

Sustainable Innovation for SMEs

July 2023 – April 2024

Project Report



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Alexandra Sarma
Chairwoman
SDG House Greece

Businesses are becoming increasingly aware that lack of action on sustainability issues⁴ may soon affect their productivity and competitive position in the markets. It is not only an ethical issue. It is a financial and legal one too, among other. Businesses are starting to understand that they may be directly impacted at their bottom lines by e.g. climate change, materials shortages etc. Regulations may affect their operations. As consumers become more aware of the sustainability challenges, their brand may be seen negatively. Or, become less appealing to talent and/or investors.

Yet, despite this shift in mindsets and the realization that change needs to happen soon, business is moving slower in the direction of developing sustainable practices and finding ways to grow both positive impact and profit. In fact, even entrepreneurs who wish to incorporate sustainability in their business models and processes (they understand the Why) are “finding it hard to find” the necessary resources that will enable them to make this transition (they are lacking the How). There is a gap that needs to be fulfilled fast, in enabling entrepreneurs to adapt, grow and find their pathway to sustainable competitiveness.

In 2023, SDG House Greece launched a series of activities under its Sustainable Innovation for SMEs project with the ambition to equip new entrepreneurs with the tools to grow ventures with a positive impact and strong financial returns. This report summarizes the activities which took place under this project.

What is SDG House Greece

02



SDG House Greece is an impact-driven ecosystem that supports the development of innovative entrepreneurial solutions to drive progress on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. We believe in the power of innovation and entrepreneurship to create a more sustainable, resilient and equitable future.

Our aim is to accelerate sustainable venture creation & growth, promote the development and use of responsible technology and advance market applications that tackle demanding challenges we face in our economy, society and environment.

This we will achieve a) through targeted trainings, exchange of know-how and meaningful collaborations and b) by building a thriving SDG community of exceptional doers that connect local and international experts, ventures and organizations, who want to Walk the Talk together. SDG House Greece is an initiative of Orange Grove and the Embassy of the Netherlands in Greece. It is a partner to the SDG Houses Network.

Our Team

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Our operations team



Natasha Apostolidi
Sr Innovation & Entrepreneurship
Officer, NL Embassy



Alexandra Sarma
Managing Director
& Partner



Vanessa Melissourgaki
Head of Programmes &
Communications



Nafsika Diamantopoulou
Programmes &
Operations Associate



Marietta Dimakopoulou
Community & Capacity
Building Associate

Our Board of Directors



Alexandra Sarma
Chairwoman | Co-founder
at Ithaca



Yiannis Nikolopoulos
Vice-Chairman Co-founder & CEO
at Clio Muse | Co-founder
at Ithaca



Susanna Terstal
Non-Executive Member |
Ambassador of the Netherlands
to Greece



Yiannis Kanellopoulos
Non-Executive Member |
Founder & CEO at Code4Thought |
Co-founder at Ithaca



Vassilis Kyriakopoulos
Non-Executive Member |
Honorary Consul of the Netherlands
to Patras



John Kikidis
Non-Executive Member | Global
Ecosystem Lead at Renesas
Electronics

The “Sustainable Innovation for SMEs” project

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04



Sustainability Acceleration Programme

In July 2023, SDG House Greece launched the “Sustainable Innovation for SMEs” project. This project consisted of the design and launch of an online educational programme for SMEs, the **Sustainability Acceleration Programme** – a series of trainings and mentoring sessions targeted to established SMEs with the aim to help new founders adapt their business models to incorporate sustainability throughout their processes and train company boards, shareholders and stakeholders on how to move beyond ad-hoc sustainability projects (*/CSR*) and place sustainability within the core of their business.

Furthermore, as part of the project, a series of activities were developed to expand **bilateral relations** to new countries, such as Norway and Iceland, in order to further grow the organization’s international network of experts and partners for ecosystem building, know-how exchange and synergies.

The above were coupled with **training opportunities** for SDG House Greece to enable its team to expand its understanding on the approaches and resources different countries utilize to accelerate the sustainability transition of their economies, while also gaining training credentials from esteemed organizations. The knowledge accumulated would be applied to the programmes and support SDG House Greece provides to its beneficiaries, as well as its strategy design.



Training

The Sustainability Acceleration Programme is an intensive training programme designed for established ventures who aim to incorporate sustainability practices in their business model to power their growth and boost their business development capacity.

