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CAPACITY-STRENGTHENING FOR TAKERS: FRAMEWORK AND CONTENTS

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Abbreviations

ISE	Innovative Sustainable Economy
BSOs, NGOs, PAs	Business Support Organizations, Non-Governmental Organisations, and Public Authorities
TP	Thematic Project
M&T	Mentoring & Twinning
TWGs	Thematic Working Groups
ISEC Hub	Innovative Sustainable Economy Community Hub
CoP	Community of Practice
UfM	Union for Mediterranean
GPP & PPI	Green Public Procurement & Public Procurement for Innovation

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Executive summary

This document presents the first comprehensive package of capacity-building contents developed within the Interreg Euro-MED Innovative Sustainable Economy (ISE) Mission.

The package includes the methodology framework and materials from trainings delivered during 2025, specifically designed to enable interested stakeholders—particularly Business Support Organizations (BSOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and Public Authorities (PAs)—to become full-fledged takers and acquire competencies to capitalize on the outputs of the Catalogue of ISE Solutions.

This activity implements a dual-track training methodology that connects internal capacity building for TP partners with external stakeholder engagement, serving as the bridging mechanism between innovative project outputs developed through internal sessions and their practical implementation by external takers across the Mediterranean region and beyond. The training approach prioritizes online delivery to maximize geographic reach while maintaining high-quality content derived from evidence-based project experiences.

During the first half of 2025, one major training event was successfully delivered: "Breaking Barriers: Behavioural Change Strategies for Circular Economy Implementation," conducted on 18 June 2025 as part of EU Green Week 2025. This webinar attracted over 100 registered participants from diverse organizations across the Euro-Mediterranean region, demonstrating significant interest in behavioural change approaches for circular economy implementation. The training successfully demonstrated the effectiveness of combining theoretical behavioural change frameworks with practical case studies from ISE Mission projects, creating a replicable model for future capacity-building activities.

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the training methodology, participant analysis, content delivery, and key outcomes. Additionally, it presents insights from behavioural change assessment tools implemented during related Thematic Projects (TPs) training activities, offering valuable perspectives on the behavioural dimensions of circular economy implementation across different stakeholder groups.

The training package establishes a foundation for continued capacity-building efforts, with plans for additional training sessions in 2025 focusing on business modelling and investment-readiness for circular economy projects.

Introduction

Context

Capacity-strengthening for takers represents a crucial component of the ISE Mission's knowledge transfer strategy. This activity serves as the bridge between the ISE solutions generated by the TPs and their practical application by external stakeholders across the Mediterranean region and beyond (from now on called “takers”).

The ISE Mission adopts a dual approach to capacity building that recognizes different needs within the innovation ecosystem. Internal capacity building (as detailed in D1.5.1¹) focuses on strengthening TP partners' skills to enhance their project implementation and foster collaboration within the ISE community. External capacity building, addressed through this activity, targets potential takers and the broader ISE Community of Practice who wish to uptake and implement solutions from the ISE Mission's Catalogue of Solutions.

These two approaches are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing. While internal capacity building helps TP partners develop and refine their innovative solutions, external capacity building ensures these solutions can be successfully adopted and scaled by the takers. This creates a continuous cycle where enhanced internal capabilities lead to better solutions, which in turn require stronger external adoption capacities for maximum impact.

Objectives

The primary objective is to strengthen the capacities of target groups—particularly Business Support Organizations (BSOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and Public Authorities (PAs)—enabling them to successfully uptake and implement the outputs catalogued in the ISE Mission's Catalogue of ISE Solutions. This capacity-strengthening approach recognizes that successful knowledge transfer requires not only accessible content but also equipped recipients who possess the necessary competencies to understand, adapt, and apply innovative solutions within their specific contexts.

The activity also directly supports and complements the Mission's Mentoring & Twinning (M&T) objectives. Under the Innovative Sustainable Economy Community (ISEC) Hub framework, particularly through its LEARN pillar, this activity contributes to the Mission's comprehensive knowledge transfer ecosystem. The ISEC Hub serves as the central

¹ https://innovative-sustainable-economy.interreg-euro-med.eu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/d1.5.1_training_tps_n1.pdf

reference platform showcasing capacity-building efforts, highlighting key components such as the M&T Programme and TIP Labs, while connecting to the broader Knowledge Repository.

