVE as a recognised interlocutor for evidence-based, sustainable skills development.

Resources

Hosted within Dinâmia'CET, drawing on the research centre's expertise, networks and institutional capacity; staffing scales with activities and projects. Infrastructure combines national digital tools (Moodle, the FSF website, social media) with the CATALYST platform and website (maintained by IECE) and equipped meeting rooms. ISCTE's scientific committee and accreditation processes keep content relevant and avoid duplication.

Cost & funding

Primary revenue is **EU and national public funding**. In line with Erasmus+ rules on education materials, outputs produced under the project must be made available free of charge under open licences and cannot be sold; revenue therefore focuses on grants and institutional contributions, with diversified applications and cost-sharing to mitigate financial risk.

Offer

All courses, materials and services developed within the CoVE and CATALYST are offered **free of charge**, ensuring broad, inclusive access and compliance with EU regulations. One FHJ course (“SDGs and My Company”) has already been adapted and translated into Portuguese under a CC BY-NC licence; other partner courses will be adapted similarly on demand. The offer is reviewed regularly using inputs from learners, stakeholders and bodies such as the OECD, CEDEFOP and WEF.

Promotion, synergies & partnership

Promotion via targeted marketing, social media, the FSF website, specialised management journals and local media, prioritising SMEs and public institutions. Synergies with ISCTE units (LIA, LCT) and projects such as INITIATE, CERERE, POLREC, CIRCVET and LOWCARBON; alignment with the National Smart Specialisation Policy and Portugal's economic-recovery strategy to 2030. Collaboration with all CATALYST partners (especially the FSF founders and IECE) and with other CoVEs (e.g. Agrifood4Future), formalised through MoUs, starting small and growing.

PART C Commitment and Agreed Positions

1. Memorandum of Understanding

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

on the continuation of the CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence

This Memorandum of Understanding (the “Memorandum”) is entered into by the partners of the **CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence** — the European Centre and the national CoVEs of North Macedonia, Greece, Austria, Germany and Portugal — to express their shared intention to sustain and build upon the results of the CATALYST project (Ref. 101056114) beyond the end of EU funding.

The partners declare their commitment to:

- **Sustain the shared results** — keeping the CATALYST Platform, courses, specialisation programmes, Network and Magazine available and relevant after the project.
- **Continue collaborating** — on the basis of voluntary cooperation, shared values and mutual benefit, recognising that levels of involvement will differ between partners.
- **Support the national CoVEs** — respecting each centre's autonomy to adapt the offer, translate materials and deliver training in national languages, with authors acknowledged and referenced.
- **Respect intellectual property** — charging fees only for certification, in-person training or accompanying services, and obtaining the original author's consent (via a mutual agreement) before any commercial use of another partner's materials.
- **Maintain the platform together** — with the coordinator (IECE) hosting the website and platform for at least five years, and partners will provide updates on materials in the individual courses and resources.
- **Pursue new opportunities** — embedding CATALYST as an existing tool in new proposals (Erasmus+, Forward-Looking, Capacity Building, Pact for Skills) and mapping synergies with other CoVEs.
- **Keep the community active** — participating in regular open Network meetings, events and the Magazine, and welcoming new members and partners.

This Memorandum expresses intent and good-faith commitment; it does not create a separate legal entity or binding financial obligations. Specific collaborations may be formalised through dedicated MoUs, partnership agreements or projects. It takes effect on signature and continues for as long as the partners wish to sustain the CATALYST Centre.

2. Sustainability Q&A

The following questions were discussed at the Athens meeting and the subsequent sustainability workshops. They are recorded here as the consortium's agreed positions, giving partners a shared reference for continuation.

Question	Position	Status
Use of created content in courses	All course materials developed within CATALYST remain available to learners through the platform.	Solved
Revenue from courses	Use of the platform and the existing open courses is free. Fees apply only to new or moderated courses, in-person training, certification and added-value services. Commercial use of another partner's materials requires the author's consent and a mutual MoU.	Solved
Mutual use of content	Courses can be used, adapted and translated into national languages by partners; authors must be acknowledged and referenced.	Solved
Use of the platform	The platform remains freely accessible to learners and partners; partners build new (including commercial) activities and services on top of it rather than charging for access.	Solved
Sustaining the platform	The maintenance of the platform and website is covered by the coordinator (IECE) for at least five years. Improvements and new functionalities (including AI features) are funded through new projects that build on the platform; two Capacity Building proposals (circular construction and CRETHIDEV) already do so. Partners include the platform as an existing tool in new applications.	Solved
Role of National CoVEs	Each national CoVE defines its role, target group and activities in coordination with the coordinator. Translation and national-language delivery are fully supported and may seed new initiatives; an industry focus is recommended.	Solved
Role of the European CoVE	All partners and national CoVEs form the European CATALYST CoVE, with involvement levels differing by partner. Partners are free to integrate CATALYST results into future initiatives, proposals and collaborations.	Solved
Legal form	No formal legal entity will be established at this stage; the CoVE operates on voluntary cooperation, shared values and mutual benefit.	Solved

ANNEXES National Sustainability Plans (full)

Annexes — Full National Sustainability Plans

The following annexes reproduce each national CoVE's full sustainability plan exactly as submitted by the partners. They are the authoritative national documents; the summaries in Part B are derived from them.

- **Annex A** — North Macedonia (IECE, CEIM, SBC)
- **Annex B** — Greece (AUEB Lifelong Learning Centre / KEDIVIM)
- **Annex C** — Austria (BEST, FH JOANNEUM)
- **Annex D** — Germany (CSCP, BNW, BELLS)
- **Annex E** — Portugal (CoVE – Future Skills Factory: ISCTE, ICAA, CENTIMFE)

The full national plans follow on the next pages, each under its own annex divider (Annex A–E).

ANNEX A National Sustainability Plan CATALYST CoVE North Macedonia

North Macedonia

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) — North Macedonia

Lead organisation: Institute for Business Excellence and Circular Economy (IECE)

National partners: CEIM (Centre for Entrepreneurship and Management Development), SBC (Small Business Consortium)

Synergies: Western Balkans Circular Economy Hub, INOVA, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Engineering Chamber

Context and Positioning

The CATALYST project is designed with a strong vision and motivation to contribute to the realisation of the European Green Deal and the new Industrial and SME Strategies. Its main goal is the establishment of a united CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in five countries — North Macedonia, Greece, Austria, Germany and Portugal — offering support and an educational portfolio that tackles personal and organisational development and the transformation of SME business models.

The CATALYST CoVE is built on two pivotal components — “Inspire” and “Enable” — which are integral to achieving sustainable systems and transforming businesses. The national CoVE in North Macedonia is positioned on a national level and united with the other CoVEs through the CATALYST platform and Network on a European level, with the aim of addressing pressing societal challenges and providing high-quality education and support to SMEs.

The European CATALYST CoVE is guided by four core values: competence, collaboration, caring and commitment. This Sustainability Plan sets out how the national CoVE in North Macedonia will operationalise these values after the project end-date, adapting the offer to the specific needs of the local market and the wider Western Balkans region.

Disclaimer

The information that follows should be understood as a set of strategic directions and planned activities, rather than as final commitments. Its realisation will depend on the availability of suitable funding sources, on the capacities of IECE and its partners, and on the evolution of national and European policy priorities. Post-project activities will focus primarily on the Macedonian market and the Western Balkans region, with a strong thematic focus on circular economy, intellectual capital and sustainable business transformation.

1. Vision and Strategic Alignment

Long-term Vision

- Position the CATALYST CoVE as a recognised Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Business Transformation in North Macedonia and the wider Western Balkans.
- Establish the Centre as a key stakeholder providing education, services, support and partnerships with a diverse set of business, academic and public-sector organisations.
- Ensure the Centre's active presence at key national and international events related to business sustainability — working groups, conferences, speaking engagements and partnerships.
- Position circular economy as a central thematic focus for the Balkans, in synergy with the Western Balkans Circular Economy Hub.

Medium-term Goals (3–5 years)

- Become a benchmark for VET excellence, maintaining strong relationships with the Ministry of Education and Science, regional centres and public institutions.
- Provide continuous education offerings to end users — both offline and online — through the CATALYST platform and direct trainings.
- Serve as a centre of applied knowledge and a reliable partner for business associations, through joint initiatives and activities.
- Support companies in their sustainability transformation through: (a) direct collaboration — pilot projects and consulting; (b) integration into new projects; (c) specialised programmes on Circular Economy (CE) and Intellectual Capital (IC).

Alignment with National Priorities

- Support the alignment of VET provision with national strategies on sustainability, digitalisation and the green transition.
- Build upon the Smart Specialisation Strategy and the Roadmap for Circular Economy of North Macedonia as guiding strategic national documents.
- Connect policy and practice — green transition, digitalisation and SME resilience.

2. Governance and Stakeholders

Formalising Partner Collaboration

- Prepare an updated stakeholder map, building on the existing list.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Macedonian partners of the Centre — IECE, CEIM and SBC — clearly defining each partner's role and responsibilities.
- Consider establishing MoUs with other key partners at national level.
- Clearly express mutual commitment and identify specific connection points with each stakeholder.

Engagement with Public Institutions

- Collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science — inviting teachers to follow the courses and use selected training materials in the classroom.
- Collaboration with INOVA, the new institution for innovation, as a relevant stakeholder and potential partner.
- Cooperation with the Engineering Chamber and the Faculty of Civil Engineering to link with technical sciences.
- Connections with regional development centres and municipalities.

Key Stakeholders

- Ministries — education, economy, environment, digital transformation.
- VET providers, universities and other educational institutions.
- Chambers of commerce, business associations and regional networks.
- SMEs, startups and larger companies with demand for sustainability training.
- Partners from the CATALYST Network and the other national CoVEs.

Engagement and Communication

- Hackathon as a model for collaboration with companies — building on SBC's already established cooperation with the companies that participated in the hackathon it organised.
- Ongoing discussions with partners to identify shared interests and priorities.
- All partnerships and joint initiatives will be included in the 2–3 year Action Plan.

3. Resources and Infrastructure

Human Resources

- Main resources will be provided primarily by IECE.
- Representatives from CEIM and SBC will also take part, with defined roles in specific activities.
- The IECE team will be responsible for maintaining and developing the platform.
- IECE will also coordinate social media management.

Material Resources and Knowledge

- No new physical infrastructure is required — existing premises of the partners will be used.
- The aim is to offer the complete portfolio of CATALYST courses through the platform.
- Partners will be invited to participate in specific services and activities according to their expertise.

Risk and Realistic Assessment

A potential risk exists if IECE staff have other official commitments and this initiative is not part of their formal duties — which could lead to delays or reduced input. It is therefore important to make a realistic assessment

of available resources and to determine how much time and capacity IECE can dedicate to the CATALYST initiative.

4. Cost Structure

- Basic costs will be covered from the partners' own resources.
- Additional project funding will be pursued to secure extra support.
- Platform costs are expected to be shared among the partner organisations.
- A realistic assessment of available capacity will be maintained to avoid overloading the team.

5. Funding and Sustainability

Funding Sources

- EU programmes: Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, Interreg, IPA and other relevant instruments.
- One possible direction is a Capacity Building project with a clearly defined focus and target group.
- National programmes and funds supporting VET and innovation.
- Foundations and donor organisations active in the region.

Revenue Mix

- Public funds (EU and national programmes) — the primary funding stream.
- Trainings and in-person workshops with participation fees.
- Business pilot project services.
- Consulting services provided by the Centre's team.

6. Offer and Continuation

Online Offer

- The full range of CATALYST courses will be available through the platform.
- Selected in-house courses will also be placed on international learning platforms such as Udemy for broader visibility.

Offline (In-person) Offer

- The Centre's core courses will be delivered as in-person trainings and workshops.
- A direct offer for larger companies, focused on sustainability trainings and transformation services.

Specialised Programmes

- Position Circular Economy (CE) as a central thematic area in the Balkans, in synergy with the Western Balkans Circular Economy Hub.

- Specialised programmes on Intellectual Capital (IC) and Circular Economy (CE), jointly with CATALYST partners.
- Short, specialised training programmes responding to specific industry needs.

7. Promotion and Visibility

- Relationship building, promotion and active participation in events.
- Developing partnerships with business chambers and professional associations.
- Creating a direct offer for larger companies, focused on sustainability training and transformation services.
- Identifying and participating in key events and business forums where CATALYST can promote its programmes and expertise.
- Communication through mailing lists, social media and the web platform.

8. Synergies with Current and Upcoming Activities

Project-level Synergies

- All upcoming activities will be aligned with the partners' other ongoing projects.
- Strong synergy with the Western Balkans Circular Economy Hub — future initiatives will build upon the results and outputs of the CATALYST project.
- In future projects, the CATALYST platform can be expanded and integrated (for example, adding new languages or features).

Strategic Partnerships

- Institutional support — ministries and public institutions.
- Project partners sharing similar visions and operational flexibility.
- Complementarity with technical sciences — partnerships with the Faculty of Civil Engineering and the Engineering Chamber.
- Revival of the joint Master of Management and Engineering programme.
- Building on the Smart Specialisation Strategy and the Roadmap for Circular Economy.
- SBC has already established collaboration with the companies that participated in the hackathon it organised.

9. Partnership and Collaboration

- Openness to new collaboration and commitment to continuing existing partnerships.
- Strengthening cooperation with the other CoVEs of the CATALYST Network.
- Formalising collaboration through MoUs or a Joint Activity Plan, which would be sufficient to formalise the cooperation.

- Ongoing discussions to identify common interests and shared priorities with partners.

