1	Project master data	
1.1 Project	Project number	**25_040_Green Pre-Incubators**
	Project title	**Green Pre-Incubators for Just Transition**
	Country/countries of implementation	Greece, North Macedonia
	If applicable: Names of municipalities/cities (including postal code), governmental regions, provinces and/or federal states the project will work with or in.	Greece: Attica, Region of Western Macedonia (postal code 10561, 53100, 50100) North Macedonia: Region of Pelagonia (postal code 7000, 7211)
	Project duration	01.12.2025-31.03.2028
	Sector	Just Transition
1.2 Implementer	Name	**National and Kapodistrian University of Athens**
	Department	Archimedes Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship
	Street, No.	6 Christou Lada Str
	Postal code, town/city	10561, Athens
	Country	Greece
	Contact person	Nikolaos Thomaidis, Marios Tsakas
	Telephone	00302103689549 / 00302103688192
	Email	ntho@chem.uoa.gr, tsakasm@agro.uoa.gr
	Contact person for public relations	Theoni Karlessi
	Telephone	00306934605665
	Email	karlessith@phys.uoa.gr
	Website	www.uoa.gr, https://archimedes.uoa.gr/en/
	Type of institution	Academic/research institution
	Legal structure	Legal entity of its own
	Deduction of input tax according to § 15 UStG (if registered in Germany)	not eligible
	Total staff	6 in Archimedes Center, 7,044 Employees in Projects at the University
	Staff for the project	6
	Year established	1837
	Experience in the target region [years]	20
	Experience in activities relevant to the project [years]	25

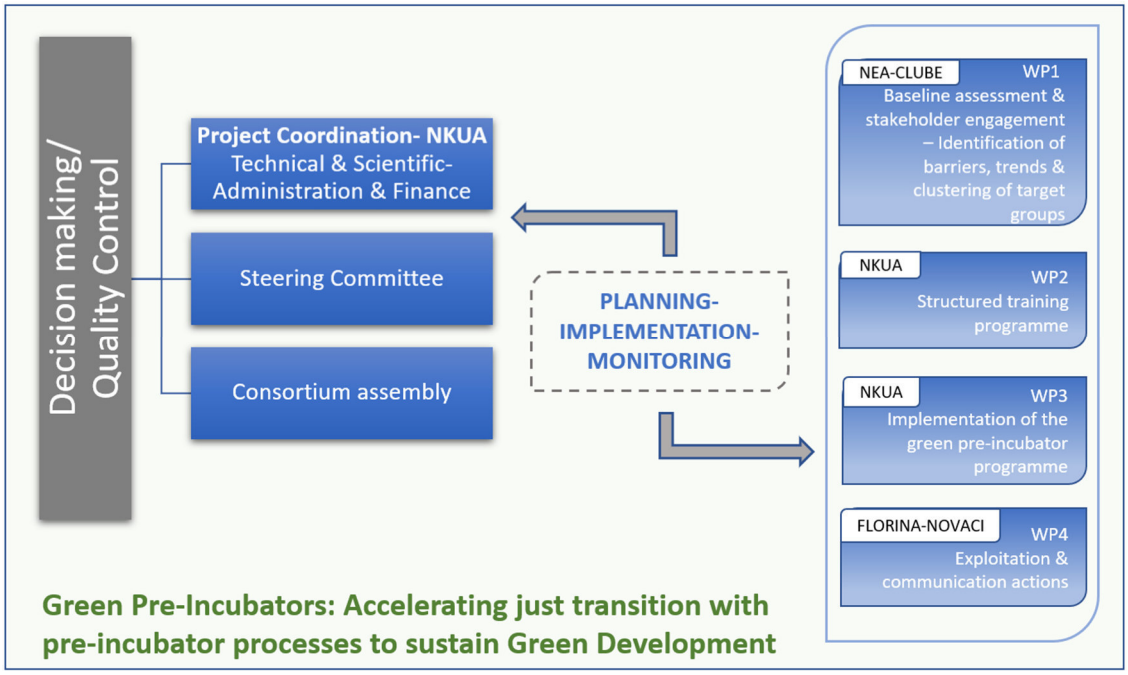
	Role/function of the implementer in the project proposed	Project coordination, development of the training programme, implementation of operational phase of the pre-incubation framework, active participation in the dissemination & awareness and long-term exploitation strategies of the developed structures
1.3 Implementing partner(s)		
1st Implementing partner	Name (translated into English and in local language)	**Bioeconomy and Environment Cluster of Western Macedonia (CluBE)** Cluster Βιοοικονομίας και Περιβάλλοντος Δυτικής Μακεδονίας
	Department	-
	Street, No.	ZEP Area
	Postal code, town/city	50100, Kozani
	Country	Greece
	Contact person	Amalia Marinou
	Telephone	+30 24610 56625
	Email	info@clube.gr, a.marinou@clube.gr
	Website	www.clube.gr
	Type of institution	Non-profit enterprises
	Legal structure	Legal entity of its own
	Total staff	38
	Staff for the project	4
	Year established	2014
	Revenue [EUR/year]	2,691,882.54
	Experience in the target region [years]	11
	Experience in activities relevant to the project [years]	11
	Capabilities and experiences relevant to the project	CluBE has a vast experience in the field of bioeconomy, biomass, bioenergy and green hydrogen. CluBE has successfully completed and also currently manages several European and Transnational Projects in the fields of Research, Innovation, and Dissemination of Knowledge and has assisted the regional business sector on promoting and fostering entrepreneurship in Western Macedonia. CluBE's areas of expertise, regarding the project preparation and implementation, are stakeholder engagement (mainly local and regional but also National and European), local and regional replication, coordination of local demo sites, communication, and dissemination as well as knowledge transfer and mobilisation of entrepreneurship.
2nd Implementing partner	Name (translated into English and in local language)	**National Extension Agency (NEA)** Агенција за поттикнување на развојот на земјоделството