All training materials and recorded sessions are made available through both the ISEC Hub's LEARN pillar and the Interreg Euro-MED Academy, ensuring broader dissemination and accessibility across the Mediterranean region. This approach maximizes reach while maintaining coherent knowledge management within the Mission's framework.

Methodology

Dual-Track Training Model

Semester-Based Thematic Focus: Each semester, a priority topic is strategically selected based on stakeholder feedback, emerging trends in circular economy implementation, and the maturity of outputs from ISE Mission projects.

For each selected topic, two complementary and sequential training sessions are delivered:

- **Internal Session:** TP partners participate in capacity-building activities tailored to their project implementation needs (input collection process from TPs is detailed in Deliverable 1.5.1²). During these sessions, participants share their ongoing challenges, successful approaches, and lessons learned, generating valuable case studies and practical insights from their real-world implementation experiences.
- **External Capitalization Webinar:** External stakeholders (potential takers) receive training that incorporates the case studies, challenges, and solutions documented during the preceding internal sessions. These external trainings showcase how ISE Mission solutions can be adapted and transferred, using the concrete experiences and outputs generated by TP partners as core learning materials alongside other documented project results.

This interconnected methodology ensures that the lived experiences of TP partners in implementing innovative and sustainable economy solutions directly inform and enrich the knowledge transfer process to external stakeholders. The internal training sessions serve as both capacity-building opportunities and content-generation activities, while the external capitalization webinars transform these fresh insights—combined with established project outputs from the Catalogue of ISE Solutions—into actionable guidance for replication and uptake across the Mediterranean region. This creates a continuous feedback loop where internal project learning systematically feeds external knowledge transfer, enhancing both the relevance of training content and the practical applicability of transferred solutions (*Figure 1*).



Figure 1: Methodology diagram

² [Training for TPs](#)

Design Principles

All training modules draw directly from the documented outputs of ISE Mission projects, specifically curated for external stakeholders seeking to implement similar solutions in their own contexts. The approach focuses on demonstrating how successful innovations can be adapted and transferred across different Mediterranean territories. Training content showcases not just what worked, but how external organizations can evaluate the feasibility and requirements for implementing comparable approaches in their specific circumstances. The training development process combines external expertise with practical implementation guidance tailored for potential adopters.

The most valuable content emerges when expert methodologies are paired with clear guidance on adaptation requirements—such as explaining how sufficiency principles can be integrated into different local governance structures or demonstrating how policy frameworks need to be considered when transferring waste management innovations to different regulatory environments.

Case studies are selected and presented specifically to help external stakeholders understand the prerequisites, challenges, and adaptation strategies needed for successful implementation. This includes analysis of the institutional requirements for adopting circular business models, the stakeholder engagement processes necessary for replicating urban bioeconomy networks, and the regulatory considerations when implementing behavioural change interventions across different cultural and administrative contexts.

Online delivery enables participation from diverse Mediterranean stakeholders who represent potential adoption territories, including Southern and Eastern Mediterranean organizations, where similar sustainable economy challenges exist, but implementation contexts may vary significantly. This approach also supports the systematic documentation of training materials for integration into the Interreg Euro-MED Academy Moodle platform, where they become accessible resources for the broader Mediterranean community seeking practical guidance on circular economy implementation.

Continuous Improvement

The initial training delivery focused primarily on content transmission and basic participant satisfaction measurement through registration numbers and pre-training expectation surveys. However, the methodology relies heavily on continuous dialogue with TP partners through regular ISE Community of Practice (CoP) gatherings and Thematic Working Groups (TWG) as the primary mechanism for understanding evolving training needs. These CoP sessions and working group interactions serve as ongoing

consultation spaces where TP partners discuss their implementation challenges, share emerging issues, and identify knowledge gaps that could benefit from targeted training interventions.