10. Action Plan (1–3 years)

Current Priorities

- Focus on promotion and implementation of activities.
- Alignment of all ongoing efforts with this Sustainability Plan.
- Preparation of several project applications already in progress.
- Development of a comprehensive service offer — including a training package tailored for the region.

Goals and Activities by Quarter

- **Visibility of results** — add links to the CATALYST platform on partners' websites (Q1–Q2 2026).
- **Communication** — regular social media posts and mailing list updates (Q1 2026 – Q4 2026).
- **Reuse of materials** — internal dissemination of CATALYST content to partners and their networks (Q1–Q2 2026).
- **Knowledge transfer** — internal trainings for the IECE, CEIM and SBC teams on the platform content (Q2–Q3 2026).
- **Networking** — targeted outreach to stakeholders (ministries, chambers, universities) through defined communication campaigns (Q2 2026).
- **New project applications** — embed CATALYST results in applications to Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, Interreg and IPA (2026–2027).
- **Support for companies and startups** — direct trainings, pilot projects and consulting with partner companies from the hackathons and the CE Hub network (2026–2028).
- **Formalising partnerships** — sign MoU between IECE, CEIM and SBC and with key external partners (Q2–Q3 2026).
- **International platform placement** — publish selected courses on Udemy or similar platforms (Q4 2026 – Q2 2027).

ANNEX B National Sustainability Plan CATALYST CoVE Greece

Greece

Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB) — Lifelong Learning Centre (KEDIVIM)

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) — Greece

1. Vision & Alignment

1.1 Long-term vision beyond project funding

The Greek CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) has developed a strong and forward-looking vision that extends well beyond the lifetime of EU funding. Building on the collaborative foundations established during the project, the Greek partners have formally agreed to continue their cooperation through a dedicated Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This MoU ensures a stable governance and collaboration framework, enabling the CoVE to continue expanding its activities, strengthening partnerships, and delivering high-quality services to learners, SMEs, and public stakeholders. The MoU will remain open to other interested stakeholders to join.

At the heart of the CoVE's long-term vision is its strategic collaboration with the Lifelong Learning Centre (KEDIVIM) of the Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB). This partnership provides a robust institutional anchor for sustainability, supporting continuous training delivery, programme accreditation, and access to a broad national and international learner base. Through this collaboration, the CoVE will maintain and grow the CATALYST training offer, integrating it into AUEB's lifelong learning portfolio and ensuring that courses remain accessible, up-to-date, and responsive to emerging labour-market needs.

The Greek CATALYST CoVE aims to evolve into a permanent reference point for skills development in sustainability-oriented business transformation, circular economy practices, and innovation management. Its long-term mission is to cultivate a dynamic ecosystem that connects VET providers, universities, SMEs, industry associations, and policymakers. By serving as a hub for knowledge exchange, applied learning, and capacity building, the CoVE will continue supporting SMEs in adapting to the green and digital transitions, enhancing competitiveness while promoting socially responsible and environmentally sustainable practices. Sustainability will also be reinforced through the Centre's strong links with national and European networks. The Greek CoVE will continue participating in joint activities, peer learning, and co-creation initiatives launched by other CATALYST partners, ensuring that Greek stakeholders remain active members of a wider community of innovation and vocational excellence.

1.2 Centre goals

The goals of the Greek CATALYST CoVE are organised around six strategic pillars:

Strengthen vocational excellence in sustainability and business transformation

- Provide high-quality, market-relevant training on sustainability, circular economy, green skills, and digital transition.
- Embed CATALYST course offerings into mainstream VET and lifelong-learning pathways through the collaboration with the AUEB Lifelong Learning Centre.
- Expand micro-credential offerings aligned with European standards to enhance learner mobility and employability.

Support SMEs in adopting sustainable and competitive business models

- Build tailored training programmes, tools, and advisory support helping SMEs integrate eco-design, resource efficiency, and circular economy practices.

- Promote innovation in traditional and emerging sectors by enabling SMEs to test and adopt new methods, technologies, and sustainability frameworks.
- Encourage uptake of green skills across regional value chains to enhance competitiveness and resilience.

Create a long-term ecosystem linking education, industry, and policy

- Maintain and grow partnerships between VET providers, universities, businesses, chambers, and public authorities to form a stable skills and innovation ecosystem.
- Ensure that the MoU among Greek partners drives coordinated planning and implementation of joint initiatives beyond the project lifetime.
- Foster dialogue between education stakeholders and policymakers to advocate for evidence-based reforms in skills development.

Advance applied learning and innovation in sustainability

- Facilitate collaborative projects and challenge-based learning connecting students, professionals, and SMEs.
- Promote real-world application of training through case studies, pilot actions, and hands-on methodologies.
- Encourage experimentation and knowledge transfer across sectors, especially in green manufacturing, circular design, and sustainable supply chains.

Ensure continuity and expansion of the CATALYST platform

- Maintain and regularly update course content and learning pathways to reflect evolving labour-market needs and EU policy priorities.
- Promote the platform nationally to broaden participation among learners, SMEs, and educators.
- Support the long-term operation of the platform through integration with the AUEB KEDIVIM Lifelong Learning Centre and alignment with other national programmes.

Strengthen regional impact and social inclusion

- Provide accessible training and support to diverse groups, including youth, unemployed individuals, women entrepreneurs, and workers needing reskilling.
- Contribute to regional development through partnerships with local authorities and industry clusters.
- Encourage socially responsible business growth aligned with sustainability goals and community needs.

1.3 Targeted impact in 3–5 years

Over the next three to five years, the Greek CATALYST CoVE aims to achieve impact across eight dimensions:

National positioning & visibility

- Greek CATALYST CoVE established as a national hub for sustainability, green skills, and business transformation.
- Recognised collaboration framework with the AUEB Lifelong Learning Centre, providing a stable long-term home for training and ecosystem services.
- Strong public presence and credibility among Greek VET providers, enterprises, and ministries.

Synergies with other Greek CoVEs

- Active cooperation with other Erasmus+ CoVEs operating in Greece.
- Joint training pathways and cross-CoVE micro-credentials in green skills, circular practices, and innovation management.

- Shared events, peer learning, and national CoVE network activities, with co-developed tools, guidelines, and case studies addressing cross-sector sustainability challenges.

Hosting Greek CoVE outputs on the CATALYST platform

- CATALYST platform functioning as a national repository for CoVE results, with selected outputs from other Greek CoVEs published and adapted into Greek where needed.
- Platform established as a shared access point for VET tools, curricula, training materials, and methodologies from multiple CoVEs, enabling unified outreach and dissemination.

Training & skills impact

- Thousands of learners trained through micro-credentials and short courses integrated into the AUEB Lifelong Learning Centre.
- Noticeable upskilling of SME staff in sustainability, digitalisation, and circular economy.
- Broader adoption of CATALYST learning pathways by VET institutes across Greece.

SME transformation & innovation

- Increased number of SMEs adopting circular, resource-efficient, and sustainable business models.
- Expansion of applied projects linking learners with SMEs through challenge-based learning.
- Documented improvements in SME competitiveness and readiness for the green transition.

Ecosystem development

- Fully operational multi-stakeholder ecosystem under the MoU framework.
- Stronger integration with sectoral bodies, chambers, clusters, and policymakers.
- Continued participation in EU-level CoVE networks, contributing Greek experience and receiving best practices.

Policy & system-level impact

- Contribution to national VET reforms, green skills strategies, and digital skills roadmaps.
- Uptake of CATALYST and other CoVE modules by VET schools and adult-learning centres.
- Evidence-based recommendations emerging from pilots and training data.

Sustainability & long-term continuation

- Mixed funding model combining AUEB programmes, EU projects, SME services, and national support.
- Continuous expansion and updating of the CATALYST platform as permanent infrastructure.
- Lasting benefits for learners, SMEs, and regional economies in Greece.

1.4 Alignment with national priorities and the CATALYST Strategy

The CATALYST project is designed to contribute to the realisation of the European Green Deal and the new Industrial and SME Strategies. Its main goal is to establish a united CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence across five countries (North Macedonia, Greece, Austria, Germany, and Portugal) to support and create an educational offer that tackles personal and organisational development, and to embrace transformation in SMEs — enabling and inspiring them to re-think and re-design their business models through co-creation between educational and business organisations.

The European CATALYST CoVE is envisioned as a central hub and catalyst for sustainable business transformation in Europe, providing the foundation for a collaborative business community focused on sustainable, resilient, and equitable outcomes. National CoVEs, tailored to local contexts, extend this vision by adapting offerings to specific regional needs and target groups. The initiative is guided by four core values — competence, collaboration, caring, and commitment — which underpin its mission to equip organisations and individuals with the knowledge and skills for lasting sustainable change.

The Greek CoVE aligns this strategy with national priorities by anchoring its activities in AUEB's academic and lifelong-learning infrastructure, focusing on sectors central to the Greek economy — agri-food, construction and buildings, tourism and HORECA, and technology — and contributing directly to national objectives for the twin green and digital transitions, labour-market modernisation, and SME competitiveness.

2. Governance & Stakeholders

2.1 Building EU-level and national partnerships with government bodies

The Greek CoVE will develop partnerships with national authorities responsible for vocational education and training, working towards alignment with the General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth of the Ministry of Education. The Centre will monitor and align with emerging national frameworks, including the observatory for VET graduates and labour-market absorption expected to begin operating in 2026, and the vocational training academies committing to the absorption of at least 40% of their graduates into the labour market.

At the European level, the CoVE will pursue synergies and partnerships with CEDEFOP and active participation in the Pact for Skills, positioning the Centre within the broader European skills ecosystem. As the national excellence-centre framework continues to develop, the CoVE will refine and align its engagement plan with government bodies as further information becomes available.

2.2 Stakeholder engagement

The Greek CoVE will keep a broad set of stakeholders engaged through targeted, sector-specific activities:

- Industry: agri-food, construction and buildings, tourism and HORECA, and technology companies, engaged through applied projects, advisory services, and demand-driven training.
- VET providers: other Greek CoVEs and the AUEB KEDIVIM network, engaged through joint training pathways, shared resources, and peer learning.
- Policymakers and public bodies: engaged through dialogue, evidence-based recommendations, and contribution to national skills and green-transition strategies.

Engagement will be sustained through regular communication, joint events, co-created initiatives, and participation in national and European networks.

2.3 Mechanisms to formalise collaboration

Collaboration will be formalised primarily through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the current Greek partners, which establishes the initial membership of the CoVE. All CATALYST partners, together with current associated members, will be full members of the CoVE. Each partner appoints one representative to the management board of the CoVE, which is responsible for coordination, planning, and reporting. The MoU remains open to additional partners, and collaboration with other CoVEs will be structured through dedicated agreements.

3. Resources

3.1 Human resources

Coordination and reporting responsibilities will rest with the management board of the CoVE. Staffing will follow a flexible, ecosystem-based model rather than a large permanent team: the Centre will draw on adjunct faculty, experts from the CATALYST consortium, visiting experts, and co-teaching partnerships, complemented by the administrative capacity of the AUEB KEDIVIM Lifelong Learning Centre. This approach keeps staffing costs variable while ensuring learners are exposed to current, practice-oriented expertise, and allows the Centre to scale delivery up or down according to demand and available funding.

3.2 Material resources

The Greek CoVE will make use of the existing CATALYST platform and the infrastructure of the AUEB KEDIVIM Lifelong Learning Centre, including classrooms, digital systems, and the institutional website, rather than creating new facilities. These resources will be maintained through KEDIVIM fees and in-kind contributions from partners. Additional investments over the next three years will be limited and demand-driven, prioritising digital learning content and shared tools. Where possible, resources such as platform content, training materials, and event infrastructure will be shared across partners to reduce costs and avoid duplication.

3.3 Knowledge resources

Core intellectual outputs — courses, toolkits, services, and the learning platform — will require regular updating to remain aligned with labour-market needs and EU policy priorities. The management board, supported by the AUEB academic team, will be responsible for ensuring content remains relevant and accurate. Feedback and new knowledge will be gathered systematically from learners, SMEs, and ecosystem partners through evaluations, advisory exchanges, and applied projects. The Centre will also draw on courses and materials developed by other CATALYST partners and other Greek CoVEs, adapting and translating them into Greek where relevant.

4. Cost Structure

4.1 Main operating costs (indicative annual structure)

Type of cost	Indicative annual share
Administration	20%
Lecturers	30%
Researchers	20%
Content development	20%

4.2 Strategies to keep costs efficient and sustainable

To maintain a cost-efficient structure, the Greek CATALYST CoVE will operate under existing AUEB infrastructures — classrooms, digital systems, and the institutional website — rather than creating new facilities, and will outsource operational needs to the AUEB KEDIVIM administration instead of hiring new personnel. Modular workflows will be activated when funding is available, keeping fixed commitments low. A second strategy is to maximise external funding and partnerships. European programmes such as Erasmus+ CoVE calls, Horizon Europe, and national opportunities through NSRF/ESPA provide substantial support for skills development, innovation, and sustainability. By positioning the CoVE as a hub within multi-actor ecosystems — where companies, public bodies, NGOs, and international partners contribute resources and expertise — the Centre can leverage external assets and reduce its own expenditure while strengthening its relevance and reach.

Digital and hybrid learning models further enhance cost-efficiency. Reusable micro-credential courses, virtual simulations, and blended programmes running on AUEB's existing platforms reduce the cost per learner, expand accessibility across Greece and internationally, and lower the environmental footprint associated with travel, printed materials, and facility use. A shared-services model within AUEB — coordinating with existing centres and departments rather than building parallel administrative, communications, or IT systems — minimises duplication and delivers economies of scale.