	Department	Agriculture and Rural Development Sector
	Street, No.	Kliment Ohridski bb, Pelagonka II-5/3
	Postal code, town/city	7000, Bitola
	Country	Republic of North Macedonia
	Contact person	Zlatko Sireta
	Telephone	+389 72 252 431
	Email	zlatko.sireta@agencija.gov.mk
	Website	http://agencija.gov.mk/
	Type of institution	National, regional and local authorities
	Legal structure	Public law body (body of state government with legal entity status, the employees of NEA have the status of civil servants)
	Total staff	90
	Staff for the project	3
	Year established	1998
	Revenue [EUR/year]	1,211,203 EUR (2024)
	Experience in the target region [years]	Over 20 years in agriculture advisory services
	Experience in activities relevant to the project [years]	7
	Capabilities and experiences relevant to the project	The National Extension Agency (NEA) brings over twenty years of hands-on experience in agricultural advisory services and rural development, underpinned by a track record in managing and implementing EU-funded initiatives. Since its establishment in 1998, NEA has coordinated cross-border programmes such as AGROWCHAIN (2018–2021) and RENAISSANCE (2021–2023) under the IPA CBC “Greece–North Macedonia” framework and is currently leading CARBONICA (2023–2026) within HORIZON-WIDERA. This wealth of project management expertise is complemented by in-house capacity for rigorous socio-economic and vulnerability assessments, data-driven target-group clustering, and tailored training and advisory services that ensure effective stakeholder engagement, policy alignment, and sustainable impact.
3rd Implementing partner	Name (translated into English and in local language)	**Municipality of Florina** Δήμος Φλώρινας
	Department	Administrative Office
	Street, No.	Megalou Alexandrou Str. 97
	Postal code, town/city	53100, Florina
	Country	Greece
	Contact person	Vasileios N. Giannakis
	Telephone	+302385351010
	Email	mayor-office@cityoflorina.gr

	Website	http://cityoflorina.gr/
	Type of institution	National, regional or local authorities
	Legal structure	Legal entity of its own
	Total staff	367
	Staff for the project	2
	Year established	2010 (Law 3852/2010)
	Revenue [EUR/year]	68,540,605 EUR (2024)
	Experience in the target region [years]	20
	Experience in activities relevant to the project [years]	15
	Capabilities and experiences relevant to the project	The Municipality of Florina plays a pivotal role in Western Macedonia's just transition efforts as the region shifts away from lignite-based economy. Over the past decade, Florina has built strong capacity in cross-border cooperation and sustainable development, participating in five EU-funded projects under Interreg IPA CBC frameworks with Greece–North Macedonia and Greece–Albania (2017–2023). These have addressed green mobility, air quality, bio-waste management and eco-tourism. With an active role in regional planning and EU programming, the municipality has cultivated extensive partnerships and mechanisms for local stakeholder engagement. Florina offers a strong administrative framework, community engagement mechanisms and proven experience in promoting stakeholder engagement, public participation and the integration of climate objectives into local strategies. Its participation in the "Green Pre-Incubators" project enhances the alignment of municipal policy with green entrepreneurship, capacity building and innovation.
4th Implementing partner	Name (translated into English and in local language)	**Municipality of Novaci** Општина Новаци
	Department	Department for local economic development
	Street, No.	1st Street
	Postal code, town/city	7211 Novaci
	Country	Republic of North Macedonia
	Contact person	Katerina Cukalevska & Igorce Risteski
	Telephone	+389 47 20 30 60
	Email	gradonacalnik@opstinanovaci.gov.mk
	Website	https://opstinanovaci.gov.mk/
	Type of institution	Local self-Government, National, regional and local authorities
	Legal structure	Legal entity of its own
	Total staff	33

	Staff for the project	2
	Year established	2005
	Revenue [EUR/year]	2,293,615 EUR
	Experience in the target region [years]	10
	Experience in activities relevant to the project [years]	5
	Capabilities and experiences relevant to the project	The Municipality of Novaci is a key stakeholder in North Macedonia's just transition process, given its central role as the host community of REK Bitola, the country's largest coal-fired power plant. Over the past decade, Novaci has actively engaged in cross-border cooperation and EU-funded initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable local development and preparing for the post-lignite era. Through its Department for Local Economic Development, the municipality has successfully implemented projects such as aGROWchain (INTERREG IPA CBC 2018–2021), focusing on sustainable agro-waste supply chains, and has partnered with SALAR International to improve local waste management practices. These experiences have strengthened Novaci's capacity to manage international projects, mobilize local stakeholders, and translate complex climate and economic policies into community-level actions. With its established networks across municipal, regional, and cross-border partners, Novaci is well-positioned to facilitate stakeholder engagement, disseminate project results, and ensure the policy integration and long-term sustainability of the Green Pre-Incubators project.

1.4 Steering structure	The **Green Pre-Incubators** project consortium consists of 5 experienced consortium members led by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (implementer) in partnership with the Bioeconomy and Environment Cluster of Western Macedonia (CluBE), National Extension Agency (NEA) as well as the Municipalities of Florina and Novaci (implementing partners). A management body, the Steering Committee (SC), consisting of one representative per implementing partner, with identified responsibilities, will be formed in the beginning of the project to assist decision making and smooth implementation of the project. The SC members will monitor the project activities and will be responsible for the quality assurance of the tasks and the timeline of activities, as well as for risk management and corrective actions. The implementer, National & Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), holds primary responsibility for the project's implementation and will closely collaborate with the leaders of all activities in a structured manner. The management of administrative issues and the communication with EUKI are the implementer's responsibility. Aside from providing central coordination and management of the project, NKUA will be responsible for fulfilling reporting obligations towards the EUKI funding programme, monitoring the project timeline, overall progress and the achievement of project-specific indicators and EUKI standard indicators. The implementer is the contact person and contractual partner of GIZ, also being responsible for the project's administration and financial management towards GIZ. The responsibilities and rights of each implementing partner will be governed by a Partnership Agreement to be signed at the start of the project by the consortium members. As an Annex to the Partnership Agreement, guidelines for the project implementation will be provided setting the procedural framework in line with EUKI requirements and obligations.