The feedback collected during these regular touchpoints includes structured surveys: a first survey disseminated in 2024 to understand and address TPs' learning priorities that inform the topics for capacity strengthening for takers, and a second survey planned for the end of 2025 to assess satisfaction and collect further feedback to reorient future training activities. This feedback goes beyond simple satisfaction metrics to capture specific learning priorities, practical difficulties encountered in project execution, and areas where peer learning could be most valuable.

For external training sessions targeting takers, pre-training expectation survey helped tailor content to participant needs and provided valuable insights for future training development. However, the broad and diverse nature of the taker community requires flexible feedback approaches that can accommodate varying levels of engagement across different Mediterranean territories and organizational contexts.

This input is systematically integrated into the training planning process, ensuring that each semester's thematic focus reflects the actual needs expressed by the community. When partners discuss regulatory barriers during ISE CoP gatherings³, this translates into policy-focused training sessions. When they share successes in stakeholder engagement, these become case studies for behavioural change workshops. The TWG discussions particularly help identify when certain project outputs have matured enough to warrant dedicated knowledge transfer activities, informing both the internal capacity-building agenda and the external capitalization training content. This approach creates a responsive training program that evolves based on real-time project experiences rather than predetermined curricula, and this deliverable will be continuously revised throughout the project duration to reflect these evolving training experiences and stakeholder feedback.

³ [ISE CoP Report](#)

Delivered Trainings

Sufficiency as a Policy Framework

Prior to the comprehensive behavioural change training in June 2025, the ISE Mission delivered foundational capacity-building content during the ISEC Hub launch event on October 2, 2024⁴. This event, which gathered approximately 70 Mediterranean stakeholders, included a strategic 20-minute keynote intervention by [Claire Roumet](#) from Energy Cities that exemplified the training design principles outlined in the methodology—combining external expertise with practical implementation guidance for diverse territorial contexts.

Roumet's presentation addressed "Why and how sufficiency can be at the heart of local and regional policies," providing external stakeholders with concrete policy frameworks they could adapt to their own territorial contexts⁵. The intervention introduced the *Manifesto: A resilient and resource-wise Europe: sufficiency at the heart of the EU's future*, developed by Energy Cities and 97 organizations from the Quadruple Helix, demonstrating how collaborative knowledge products can support policy transformation across Mediterranean territories⁶. Through practical examples from local sufficiency plans in Grenoble, Brussels, and Geneva, participants gained insights into how public services can ensure sufficient resources while supporting local actors toward sufficiency-driven economies.

⁴ <https://innovative-sustainable-economy.interreg-euro-med.eu/2024/10/11/launching-the-innovative-sustainable-economy-community-isec-hub-of-the-mediterranean/>

⁵ [Webinar I: Sufficiency at the heart of local and regional policies](#)

⁶ https://eeb.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/sufficiency_manifesto.pdf

Breaking Barriers - Behavioural Change Strategies

Capacity-strengthening Overview

Title: Breaking Barriers: Behavioural Change Strategies for Circular Economy Implementation

Date: Wednesday, 18 June 2025

Time: 14:30–16:00 CEST

Format: Online webinar in English

Duration: 90 minutes

Recording: [Breaking Barriers Behavioural Change Strategies for Circular Economy Implementation](#)

The training was strategically positioned within multiple frameworks to maximize impact and visibility:

- **[EU Green Week 2025 Partner Event](#):** Aligned with the annual theme "Circular Solutions for a Competitive EU"
- **[ACR+ Circular Lifestyle Web-series](#):** Third episode of a four-part series exploring behavioural dimensions of circular economy
- **[ISE Mission External Trainings](#):** First major capacity-building event for external stakeholders

Training Structure and Content

Strategic Context Setting

The training opened with comprehensive context-setting that positioned behavioural change within broader Mediterranean cooperation frameworks:

ISE Mission Insights ([Zuzana Bohacova](#), ACR+ presentation): Building on findings from the 3rd ISE Community of Practice (CoP) gathering in Sarajevo, the session synthesized behavioural barriers and enablers identified across 14 Thematic Projects using the COM-B behavioural change model (Capability, Opportunity, Motivation → Behaviour). Key insights revealed common patterns:

- **Barriers:** Knowledge and skills gaps, financial constraints, inadequate infrastructure/policies, resistance to change

- **Enablers:** Existing networks and expertise, growing consumer demand, supportive policy frameworks
- **Target Behaviour Transformations:** From cost-based to evidence-based decision-making (public authorities), linear to circular production models (businesses), and limited awareness to informed consumption choices (citizens)

Regional Cooperation Framework (Alessandra Sensi, Union for the Mediterranean): Emphasis on the UfM's GreenerMed Agenda shaped by 43 Euro-Mediterranean countries, highlighting consumers as underexplored yet essential agents of change. The presentation stressed the importance of defining actionable daily behaviours that can achieve cumulative impact when adopted collectively⁷.

ISE Mission Context (Maria Calderó Pascual, Beta Technology Centre): Introduction of the ISEC Hub as a lasting platform for Mediterranean collaboration, emphasizing localized innovation through quadruple helix engagement and transnational knowledge transfer.

Expert Foundations: Behavioural Change Theory and Practice

Moving from Information to Emotion (Rosa Strube, CSCP - CARE Project): Rosa Strube presented evidence-based approaches demonstrating that "information alone doesn't trigger change—emotions do." The CARE project's methodology included:

- Human-centred design workshops across five countries to understand motivations and challenges
- Creation of relatable "circular heroes" to help individuals connect with sustainable behaviours
- Storytelling videos as emotionally resonant communication tools
- Local stakeholder engagement and co-creation to ensure cultural relevance

Nudging and Systemic Experimentation (Hernan Ruiz, CERC - SHARED Green Deal⁸): Hernan Ruiz demonstrated practical application of design thinking methodology through local accelerator hubs in Portugal, Slovenia, Cyprus, and France. Four key learnings emerged:

1. Local accelerator hubs effectively foster innovation and collaboration
2. SMEs require basic circular economy knowledge and capacity building
3. Regulatory and financial support are essential enablers
4. Cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder engagement is critical for success

⁷ <https://ufmsecretariat.org/publication-speech/education-for-sustainable-consumption-behaviour-and-lifestyles/>

⁸ <https://sharedgreendeal.eu/resources/case-study-guides>

Case Studies: Behavioural Interventions in Practice

Three ISE Mission projects presented comprehensive approaches to behavioural change across different sectors:

REPPER: Creating a New Repair Culture ([Giulia Maselli](#), Metropolitan City of Bologna): Addressed cultural and logistical barriers preventing repair behaviours despite widespread desire to repair rather than replace. The intervention approach included:

- Development of online and physical "REPPER Hubs" connecting citizens with local repair services
- "Training the Trainers" programs to embed repair knowledge within communities
- Subtle nudging approaches designed for cross-country implementation
- Co-creation strategies and practical local engagement to tackle deeper behavioural barriers

VERDEinMED: Transforming Textile Consumption ([Chrysovalantis Ketikidis](#), CERTH):

Tackled the textile industry's environmental footprint (third highest source of pressure on water and land use in the EU) through multi-level behavioural interventions:

- Consumer Level: Storytelling videos and Living Labs gathering consumption habit data
- Industry Level: Stakeholder dialogues on sustainable practices
- Policy Level: VERDE Academy events bringing together public, private, and social economy actors
- Tools: Knowledge Platform with user-centred content, national communities of practice, and targeted social media campaigns promoting conscious consumption

ProcuraMED: Behavioural Change in Public Procurement ([Sofia Martins](#), Irradiare):

Addressed procurement behaviours within public administrations, recognizing that public procurement represents 14% of EU GDP yet 55% prioritizes lowest price over sustainability. Interventions focused on:

- Integration of Green Public Procurement (GPP) and Public Procurement for Innovation (PPI)
- Overcoming barriers including knowledge gaps, limited staff capacity, and risk aversion
- Creating unified strategic procurement platforms and establishing inter-municipal coalitions
- Demonstrating long-term cost savings and environmental benefits through successful case studies

Participants

The training session attracted over 100 registered participants, with more than 60 actively engaged throughout the session. Participation spanned the Euro-Mediterranean region with broader European representation, demonstrating the wide geographic interest in the ISE Mission's capacity-building activities.