For long-term sustainability, the CoVE will develop a diversified set of revenue streams: executive education, thematic short courses, consulting services, industry-sponsored research, and alumni-supported upskilling. Public-private living labs, developed with municipalities, companies, and innovation hubs, will provide practice-based learning in real-world settings and reduce capital expenditure on specialised facilities. A lean staffing model based on adjunct faculty, consortium experts, and co-teaching partnerships will keep staffing

costs variable. To avoid mission creep, the Centre will maintain a small number of strategic priority areas and a strong monitoring system with clear KPIs — cost-per-learner, share of external funding, and utilisation rates of shared resources. Finally, sustainable day-to-day operations — digital-first processes, circular procurement, refurbished equipment, and low-waste events — will reduce operational expenditure while reinforcing the Centre's identity as a leader in sustainable transitions.

4.3 Financial risks and mitigation

A key financial risk is overreliance on external funding streams — particularly EU programmes such as Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, or national grants — which are competitive, cyclical, and not guaranteed. To mitigate this, the CoVE will follow a diversified funding strategy combining competitive grants with internally generated revenue, including training fees, consultancy services, and industry partnerships, reducing vulnerability to fluctuations in any single source.

A second risk relates to escalating operational costs if the Centre expands too quickly or invests prematurely in costly facilities, proprietary technologies, or high fixed staffing. Mitigation requires a phased, lean-growth model in which infrastructure investments are delayed until there is steady income and clear evidence of demand, leveraging existing university facilities, shared services, and partner-provided expertise to keep fixed costs low.

A third risk concerns uncertain learner or partner uptake if demand is overestimated. Mitigation involves regular market assessments, co-designing programmes with industry to ensure relevance, and adopting digital and hybrid formats that reduce marginal delivery costs. Long-term agreements with employers, public bodies, and sectoral organisations will help secure predictable demand and place financial planning on stable, recurring engagement rather than speculative projections.

5. Funding

5.1 Main potential revenue streams

The CoVE's revenue base draws on a diverse mix of sources to ensure long-term financial resilience. A major stream comes from EU and national funding programmes, including Erasmus+ Centres of Vocational Excellence, Horizon Europe, EIT initiatives, Digital Europe, and Greek NSRF/ESPA schemes, which support both capacity-building and thematic projects. These funds are particularly valuable for launching new activities, developing training content, and building international partnerships.

To complement competitive grants, the CoVE will generate revenue through training fees — short courses, micro-credentials, executive education, and professional workshops tailored to industry, public-sector organisations, and lifelong learners. The Centre will also leverage its expertise to offer consultancy and advisory services in sustainability transitions, digital transformation, skills strategies, and innovation management, creating opportunities for long-term partnerships with companies, municipalities, and public agencies.

A further stream comes from membership or partnership schemes, where organisations pay an annual fee to access training discounts, early insights, specialised tools, networking events, and co-designed projects, encouraging recurring income and deeper engagement. Finally, the CoVE can secure private-sector sponsorships and philanthropic contributions for thematic programmes, scholarships, equipment, and living labs. Together, these streams create a robust, diversified financial structure supporting both the Centre's mission and its long-term sustainability.

5.2 Most realistic revenue sources in the Greek context

In the Greek context, the most realistic and immediately accessible revenue sources are EU-funded programmes and training-related income. Greece has consistently high participation in Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, and NSRF/ESPA programmes, making competitive funding a viable early-stage driver, particularly for calls on skills development, digital transformation, sustainability, and labour-market innovation that align with AUEB's expertise.

Professional training fees and executive education represent a highly realistic and sustainable source, given strong and growing demand in Greece for upskilling in ESG, circular economy, digital skills, leadership, and innovation management. AUEB's strong brand reputation in business and economics education gives the CoVE a competitive advantage with working professionals, companies, and public-sector organisations, and micro-credentials, hybrid courses, and sector-specific academies can generate reliable annual income at relatively low delivery cost.

A third realistic stream is consultancy and applied research services for Greek municipalities, ministries, SMEs, banks, and utilities facing regulatory pressures related to sustainability, digitalisation, and workforce transformation. While sponsorships and membership schemes can also contribute, they are likely to be supplementary in the early years. Overall, EU funding, training fees, and consultancy services form the most feasible and stable revenue mix.

5.3 Target revenue mix

Revenue source	Target share
EU and national grants	40–50%
Training fees and executive education	25–30%
Consultancy and advisory services	15–20%
Sponsorships, memberships, and philanthropy	5–10%

In the early years, EU and national grants are expected to play the strongest role, reflecting Greece's strong access to EU funding and the need for initial investment to build curricula, establish partnerships, and launch pilot activities. Over time, the share of grant income can gradually decrease as the Centre strengthens its market position and internal revenue capacity, creating a diversified and resilient financial structure that reduces exposure to uncertainty in any single source.

5.4 Upcoming opportunities to leverage

Several opportunities at European level can sustain and expand the Centre's work. The most directly relevant is the Erasmus+ Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) call, which funds the creation or scaling of vocational excellence ecosystems, including collaborative projects, curriculum development, mobility, and innovation in VET. Erasmus+ also offers Forward-Looking Projects, joint VET qualifications, and adult-learning initiatives that align closely with the Centre's offer.

Beyond Erasmus+, the CoVE can benefit from EU funding streams focused on the green and digital transitions, including Horizon Europe clusters, EIT programmes, Digital Europe, and initiatives under the Pact for Skills, which support capacity-building, innovation, digital upskilling, sustainability training, and industry collaboration. At national level, Greece's Recovery and Resilience Plan (Greece 2.0) and ongoing NSRF/ESPA programmes fund large-scale reskilling and upskilling, digital transformation, and workforce development, where the CoVE could act as an accredited training provider or strategic implementation partner.

Finally, the CoVE can leverage sector initiatives related to digital skills, green jobs, circular economy, entrepreneurship, and employability — including actions under the Digital Skills and Jobs Platform, national employer-led programmes, and industry partnerships. With sectors such as tourism, energy, finance, maritime, and public administration under pressure to modernise, aligning the Centre's portfolio with these priorities will secure diverse partnerships and establish it as a key skills and innovation hub.

6. Offer

6.1 CATALYST offer to be continued after funding

Offer	Delivery model	Target group	Additional information
Courses, training & programmes	Mixed model: open-access online modules (non-commercial) plus paid	Students, professionals, companies, VET providers, educators.	Moderate–high revenue potential (corporate training); new modules

	certifications, advanced courses, and tailor-made corporate training. Hybrid delivery with online content and live sessions in Greek/English.		added annually; supports visibility and outreach.
Resources (toolkits, guides, templates)	Hosted on the CoVE online platform; integrated into training; selected toolkits may be upgraded into premium resources.	Educators, policymakers, VET providers, organisations needing capacity-building tools.	Enhances reputation as a knowledge hub; potential for premium toolkit sales.
Services (mentoring, consultancy, capacity building)	Delivered via tailored workshops, advisory projects, mentoring, and strategic consulting packages.	Companies, municipalities, ministries, NGOs, sector associations.	High revenue potential through multi-month contracts; strengthens partnerships and ecosystem engagement.
Business Pilot Projects	Structured 8–12 week pilots with SMEs, startups, and public agencies, combining research, co-design, and evaluation.	SMEs, startups, public organisations, industry partners.	Creates hands-on learning and applied research; may lead to consultancy or training contracts.
CATALYST Network participation	Continued engagement through joint events, proposals, peer learning, and working groups, both in person and virtual.	CoVEs, VET organisations, universities, innovation actors.	Secures visibility, supports EU project participation, strengthens collaboration pathways.
Events (workshops, webinars, conferences)	Hosted onsite at AUEB or online; mix of free public events and premium paid events (e.g. summer schools, executive bootcamps).	Students, professionals, policymakers, companies, educators.	Enhances outreach; premium events generate additional revenue and attract new partners.
Know-how for establishing & leading CoVEs	Delivered through consultancy, coaching, peer-learning missions, and contribution to EU/international capacity-building actions.	Universities, VET providers, ministries, regional authorities.	High-value consultancy potential; positions AUEB as a leader in CoVE development and governance.

6.2 Differentiation and complementarity

The Centre's offer differs from existing market options by combining academically grounded methods with applied, practice-oriented tools developed through the CATALYST programme, creating a unique bridge between university expertise and vocational excellence. While many providers focus either on theory or on narrow technical skills, the CoVE offers an integrated approach blending systems thinking, sustainability transitions, innovation ecosystems, and digital skills — areas where current Greek market offerings remain fragmented. The Centre complements existing programmes through open-access resources, tailored corporate training, and structured business pilot projects that are not widely available nationally, and through participation in the CATALYST and EU CoVE networks it offers international collaboration opportunities most domestic providers cannot match.

6.3 Pricing and access models

The Centre will apply a tiered access model. A core set of online modules and selected resources will remain free and open-access to support visibility, outreach, and social inclusion. Advanced courses, certifications, and micro-credentials will be fee-based, with preferential rates for partners and members. Tailor-made corporate training, consultancy, and capacity-building services will be priced on a contract basis according to scope. Premium events such as summer schools and executive bootcamps will carry a participation fee. This blended model balances accessibility with the generation of sustainable revenue.

6.4 Review and adaptation of the offer

The Centre will review and adapt its offer annually, using feedback from learners, industry partners, and ecosystem stakeholders to update course content, refine services, and introduce new modules. A mid-year monitoring process will assess emerging trends in skills demand, policy shifts, and labour-market developments, allowing a more rapid response when needed. This combination of structured annual evaluation and ongoing monitoring keeps the offer relevant, high-quality, and aligned with evolving national and European priorities.

7. Promotion

7.1 Raising awareness post-funding

After funding ends, the Centre will raise awareness of its services primarily through the AUEB KEDIVIM platform, which provides direct visibility to students, professionals, and organisations seeking accredited training. This will be complemented by the outreach networks of the Greek CoVE partners — universities, VET providers, chambers of commerce, and sectoral associations — ensuring dissemination across multiple regions and industries. Regular communication through newsletters, social media, events, and participation in national skills initiatives will reinforce the Centre's presence and maintain strong engagement.

7.2 Communication channels

The Centre will use a combination of digital and institutional channels: an updated website with clear information on courses, services, and resources; social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram to reach students, professionals, and industry partners; and regular newsletters to stakeholders within the Greek CoVE ecosystem and beyond. It will also promote its work through webinars, workshops, conferences, and participation in national skills initiatives, providing continuous, multi-layered communication to diverse audiences.

7.3 Priority outreach groups

The strongest outreach efforts will focus on companies and industry partners, who are essential for work-based learning, pilot projects, and demand-driven training. Equally important are VET providers, educators, and training institutions, who can integrate the Centre's methodologies and amplify its impact. Additional emphasis will be placed on public-sector bodies and regional authorities, which play a key role in implementing upskilling policies and supporting large-scale programme adoption. Targeted communication to students and early-career professionals will ensure a steady pipeline of learners and future practitioners.

7.4 Leveraging success stories and case studies

The Centre will use success stories, testimonials, and case studies to demonstrate its impact and strengthen credibility. These will be collected from pilot projects, training participants, and partner organisations and transformed into short videos, website features, social-media posts, and newsletter highlights. By showcasing concrete outcomes — improved skills, organisational change, and innovative solutions — and sharing them through the KEDIVIM platform, partner networks, and events, the Centre will reinforce its reputation as a leading actor in skills development and vocational excellence.

7.5 Promotional partnerships

The Centre will amplify its promotion by working with chambers of commerce, professional associations, and sectoral bodies that can disseminate training opportunities and success stories directly to businesses. Partnerships with universities, VET providers, and the Greek CoVE consortium will extend outreach across educational institutions and regional ecosystems, while collaboration with local and sector-specific media will highlight achievements and activities to broader audiences. Engagement with municipalities, regional authorities, and innovation hubs will ensure visibility within policy and entrepreneurship communities, creating a strong communication ecosystem.

8. Synergies with Current and Upcoming Activities

8.1 Connection with existing initiatives

Through activities in impact investing, circular-economy transition, ecosystem building, and portfolio support, the Centre's partners can integrate references to the CATALYST methodology and resources within their dissemination activities, events, and stakeholder networks, extending the reach of project outcomes into adjacent initiatives.

8.2 Alignment with national and regional strategies

The Centre will align its activities with national and regional strategies for the green transition, digitalisation, and skills development, contributing to the objectives of Greece 2.0 and NSRF/ESPA programmes and supporting the modernisation of priority sectors such as agri-food, construction, tourism, and technology.

8.3 Partnerships strengthening sustainability

Networks of portfolio companies can serve as multipliers, sharing their experiences and cases within their domains, while collaboration with chambers, associations, and public bodies strengthens the Centre's sustainability through joint activities and shared resources.

8.4 Avoiding duplication

To avoid duplication, the Centre's contribution focuses on dissemination, networking, and ecosystem mobilisation rather than on launching parallel educational delivery. It will complement the CATALYST offer by promoting and amplifying what the project has already produced, building on the existing infrastructure rather than creating a new, competing one.

9. Partnership and Collaboration

9.1 Continuing collaboration with CATALYST partners

The Centre will continue collaborating with all Greek CATALYST partners, with SPOROS providing support across all levels of activity. Collaboration will be structured through the MoU and the management board, ensuring coordinated planning and joint implementation beyond the project lifetime.

9.2 New partners

Through its impact-investment activities, the Centre can bring in companies from its portfolio as demonstration cases and multipliers of CATALYST outcomes, expanding the network of SMEs and organisations engaged with the Centre's offer.