Launched in December 2023, ten innovative ventures with established revenues, or at minimum an MVP, were selected to participate in this fast-paced programme. For five months, the entrepreneurs joined a series of interactive workshops, custom-designed to their needs, and received hands-on support through mentoring sessions, delivered by the Dutch organization, The Rock Group, and the Women Investor Network (WIN).


The participating ventures got access to insights, methodologies and resources to help them, among other, design their sustainability strategy, decode existing and upcoming regulations, take the necessary compliance steps, map their value chains, advance with their materiality assessments, and create transparent and effective communication plans, while expanding their business capacity and increasing their competitive edge.




Networking

Networking is an integral part of business development and capacity building, fostering ideas exchange, connectivity, and synergy creation. A community meet up was organized in March 2024, at the SDG House Greece premises, for the participating entrepreneurs giving them the opportunity to acquaint each other and connect with members of the vibrant sustainability ecosystem, consisting of like-minded entrepreneurs, mentors, impact investors and much more. Participants were also invited to additional meetups, organized by the SDG House Greece initiator Orange Grove, taking place during this period to connect with the wider ecosystem of entrepreneurship and innovation.

Equally importantly, throughout the programme, the entrepreneurs were offered significant networking opportunities with our local and international ecosystem of experts on sustainable innovation and sustainable venture development, with some also building important connections with potential clients.



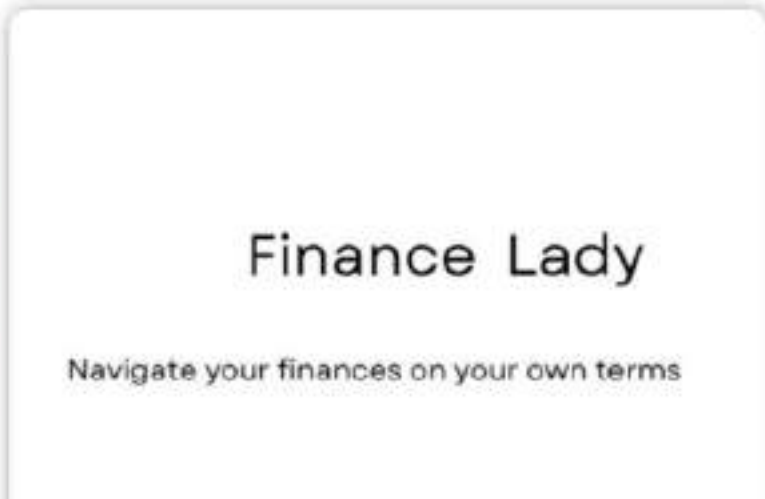



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Anastasia Pasiali
Co-founder of Fruit Stories

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Business & Finance

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Dimitris Axiotis
Business & Marketing Manager

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Filio Lekka
Sommelier & Sales Professional