	The fixed project meetings (Q4 2025 (kick-off), Q4 2026, Q3 2027 and Q1 2028 and web conferencing at Q2 2026, Q3 2026, Q1 2027, Q4 2027) will be planned for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the results and for improvements regarding the activities, with dedicated sessions taking place regularly. The consortium will exploit all possible opportunities to take part in EUKI networking events to exchange experience and disseminate the scope and outcomes of the project. **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA)** Project management, development of the training programme, implementation of operational phase of the pre-incubation framework, active participation in the dissemination & awareness raising and long-term exploitation strategies of the developed structures **Cluster of Bioeconomy and Environment in Western Macedonia (CluBE)** Definition and clustering of target groups / creation of interactions, assist the development and implementation of the training procedure, dissemination actions **National Extension Agency (NEA)** Analysis of the current status of the transition beyond coal economy & emerging trends, dissemination actions **Municipality of Florina & Municipality of Novaci** Dissemination & communication, policy integration & replicability, application and realisation of the pre-incubator and accelerator programme in the targeted regions Figure 1 shows the steering structure of the project indicating the implementation strategy and interactions.  Fig. 1 Steering structure of the Green Pre-Incubators project

2 Brief description	
2.1 Structured brief description	Promoting green entrepreneurship and low-carbon innovation in transitioning regions is crucial to achieve EU climate targets and foster a just transition. This project serves as a structured pre-incubation and early-stage launchpad initiative focusing on awareness ideation, and capacity building for green entrepreneurship in Greece and the Republic of North Macedonia. Through a combination of digital tools, local mentoring and stakeholder engagement, it supports young and aspiring entrepreneurs to shape viable climate-oriented business ideas. By promoting climate innovation at an early stage, the project empowers local actors, improves regional cooperation

	and lays the foundation for greenhouse gas emission reductions across sectors such as energy, agriculture and circular economy.

3 Problem analysis	
3.1 Key issues in the sector to be addressed by the project	The cross-border region encompassing Florina (Greece) and Novaci (Republic of North Macedonia) represents a critical area for Europe's coal phase-out ambitions. Both communities have historically been dependent on lignite-based economy, resulting in high employment vulnerability. As the EU and EU accession countries tighten their climate targets, these areas face major structural challenges, including insufficient reskilling mechanisms, low institutional capacity and weak access to financial and entrepreneurial ecosystems. The "Green Pre-Incubators" project directly addresses these gaps to enable a just and locally led transition through cross-border cooperation, capacity building and climate innovation. The key issues per country are analysed below. Republic of North Macedonia – Municipality of Novaci Novaci is home to REK Bitola, the largest coal-fired power plant in the country, covering 54.3% of North Macedonia's electricity generation in 2022 (National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) NMKD, 2022; Republic of North Macedonia Country Strategy, 2025). Currently the North Macedonian NECP is being revised and the 2025 version will be soon available. The local economy is significantly linked to this facility, which directly employs 2,500 to 3,000 workers and indirectly supports hundreds more in supply chains and services. According to the National Long-Term Strategy for Climate Action (NMK LTS, 2021), the share of coal in electricity generation is expected to drop dramatically by 2030. In addition, as North Macedonia aspires to join the European Union, aligning with EU climate and energy policies and targets has become particularly important for its national and local strategies. However, this transition is hindered by critical barriers: - A technical workforce deficit of 30–35% in energy transition fields (NMK LTS, 2021). - Limited investment, with less than 20% of the funds required for the restructuring of the energy sector secured (ibid.) - Weak local capacity to design and implement just transition plans Greece – Municipality of Florina Florina, located in Western Macedonia, is undergoing an accelerated decarbonisation process following Greece's 2019 commitment to phase out lignite by 2028. This transition has triggered strong socio-economic pressure. According to the World Bank (2020), the industry sector (except construction) accounted for almost 49% of Florina's gross value added (GVA) mainly due to lignite related activities, a clear indicator of mono-sectoral dependence. The region also exhibits: - Unemployment rates of over 25% in the 15–29 age group (Eurostat, 2022) - A population decline of 10.2% between 2011 and 2021 (ELSTAT, 2022), due to youth outmigration and the lack of alternative employment opportunities - Persistent skills gaps in the green sectors, as noted by IENE (2023) - Slow absorption of the EU funding concerning just transition (Just Transition Development Programme (JTDP) and the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) The implementation of the "Green Pre-Incubators" project will create the necessary conditions for a locally driven, cross-border just transition in these areas. By building project development capacity, promoting inclusive governance and mobilizing climate-oriented entrepreneurship, the project will help bridge the persistent gap between policy development and implementation on the ground, especially in vulnerable regions such as Florina and Novaci. In this way, it directly addresses the main barriers identified – strengthening the local workforce and skills base, improving the capacity of municipalities to design and implement transition plans, and catalysing investment and entrepreneurship, that are currently lacking.

3.2 Stakeholder landscape in the sector	The map of actors provides an overview of the identified stakeholder groups, their role, interaction and level of involvement in the project. In order to prioritize and segment the stakeholder groups, multiple parameters are considered: The influence of the actors in the project, their interest in its scope and activities, and the impact as a two-way process - to the project and the degree of the project's influence to the actors. Primary stakeholders are identified as the groups with direct connection to the problems addressed by the project (skills gap, lack of investment, weak local capacity) and the solutions provided by the project results (enhancement of skills, capacity building, societal motivation and engagement). Primary actors are directly affected by the coal transition and have a strong influence on how just transition strategies are designed and implemented (ministries, municipalities, industries). Secondary actors play a supportive and complementary role to the extension of the project's impact and sustainability. They contribute through dissemination, technical assistance, research and replication (business associations, universities, development agencies, utilities, community organizations and financing institutions). The clustering of the stakeholder groups maximises their effective approach and engagement in the project activities: Primary stakeholders are at the core of addressing the challenges of transition, while secondary stakeholders enable the scaling and sustainability of the solutions developed. **Primary Stakeholders** • Ministries of Environment, Energy, and Economy (GR/NMK): They set the policy and regulatory frameworks in which local transition strategies operate as well as influence funding priorities and long-term implementation of green transition goals. • Municipalities/Public authorities affected by post-lignite transition (e.g. Kozani, Eordaia, Amintaio, Prespes, Bitola): They represent areas with similar socio-economic and environmental challenges. Their endorsement reflects regional interest in replicating and scaling up project activities. Letters of Support provided by the Municipalities of Kozani, Prespes, Amintaio, Eordaia attest their active contribution to dissemination activities, community engagement, and their consideration to replicate project results across neighbouring territories. • Energy & utilities industry (e.g. PPC in Greece / ESM in North Macedonia): Their decarbonisation strategies and infrastructure planning shape the pace and scope of the transition. They are engaged through WP1 (data analysis, stakeholder feedback) and WP4 (policy recommendations), supporting evidence-based strategic decisions. • Green Transition Target Groups (GTTG) (youth, entrepreneurs, unemployed individuals and former lignite workers): They represent both the direct beneficiaries and active agents of change and participate in workshops, idea development, and capacity-building. Their empowerment is crucial to the just transition and drives impact at the community level. The Association of Active Youths of Florina (OENEF) explicitly supports the project, stressing their role in engaging young people and amplifying dissemination through their Europe Direct Western Macedonia hub. **Secondary Stakeholders** • Chambers of Commerce, Agricultural Cooperatives, and Local Business Networks: They provide entrepreneurial infrastructure and promote diversification in green sectors. They are supported by the project through targeted training and networking (see WP3/Activities III.1, III.2, III.3). The Chamber of Florina and the Association of Agronomists of Florina confirmed their interest in the project implementation in their Letters of Support. • Academic and Research Institutions: They replicate educational tools and methods developed through the project and help scale up impact through academic networks. For example, the University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in Bitola and the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food Skopje have expressed their support to the project.