9.3 Formalising collaboration

Collaboration will be formalised through the MoU between Greek partners and, where relevant, through agreements with other CoVEs, joint project participation, and membership arrangements, providing a clear and durable structure for cooperation.

9.4 Added value of partnerships

The Centre's partnerships provide access to diverse SME communities, networking opportunities, and access to varied audiences, alongside knowledge exchange and potential policy influence. These partnerships strengthen the Centre's relevance, reach, and capacity to mobilise resources.

9.5 Ensuring long-term commitment

Mechanisms for ensuring long-term commitment and engagement from partners will be defined progressively as the governance framework matures and the Centre's activities develop, building on the foundation established by the MoU.

10. Action Plan for the Next 3 Years

The following action plan translates the Centre's vision and goals into concrete objectives, actions, timelines, resources, expected outcomes, and involved organisations.

Objective	Action	Timeline	Resources	Expected outcomes	Involved organisations
Establish governance framework	Sign the MoU; constitute the management board with one representative per partner	Year 1 (M1–M6)	Partner staff; legal support	Operational CoVE governance; defined membership	All Greek CATALYST partners, associated members
Anchor training in AUEB KEDIVIM	Integrate CATALYST courses into the KEDIVIM lifelong-learning portfolio; define micro-credentials	Year 1 (M6–M12)	AUEB KEDIVIM infrastructure; content team	CATALYST offer accredited and accessible nationally	AUEB, KEDIVIM
Secure external funding	Submit applications to Erasmus+ CoVE, Horizon Europe, and NSRF/ESPA calls	Years 1–3 (ongoing)	Proposal-writing capacity; partner network	At least one new funded project; diversified income	AUEB, SPOROS, consortium partners
Launch SME services and pilots	Run business pilot projects and advisory services with SMEs and public bodies	Years 1–3 (ongoing)	Expert pool; SME network; living labs	SMEs adopting sustainable models; consultancy contracts	AUEB, SPOROS, SME partners, municipalities
Strengthen the national CoVE network	Establish cooperation with other Greek CoVEs; host shared outputs on the CATALYST platform	Years 1–2	CATALYST platform; partner coordination	Cross-CoVE pathways; unified national repository	Greek CoVEs, AUEB
Sustain promotion and engagement	Maintain website, social media, newsletters, and	Years 1–3 (ongoing)	Communication team; partner channels	Sustained visibility; growing learner and SME engagement	All partners, chambers, associations, media

	events; collect and publish success stories				
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ANNEX C National Sustainability Plan CATALYST CoVE Austria

Austria

BEST and FH JOANNEUM — CATALYST CoVE Austria

The following pages reproduce this national CoVE's full sustainability plan exactly as submitted by the partners.

1. Vision & Alignment

1. What is your centre's long-term vision once the project funding ends?

Our vision is to cultivate a vibrant, cross-sectoral community of learners, innovators, and change makers anchored in Austria, but connected to the wider European network, who are equipped to tackle the pressing sustainability challenges of our time.

Once the CATALYST project funding concludes, our [Austrian Centre of Vocational Excellence \(CoVE\)](#) envisions a dynamic and enduring role as a national hub for sustainable transformation, beginning with the tourism sector and start-up ecosystem. Building on the robust foundation laid by the international CATALYST initiative, our long-term strategy is to localise and deepen impact by tailoring support, training, and innovation to Austria's unique economic and environmental landscape.

Our target groups will still range from founders/ entrepreneurs to SME owners and managers, as well as professionals, including also HE (Higher Education) learners, and their educators. One immediate priority is the tourism industry, a vital pillar of Austria's economy that faces increasing pressure to align with sustainability goals.

In parallel, we will nurture start-ups and early-stage ventures, recognising their agility and potential to drive innovation in sustainable practices. Especially the FH Joanneum maintain a strong focus on supporting start-ups, ensuring that its activities are not limited to any single sector. Our centre aims to provide tailored support through the existing CATALYST training programme, international partnership, and eventually access to researchers, or even mentors, as an integral part of the broader CATALYST ecosystem. By fostering a culture of sustainability from inception, we aim to shape a new generation of businesses that embed environmental and social responsibility into their core DNA.

2. What are your centre goals?

The overarching goal of our Austrian Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) is to become a national player for sustainability-driven innovation, capacity building, and transformation—starting with the tourism sector and start-up community, and expanding into other industries where sustainability adoption remains limited.

Our long-term goal is to evolve into a self-sustaining entity that continues to inspire and enable Austrian SMEs and professionals to lead in sustainable business transformation. Through this, we aim to contribute meaningfully to the European Green Deal and Austria's national climate goals, long after the initial project funding has ended.

As our capacity grows, we will strategically expand into other sectors that lag behind in sustainability adoption in Austria, such as construction, manufacturing, and retail, and can build on the network with the peer CATALYST CoVEs in the other partner countries. These industries often face structural barriers to transformation, and our centre will serve as a bridge by offering accessible training, sector-specific toolkits, and collaborative forums to accelerate change.

3. *What impact do you aim to achieve in 3–5 years?*

Over the next three to five years, our Austrian CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence aims to establish itself as a transformative force in Austria's innovation ecosystem, contributing to sustainable change across social, economic, and environmental dimensions. Our vision is to empower businesses, and with them local communities, and foster cross-sector collaboration that accelerates Austria's transition toward a resilient and inclusive future.

Through capacity-building, we will help them scale their impact while embedding sustainability at their core.

The internationally used CATALYST platform will serve as a bridge between startups, academia, industry, and other stakeholders, enabling knowledge transfer and a participatory approach for the green transition. By promoting regenerative business models and circular value chains, we hope to support position Austria among the European leaders in sustainable innovation.

Environmental stewardship is central to our mission. Through the international CATALYST training and service programmes, we will promote low-carbon technologies, nature-based solutions, and climate-positive practices. In general, the impact is based on our CATALYST strategy paper to achieve long-term:

- Improved environmental performance: Tourism providers and young enterprises may be better equipped to implement sustainable practices that help reduce their environmental impact. This could lead to a reduction in waste, carbon emissions, and other harmful environmental impacts.
- Enhanced reputation: Tourism providers or young companies that are seen as eco-friendly and socially responsible may be more likely to attract environmentally conscious and socially responsible tourists, as well be attractive to experts/ staff. This could enhance Austria's reputation as a destination that prioritises sustainability.
- Increased competitiveness: businesses that have a comprehensive sustainability plan and implement sustainable practices may be more competitive in the marketplace. This could lead to increased revenues for the providers and for the Austrian tourism industry as a whole.
- Job creation: As the tourism sector grows and becomes more sustainable, there may be opportunities for job creation in areas such as eco-tourism, sustainable transportation, and sustainable food and beverage service.
- Empowerment of start-ups: Through targeted support and tailored programmes, FH Joanneum will help start-ups across various sectors to integrate sustainable practices from the outset. This approach aims to foster innovation, resilience, and long-term growth among early-stage ventures, contributing to a more dynamic and sustainable Austrian economy.

Beyond direct outcomes, the Austrian CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence seeks to shift mindsets among the population in general. We envision a more collaborative, transparent, and impact-oriented innovation culture in Austria.

4. *How does your vision align with national priorities defined in the CATALYST Strategy?*

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 European CATALYST CoVE is envisioned as a central hub and catalyst for sustainable business transformation in Europe. It serves as the foundation for a collaborative business community focused on driving sustainable, resilient, and equitable outcomes. National CoVEs, tailored to local contexts, extend this vision, adapting offerings to meet specific regional needs and target groups. The initiative is guided by four core values: competence, collaboration, caring, and commitment, which underpin its mission to equip organisations and individuals with the knowledge and skills for lasting sustainable change.

The National CATALYST CoVE in Austria puts its focus on sustainability in tourism (for a start), emphasizing the sector’s growth and the need for eco-friendly practices. Additionally, the CoVE aims to target entrepreneurs and founders, addressing the low entrepreneurial activity and the need for concise training in sustainability practices.

Building on our long-term vision and the strategic activities outlined above, as well as in the [CATALYST Strategy](#), the Austrian CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence is committed to delivering measurable and transformative impact over the next three to five years across sustainability, innovation, and community empowerment.

The emphasis on nurturing startups and embedding sustainability into vocational training aligns with Austria’s broader innovation and education goals. The Austrian government supports entrepreneurship through digitalisation, green tech, and international collaboration, core elements of your CATALYST ecosystem.

By positioning our CoVE as a bridge between academia, industry, and other stakeholders, we are contributing to Austria’s ambition to lead in sustainable innovation and inclusive economic transformation.

This particularly is relevant and valid for the Tourism sector: Austria’s national tourism strategy, [Plan T](#)¹, emphasises sustainability, innovation, and stakeholder collaboration. It aims to transform tourism into a driver of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a strong focus on environmental stewardship, inclusive growth, and digital transformation. Focusing in our Austrian CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence on SMEs, and (future) workers in this sector, as well as mindset and knowledge that open their green transition to circular models, and climate-conscious services directly supports this agenda.

Also Austria’s 2023–2024 Action Plan² in the National Tourism Strategy, prioritises sustainable development, entrepreneurial support, and community engagement. It addresses the evolving needs of tourism businesses and promotes eco-friendly practices, aligning perfectly with our goal to support SMEs and startups in the sector.

Austria’s Ministry for Labour and Economy actively promotes energy efficiency, resource conservation, and sustainable HR practices in tourism³. Our CATALYST CoVE’s training programmes for SMEs are well-positioned to complement these efforts.

¹ Plan T: <https://www.bmwet.gv.at/en/Topics/tourism/plan-t.html>

² https://transition-pathways.europa.eu/system/files/2024-09/Aktionsplan%202023-2024_imCI_barrierefrei.pdf

³ <https://www.bmwet.gv.at/en/Topics/tourism/sustainable-tourism/sustainable-tourism-development.html>

Expanding - in the long-run - to other industries than tourism, aligns with the policies and strategies found in Austria, too: Austria's long-term strategy for climate neutrality by 2040⁴ outlines pathways for decarbonising industry, boosting renewable energy, and supporting innovation across sectors, making it highly relevant for startups and SMEs in diverse fields.

2. Governance & Stakeholders

1. *How will you build EU-level and national partnerships with government bodies?*

There is no partnership planned between EU-level and national governments. For continuing our work as the national CoVE, we will stay in contact with the project consortium. Partnerships may occur individually by the national CoVE partners with all or individual consortium partners to up-scale the international CATALYST programme and services, for instance.

2. *Which stakeholders (industry, VET providers, policymakers, others) need to remain engaged and how do you plan to engage them?*

To ensure the long-term success and sustainability of the Austrian CATALYST Centre of Vocational Excellence, we recognise the critical importance of maintaining active engagement with a diverse group of stakeholders across the tourism sector and the start-up ecosystem in this phase. These include:

Tourism businesses and early-stage ventures are at the heart of our mission. We will engage them through tailored training programmes, and exchange of knowledge/ practice events (like workshops, conferences, seminars, meetings,...) that address their specific sustainability challenges. By offering practical tools, peer learning opportunities, and access to innovation networks, we aim to build trust and foster long-term collaboration. With the international CoVE network, we can also support them in accessing our European partnerships and expertise.

To ensure our interventions are grounded in the latest knowledge, we will collaborate with (other) universities, research institutes, and sustainability experts. These stakeholders will contribute to our programme updates, and innovation scouting. Their expertise will help us stay ahead of emerging trends and technologies. A part in this sector belongs to VET (Vocational Education Training) institutions being key partners in embedding sustainability into curricula and professional development. We will collaborate with local and regional providers to maintain our training programmes, explore new modules, facilitate knowledge exchange, and new learning contents that reflect real-world industry needs.

3. *What mechanisms (MoUs, advisory boards, memberships) will you use to formalise collaboration?*

The Austrian Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) is established by three founding member organisations, hereinafter referred to as the CATALYST CoVE Founding Board Members ("CoVE Founding Board Members") that will remain active at least until the end of the project and have the capacity to operate in the business field that was the key for their involvement in the CATALYST project, or do not want to resign from this CoVE, or as long as this CoVE exists.

These entities are recognised as the strategic initiators and core stewards of the CoVE's mission, values, and long-term development.

The Founding Board Members shall constitute the leading board of the Austrian CoVE and retain exclusive voting rights on all matters related to:

- Their roles and contribution
- Strategic changes to the CoVE's structure, objectives, or operational model

⁴ https://gruenstattgrau.at/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/mission2030_oe_climatestrategy_ua.pdf

- Governance policies, partnership frameworks, and external representation
- Admission of new member organisations or partners
- Approval and modification of training programmes, initiatives, and priorities

All other participating entities (whether educational institutions, industry partners, public bodies, or civil society organisations, or other) shall be considered the Austrian Centre of Vocational Excellence CoVE Contributing Members (short: “Contributing Members”). These members are encouraged to actively engage in the CoVE’s activities, propose initiatives, and collaborate on joint projects. However, they do not hold voting rights in formal decision-making processes, nor any right to receive resources (like, inter alia: salaries, funds, any income share, ...).

The CoVE Founding Board Members will agree upon or not for individual entities / or people to issue formal “support letters”. These support letters these third parties sing shall be affirming their intent to contribute resources, expertise, and/ or participation in all or parts of our work in the Austrian Centre of Vocational Excellence. They can become part of our supporting network.

3. Resources

a) Human

1. Which roles/staff positions are needed after funding ends?

There will not be staff nor staff positions in the Austrian Centre of Vocational Excellence CoVE. The roles of the funding members will be as defined by the CATALYST project proposal, but can be changed after the project funding for the CATALYST project will have ended, or any other time after this.