The participant profile reflected a diverse stakeholder mix, with academic and research institutions representing the largest group (10 participants), followed by NGO networks (4 participants), and equal representation from networks of local and regional authorities, private companies, and local/regional authorities (3 participants each). Additional participation included consultancies, international organizations, public-owned companies, national authorities, and social utility companies, showcasing the broad appeal of capacity-building activities across different organizational types and sectors (Figure 2).

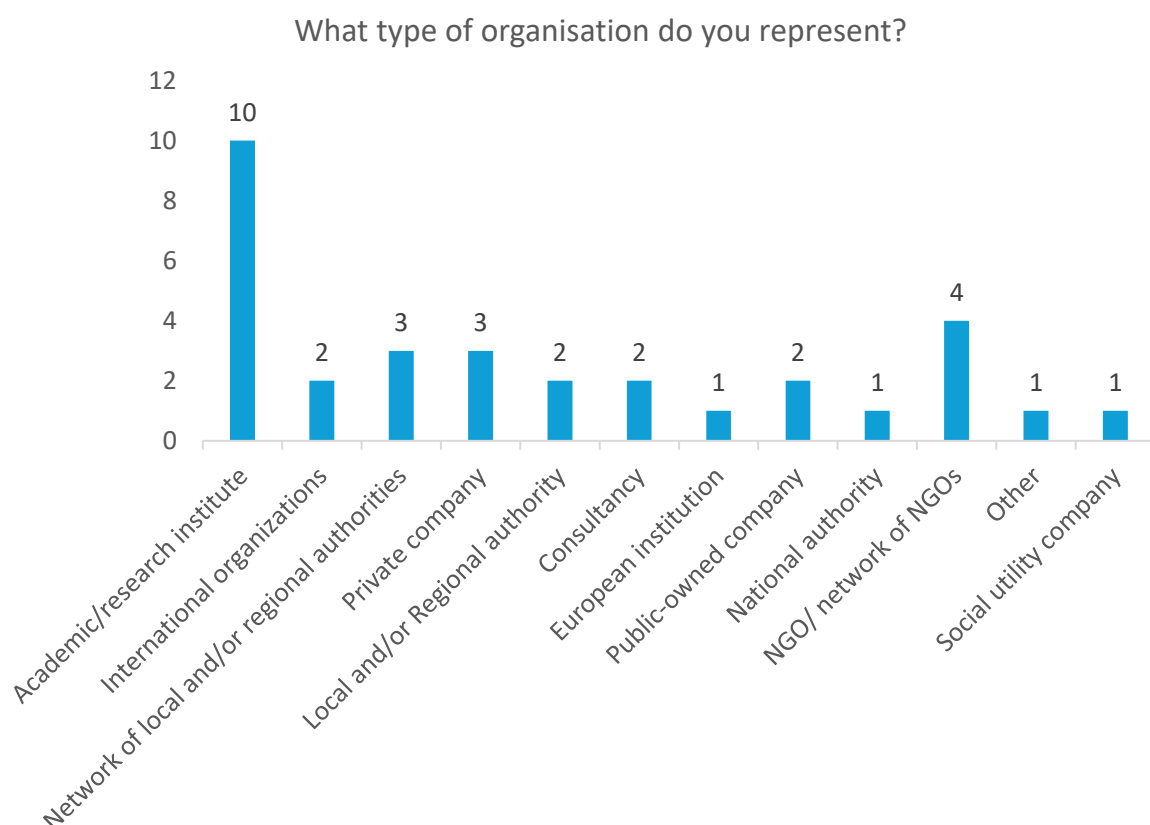


Figure 2: Type of participants' organisation

In-training participants survey then revealed high demand for practical implementation strategies, successful case study analysis, and networking opportunities for knowledge exchange—expectations (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Expectations word-cloud

Learning Outcomes

Participants gained practical insights into:

Practical Implementation Strategies:

- Emotional engagement techniques that move beyond information provision
- Local adaptation methods for global sustainability concepts
- Co-creation approaches that ensure cultural relevance and stakeholder buy-in
- Systematic experimentation frameworks for testing behavioural interventions