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Georgios Athanasiadis
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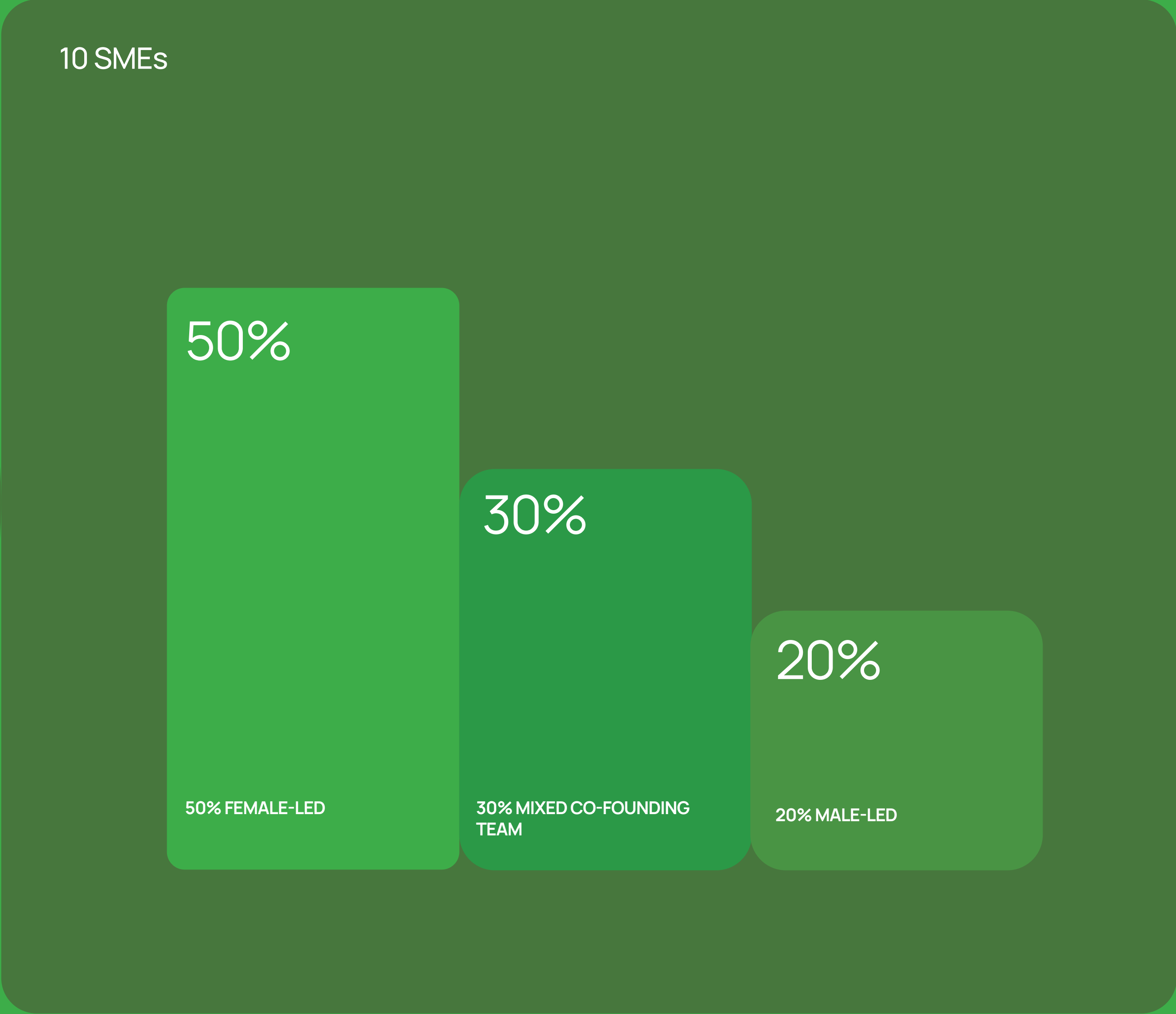
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Online Community

An SDG House Greece community for the participants of the programme was created on-line using the organization’s learning platform. The platform served as a 24/7 meeting point for the participants where they could connect among them and with their trainers, mentors and the SDG House Greece team to exchange ideas in the discussion forum and stay up-to-date with news and announcements.

Participants could navigate important resources on the platform’s library, with presentations, tools and tips. As well as receive personalized feedback from the trainers and the community.



Participants to the programme



“ Participant Stories

Learn more about our Sustainability Acceleration Programme #1 by clicking [here](#) to watch the programme videos on our Youtube channel!

LIA Hub

www.liaoliveoil.com



Operating as an innovation hub, LIÀ Hub serves as a central hub for knowledge-sharing and networking within the olive oil farming community and industry stakeholders. Committed to both nature and quality, the hub promotes a harmonious blend of high-quality products crafted through sustainable farming methods and an entrepreneurial olive oil mindset. This collaborative initiative aims to redefine the olive oil sector, emphasizing not only ecological sustainability but also the preservation and advancement of time-honored practices. Going beyond the cultivation of olives, the Olive Oil Hub strives to nurture a new generation of farmers, inspiring them to embrace and innovate within the rich traditions of olive oil production. In this way, LIÀ Hub brings a positive change, ensuring the longevity and vibrancy of the olive oil industry and playing a role in enhancing the well-being of olive oil farmers.

Corkcycle

www.corkcycle.org



CorkCycle saves tons of CO2 by giving cork a second life. Founded by Filio Lekka and Dimitris Axiotis, Corkcycle is Greece's first and only cork collection and repurposing initiative. Their mission is to empower the HoReCa sector to become more sustainable by reducing its carbon footprint. Companies recycling their corks through CorkCycle service gain a solid offset tool of quantitative and qualitative information & data to incorporate in their CSR efforts and to fuel their non-financial reporting, ESG reporting, and EU legislation compliance. CorkCycle fosters a vibrant ecosystem with diverse stakeholders and collaborative initiatives, such as: HoReCa & wine businesses collecting thousands of cork stoppers on a daily basis on our behalf; Certified cork recycling and repurposing companies across Europe sharing data on the amazing environmental benefits cork repurposing has; Private and public organizations who are passionate about supporting initiatives that promote sustainability, ESG goals, and a better natural world for our children.