FH Joanneum will integrate the activities of the CoVE into its daily operations, especially by promoting the content and outcomes of the CoVE at the course level within FH Joanneum’s educational programmes. Furthermore, FH Joanneum is actively collaborating with the Green Transformation Academy Austria to strengthen and expand the impact of sustainability-focused education and innovation. Staff working on these aspects can be involved from FH Joanneum-side.

2. How many people will be required to deliver your services?

This cannot be defined at this stage but will be decided at a stage that may be outside the funded lifetime of the CATALYST project. It must be clarified how and what the international CATALYST consortium will sustain from the project outcomes for public and the conditions for the project partners to access these.

3. How will you recruit, retain, or upskill staff?

See (3.a.1). However, each of the funding members has their recruitment policies and processes, as well as contractual procedures in place that apply the Austrian legislation. Being involved in the CoVE will not change these.

4. Who will be responsible for coordination and reporting?

The roles will be as defined by the CATALYST project proposal, but can be changed after the project funding to the CATALYST project will have ended, or at any other time after this. The national CoVE partners will inform one another about such changes appropriately.

b) Material

1. *What physical or digital infrastructure is required (offices, training rooms, equipment, CATALYST platform)?*

FH Joanneum can make use of its existing facilities in Graz, such as offices and training rooms or general material, to support the activities of the CoVE from FHJ Joanneum side as needed. For the other two national CoVE members, this cannot be answered at this stage without knowing about the availability of CATALYST outcomes.

2. *Who will maintain and pay for these facilities/resources?*

This cannot be answered at this stage without knowing about the availability of CATALYST outcomes.

At this stage, any further work in and for the national CoVE will have to be funded by new resources. Implementing the training programme, for instance, into the existing BEST and FH Joanneum portfolio, will be used as an add on service for these other portfolio parts, not generate specific income to fund CATALYST.

3. *What additional investments are needed in the next 3 years?*

This cannot be answered at this stage without knowing about the availability of CATALYST outcomes.

4. *Which resources could be shared with partners to reduce costs?*

This cannot be answered at this stage without knowing about the availability of CATALYST outcomes.

c) Knowledge

1. *Which intellectual outputs (courses, services, learning platform etc.) need regular updating?*

Upon change in the legal system or upon availability of new Agreements like the Green Deal, respective courses might need to be updated. For updating it will be important to have open access to the international CATALYST platform and share the manual on when and how updating should be handled online when the authors see the need.

2. *Who is responsible for ensuring content remains relevant?*

Based on author rights, existing content relevance will be up to the individual authors.

3. *How will you gather feedback and new knowledge from stakeholders?*

For existing content, it will be up to the authors to update material. No further stakeholder involvement on content reviews is intended from our side. For existing content, the feedback form on the international CATALYST platform should be available, access to its results provided to each participating party for their own course(s).

4. *Utilisation of courses and materials from other partners?*

Course material developed from other partners within the CATALYST project is available to partners and public for commercial use, while all other parties will have the right to access it for non-commercial use only. Agreements on access and use-rights on any new course access will have to be made available for contributors. Results from the project development and validation work will have to be shared also via the funding programme’s result page.

4. Cost structure

1. *What are the main costs required to continue operations (annual estimate)?*

These answers will depend on the user rights and conditions of the consortium partners to the international platform, and other services (like online consulting/ ask an expert etc.)

Type of cost	Annual estimation
Staff costs	Depending on efforts and tasks/ staff category – but in average between 500 and 1000 EUR per day

2. *What strategies will you use to keep costs efficient and sustainable?*

For any financing of expenditures, each of the three national CoVE funding parties has their own procedures they follow. Regarding exploiting, mainstreaming and multiplying the overall CATALYST results, partners will have to see specific costs needed for e.g. tenders or calls to propose working with CATALYST resources. As explored earlier, the intention for the beginning is to implement the results in existing services that are funded by other resources which will help expand awareness, dissemination reach and capacity among targeted audiences. Once the access conditions to the full international CATALYST programme and services will have been clarified, the national CoVE partners will – jointly or individually – contact the full or part of the consortium to further scale up all or parts of the resources produced within the CATALYST project.

3. *What financial risks do you foresee and how will you mitigate them?*

One of the most pressing concerns is the increase in staff, energy and technology-related prices to rise over time. This refers to the partners own staff, but also any respective costs for the inclusion of other consortium partners in a training programme. In addition, this also refers to the CATALYST platform and the provider dependency, lack of competition, or hidden fees, as well as any future fluctuating licensing fees, pay-per-user models, or charges for customization and support. Outsourcing part or all of the necessary training elements can result in loss of control over data security, compliance, and intellectual property, which may carry legal and reputational consequences if not properly managed, and financial risks in the end.

To mitigate these risks, the CATALYST partners will need clear service-level agreements (SLAs) for each individual service (e.g. partners contributing to synchronous online training, the platform provider to indicate the rights and obligations of users and partners), conduct regular performance reviews, and maintain contingency plans to ensure continuity and cost-efficiency.

5. Funding

1. *What are your main potential revenue streams (e.g. membership, training fees, consultancy, sponsorships, EU funds)?*

In our national CoVE, we will use the international CATALYST results - as explained - in our ongoing programmes and work individually. New potential revenue streams are new tender and call funds from

national or international funding bodies, as well as fees for in-situ training or consultancy work to individual clients, for instance. We do not intend to open the national CoVE in a membership programme.

2. *Which revenue sources are most realistic in your national context?*

See answer (1)

3. *What is your target revenue mix (percentage from each source)?*

For 100% at this stage existing contracts for training and counselling.

4. *Which upcoming opportunities (EU calls, national programmes, sector initiatives) could your centre leverage to sustain or expand its work? List relevant calls.*

Any new Education-related tender or call could be of interest; funding bodies could be EC, ECAS, UN, Worldbank, for instance, which the national CoVE partners will individually revalidate upon announcement of funding programmes.

6. Offer

1. *What of the CATALYST offer will your centre continue to provide after funding?*

	Offer	How will it be delivered?	Target group	Additional info
[x]	Courses & Training & Programmes	Non-commercial (free access, open online)	Students, professionals, companies, training providers, teachers	Mode: Live training/workshops or lectures will be offered in German Revenue potential: 0 Frequency: Once per semester Scale: Offer only in Germany

2. *How will your offers differ from or complement existing market options?*

For the intended exploitation, we still refer to the strategy paper developed with the Austrian contribution and view: the request is to have high-quality training in German that can also be adapted to the individual sectors.

3. *Elaborate on pricing and access models will you use (free, fee-based, tiered packages)?*

See 6.1

4. *How often will you review and adapt your offer to meet changing needs?*

The training programme will have to be individually designed – training concept and adapted material will be needed; Frequency will depend on finding new clients.

7. Promotion

1. *How will you raise awareness about the centre and its services post-funding?*

We continue using our project website for the national CoVE

2. *Which communication channels will you use (social media, website, newsletters, events)?*

Each national CoVE partner has their own media and will use them to promote and disseminate the CATALYST project results. Examples are regular education conferences, meetings with policy makers and clients.

3. *Which stakeholder groups need the strongest outreach efforts?*

All authorities.

4. *How will you leverage success stories, testimonials, and case studies to promote the impact?*

Each national CoVE partner has their own media and will use them to promote and disseminate the CATALYST project results. Examples are regular education conferences, meetings with policy makers and clients.

5. *What partnerships can help amplify your promotion (e.g. chambers, associations, local media)?*

Each national CoVE partner has their own media channels for promotion with high reach.

8. Synergies with Current or Upcoming Activities

1. *Which existing initiatives, projects, or programmes in your organisation can your centre connect with after funding ends?*

BEST has started connecting Jugendcolleges we run with CATALYST courses. Jugendcolleges are similar to second chance schools for young people with migration background from war and similar conflict affected countries. The target groups are young people entering the labour market.

2. *How can you align your centre's activities with national or regional strategies (e.g. green transition, digitalisation, skills policies)?*

The national CoVE partner are active in training, counselling and have existing clients in the sustainability topics. They need – individually – to research updates and make new contacts to align with these external strategies.

3. *What partnerships or collaborations could strengthen your sustainability through joint activities?*

We will particularly address the German national CoVE to find synergies in our offers on behalf of the Austrian national CoVE.

4. *How will you avoid duplication and instead complement what already exists (for example new CoVE project instead continuation of the already built infrastructure)?*

The national CoVE partner are active in training, counselling and have existing clients in the sustainability topics. They need – individually – to research updates and make new contacts to align with these external strategies. However, after the end of the CATALYST project, partners will have to focus on their individual clients' requests.

9. Partnership and Collaboration

1. *Which of the current CATALYST partners will you continue collaborating with after the project ends, and in what form?*

Our interest is to continue the collaboration with the international CATALYST consortium to update existing resources and training programmes, to enrich existing material, to engage in exchange of knowledge, and to contribute to any new collaborative projects.

2. *Are there new partners (e.g. companies, VET providers, associations) that you plan to bring on board?*
Not at this stage

3. *How will you formalise and structure collaboration (e.g. MoUs, contracts, memberships, joint projects)?*
See earlier section

4. *What added value do your partnerships bring (knowledge, funding, access to learners, policy influence)?*
Our individual partner profiles is an added value for our national CoVE; our main business field, operations are as described in the project proposal. We all have increased knowledge and competences in the project topic and handling of a large-scale international project we can bring in to new partnerships together or individually.

5. *How will you ensure long-term commitment and engagement from your partners?*
The national CoVE partners are interested in continuing the collaboration on the national CoVE and will stay in contact to find new opportunities for the national CoVE, for individual partnerships, or both

10. Action plan for the next 3 years

Objective <i>What do you want to achieve?</i>	Action <i>What needs to be done</i>	Timeline	Resources	Expected Outcomes	Involved organisations
Inclusion of training courses in existing partner portfolios	Where necessary to organise translations, adaptations to targets and audience	12 months after project closure	Own resources – handled individually	Access to localized training	CoVE partners
Ongoing marketing	Use website implemented during the project (see below)	Ongoing	Own resources	Contacts from interested parties	CoVE partners
Ongoing communication	Continue collaboration	Ongoing	Own resources	Shared course implementation where suitable	CoVE partners



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www.catalyst-cove-austria.com Image credit: [Freepik](https://www.freepik.com)

ANNEX D National Sustainability Plan CATALYST CoVE Germany

Germany

Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP), with BNW and BELLS

The following pages reproduce this national CoVE's full sustainability plan exactly as submitted by the partners.

Lead Organisation Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP)

National Partners BNW, BELLS

Disclaimer

In contrast to other participating countries, the German CoVE was not originally designed to include a traditional VET provider such as a university or vocational training institute. The CSCP, as the German lead organisation, is not a conventional training provider but a Think & Do Tank that rather focuses on transferring knowledge into practical, project-based applications.

The following information should therefore be understood as a collection of preliminary ideas and potential directions rather than firm commitments. The realisation of these ideas will depend on the availability of suitable external funding opportunities that align with the strategic priorities of the German partners involved.

*Building on insights gained during the project, post-project activities will primarily focus on the **German-speaking region**, as experience has shown that the main target group—SMEs—prefer learning content provided in their native language.*

Vision & Strategic Alignment

Long-term Vision

- Establish a **focal point for innovative and comprehensive capacity building** to strengthen sustainable future skills covering the systemic, organisation and personal levels across the German-speaking region.
- Transform the CATALYST online learning content into **physical, experience-based learning formats that engage head, heart, and hands** — fostering emotional connection to the subject matter, deeper understanding and ultimately behavioural change. This innovative approach

makes sustainability knowledge tangible and inspiring, enabling participants to directly experience and apply what they learn.

- Set-up a **network of Pioneering Places**, Living Labs across Europe that serve as innovation and learning spaces that adopt the “Head-Heart-Hand” approach to scale impact and promote experiential sustainability learning.
- Make course content available in German via the platform of a partner organisation, in order to **reach a wider audience and ensure accessibility for German-speaking learners**.
- Assure that CATALYST stays abreast of the advancements in artificial intelligence and provide support systems to those who engage with CATALYST by offering consultation and linking to professional artificial intelligence sources and providers.

Mid-term Goals (3-5 years)

- **Translate and adapt CATALYST training materials into German** language to ensure the long-term availability and relevance of course content at the national level.
- **Leverage CATALYST learning content and resources** to
 - a) directly support businesses in their sustainable transformation journey through 1:1 collaboration (e.g. via pilot projects, experiential learning, consultation etc.), and
 - b) integrate the materials into other publicly funded projects, thereby broadening the reach and long-term impact of the results.
- **Integrate insights and lessons learned from the CATALYST project into upcoming capacity-building and education projects** to continuously improve learning formats and outreach strategies.

Alignment with National Priorities

- By **translating and adapting** the training materials into national contexts, the project supports the alignment of VET provision with **regional and national sustainability strategies**.
- The integration of CATALYST resources into ongoing and future education and capacity-building initiatives creates a **bridge between policy and practice**. Policy priorities such as the Green Transition, digitalisation, and SME resilience are effectively implemented at the local level.

Governance & Stakeholders

Engagement with Government Bodies

Leverage CSCP’s 20 years of experience in building partnerships with public institutions to embed CATALYST results into ongoing processes at both national and European levels.

- **EU level:** Build on established relations with European institutions and networks, such as the *European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP)*, to embed CATALYST outcomes within broader EU initiatives on sustainability and skills development.

- **National level:** Strengthen existing collaborations with ministries as well as local NGOs in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), to ensure alignment with national sustainability and skills strategies.