Successful Intervention Models:

- Hub-based approaches that combine online and physical spaces for community engagement
- Multi-level strategies simultaneously targeting consumers, industry, and policymakers
- Training multiplication models that embed knowledge within local communities
- Platform development that facilitates ongoing knowledge exchange and collaboration

Stakeholder Engagement Approaches:

- Cross-sectoral collaboration methods that leverage diverse expertise and resources
- Nudging techniques adapted for different cultural and regulatory contexts
- Policy integration strategies that align behavioural change with regulatory frameworks
- Network building approaches that create lasting capacity beyond individual projects

Behavioural Change Assessment: Insights from TPs Training Activities

This section presents comprehensive insights from behavioural change assessment tools implemented during the 3rd Innovative Sustainable Economy Community of Practice gathering in Sarajevo (April 2025). The analysis builds upon internal capacity-building activities for TP partners and directly informed the development of external training content, creating a continuous feedback loop between internal project learning and external knowledge transfer.

Thematic Projects Portfolio

The behavioural assessment encompassed the full ISE Mission portfolio⁹, representing comprehensive coverage across four strategic areas of Mediterranean sustainable economy development (Table 1). This diversity presents both analytical complexity and strategic opportunity, enabling examination of behavioural change patterns across different societal levels—from individual consumers to institutional decision-makers—while identifying common intervention approaches applicable across sectors.

⁹ <https://innovative-sustainable-economy.interreg-euro-med.eu/our-projects/>

Table 1: Thematic Projects by Focus Areas, Primary Focus, and Target Groups

Focus Area	Thematic Projects	Primary Focus	Target Groups
Marine Resources	AZA4ICE, SPOWIND, 2B-BLUE, BLUEECOSYSTEM	Sustainable aquaculture, groundwater management, marine spatial planning, blue biotechnology	Public authorities, (water authorities); Businesses and Producers (Producers, marine stakeholders)
Agri-Food Systems	CARBON FARMING MED, CLEPSYDRA, OLIVEOILMED	Carbon farming practices, territorial food systems	Businesses and Producers (Farmers, agri-food businesses); Citizens and Consumers (rural communities)
Industrial Transition	GREENSMARTMED, ProcuraMED, CircleMED, REVIVE	SME circular transition, sustainable procurement	Businesses and Producers (Manufacturing SMEs); Public authorities
Resource Valorisation	eWAsTER, VERDEinMED, REPPER	Circular economy adoption, waste management, textile sustainability	Consumers, Businesses, Public authorities (policymakers)

Analysis Through COM-B Framework

The assessment utilized the COM-B model—a validated behavioural change framework identifying three essential components required for any behaviour to occur: **Capability** (psychological and physical ability), **Opportunity** (external enabling factors), and **Motivation** (internal processes directing behaviour). All 14 Thematic Projects completed detailed behavioural change cards, providing systematic analysis across diverse sectors and stakeholder groups.

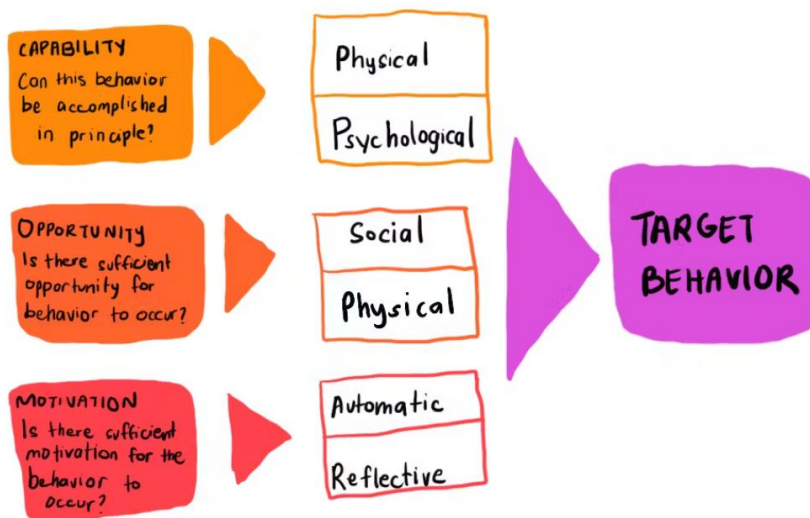


Figure 4: COM-B model diagram. Source: <https://thedecisionlab.com/reference-guide/organizational-behavior/the-com-b-model-for-behavior-change>