Promoting Bilateral Relations & Ecosystem Building

SDG House Greece, as an initiative of Orange Grove, has been the result of international collaboration. Its inception and the value it created from early on, can be largely attributed to its international outlook. Under the framework of the Sustainable Innovation for SMEs project, SDG House Greece sought to become even more international, turning for synergies towards the northern edges of Europe and, in particular, Norway and Iceland, where important tangible advances are taking place in sustainable growth. The aim was, through field trips, to develop lasting channels of know-how exchange, reinforce the value and impact of its activities, and create international bridges for its beneficiaries.



Norway

The SDG House Greece team embarked on a journey to Norway to immerse themselves in the local innovation and sustainability ecosystem. Over the course of their trip, they explored various facets of Norwegian industry, focusing on sustainability initiatives and innovative practices in entrepreneurship.





Ålesund

The team's journey commenced in Ålesund, where they delved into the heart of sustainability and innovation within the maritime industry. They visited the NMK Norwegian Maritime Competence Center, home to the ÅKP Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and the GCE Blue Maritime Cluster, an innovative initiative in the forefront of blue economy and sustainable maritime innovation, seamlessly bringing together academia, public organizations, startups and a diverse range of maritime companies, holding a bold vision to become the world's first zero-emission maritime cluster.



Oslo

In Oslo, the team continued their exploration, focusing on life sciences, healthtech, and startup development, always through the lens of sustainability. They visited the Forskningsparken - Oslo Science Park, where they interacted with technology transfer offices and venture development organizations like Inven2, ShareLab, Spark Norway and Aleap witnessing firsthand how academic research can translate into impactful products addressing global challenges.





Next stop was the Women Investor Network, with Angela Holter and Rita Anson shedding light on the thriving innovation and sustainability landscape of Norway, focusing on Oslo’s role as a hub for SMEs and startup development. While, lastly, our team was able to experience from up close the local ecosystem, joining the Digital Bar event, at Mesh Community, bringing together Oslo’s investors and startup community.



Iceland

Iceland was the destination of SDG House Greece’s second field trip. In April 2024, the team landed in Reykjavik to explore the vibrant ecosystem of Iceland, with a focus on its innovations in the development and market applications of clean energy and sustainable fisheries.

During this field trip, we visited the pioneering Iceland Ocean Cluster, a pioneering cluster that stands as a testament to Iceland’s dedication to sustainable oceanic industries and the ingenious use of marine resources, maximizing the value of ocean catch through full utilization and innovation. We had the opportunity to engage with entrepreneurs leading the way in the sustainability transition of the blue economy and deep-dive into the world of blue engineering, biotechnology and ecosystem restoration. But, also, learn about the new Iceland Eco-Business Park, a project changing the way we think of co-working spaces and aspiring to revolutionize how we develop business parks by designing waste out of the system and building closed loop ecosystems.



At Festa – Centre for Sustainability we learned how this leading non-profit organization has been operating as a bridge builder between and within the public and private sector, focusing on sustainable development through the SDGs, climate change and corporate social responsibility in its broad sense.

While at KLAKE – Icelandic Startups, we connected with a vibrant ecosystem of startups. The accelerator’s innovative circular economy acceleration programme, running at the time of the visit, proved an insightful discussion opportunity on sustainable acceleration design and value creation.

Last but not least, the representatives of the “University of Iceland’s Science Park and Auðna Technology Transfer Office” offered invaluable insights into the local entrepreneurial ecosystem and effective strategies to bringing together the academic world, knowledge-based companies and research institutions.

Publicity

09

09

BUSINESS
NEWS

SDG HOUSE GREECE: LAUNCH OF SUSTAINABILITY ACCELERATION PROGRAMME

SDG HOUSE GREECE: ΕΝΑΡΞΗ ΤΟΥ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΟΣ ΕΠΙΤΑΧΥΝΣΗΣ ΒΙΩΣΙΜΟΤΗΤΑΣ



To **SDG House Greece**, μια πρωτοβουλία του **Orange Grove** και της **Πρεσβείας των Κάτω Χωρών** στην Αθήνα, ξεκίνησε το πρώτο του Πρόγραμμα Επιτάχυνσης Βιωσιμότητας για επιχειρήσεις που επιδιώκουν να εντάξουν στα πρότυπά τους τη βιωσιμότητα με αντίστοιχες διαδικασίες, προσεγγίσεις και συμμόρφωση.