For more than 30 years, BNW has been dedicated to building a vast network of members and partner organisations.

- With several partnerships in Berlin politics, both at federal and municipal level, BNW provides impetus for environmentally oriented policies.
- On the European Level, BNW co-founded **Ecopreneur.eu** to strengthen links with EU policy on sustainable and skills-oriented economic development. Through this network, the project remains aligned with European VET and green transition priorities.

Key Stakeholders

- National and regional (NRW) **ministries** (e.g. Environment, Education, Economy)
- Recognised and well-established **VET providers and education partners** with a focus on the German market (e.g. XU, Haufe, VAUDE Academy, TÜV Akademie, Seed17, metabolon, EFA)
- **Industry associations, chambers, and regional networks** (e.g. local Business and Economic Development (Wirtschaftsförderungen), SIBB e.V. - Verband der Digitalwirtschaft Berlin & Brandenburg, Regional Chambers of Commerce (IHKs), Bundesverband mittelständische Wirtschaft (BVMW) Region Berlin-Brandenburg, Unternehmensnetzwerk Klimaschutz (IHK))

Engagement & Communication

- Invite CATALYST stakeholders to join a **mailing list** and subscribe to **social media channels** of German partner organisations for future updates and invitations related to capacity-building.
- **Approach key partners individually** for potential follow-up project collaborations (e.g. through new funding opportunities or formalised partnerships)
- Reach out to individual CATALYST stakeholders as **opportunities arise within other ongoing or future projects.**

Resources & Infrastructure

Human Resources

- CSCP assignment of one **German CoVE representative** for at least the first post-project year to oversee CATALYST content, promote it to third parties, and serve as the main contact point for the CATALYST project lead.
- The provision of further services would require additional funding, as this was not considered in the initial project contract.

Material Resources

- No major additional infrastructure investments are foreseen, since no direct follow-up project is planned at this stage.
- For on-site services, the German CoVE can utilise existing premises (e.g. CSCP office, Gut Einern).
- For online services, and if fitting to the organisations' objectives, the German CoVE may host course content on existing CSCP and/ or BNW websites.

Knowledge Resources

- The German CoVE will assess the use of courses and materials from other partners on demand and on a case-by-case basis. The current focus is on utilising primarily content from German-speaking partners to make it ideally available in German through potential follow-up funding.
- Course materials should be reviewed and updated every 3–5 years to maintain relevance. However, as no dedicated budget was allocated for this purpose within the framework of CATALYST, such updates are currently outside the scope of the German partner organisations.

Funding & Financial Sustainability

Potential Funding Sources/ revenue streams

- **EU funding:** Horizon, Erasmus+, Interreg, EFRE
- **National and regional programmes:** BMUV, BMAS, BMBF, BMWF, NKI, Berliner Senatsverwaltung für Wirtschaft, Energie und Betriebe
- **Foundations and sustainability networks:** DBU, Stiftung Bildung & Entwicklung NRW, Brost Stiftung
- **Commercial income** based on individual quotes for consulting/ coaching services, live trainings, and business pilot projects.

Potential Revenue Mix

- 70% public or foundation-based funding.
- 30% consultancy and coaching services.

Offer & Continuation

Key Offers after Project End

Disclaimer: The following ideas outline potential directions for continuation and are not linked to already confirmed opportunities.

The German partners currently have no dedicated resources for implementation. Continuation will depend on future funding or concrete market opportunities.

Non-commercial offers:

- **Free access to online courses and resources** via the official CATALYST online platform.
- Use of course materials for internal capacity building within CSCP and BNW as well as for new publicly funded project initiatives.

Commercial offers:

- **Live training sessions** in English or German, offered on demand and based on individual quotations.
- **AI-based learning companion**, customised to company-specific requirements and by linking company-specific knowledge with CATALYST learning content. (The technical foundation already exists but would require further development through additional funding opportunities.)
- **Consulting, mastermind, mentoring and coaching services** focused on sustainable business transformation, offered on demand and based on individual offers.
- **Facilitation of Business pilot projects** on demand, designed and implemented based on individual agreements.

Target Groups

- Focus on the German-speaking market
- Primary target group: SMEs
- Secondary target groups: Municipalities, professional orientation organisations

Partnerships & Synergies

Continuation of Existing Partnerships

- CSCP projects with potential links to CATALYST to reuse and adapt CATALYST resources in related capacity-building initiatives:
 - [FAB.Region](#)
 - [Bergisch Kompetenz](#)
 - [MDZ](#)
- CSCP cooperation partners with potential links to CATALYST:
 - Co-do! lab
 - Training and education partners such as metabolon, LAG21, SEED17
- BNW projects and initiatives with potential CATALYST links:
 - [Netzwerk Grüne Arbeitswelt](#)
 - [na.wi Berlin](#)
 - [Ecopreneur](#) (european business association)

New Potential Partnerships

- Collaboration with professional training platforms and networks (e.g. Haufe, offstandards, IDG Network, Semigator, TÜV Akademie).

1-Year Action Plan

Objective <i>What do you want to achieve?</i>	Action <i>What needs to be done</i>	Timeline	Expected Outcomes	Involved organisations
Ensure long-term visibility of CATALYST outcomes	Add a final reference and link to the CATALYST platform on German partner organisations' websites.	June 2026	References and links are added; potential increased platform traffic and stakeholder awareness	CSCP BNW BELLS
Maintain awareness through communication channels	Consider references to CATALYST results and ongoing activities, where relevant, in regular social media posts related to capacity-building within other projects.	June 2026 - May 2027	CATALYST is occasionally mentioned in social media; possible increase in platform engagement	CSCP BNW BELLS
Leverage CATALYST outcomes for reuse where applicable	Internal dissemination of course content to be used in other fitting projects	June 2026 - May 2027	Content is shared internally; may be used in other projects if suitable	CSCP BNW
Support internal knowledge transfer using CATALYST resources	Use content for internal team trainings (e.g. for newcomers)	June 2026 - May 2027	CATALYST content included in onboarding activities	CSCP BNW
Maintain engagement and facilitate networking for long-term collaboration	Mailing to all stakeholders involved to check if they like to be contacted for related projects	July 2026	A list of stakeholders who opt in; potential for continued engagement	CSCP BNW

Leverage CATALYST outcomes to enhance success in new project proposals	Acquisition opportunities: Consider CATALYST content in future acquisition efforts / funding opportunities	July 2026- May 2027	CATALYST referenced in appropriate circumstances	CSCP BNW BELLS
Extend CATALYST impact by supporting start-up growth and innovation	Offer courses for start-up Centre Krefeld tenants (Spring of 2027)	March 2027	Content adapted to fit start-up Centre context and needs	CSCP

ANNEX E National Sustainability Plan CATALYST CoVE Portugal

Portugal

CoVE – Future Skills Factory — ISCTE, ICAA, CENTIMFE

The following pages reproduce this national CoVE's full sustainability plan exactly as submitted by the partners

1. Vision & Alignment

1. What is your centre's long-term vision once the project funding ends? (300-500 words)

A Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) represents a key pillar of high-quality education and training for both young and adult workers. CoVEs create skill ecosystems that foster innovation, regional development, and social inclusion through close collaboration among businesses, public authorities, and qualification systems. Their bottom-up approach engages multiple local stakeholders while also connecting internationally through collaborative networks.

These centres offer both initial training for young people and continuous upskilling and reskilling opportunities for adults, ensuring that education systems respond effectively to the needs of a dynamic labour market - particularly in the context of green and digital transitions. By working closely with companies, especially SMEs, CoVEs act as catalysts for local business innovation, applied research, and entrepreneurship.

CoVE-Future Skills Factory (FSF) is a skills laboratory and observatory for a digital and sustainable future in Portugal. It aims to support the conception of public policies; to help educational and training systems to identify and develop skills and competencies that meet the requirements of an innovative, inclusive and sustainable economy; and to engage regional and sectoral stakeholders in this process. Furthermore, FSF attempts to increase the competitiveness of SME through renewed business models that demand skilled workers and entrepreneurs.

CoVE-Future Skills Factory is an outcome of the Catalyst project, which laid the seeds of the strategy and the Centre, and it will continue to be a space for further thinking and work on the quality of education and training for a sustainable economy and society, with a special focus on SMEs.

2. What are your Centre goals? (300-500 words)

The strategic goal of the CoVE-FSF is to be a national and European benchmark in education and training for economic and social sustainability. It also intends to promote dialogue and interaction with policy makers, business, vocational training, and higher education at the national level.

Currently, it involves partners from training for the mould industry (CENTIMFE), Intellectual Capital Association (ICAA) and one higher education institution (ISCTE). These partners are regionally located

promoters of the CoVE-FSF. These partners have worked together to gather information on skill needs and are working to supply suitable skills to the specific needs of the mould industry.

The future of the CoVE-FSF involves uncertain financial and human resources at this stage. The willingness of the current partners to develop the CoVE-FSF is conditioned by the availability of those resources, although assuming the crucial role of this initiative for the sector and for the country. It should be noted that the mould sector is one of the most important and growing activities of the Portuguese economy.

3. What impact do you aim to achieve in 3–5 years? (300-500 words)

The CoVE-FSF faces a set of challenges in the next 3-5 years. This time frame will be crucial for establishing itself as a partner that promotes dialogue and interaction between stakeholders. The experience achieved so far aims to increase the likelihood of becoming a European benchmark in skills foresight, anticipation, and recommendation, directly supporting evidence-based policymaking, education strategy, and workforce adaptability. The sustainability strategy aims to ensure long-term impact on institutions, policymakers, and individuals.

This mission is aligned with Catalyst Project's objectives, notably, to anticipate future skills needs and translate them into actionable recommendations for education, training and labour market policies. The implementation of such a strategic goal involves embedding foresight methodologies into institutional practices to enable continuous monitoring and adaptation of skill sets to ongoing and emerging technological, environmental, and social transformations.

In alignment with the European Green Deal, the European Skills Agenda, and the specific objectives of the Catalyst Project, the CoVE-FSF initiative will support the twin transition (green and digital) by identifying and promoting the key competences required for sustainable and inclusive growth. Its output will contribute to a more adaptive, forward-looking skills ecosystem that meets labour market requirements at all levels while addressing environmental and social changes. Therefore, the implementation involves three complementary levels:

- Macro (national): Integration of project findings into national skills and education policies.
- Meso (regional and sectoral): Strengthening regional cooperation between education and training providers, industry, and innovation clusters.
- Micro (organisational and individual): Supporting companies and workers in applying foresight-driven training approaches.

Ultimately, the CoVE-FSF will provide evidence and recommendations to guide national and regional skills strategies, including upskilling and reskilling policies, through structured dialogue with policymakers and public agencies. This will foster the integration of foresight results into long-term policy frameworks, enhancing institutional capacity for strategic planning.

Finally, it is assumed that higher education and training institutions should gradually adapt their courses to sustainability-related challenges. In this regard, the CoVE-FSF intends to engage with higher education and training institutions to encourage them to introduce cross-cutting, mandatory modules on dual transitions across all degree programmes. This approach aims to create a lasting culture of anticipation and adaptability in learning systems related to a more sustainable, green, and digital economy and society.

4. How does your vision align with national priorities defined in the CATALYST Strategy? (300-500 words)

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

The creation of five Centres of Vocational Excellence (North Macedonia, Greece, Austria, Germany and Portugal) is the major outcome of the CATALYST project, which seeks to engage key stakeholders in the education and training systems to address personal and organisational development and to support the transformation of SMEs. This transformation is required to enable and inspire SMEs to rethink and redesign their business models, to co-create and share experiences with educational and business organisations.

The European CATALYST CoVE is envisioned as a central hub and catalyst for sustainable business transformation in Europe. It serves as the foundation for a collaborative business community focused on driving sustainable, resilient, and equitable outcomes. National CoVEs, tailored to local contexts, extend this vision, adapting offerings to meet specific regional needs and target groups. The initiative is guided by four core values: competence, collaboration, caring, and commitment, which underpin its mission to equip organisations and individuals with the knowledge and skills for lasting sustainable change.

Portuguese CoVE - Future Skills Factory

The goals of the Future Skills Factory® are aligned with the general goals of European CoVE, whose aim is to support public policies and the educational and training system to foster skills for a sustainable economy and society. Those skills are the necessary conditions for Leading Sustainable Systems and Business Transformation. Consequently, the specific goal of FSF is to provide support for professionals and students in personal and organisational development; encourage organisations to embrace sustainability in their business models; and play an advisory role in policy design.

It is important to recapture the top three objectives of the European Green Deal that are the foundations of the CoVE project:

1. Climate Neutrality by 2050: Achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions across the EU, fostering low-carbon technologies, energy efficiency, and sustainable practices.
2. Transition to a Circular Economy: Promote sustainable production and consumption, resource efficiency, and waste reduction across industries and society.
3. Sustainable Jobs and Skills Development: Support the creation of green jobs, upskilling and reskilling the workforce to meet the demands of the green transition, ensuring an inclusive and just transformation.

2. Governance & Stakeholders

1. How will you build EU-level and national partnerships with government bodies? (300-500 words)

The CoVE-FSF governance framework will focus on building strategic and sustainable partnerships with public policy entities, businesses and education institutions both at EU and national levels. These partnerships will ensure the alignment of the CoVE-FSF with public policy objectives, strengthen its institutional legitimacy and enhance its capacity to influence skills development at a national and regional level.