• Community Groups: They foster local participation and civic engagement and help strengthen social acceptance and co-creation of project outputs. The Center for Civic Initiative (NMK) and the Association of Florina Race confirmed in their Letters of Support their involvement in dissemination and community mobilisation, showing how civic actors can co-create outputs and improve social acceptance.

• The business sector in the region will benefit from the increased local capacity in green entrepreneurship, developed during the project, in terms of developing innovative green products and services, fostering a proactive and resilient mindset and adapting to evolving market needs for sustainability, driving the transition to a sustainable economy. The knowledge and skills developed by participants will remain within the region, supporting future green investments and workforce readiness. Stakeholders such as SHAPE IKE (Media & Events), ANFLO (Development Agency of Florina), ANKO (Western Macedonia Development Agency), DIADYMA (waste management company), DEYAF (Water & Sewage Utility of Florina), and the Green Fund expressed their support for the project through Letters of Support. Greece's Green Fund manages and provides financial and technical support to support the country's environmental policy. Business sector players in their Letters of Support, confirmed their willingness to contribute primarily to dissemination activities, event organisation, and the replication of project results, while underlining their availability to be involved in project activities and to support the engagement of additional actors through their networks.

Interactions are mapped in Fig. 2, illustrating how primary stakeholders (ministries, municipalities, utilities, and target groups) are directly linked to project activities, while secondary stakeholders provide complementary support to ensure dissemination, replication, and long-term sustainability.

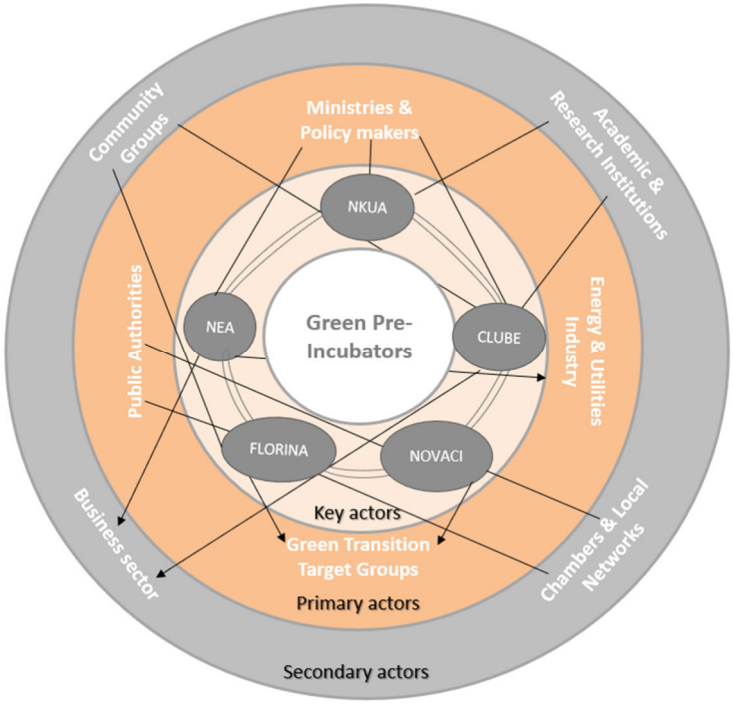


Fig. 2 Map of interactions of Green Pre-Incubators

The consortium has strong collaboration with organizations from the targeted stakeholder groups which have expressed their interested involvement in the project with dedicated Letters of Support aforementioned and listed below:

- SHAPE I.K.E, GR (Media Events, Creative Agency)
- Association of Florina Race (Sheep), GR
- Association of Agronomist of the Prefecture of Florina, GR
- DIADYMA – Waste management of Western Macedonia, GR
- Municipalities of Kozani, Prespes, Amintaio, Eordaia GR
- Network of Energy Municipalities, GR

	- Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food Skopje, NMK - Center for Civic Initiative, NMK - Development Agency of Florina S.A, GR - Green Fund, GR - Chamber of Florina, GR - Association of Active Youths of Florina (OENEF) – Europe Direct of Western Macedonia, GR - University "St.Kliment Ohridki"-Bitola, NMK - Municipal Water and Sewage Authorities of Florina (D.E.Y.A.F), GR The “Green Pre-Incubators” project utilizes a comprehensive stakeholder architecture that reflects both the complexity and the opportunities of a just transition. It ensures that institutional, social and economic actors work together synergistically, while responsibility and ownership are anchored in the implementing consortium. This structure will enable the project to provide inclusive and practical responses to the climate policy needs in Florina and Novaci and to strengthen local leadership and long-term sustainability.
3.3 Embedding the project in the target country’s climate policy framework	As a cross-border project between an EU Member State (Greece) and a candidate country (North Macedonia), “Green Pre-Incubators” is embedded within the evolving European and national climate frameworks. The European Climate Law (Regulation (EU) 2021/1119) sets binding targets: Net-zero emissions by 2050 and a 55% reduction of emissions by 2030 (compared to 1990), implemented through the Green Deal and Fit for 55. These frameworks inform instruments like the EU ETS and Clean Energy Directives, while driving the coal phase-out. Greece has legally committed to full decarbonisation under the European Climate Law, with binding targets of 55% greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction by 2030 and climate neutrality by 2050. The phase-out of lignite by 2028, as outlined in the Greek National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) and Law 4936/2022, marks a profound structural change - especially in regions like Florina, where economic activity has been tightly linked to coal. Despite support measures such as the Just Transition Development Plan (JTDP) and the allocation of funds under the EU’s Just Transition Mechanism, implementation is hindered by capacity gaps, a limited entrepreneurial culture and slow absorption of funds. The “Green Pre-Incubators” project complements national efforts by providing structured training for aspiring green entrepreneurs, including youth, unemployed individuals and former lignite workers, enabling green business ideas and fostering community engagement for inclusive governance and cross-border exchange that connects local needs with sustainable business solutions. The project is also closely aligned with the Greek ‘Master Plan for Fair Development Transition (SDAM)’, which was drafted to serve as the strategic roadmap for the lignite-dependent areas of Western Macedonia and Megalopolis. The plan defines development priorities such as green energy, sustainable agriculture, waste minimisation, infrastructure support, digital economy and education, which correspond directly to the focus area addressed by the project. It is ensured that project outcomes support and integrate within the regional transition visions set by the Master Plan through basing training and pre-incubation modules on those priorities. North Macedonia, though not an EU member state, is actively adapting to the EU acquis. Its 2020–2040 Energy Strategy outlines a coal phase-out between 2025 and 2040, and its participation in the Powering Past Coal Alliance signals a commitment to phase out lignite by 2027. As part of the Powering Past Coal Alliance, North Macedonia has committed to a coal phase-out by 2027. It was also the first contracting party to the Energy Community to complete a National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP)—committing to increase the share of renewable energy sources in its gross energy consumption to 38% and reduce by 51% the greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. This demonstrates a strong determination to accelerate its transition away from coal. A draft climate law is under preparation to codify these ambitions. However, municipalities as Novaci are still heavily dependent on lignite. Through knowledge transfer and structured dissemination actions, the project supports local stakeholders to engage with implemented and tested models of green change from the Greek experience. By linking European climate targets with local transformation, the project promotes equitable and inclusive change in high-carbon regions and paves the way for long-term sustainability.

4 Project's concept	
4.1 Contribution to trans-formational processes	The project contributes to the structural transformation of coal-dependent regions, in Greece and the Republic of North Macedonia, by promoting the transition to a low-carbon and innovation-driven local economy. This is in line with the EU's pathway to climate neutrality by 2050, as set out in the European Climate Law, and reflects the concept of a green transition as a multidimensional process combining decarbonization, economic diversification and social inclusion. The representative regions of Western Macedonia in Greece where Florina is located and Novaci in North Macedonia are directly affected by the phase-out of lignite. These regions are currently experiencing deep socio-economic consequences and need targeted support to unlock sustainable growth pathways that are in line with climate neutrality goals. In both countries, the initial activities of the project entail a thorough assessment of the socio-economic context and the identification of region-specific barriers to decarbonization and a clustering of the target groups based on their needs and potential for green transition (WP1), with a parallel mapping exercise taking place in each country. This is crucial, since the starting points between clusters differ significantly: There are cases that require reskilling from coal-related employment, cases that need entrepreneurial capacity to enter green markets, while others lack access to networks or mentoring. This diversity of needs makes clustering essential to tailor support measures and maximise impact. In Greece (Florina), a full cycle of structured training and development support will be implemented, including tailored workshops, coaching, mentoring and the establishment of a digital lab to help participants develop and refine green business ideas (WP2–WP3). The approach focuses on empowering participants to move from an initial concept to viable business solutions capable of addressing actual local decarbonization challenges. In the Republic of North Macedonia (Novaci), beneficiaries participate in tailored knowledge transfer and policy development activities. These include shared access to training content, active participation in regional workshops, the organization of an event to present the ideas developed in Greece for policy implementation and local dialogue (WP4). The cross-border exchange of people, practices and policies strengthens regional cooperation and paves the way for a more inclusive and bottom-up just transition model. Through this structure, the project contributes to broader transformation efforts by turning vulnerability into opportunity and embedding locally rooted innovation at the heart of the green transition.
4.2 Target group	The project addresses four key target groups whose involvement is crucial to the success of the regional green transition. ● **Young entrepreneurs, graduates and career changers** who seek to shift from traditional sectors to sustainable business models. Initially, the focus in regard to this group will be on Greece, where the pre-incubation process will take place, due to the more advanced stage of the lignite phase-out and the more immediate needs for entrepreneur initiatives. These individuals will be supported through practical training, expert mentoring, and access to a digital platform that helps develop and refine early-stage green business ideas. The process will then be replicated in North Macedonia (AIII.1,2,3,4). ● The project targets **industry stakeholders** operating in sectors affected by the transition from coal to renewable energy such as fossil fuels transportation and coal mining. These actors, both in Greece and in the Republic of North Macedonia, will indirectly benefit from a better educated and sustainability-oriented workforce as well as from innovative low-carbon solutions resulting from the project's activities. ● **National and regional public authorities** are engaged to utilize the project's socio-economic analyses and policy-oriented outputs to better develop and implement climate-relevant strategies. These stakeholders will be involved through structured communication, shared workshops and policy briefs (AIV.3,4). ● **Decision-makers in Florina and Novaci**. By actively participating in data collection, clustering of impacted populations, and participating in final events (AIV.5,6), they are better equipped to shape inclusive and forward-looking local policies for a just transition. By building capacities across these groups and fostering connections between them, the project enables the emergence of local innovation ecosystems that strengthen the foundation for long-term economic and environmental sustainability in both countries.