Το νέο πρόγραμμα εντατικής κατάρτισης, με την υποστήριξη του κορυφαίου ολλανδικού οργανισμού **Rock Group**, επιταχύνει την ανάπτυξη και ενισχύει μέσα και δυνατότητες μέσω μιας σειράς ταχύρρυθμων εκπαιδεύσεων σε θέματα όπως στρατηγικός σχεδιασμός, σχέδιο μετάβασης, τάσεις της αγοράς, νομοθεσία, συμμόρφωση και αναφορά, αλυσίδες αξίας, μάρκετινγκ και ανθρώπινοι πόροι. Στους συμμετέχοντες προσφέρει διαδραστικά εργαστήρια, μέντορες, ένα διεθνές δίκτυο ειδικών σε θέματα βιωσιμότητας, καινοτομίας και επιχειρηματικής ανάπτυξης σε συνδυασμό με πολύτιμες ευκαιρίες δικτύωσης με επαγγελματίες, φορείς και εταιρίες από όλο τον κόσμο. Το πρόγραμμα υλοποιείται μέσω του **Χρηματοδοτικού Μηχανισμού 2014-2021 του ΕΟΧ με τη συνδρομή Ισλανδίας, Λιχτενστάιν και Νορβηγίας** στο πλαίσιο του Προγράμματος “Business Innovation Greece”.

Η πρωτοβουλία **SDG House Greece**, ως οικοσύστημα με θετικό αντίκτυπο που στηρίζει την ανάπτυξη καινοτόμων λύσεων, υπεύθυνων τεχνολογιών και βιώσιμων εγχειρημάτων υπέρ των 17 Στόχων Βιώσιμης Ανάπτυξης του ΟΗΕ (SDGs) μέσω στοχευμένων εκπαιδεύσεων και διεθνούς δικτύωσης, πραγματοποιείται χάρη στη στήριξη της **Reggeborgh** που την ίδρυσε, της **Heineken** ως μεγάλου χορηγού και των χορηγών **FrieslandCampina**, **Interamerican**, **Philips**, **KLM** και **HeDA**. Πρόκειται για εταίρο του **SDG House Network** που εδρεύει στις Κάτω Χώρες.

SDG House Greece, an initiative by **Orange Grove** and the **Netherlands Embassy in Greece**, introduced its first Sustainability Acceleration Programme for established ventures striving to integrate sustainability processes, approaches and compliance into their business models.

This intensive training programme, powered by the leading Dutch organization **The Rock Group**, accelerates growth and enhances business development capacity through a series of high-paced trainings covering strategy design, transition planning, trends, regulation, compliance and reporting, value chains, marketing and human resources, among others. Participants to the programme benefit from interactive workshops, tailored mentoring provided by an international network of sustainability, innovation and business development experts and valuable networking opportunities with professionals, organizations and businesses from around the world. The programme is supported by a grant from **Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021**, in the framework of the “Business Innovation Greece” Programme.

SDG House Greece is an impact-driven ecosystem that supports the development of innovative solutions, responsible technologies and sustainable venture-building to drive progress on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through targeted trainings and international networking. **SDG House Greece** would not have been possible without the support of its founding sponsor **Reggeborgh**, main sponsor **Heineken** and sponsors **FrieslandCampina**, **Interamerican**, **Philips**, **KLM** and **HeDA**. It is partner to the **SDG House Network**, based in the Netherlands.



A buzz was created around this new programme of **SDG House Greece**. Our team participated in events, such as **Innovation Greece 5.0** by **NBG Business Seeds** and the **Creative+’s SDG’s AI #Hackathon**, to present the programme and important publicity was generated though social media. Furthermore, the participants of the programme were highlighted in our **SDG House Greece** social media platforms enhancing their visibility to a wider audience.



We hope you enjoy this issue of "Our Highlights" where our Partners share their news on what has been happening inside their organizations, Odisseas Raptis and Harry Kalliaras give us their input on what is happening inside e-Trikala and Dr. Konstantinos Katsaros gives us his insights on how AI/ML can support Verticals! Happy reading!