The CoVE-FSF stakeholders ecosystem includes bodies that are deeply engaged with sustainability, ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) principles, and the implementation of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This participation ensures that the CoVE-FSF's vision and activities are embedded within the broader European and national sustainability agendas. Therefore, cooperation with these stakeholders will contemplate, specifically:

- Public Policies: e.g. ministries, national agencies, and local authorities responsible for skills, education, labour and sustainability.
- Businesses: e.g. sectoral organisations, enterprises committed to green and digital transformation.
- Education: e.g. universities, vocational education and training (VET) providers and lifelong learning institutions.

At the EU level, partnerships will be established with European networks and agencies that support the European Skills Agenda, the Green Deal, and the Digital Europe Programme. At the national level, cooperation will focus on integrating the CoVE-FSF initiatives into national qualification frameworks, sectoral skills councils and policy instruments related to upskilling and reskilling, ensuring continuous alignment between the CoVE-FSF and public strategies.

This is an ongoing process that still lacks formalised mechanisms for cooperation among stakeholders. The steps towards a structured entity depend on the new partners who will strengthen the FSF, as well as on the current implementers and consultants' partners who created the network. The engagement of any stakeholder will be based on a mutual agreement set out in a memorandum of understanding (MoU).

2. Which stakeholders (industry, VET providers, policymakers, others) need to remain engaged, and how do you plan to engage them? (300-500 words)

We consider three types of stakeholders, each with a specific role but working to create synergies and share knowledge about how SMEs can benefit from and contribute to sustainable goals:

- Founders.
- Implementers.
- Consultants.

3 types of stakeholders: founding, implementing e consulting

First Phase: Founding stakeholders

Main tasks: this involves creating CoVE, defining the initial strategy, making contacts with other organisations, attracting stakeholders and implementers of the Catalyst Centre and CoVE, disseminating the Catalyst Project and CoVE; Overall, getting everyone involved.

Below are the founding stakeholders and their descriptions:

- **ICAA:** The Association for the Management of Intellectual Capital is an international non-profit organisation whose origins lie in the need to build a society where intangible assets can be valued and contribute to sustainability goals.
- **Centimfe:** Portuguese non-profit public utility institution, recognised as a Technology and Innovation Centre (CTI), integrating the Portuguese Science and Technology System that had specialised training to reinforce Industrial competitiveness.
- **Iscte:** Iscte - University Institute of Lisbon's mission is to create and convey scientific knowledge according to the best international standards, training highly skilled professionals, mainly at the postgraduate level, in the areas of management, information technology and architecture, social sciences and public policy, for the advancement of society.

Second Phase: Implementing Stakeholders

Main functions: In addition to being training promoters, as the founding stakeholders, implementing stakeholders will develop contacts with other organisations; attract new stakeholders and implementers of the Catalyst Centre and CoVE; and disseminate the Catalyst Project and CoVE. Founding stakeholders will also integrate this group, having, therefore, overlapping roles.

Below are the implementing stakeholders and their descriptions:

- **Founding/Implementing Stakeholders:** Iscte, ICAA, Centimfe, described above
- **Implementing stakeholders:**
 - **Iscte – Executive Education:** The goal is to be at the forefront of Executive Training when it comes to real-life, applied solutions and focus on delivering practical, applied solutions to real business problems.
 - **Iscte – Sintra:** Iscte-Sintra is Iscte's new faculty, dedicated to teaching and research in Applied Digital Technologies.
 - **Audax – Iscte:** Iscte's Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre, working in the areas of entrepreneurial training, business and start-up incubation, local and social development and promoting studies & projects in a wide range of areas such as management, marketing, technology and human resources.
 - **IPPS – Iscte:** IPPS-Iscte is a non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting the quality of public and social policies at local, regional, national and international levels. Their goal is to enhance the capacity of individuals and institutions involved in the public and social policy process, from conception to implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and communication, through training courses, projects, and events to disseminate knowledge.
 - **IPSantarém:** Public polytechnic of higher education institution, at the service of society, committed to the high-level qualification of citizens, aimed at the production and dissemination of knowledge, creation, transmission, and dissemination of knowledge of a professional nature, culture, science, technology, the arts, guided research, and experimental development, emphasising the centrality of the student and the surrounding community, within an international reference framework.

Third Phase: Consulting Stakeholders

Main functions: this group has a double role. Firstly, it will help founders and implementers to design an overall strategy, identify specific needs, and interact with companies. Secondly, the consulting stakeholders are expected to contact new firms, attract new stakeholders for the Catalyst Centre and CoVE, and disseminate the Catalyst Project and CoVE.

More importantly, founders and implementers integrate the group of consultants, having an overlapping function. This group consists of:

- **Founding Stakeholders: Iscte, ICAA, Centimfe.**
- **IAPMEI:** Competitiveness and Innovation Agency, a strategic partner for innovation and growth for companies, businesspeople and entrepreneurs, whose mission is to promote competitiveness and business growth through the management of instruments and programs aimed at strengthening SME innovation, entrepreneurship and business investment.
- **IEFP:** The IEFP is the national public employment service. Its mission is to promote job creation and quality, and combat unemployment by implementing active employment policies, namely vocational training.
- **ANQEP:** The National Agency for Qualification, a public institute within the Government's indirect administration, has administrative, financial and pedagogical autonomy. It contributes to improving the qualification levels of young people and adults in Portugal, promoting both a growing demand for school and professional qualifications (dual certification) at the non-higher-education level and an initial and lifelong training offer that is broadly attractive, high quality, and relevant to the labour market.
- **INA:** The Directorate-General for the Qualification of Workers in Public Service, or INA, is a central service of the State's direct administration, endowed with administrative autonomy. INA's mission is to promote the development, qualification and mobility of workers in public service, through skills management and the assessment of staff needs in relation to the mission, objectives and activities of public services and career management, with a view to integrating organisational development processes.
- **ANI:** National Innovation Agency S.A's mission is to promote collaboration between entities in the Scientific and Technological System and the business environment; Strengthen participation in international programmes by companies and entities in the national Scientific and Technological System, with a view to boosting their capacities, skills and results; Fund R&D - Innovation & Development, through the management of a set of R&D instruments and incentives for innovation; Empower and enhance innovation, contributing to the strengthening of the SNI - National Innovation System; Publicise cases of innovation in Portugal at national and international level.
- **SDSN Portugal:** The UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) works under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General to mobilise the world's universities, think tanks, and national laboratories for action on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement; empower societies through free online education; and translate scientific evidence and ideas into solutions and accountability. Specifically, SDSN Portugal, hosted by NOVA University Lisbon, the Centre of Engineering and Product Development (CEIIA), and

Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr (IMVF), mobilises its members in Portugal and leverages their strengths to help realise the SDGs. Established in 2023, its key focus areas include raising awareness and engagement on the SDGs and promoting a national dialogue among all stakeholders. The network also undertakes policy engagement activities, such as collaborating on the elaboration of the 2030 Portuguese Roadmap.

- **Other business associations to be determined.**

3. What mechanisms (MoUs, advisory boards, memberships) will you use to formalise collaboration? (300-500 words)

From the outset, the CoVE-FSF founders are responsible for designing the governance model in accordance with EU and national guidelines. They constitute the board of directors and are the main stakeholders in defining the strategy and goals of FSF. All others have a secondary role structured based on Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or Partnership Agreements, which outline commitments in knowledge sharing, policy alignment and joint initiatives. Stakeholders will include public authorities, businesses and education providers, focusing on sustainability, ESG and SGD implementation. Cooperation will target upskilling and reskilling, policy support and reporting frameworks. At EU and national levels, the CoVE-FSF will align with the European Skills Agenda, Green Deal and national strategies, aiming to become a recognised interlocutor for evidence-based policy and sustainable skills development.

3. Resources

a) Human

1. Which roles/staff positions are needed after funding ends?

The CoVE-FSF, hosted at the Dinâmia'CET Research Centre, will leverage the available human resources there.

2. How many people will be required to deliver your services?

The number of people involved will depend on the development of activities and projects carried out within the CoVE-FSF.

3. How will you recruit, retain, or upskill staff?

The CoVE-FSF will benefit from the expertise, networks, and institutional capacity available within the Dinâmia'CET Research Centre and its partner institutions.

4. Who will be responsible for coordination and reporting?

Coordination and reporting activities will be carried out by representatives of the founding members.

b) Material

1. What physical or digital infrastructure is required (offices, training rooms, equipment, CATALYST platform)?

- National Digital Infrastructures:

Access to a Moodle platform for learning and course management, the CoVE-FSF website for information dissemination and repository and dedicated social media channels for outreach and stakeholder engagement.

- Catalyst Project Digital Infrastructure:

Access to the Catalyst Centre Moodle platform for collaborative learning and resource sharing, as well as the official Catalyst Project website for project documentation and communication.

- Physical Infrastructures:

Availability of fully equipped meeting rooms for workshops, training sessions and consortium meetings.

2. Who will maintain and pay for these facilities/resources?

The Catalyst Centre Platform and the Catalyst Project website, maintained and managed by IECE will continue to be the main tool.

The Founder institutions will host other CoVE-FSF resources, notably digital and physical infrastructures (e.g., national Moodle platforms, social media channels, and meeting rooms).

IECE should assume responsibility for the technical upkeep, regular updates, and content management of these digital infrastructures. The associated costs, including maintenance, hosting, and technical support, will be covered by IECE as part of its institutional contribution to the project.

CoVE - FCF's participation in national or international projects may be important for the maintenance and development of CoVE's activities, notably the hiring of human resources.

3. What additional investments are needed in the next 3 years?

At the national level, additional investments will be determined as the CoVE-FSF develops and partner needs are more clearly identified. These investments may include enhancements to digital infrastructures (such as Moodle platforms, websites, and social media management tools), upgrades to physical infrastructures (e.g., meeting rooms and training facilities), and resources to support increased collaboration, upskilling, and reskilling activities.

Additional investments may also be required for the translation, adaptation, and contextualisation of courses developed within the CATALYST network and other partner initiatives, ensuring their accessibility and relevance to the Portuguese context and target groups, particularly SMEs and vocational education stakeholders.

Investment requirements will be continuously assessed to ensure alignment with project objectives, sustainability goals, and the evolving needs of the Centre of Vocational Excellence and its stakeholders.

1. Which intellectual outputs (courses, services, learning platform etc.) need regular updating?

The following outlines the key resources and responsibilities distinguished between National and Catalyst infrastructures, specifying how courses, websites, regulations, and reports are maintained, updated, and shared to support the objectives of the CoVE and the Catalyst Project.

National Resources:

- Courses: Regularly updated to reflect new research developments and emerging skills needs.
- Website CoVE-FSF: Continuous updating of content, data, and news to maintain relevance for stakeholders.
- Regulations and Agreements: Managed under existing agreements with founders, implementers, and consultants to ensure compliance and governance.
- Reports: Produced and disseminated to inform policy, education, and workforce stakeholders at a national and European level.

Catalyst Resources:

- Courses: Access to Catalyst-specific learning modules and training content.
- Website Catalyst Project: Maintained for project documentation, collaboration, and dissemination of outputs.
- Reports: Shared among partners for monitoring, evaluation, and policy recommendations at a European level.

2. Who is responsible for ensuring content remains relevant?

The CoVE-FSF is coordinated by the founder stakeholders. The Iscte is the leader of the group and will coordinate the activities as agreed with other. Iscte is a public university, dedicated to social sciences,

management and technological fields of education. The academic programmes are accredited by bodies responsible for this process and follow national and European rules. Each course involves a discussion and approval of courses.

Iscte scientific committee, ensure compliance with academic standards, avoid duplication, and maintain sustainability of the curriculum. This process guarantees that courses are continuously updated with new research developments and aligned with emerging skills needs.

Nonetheless, the CoVE-FSF intends to engage with vocational education and training (VET) institutions whenever perceive the relevance of those programmes, and to create partnerships useful to update syllabus content, share best practices, and enhance the overall quality and sustainability of the programmes.

As reported, the coordinator of the CoVE - FSF is Iscte, a public university, which is engaged in quality control in accordance with the accreditation process implemented in Portugal since the Bologna Process. Therefore, Iscte includes specialised services responsible for the entire process to ensure that the Institution meets quality standards in curriculum design, faculty, and student services. It also includes a commitment to continuous improvement through regular follow-up reviews. Iscte scholars are regularly engaged in the review process and interact with stakeholders (students, employers) to gather information on graduates' skills as well as identify skill needs.

Of course, this process is complex and demanding and can take a lot of time to certify programmes. More precisely, the scientific committee's control at Iscte is crucial. All these diligences aim to reduce the risk of overlapping courses or of proposing programmes that are unsustainable for the Institution.

Founders: First Phase: Founding stakeholders

Main tasks: Creating CoVE, defining the initial strategy, making contacts with other organisations, attracting stakeholders and implementers of the Catalyst Centre and CoVE, disseminating the Catalyst Project and CoVE; Overall, getting everyone involved.

There is space to engage other VET institutions that supply relevant training programmes, which can be integrated in CoVE-FSF.

3. How will you gather feedback and new knowledge from stakeholders?

It is assumed from the outset that stakeholder feedback is crucial for aligning the supply of programmes. Moreover, stakeholders are key channels for conveying new knowledge. A varying set of practices will be implemented to take advantage of stakeholders' perspectives:

- Within group discussions: Meeting with founders and implementers (B2B) for consultations to discuss progress, emerging trends and strategic priorities.

- Students' perceptions: Feedback surveys (B2C) directed to learners and trainees to gather insights on course quality, relevance and applicability.
- Experts: advisory Board constituted by the Founders and Implementers providing expertise guidance, reviewing outputs, and recommending updates based on emerging research, policy changes and market developments.