4.3 Impacts (long-term results)	The project will foster a resilient green entrepreneurship ecosystem in the regions of Florina and Novaci, providing the foundation for new sustainable and climate-resilient business initiatives, thus contributing to inclusive economic diversification. Therefore, it will support job creation and new career prospects in the green economy enforcing local economic growth. Improved institutional capacity to absorb and manage climate-related opportunities and finance, through project development support and policy integration, will enable local authorities to accelerate the implementation of Just Transition strategies and unlock national and EU funds. Low-carbon practices will be promoted across sectors while regional resilience to climate change will be enhanced through locally rooted innovation and cross-border cooperation. Eventually, project insights will be embedded into policy and education, enabling replication and long-term sustainability.
4.4 Results logic and capacity development	The "Green Pre-Incubators" project follows a results-oriented logic to address the multiple challenges of coal-dependent regions in the transition to a low-carbon economy. Its main objective is to enhance green skills, foster cooperation and create readiness for the transition by creating a cross-border pre-incubation framework that transforms innovative ideas into sustainable businesses. The implementation logic of the project is structured around four sequential Outputs, each reflected by a dedicated Work Package (WP) and a set of activities. The project follows the basic principles of pre-incubation processes: Providing early-stage support to help entrepreneurs to develop a viable business idea and prepare to launch a start-up. Key features include training, mentorship and networking. The main goals are to transform ideas into strong business models, provide access to essential resources, and help founders to overcome barriers, build entrepreneurial capacity, and create readiness for sustainable business. OI (Output I) is approached through WP1, led by NEA and CluBE, starting with activity AI.1 (NEA) which includes the collection of socio-economic and environmental data and the identification of barriers to a just transition in Florina and Novaci. This leads to a comprehensive report (Milestone I.1) that presents the status of transition, emerging trends and sector-specific vulnerabilities. It forms the basis for targeted measures and the mobilization of stakeholders. Activity AI.2 focuses on stakeholder engagement. It defines key target groups (TG), assesses their vulnerability to coal phase-out and clusters them based on their needs and potential benefits from pre-incubation. The result is the formation of structured group clusters (Milestone I.2) that ensure that subsequent interventions are tailored, inclusive and responsive to local dynamics. OII (Output II) is reflected by WP2, led by NKUA, and translates this knowledge into capacity building. It develops an interactive and modular training programme (Activity II.1) and integrates a Gamified Digital Lab (Activities II.2–II.3) as a creative ideation and interactive tool. Output II consists of a ready-to-use training structure and digital resources (Milestones II.1 & II.2) that provide both technical and soft skills to aspiring green entrepreneurs. OIII (Output III) is linked to WP3, also coordinated by NKUA, and implements the Pre-Incubation Framework. The participants go through three structured phases: Training Workshops (AIII.1), Mentoring (AIII.2) and Advice on Mature Business Ideas (AIII.3). Feedback mechanisms are integrated in activity AIII.4. Milestones are a report on the implemented training sessions (Milestone III.1), a portfolio of green business ideas (Milestone III.2), a complete documentation of the pre-incubation process (Milestone III.3) and the presentation of the "Green Spark Award" (Milestone III.4). OIV (Output IV) is approached through WP4 that is implemented by NKUA and the municipalities of Florina & Novaci and will focus on dissemination, policy implementation and long-term sustainability. Output IV is produced through Activities IV.1 to IV.6, including events, workshops, communication materials and joint policy briefs (Milestone IV.3). The results include a visibility strategy, reports and a roadmap for replication (Milestones IV.1,2, 4). All outputs and WPs are interlinked and mutually reinforcing the project as: ● WP1 identifies key vulnerabilities and barriers to a just transition in GR and NMK. It also defines key social & professional groups affected by the coal phase-out and clusters according to needs, skills, and readiness levels for green entrepreneurship ● WP2 provides the development of tools and methods for capacity building ● WP3 transforms early-stage business ideas into viable business concepts and validates them before a future formal incubation/acceleration process ● WP4 ensures exploitation of the project and continuity of its outcomes This interplay of activities leads to the project's outcome which is the enhancement of skills, cooperation, and green transition readiness of clustered target groups in regions affected by coal

	transition, through the development of a transnational support structure to transform innovative green ideas into sustainable businesses. The project's approach to capacity development combines structured learning, mentoring, digital tools and peer-to-peer exchange to build confidence and unlock community-led innovation. The results of the project will contribute to the following long-term impacts: Foster a resilient green entrepreneurship ecosystem, new career prospects, acceleration of Just Transition strategies, promote low-carbon practices and adaptation to EU climate targets in Greece and North Macedonia.

Impact			
The project will foster a resilient green entrepreneurship ecosystem in the regions of Florina and Novaci, providing the foundation for new sustainable and climate-resilient business initiatives, thus contributing to inclusive economic diversification. Therefore, it will support job creation and new career prospects in the green economy enforcing local economic growth. Improved institutional capacity to absorb and manage climate-related opportunities and finance, through project development support and policy integration, will enable local authorities to accelerate the implementation of Just Transition strategies and unlock national and EU funds. Low-carbon practices will be promoted across sectors while regional resilience to climate change will be enhanced through locally rooted innovation and cross-border cooperation. Eventually, project insights will be embedded into policy and education, enabling replication and long-term sustainability.			
Outcome Enhancement of skills, cooperation, and green transition readiness of clustered target groups in regions affected by coal transition through the development of a transnational support structure to transform innovative green ideas into sustainable businesses.			
Output I **OI: Trends and barriers to a just transition in GR and NMK are identified. Key social & professional groups affected by the coal phase-out are defined and clustered according to their needs, skills, and readiness levels for green entrepreneurship.**	**Output II** **OII: Integrated training programme to accelerate green business development is produced, tailored to post-lignite regional needs and requirements.**	**Output III** **OIII: The green pre-incubator programme is developed and implemented, upgrading knowledge, skills and business ideas.**	**Output IV** **OIV: Long-term sustainability & replicability is established; the project's results are communicated and disseminated among the stakeholder community**
Work packages and activities			
WP1: Baseline assessment and stakeholder engagement – Identification of barriers, trends & clustering of target groups (led by NEA-CluBE)	**WP2: Structured training programme** *(led by NKUA)*	**WP 3: Operational phase of the green pre-incubator programme** *(led by NKUA)*	**WP 4 : Exploitation & communication actions** *(led by Florina-Novaci)*
A I.1 Collection of socio-economic & environmental data - Identification of barriers to the route of just transition	**A II.1** Planning and development of the training programme modules	**A III.1** Phase 1: Structured training on green business development through a series of workshops	**A IV.1** Strategic dissemination & communication plan
A I.2 Definition & clustering of target groups according to	**A II.2** Development of Gamified Digital Lab for	**A III.2** Phase 2: Coaching and mentoring from business experts	**A IV.2** Visual identity, project branding and dissemination material