SDG House Greece, an initiative of Orange Grove, has recently introduced its Sustainability Acceleration Programme for established ventures striving to integrate sustainability into their business models. This intensive training programme accelerates growth and enhances business development capacity through a series of high-paced workshops covering strategy design, regulation, trends, compliance, marketing and value chains, among other. The inaugural workshop, powered by The Rock Group, delved into Sustainability Strategy and Transition Thinking, guiding participating ventures through the essential aspects of developing a tangible sustainability strategy and transition plan. While the second workshop was a deep dive into regulation and reporting, exploring the important steps ventures need to take from early on to secure compliance. The programme is supported by a grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, in the frame of the Programme "Business Innovation Greece".

SDG House Greece
31 January

Excited to see a member of our "Sustainability Acceleration" Programme being showcased on "Υπαίθρος Χώρα. The award winning **Latomi Farm**, started their journey during the challenging Covid period, crafting 100% natural products for children, free from additives. Latomi Farm operates in Greece (60 spots) and exports to Australia, Belgium, France and soon Italy. Their standout butter nut spreads, featuring 'Friania' almonds, recently won the Gourmet Exhibition award and the Great ... [See more](#)



12/04/2024, 11:48 SDG House Greece: Ολοκληρώνονται οι "Sustainability Acceleration Programmes", για τη μετάβαση επιχειρήσεων στη βιώσιμη α...

Παρασκευή, 12 Απριλίου 2024

BusinessNews ΟΡΓΑΝΙΣΜΟΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΣ ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΜΑΤΙΚΗΣ ΕΡΕΥΝΑΣ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΟ ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΜΑΤΙΚΟ ΜΑΓΑΖΙΝΙ

BN Newsroom 1004/2024 18:06

SDG House Greece: Ολοκληρώνονται τα "Sustainability Acceleration Programmes", για τη μετάβαση επιχειρήσεων στη βιώσιμη ανάπτυξη

Τα προγράμματα υποστήριξαν 42 επιχειρήσεις στο σχεδιασμό της στρατηγικής τους για την ενσωμάτωση βιώσιμων πρακτικών στα επιχειρηματικά τους μοντέλα και τις αλυσίδες αξίας τους.

Το **SDG House Greece**, που δημιουργήθηκε ως ένα οικοσύστημα για το σχεδιασμό καινοτόμων επιχειρηματικών λύσεων και μοντέλων που προωθούν τη μετάβαση στη βιώσιμη ανάπτυξη, ολοκλήρωσε το πρώτο πρόγραμμά του **Sustainability Acceleration Programme** ενώ το δεύτερο πρόγραμμά του από την Διεθνή Οικονομική Βιομηχανία (WOW Athens Festival) θα πραγματοποιηθεί στα τέλη Απριλίου. Τα προγράμματα υποστήριξαν 42 επιχειρήσεις στο σχεδιασμό της στρατηγικής τους για την ενσωμάτωση βιώσιμων πρακτικών στα επιχειρηματικά τους μοντέλα και τις αλυσίδες αξίας τους.

<https://www.businessnews.gr/einetai/esph/tema/285747-sdg-house-greece-oloklironontai-ta-sustainability-acceleration-programmes-gia-ti-metabasi-epixirismat...> 1/4

@creativeplus.panteion
#SDGs #AI #Hackathon

ΠΑΝΤΕΙΟ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΩΝ & ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΩΝ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΩΝ

SDG House Greece
Δημοσιεύτηκε από Marietta Dimakopoulou 1λ.

Calling all parents and teens! Don't miss out this Saturday, April 6th, the Educational Workshop: Budgeting for Teens hosted by Finance Lady, alumni of our Sustainability Acceleration Programme and part of the upcoming WOW Athens Festival! This workshop is tailored for children aged 11-15, offering them crucial money management skills that will benefit them for life. Equip your teen with essential knowledge on financial responsibility, understanding the impact of money and mastering proper money usage. Click the link below for more information and registration details.

SNFCC.ORG
Εκπαιδευτικό εργαστήριο: Προϋπολογισμός για έφηβους!
Ποιο είναι το δυνατό σου σημείο; Πώς μπορεί αυτό να σε βοηθήσει ώστε να χτίσεις μια υγιή σχέση με το χρήμα; Σκέφτηκες ποτέ ότι κάτι που θέλεις μπορεί να είναι...

Our Partners

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The Sustainable Innovation for SMEs was supported by a grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, in the frame of the Programme “Business Innovation Greece”.



SDG House Greece would not have been possible without the ongoing support of its valuable sponsors:

Founding Sponsor



Sponsors



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