These mechanisms will collectively ensure that the CoVE-FSF remain responsive, evidence-based and aligned with national and European priorities.

4. Utilisation of courses and materials from other partners?

Presently, the CoVE-FSF has adapted one course from the partner FHJ ("SGDs and My Company") and translated it into Portuguese language. The content has been modified under the Creative Commons license CC BY-NC (Non-commercial Attribution), which allows remixing, modification, and expansion for non-commercial purposes with proper attribution.

Other partner courses will be updated and adapted as required under the same CC BY-NC license. All materials will be utilised according to learner demand, translated into Portuguese, and contextualised while respecting the licensing terms.

Courses originally created by the CoVE-FSF will also be regularly updated to ensure relevance and alignment with emerging skills and research developments.

4. Cost structure

1. What financial risks do you foresee and how will you mitigate them?

A primary financial risk identified is the limited availability of funding and financial resources to sustain CoVE activities, including course delivery, platform maintenance, and stakeholder engagement. To mitigate this risk, the CoVE will pursue diversified funding strategies, such as applying for complementary national, European, and private funding opportunities, including competitive projects and grants. Additional mitigation measures include careful budgeting, cost-sharing agreements with partners, and prioritisation of resources to avoid disruption of the core activities. Regular financial monitoring and risk assessment will support timely corrective actions.

5. Funding

1. What are your main potential revenue streams (e.g. membership, training fees, consultancy, sponsorships, EU funds)?

The primary potential revenue streams for the CoVE-FSF are EU funding and national funding allocated to support vocational education, training, and skills development initiatives. Materials and services developed within the framework of the Catalyst Project cannot be sold, in accordance with European Union regulations - 5.2 EDUCATION MATERIALS - *If the beneficiaries produce educational materials under the scope of the project, such materials must be made available through the Internet, free of charge and under open licenses. The beneficiaries must ensure that the website address used is valid and up to date. If the website hosting is discontinued the beneficiaries must remove the website from the Organisation Registration System to avoid the risk the domain is taken over by another party and redirected to other websites (that (Annex 5, ERASMUS +).*

Revenue will therefore focus on public funding sources, project grants, and institutional contributions, ensuring compliance with EU rules while sustaining core activities and the development of educational resources.

2. Which revenue sources are most realistic in your national context?

In the national context, the most realistic and reliable revenue sources for sustaining CoVE activities are European Union funds and national public funding. These sources provide structured support for vocational education, skills development, and project implementation, ensuring compliance with regulations and the long-term sustainability of the Centre’s initiatives.

3. Which upcoming opportunities (EU calls, national programmes, sector initiatives) could your centre leverage to sustain or expand its work? List relevant calls.

The CoVE-FSF will leverage ongoing contacts with EU officials and national authorities to identify strategic opportunities for funding and collaboration. Relevant opportunities include upcoming EU and national project calls, which can support the development, scaling, and sustainability of CoVE activities. These calls may cover areas such as vocational education, skills development, digital transformation, sustainability, and green and social innovation. Active monitoring of sector initiatives and participation in relevant funding programmes will ensure that the Centre can continuously expand its work and impact.

6. Offer

1. What of the CATALYST offer will your centre continue to provide after funding?

Offer	How will it be delivered?	Target group	Additional info

<i>Courses & Training Programmes</i>	Non-commercial (free access, open online)	Students, professionals, companies, training providers, teachers	<i>Example Mode: Live training will be offered in German</i> Revenue potential: Free Frequency: Once per semester Scale: Offer only in Germany
<i>Resources</i>			<i>Free</i>
<i>Services</i>			<i>Free</i>
<i>Business Pilot Projects</i>			<i>Free</i>
<i>CATALYST Network</i>			<i>Tbd.</i>
<i>Events</i>			<i>Tbd.</i>
<i>Know-how for establishing and leading CoVEs</i>			<i>Tbd</i>

2. How will your offers differ from or complement existing market options?

The CoVE's free programmes intend to ensure open access to high-quality educational materials and services. According to European guidelines, the sale of training programmes developed with grant funding is forbidden, especially to ensure that the funds are used to provide the training to specific groups. Grants are not expected to generate profits for the grantees. In line with such recommendations. Materials and services developed within the framework of the Catalyst Project cannot be sold, in accordance with Article 16 — Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), Annex 5 of the Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement, which stipulates that outputs funded by EU grants must remain non-commercial unless otherwise agreed. This approach differentiates the CoVE from commercial providers while complementing existing market offerings by providing accessible, evidence-based, and up-to-date training aligned with EU and national skills priorities.

3. Elaborate on pricing and access models will you use (free, fee-based, tiered packages)?

All courses, materials, and services developed within the CoVE and Catalyst Project will be offered free of charge. Materials and services funded by EU grants cannot be sold or monetised for commercial purposes. This free-access model ensures broad availability, inclusivity, and alignment with European Union regulations, allowing learners, institutions, and stakeholders to benefit from high-quality, up-to-date resources without financial barriers.

4. How often will you review and adapt your offer to meet changing needs?

The CoVE-FSF will regularly revise training programmes to ensure that they remain relevant, up-to-date, and effective in meeting learning objectives and industry demands. Revisions are useful to incorporate new knowledge, respond to feedback from stakeholders, accommodate technological advancements. Ultimately, they help enhancing the overall quality and impact of the training. Information from international bodies (OECD, CEDEFOP, WEF) and stakeholders demands will be considered in such revisions. For example, CoVE-FSF may create dedicated communication channel on the website where learners and partners can submit information on emerging skills needs. This approach ensures that the learning offer remains responsive, up-to-date, and aligned with evolving labour market requirements.

7. Promotion

1. How will you raise awareness about the centre and its services post-funding?

The CoVE-FSF will develop promotion tools and guidelines to highlight the variety and accessibility of educational and training options available to learners. This promotion will be implemented through targeted marketing, community outreach, social media campaigns, and collaborations with educational and training institutions to ensure that prospective students are aware of the available courses and understand how they can benefit from them.

2. Which communication channels will you use (social media, website, newsletters, events)?

The CoVE-FSF will utilise a range of communication channels to reach stakeholders and disseminate information, including:

- Events: Workshops, conferences, and training sessions for direct engagement.
- Social media: Active presence on relevant platforms to share updates and promote activities.
- Website: Central hub for information, resources, and continuous updates on courses and project developments.

These channels will ensure broad visibility, stakeholder engagement, and sustained dissemination of the Centre's activities and outputs.

3. Which stakeholder groups need the strongest outreach efforts?

The CoVE-FSF will prioritise outreach efforts towards small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and public institutions. SMEs require targeted engagement to raise awareness of available courses, upskilling opportunities, and collaborative initiatives, while public institutions are essential for policy alignment, partnership building, and integrating project outputs into national strategies. Focused outreach to these groups will maximise the Centre's impact and sustainability.

4. How will you leverage success stories, testimonials, and case studies to promote the impact?

The CoVE-FSF will promote its impact by strategically sharing success stories, testimonials, and case studies through multiple channels:

- Social media: Regular posts to highlight achievements and engage a broad audience.
- CoVE-FSF Website: Dedicated sections for detailed project updates and case studies.
- Specialised Management Journals: Articles targeting both academic and non-academic audiences.
- Local Media: Dissemination of regional success stories to strengthen local engagement and visibility.

These activities will enhance the CoVE-FSF's reputation, demonstrate tangible outcomes, and attract further participation and collaboration.

5. What partnerships can help amplify your promotion (e.g. chambers, associations, local media)?

To enhance visibility and outreach, the CoVE-FSF will collaborate with a range of strategic partners, including:

- Public authorities to ensure policy alignment and support.
- Business, trade, and professional associations to reach SMEs and sector stakeholders.
- Social partners to engage employees and communities.
- Local media to disseminate success stories and raise regional awareness of CoVE-FSF activities.

These partnerships will strengthen promotional efforts, extend reach, and reinforce the Centre's credibility and impact.

8. Synergies with Current or Upcoming Activities

1. Which existing initiatives, projects, or programmes in your organisation can your centre connect with after funding ends?

The scope of CoVE-FSF extends beyond the Catalyst project, with development and expansion in the future. It is assumed that CoVE-FSF can be beneficial for adapting to new opportunities and evolving needs. Some stakeholders, notably LIA, LCT (Iscte) are crucial to ensure further development because they provide resources, and support that fosters collaboration inside and outside academy. Other ongoing projects dedicated to educational and training are also crucial to strengthen the CoVE-FSF, such INICIATE, CERERE. Finally, projects focused on policy development, vocational education, and sustainability, as POLREC, CIRCVET, LOWCARBON are also potentially relevant.

2. How can you align your centre's activities with national or regional strategies (e.g. green transition, digitalisation, skills policies)?

The National Policy for Smart Specialization, which aggregates a national strategy for intelligent specialisation to support innovation, is significant from a strategic perspective. It aims to be a catalyst for innovation that supports the demands and problems of the national landscape without ignoring regional differences. As a result, the strategy presented is divided into six key areas:

- Major Natural Assets: Forest, Sea, and Space
- Digital Transition
- Materials, Production Systems and Technologies
- Green Transition
- Society, Creativity and Heritage
- Health, Biotechnology and Food.

This strategy is anticipated to encourage the integration and optimization of value chains around a paradigm that emphasizes results, which will increase the capacity for innovation and economic growth. These effects force Portugal to change its export-oriented, competitive economic structure to maintain prosperity and European integration while creating endogenously dynamic competitive advantages to withstand supply and demand shocks from outside the country. The employment (profile and quality, including salaries), GDP, competitiveness, and innovation indices, as well as a higher level of environmental sustainability of the economy, must reflect these benefits.

The Strategic Vision for Portugal's Economic Recovery Plan until 2030 essentially aims to answer the question: what should be done the day after tomorrow? Covid-19 accelerated the digital transition trend, forcing companies, workers, institutions, the state, and the government to reinvent their work models and systems, making much greater use of telework.

From this perspective, the focus on improving the qualifications of the active population and the digital skills of public administration, institutions, and companies, especially SMEs, is a fundamental

pillar of economic recovery. The bet on SMEs' digital skills can have a very positive effect on the Portuguese economy.

3. *What partnerships or collaborations could strengthen your sustainability through joint activities?*

Sustainability can be strengthened through strategic partnerships and collaborations that enable joint activities in education, training, and skills development. Key partners include:

- Companies: Collaborate on upskilling, reskilling, and practical training initiatives.
- VET Providers (public and private): Co-develop courses and expand the learning offer.
- Associations and Social Partners: Support dissemination, engagement, and promotion to broader networks.
- Public Authorities: Align activities with policies and secure long-term institutional support.

Such collaborations will enhance the Centre's reach, resource efficiency, and long-term impact.

4. *How will you avoid duplication and instead complement what already exists (for example new CoVE project instead continuation of the already built infrastructure)?*

The risk of duplication does not apply, as there are currently no CoVEs in the national context. The new Centre will therefore establish original infrastructures, courses, and activities, ensuring that all outputs are innovative, complementary to existing initiatives, and aligned with national and European skills priorities.

9. Partnership and Collaboration

1. *Which of the current CATALYST partners will you continue collaborating with after the project ends, and in what form?*

Preferably, the CoVE-FSF intends to continue collaborating with all CATALYST partners. However, cooperation will be primarily strengthened with the CoVE-FSF Founders and IECE, maintaining strategic and operational engagement whenever relevant and aligned with the Centre's objectives.

In addition, the CoVE-FSF intends to reinforce collaboration through synergies with other European and national initiatives related to skills development, sustainability, vocational education and innovation ecosystems. These may include cooperation with the Agrifood4Future CoVE, as well as projects such as INITIATE, SmartVitiNet and CERERE, among others, fostering joint dissemination activities, knowledge sharing, development of training initiatives, and stakeholder engagement.

The cooperation with current and future partners will depend on mutual interests, opportunities, and contributions in line with the Centre's strategic objectives.

2. *Are there new partners (e.g. companies, VET providers, associations) that you plan to bring on board?*

The CoVE-FSF plans to engage new partners, including companies, vocational education and training (VET) providers, and professional or sectoral associations, to expand its network, enhance the relevance of its courses, and strengthen collaboration on skills development. Specific partner details will be shared in compliance with data privacy regulations. The underlying assumption is that CoVE-FSF should start with limited partners and sectors and gradually move towards more partners, building new connections and becoming a reference on education and training for sustainability in Portugal.

3. How will you formalise and structure collaboration (e.g. MoUs, contracts, memberships, joint projects)?

Collaboration with partners will be formalised through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), which will define roles, responsibilities, and commitments for joint activities. These agreements will provide a clear governance framework, ensure alignment with the Centre's objectives, and facilitate structured cooperation in projects, training, and knowledge-sharing initiatives.

4. What added value do your partnerships bring (knowledge, funding, access to learners, policy influence)?

The added value of partnerships varies according to the type of partner and the nature of the collaboration:

- Companies: Provide insights into skills needs and contribute to on-the-job training. Companies' experiences are useful as case studies to share with learners.
- VET Providers (public and private): Expand the Centre's training offer and diversify educational opportunities.
- Associations: Facilitate promotion and engagement with companies, enhancing visibility and uptake of courses.

These partnerships collectively strengthen the Centre's relevance, responsiveness to labour market needs, and overall impact.

5. How will you ensure long-term commitment and engagement from your partners?

Long-term commitment and engagement from partners will be maintained through regular meetings to discuss progress, emerging needs, and joint initiatives. Additionally, partners will receive periodic reports and newsletters to provide updates on activities, results, and opportunities for collaboration, ensuring sustained involvement and alignment with the Centre's objectives.