Systematic Barriers

The cross-project analysis revealed commonalities in behavioural barriers, despite significant sectoral differences. These patterns indicate systematic challenges requiring coordinated intervention approaches:

Capability Barriers (Knowledge and Skills Deficits):

- Limited technical knowledge of circular/sustainable practices (identified by 8/14 projects)
- Lack of specialized implementation skills (7/14 projects)
- Insufficient data or digital tools for decision-making (6/14 projects)
- Limited understanding of environmental impacts and benefits (5/14 projects)

Opportunity Barriers (Structural and Systemic Constraints):

- Inadequate infrastructure or supportive physical environment (9/14 projects)
- Regulatory complexity, fragmentation, or gaps (8/14 projects)
- Limited collaboration mechanisms among stakeholders (7/14 projects)
- Financial constraints and investment barriers (7/14 projects)

Motivation Barriers (Psychological and Economic Resistance):

- Perceived economic risks or implementation costs (9/14 projects)
- Lack of immediate, visible benefits or incentives (8/14 projects)
- Competing priorities and time constraints (6/14 projects)
- Attachment to traditional practices and risk aversion (5/14 projects)

These findings demonstrate that successful behavioural change requires simultaneous intervention across all three COM-B dimensions, rather than addressing isolated barriers individually.

Stakeholder-Specific Behavioural Patterns

Analysis across project cards revealed distinct behavioural transformation patterns for each major stakeholder group, providing targeted intervention opportunities:

Public Authorities: From Reactive to Strategic Governance

Current State: Cost-driven decision-making dominates, with fragmented departmental approaches limiting cross-sector collaboration. *ProcuraMED specifically highlighted how 55% of public procurement prioritizes the lowest cost over sustainability considerations.*

Target Transformation: Evidence-based policy development integrated with strategic procurement practices and systematic cross-sector collaboration. This includes long-term sustainability planning that considers lifecycle costs and environmental benefits.

Critical Interventions: Capacity building on green procurement methodologies, demonstration of robust cost-benefit analysis tools, and development of policy alignment frameworks that facilitate interdepartmental coordination.

Businesses and Producers: From Linear to Circular Models

Current State: Linear production models persist with waste generation accepted as an operational externality. Resistance to innovation stems from perceived complexity and implementation risks, *as noted by AZA4ICE regarding aquaculture producers' hesitancy toward circular systems.*

Target Transformation: Circular business model adoption emphasizing resource optimization, process innovation, and long-term value creation over short-term profit maximization.

Critical Interventions: Business model innovation support combining technical assistance with financial incentives, regulatory frameworks that reward circularity, and market development initiatives that create demand for circular products and services.

Citizens and Consumers: From Passive to Active Circularity

Current State: Limited awareness of circular alternatives combines with inadequate infrastructure for sustainable choices. *VERDEinMED identified improper textile disposal practices and price-driven purchasing decisions as persistent patterns.*

Target Transformation: Informed sustainable choices supported by active participation in circular economy initiatives, including long-term consumption planning and value-based purchasing decisions.

Critical Interventions: Comprehensive awareness campaigns coupled with

infrastructure development, behavioural nudges integrated into service delivery, and community engagement programs that make sustainable choices convenient and socially reinforced.

Cross-cutting enablers and strategic opportunities

Despite significant barriers, the assessment identified substantial existing enablers that can be leveraged for accelerated behavioural change:

Capability Enablers: Existing research networks provide the foundation for knowledge transfer, accumulated expertise within TP partnerships enables peer learning, and growing technical competencies create replication opportunities.

Opportunity Enablers: Supportive policy frameworks (including EU Green Deal directives) create regulatory momentum, available funding mechanisms enable pilot implementations, and growing market demand for sustainable solutions provides economic incentives.