their role and the benefit of the pre-incubator process	structuring and refining green business ideas	**A III.3** Phase 3: Submission of mature business ideas and advanced consulting	**A IV.3** Participation in local events
	A II.3 Guidance and application of the Digital Lab	**A III.4** Feedback and evaluation of business ideas	**A IV.4** Media releases, press articles & publications
			A IV.5 Workshop in the Municipality of Novaci to present the developed business ideas from the accelerator procedure in Greece
			A IV.6 Final event to present outcomes, facilitate cross-border networking, and ensure long-term uptake of results in the Municipality of Florina

4.5 Outcome (overarching project goal) including indicators

Outcome:

Enhancement of skills, cooperation and green transition readiness of clustered target groups in regions affected by coal transition through the development of a transnational support structure to transform innovative green ideas into sustainable businesses.

Indicators for the outcome:

Outcome indicator 0.1: Number of developed & validated green business concepts		
Unit: Number of business concepts	Baseline (start of project): 0	Target value (end of project): 5
Means of verification and a description of the verification procedure: - Documented business proposals submitted through the digital lab and positively evaluated by assigned mentors based on predefined criteria (e.g. feasibility, sustainability, alignment with climate goals)		

Outcome indicator 0.2: Percentage of participants (approximately 50 participants in total) who present increased capacity (knowledge, skills, confidence) in green business development after participation in the pre-incubation process		
Unit: Percentage (%)	Baseline (start of project): 0%	Target value (end of project): 85%
Means of verification and a description of the verification procedure: - Pre- and post-training self-assessment surveys filled in by participants at the beginning and end of the training phase. Results will be aggregated and compared to measure improvement. - Evaluation by the steering committee of the project.		

4.6 Outputs (specific project goals) including indicators and work packages (activities)

Output I:

Trends and barriers to a just transition in GR and NMK are identified. Key social & professional groups affected by the coal phase-out are defined and clustered according to their needs, skills, and readiness levels for green entrepreneurship.

Indicators for Output I:

Indicator I.1: Completed baseline assessment report covering socio-economic vulnerabilities and decarbonisation barriers			
Unit: Report	Baseline (start of project): 0	Target value and planned date of attainment: 1 [by March 2026]	
Means of verification and a description of the verification procedure: - Finalised report published online and internally distributed to the consortium			

Indicator I.2: Plan of interactions, identifying patterns between the clusters of candidate entrepreneurs and developing of tailor-made procedures for each cluster		
Unit: Plan of interactions	Baseline (start of project): 0	Target value and planned date of attainment: 1 [by June 2026]
Means of verification and a description of the verification procedure - Written statements of involvement of target actors prepared in cooperation with the consortium describing the role and participation of each actor in the project - Reports of meetings - List of participants		

Activities corresponding to Output I:

Work Package (WP1): Baseline assessment and stakeholder engagement – Identification of barriers, trends & clustering of target groups

Lead: *NEA and CluBE*

WP1 generates a comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic and environmental landscape in both regions, highlighting key barriers to just transition establishing the evidence base and segmentation logic required for designing targeted training interventions, ensuring that the project's next phases are both needs-based and inclusive. The clustering of target groups that the WP provides, enables the tailoring of training content and mentoring strategies to diverse user profiles.

A I.1: Collection of socio-economic & environmental data & identification of barriers to the route of just transition

Collection of quantitative and qualitative data across sectors such as employment, education, energy (the trends in the energy sector since the beginning of the coal transition) and environment to identify priority areas for green entrepreneurship. The data will be collected form excessive - scientific and grey- literature review, datasets from the databases of the consortium, interviews and meetings with stakeholders. NEA will lead the data collection in North Macedonia, CluBE will be responsible for the Greek side and NKUA will monitor methodological consistency and ensure comparability between regions. In addition, the analysis and mapping of the main administrative, financial, technical and behavioural barriers hindering a fair and inclusive decarbonization process in both project regions will be conducted. The analysis will be based on secondary data, existing reports and statistical indicators and will be carried out through research by NKUA and NEA. CluBE will contribute by assessing and elaborating on the findings from the Greek side. The aim is to produce a structured section on the assessment of barriers, which will be part of the baseline report with the insights on key socio-economic and environmental factors, emerging trends and barriers of just transition.

A I.2 Definition & clustering of target groups according to their role and the benefit of the pre-incubator process

Identification & characterisation of target groups (e.g. unemployed youth, aspiring entrepreneurs, small business owners, etc.). On this basis, these prospective green entrepreneurs will be approached, and the following training sessions will be tailored based on this. CluBE will lead the analytical process, with data provided by the municipalities and validated by NEA and NKUA. The next step of the procedure includes the clustering and the structure of a plan of interactions. The

activity will primarily be conducted by CluBE, with NKUA and NEA conducting a review to ensure cross border comparability.

Milestone (MS I.1): Report on the key socio-economic and environmental factors, emerging trends and barriers of just transition (by Q2 2026)

Milestone (MS I.2): Report on the definition and exploitation of group clusters (by Q3 2026)

<u>Output II</u>:
Integrated training programme to accelerate green business development is produced, tailored to post-lignite regional needs and requirements.

Indicators for Output II:

Indicator II.1: Structured training programme to accelerate green business development with different training modules according to cluster analysis (of Output I)		
Unit: Training programme	Baseline (start of project): 0	Target value and planned date of attainment: 1 [by December 2026]
Means of verification and a description of the verification procedure: - Training requirements, objectives, and structure of courses documented in a formal Training Programme Handbook		

Indicator II.2: Gamified Digital Lab for structuring and refining green business ideas		
Unit: IT system	Baseline (start of project): 0	Target value and planned date of attainment: 1 [by June 2027]
Means of verification and a description of the verification procedure: - Guidebook - Operational IT system (web-based application, a link from the project website will be available, directing to the system, the URL will be publicly accessible)		

Activities corresponding to Output II:

Work Package (WP2): Structured training programme

Lead: *NKUA (with support from CluBE and NEA)*

This WP includes all preparatory work for delivering the knowledge components and interactive tools. The training curriculum ensures that all relevant knowledge is tailored to the participants' needs, while the Gamified Digital Lab adds a dynamic layer of engagement. By simulating the experience of pitching to an investor and providing real-time feedback, the Lab activates critical thinking and helps refine ideas before participants move into the operational pre-incubation phase. These tools ensure that participants enter Output III with better structured, more mature business concepts, increasing the programme's potential for success.