Motivation Enablers: Increasing consumer awareness creates demand pressure, regulatory requirements provide compliance motivation, and competitive advantages from early adoption encourage innovation leadership.

Current intervention approaches and future directions

Projects are implementing diverse but complementary intervention strategies that align with the COM-B framework requirements:

- **Education and Information** (addressing Capability): Knowledge platforms, specialized training programs, and public awareness campaigns
- **Tools and Technical Support** (enhancing Opportunity): Decision support systems, digital platforms, and demonstration sites
- **Engagement and Networks** (strengthening Motivation): Stakeholder co-creation processes, community networks, and cross-sector collaborations

The analysis reveals that most effective interventions combine approaches across all three categories, suggesting that integrated strategies yield superior results compared to single-focus initiatives.

Strategic implications for capacity building

These behavioural insights directly informed the design and content of external training activities, ensuring that capacity-building efforts address real implementation challenges rather than theoretical concepts alone. The systematic barriers identified across projects indicate clear opportunities for shared solutions and knowledge exchange, while stakeholder-specific patterns enable targeted intervention design.

Conclusions

Key Achievements

The first year of capacity-building activities has established a solid foundation for external stakeholder engagement. The inaugural training achieved significant quantitative impact, with over 100 registered participants representing diverse organizational types across the Euro-Mediterranean region, indicating strong demand for evidence-based capacity building in circular economy implementation. Beyond numbers, the training successfully demonstrated the effectiveness of combining theoretical behavioural change frameworks with practical case studies from ISE Mission projects, creating a replicable methodology that bridges academic research with implementation practice.

Strategic positioning proved equally important, with effective integration across multiple frameworks—including EU Green Week 2025¹⁰ and the ACR+ Circular Lifestyle Web-series¹¹—establishing the ISE Mission as a recognized contributor to Mediterranean innovative sustainable economy discourse. The systematic analysis of behavioural barriers across 14 thematic projects using the COM-B framework created a comprehensive knowledge base that informs both current training design and future intervention strategies, providing evidence-based content development that ensures relevance and applicability for external stakeholders.

Lessons Learned

The implementation experience has generated valuable insights that inform ongoing methodology refinement. Digital accessibility and geographic reach were successfully maximized through online delivery formats, which maintained high-quality engagement while enabling participation across the Mediterranean region, thereby validating the strategic emphasis on digital-first approaches for external stakeholder training. The broad organizational representation—from municipal authorities to NGOs to private sector entities—created opportunities for cross-sectoral knowledge exchange and collaborative partnerships that extend beyond individual training sessions, demonstrating how stakeholder diversity functions as a strategic asset.

¹⁰ https://green-week.event.europa.eu/partner-events/breaking-barriers-behavioural-change-strategies-circular-economy-implementation-2025-06-18_en

¹¹ <https://www.acrplus.org/en/agenda/breaking-barriers-behavioural-change-strategies-for-circular-economy-implementation-725>

Participant feedback consistently emphasized high demand for evidence-based, replicable solutions, confirming the strategic decision to ground training content in actual project experiences rather than theoretical frameworks alone. The systematic analysis of capability, opportunity, and motivation barriers across projects has also revealed the complexity of behavioural change interventions, demonstrating the necessity of integrated approaches that address multiple behavioural dimensions simultaneously, rather than focusing on isolated factors.

The methodology's emphasis on continuous feedback collection—through pre-training expectation survey for external participants and systematic dialogue with TP partners through CoP gatherings and TWGs—has proven essential for responsive training design that addresses real implementation challenges.

Future Directions

Immediate development priorities focus on delivering the October-November 2025 business modelling and investment-readiness training while implementing enhanced feedback collection mechanisms to strengthen evaluation frameworks and adaptive management capabilities. These short-term objectives will build upon the successful foundation established through the behavioural change training while expanding the scope of knowledge transfer activities.

Medium-term integration objectives centre on achieving full alignment with the broader Interreg Euro-MED Academy initiative to ensure coherent capacity-building across the cooperation program. This integration will enable systematic scaling of successful approaches while maintaining the quality and relevance that characterized the initial training activities.



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