A II.1: Planning and development of the training programme modules

Development of a modular curriculum that addresses the key topics of green entrepreneurship, including business modelling, sustainability practises, access to finance and scaling. The curriculum will consist of multiple modules, each structured as a self-contained unit (e.g. introduction to green business models, financial planning, marketing & digital tools, sustainability standards, scaling strategies). Modules will include learning objectives, short lecture content and interactive exercises. The curriculum will be structured to match the different profiles of participants identified in Output I, and a Training Programme Handbook will be created. NKUA is leading this task with support from NEA and CluBE.

A II.2: Development of Gamified Digital Lab for structuring and refining green business ideas

The Gamified Digital Lab is a specialised IT application that provides a phased, game-based pathway to support and provide guidance to approximately 50 trainees in the development of

business ideas as well as in their refinement process. The application will be developed in an agile methodology reaching initially the Minimum Viable Product (MVP) stage and will then be scaled up to production. A cloud-native architecture will be adopted to ensure the reliability, scalability and extensibility of the software. In the first phase, it collects basic data about participants' business ideas (sector, knowledge level and familiarity with green transition etc.) to classify them across key dimensions. In the second phase, the tool presents a structured set of predefined questions, similar to those used in investor interviews. These questions will be designed and developed by NKUA and entered into the system. The application automatically processes the answers according to predefined scoring rules, which will be defined under the responsibility of NKUA, generating a readiness score for each participant. The score aims to reflect and provide a quantitative measure of the maturity of green business ideas. The tool will be available on the project's website.

A II.3: Guidance and application of the Digital Lab

This activity ensures the effective utilisation and integration of the Gamified Digital Lab into the overall support structure of the project. Participants will be guided through the tool with the help of practical instructions and a user-friendly interface. The application includes automatic, exportable feedback tailored to the profile and choices of each user. The Gamified Digital Lab will be available in a designated URL, publicly accessible through the internet and while publicly accessible, login credentials will be provided to the users to enter the application.

The Lab's evaluation procedure will be applied in two phases:

- Initially, at the end of Output II to establish a pre-training readiness baseline,
- at the end of Output III to assess the improvements and validate the impact of the pre-incubation support.

By comparing the two outputs, the project will quantify the learning curve and readiness progress of each participant. This dual testing function ensures a robust feedback loop and supports both the refinement of business ideas and the final award process. The feedback will be provided by specialised staff from NKUA, supported by mentors and experts from partner organisations (e.g. CluBE, NEA) and local business representatives confirmed through Letters of Support, such as the Chamber of Commerce etc.

Milestone (MS II.1): Integrated training programme (by December 2026)

Milestone (MS II.2): Description and guidelines for the Gamified Digital Lab (by June 2027)

<u>Output III:</u>
The green pre-incubator programme is developed and implemented, upgrading knowledge, skills and business ideas.

Indicators for output III:

Indicator III.1: 50 trainees from all target groups gained knowledge and experience from the training courses		
Unit: Trainees	Baseline (start of project): 0	Target value and planned date of attainment: 50 [by March 2028]
Means of verification and a description of the verification procedure (e.g., data sources, data collection, measurement methods): - Learning Material - List of Attendants - Evaluation of the courses by the attendants - Photo documentation - Summary of the courses		

Indicator III.2:
Readiness level improvement of the trainees

Unit: Percentage	Baseline (start of project): 0	Target value and planned date of attainment: 30% [by March 2028] (30% represents an average relative increase in the Digital Lab readiness scores between the baseline at the end of Output II (T0) and the final assessment at the end of Output III (T1). Scores are generated automatically by the Lab's assessment module (0–100 scale) under NKUA's scoring rules. The calculation will be based on the group of participants who complete both assessments.)

Means of verification and a description of the verification procedure (e.g., data sources, data collection, measurement methods):

- Assessment and score of the Gamified Digital tool by the trainees before and after the implementation of the training programme
- Overall evaluation by the steering committee and training experts

Activities corresponding to Output III:

Work Package (WP 3): Operational phase of the green pre-incubator programme

Lead: *NKUA (with support from NEA, CluBE and municipalities)*

WP3 activates the tools and structures developed in Output II and upscales from conceptualisation to real-world application. The structured trainings (AIII.1) provide aspiring green entrepreneurs with key knowledge and skills, while the mentoring process (AIII.2) provides personalised advice that improves the feasibility of ideas. The business plan submission (AIII.3) allows participants to consolidate their progress and present refined ideas. Finally, the second stage application of the Gamified Digital Lab (A III.4) quantifies improvements, provides targeted feedback and supports a transparent selection process for the Green Spark Award. This comprehensive support cycle ensures that participants not only strengthen their ideas but also build the capacity and confidence to pursue sustainable green entrepreneurship.

A III.1: Phase 1: Structured training on green business development through a series of workshops

This activity involves the delivery of eight interactive training sessions based on the modules developed in Output II for participants identified through the clustering process. Prospective start-up founders include individuals directly affected by the lignite phase-out, young people etc. (see Green Transition Target Groups (GTTG)). The workshops will be held in in person in Florina, while an online participation option will be offered to ensure inclusiveness for participants from both countries (also completely online in case of unforeseen circumstances) and will cover key topics such as green value propositions, circular business models, financial planning and pitching skills. Trainers from NKUA and experienced practitioners from the consortium and its wider stakeholders' network will deliver the sessions.

A III.2: Phase 2: Coaching and mentoring from business experts

Participants will be trained by experts and business mentors. These experts include NKUA staff with relevant scientific expertise, experienced practitioners from the consortium and its wider stakeholders' network, and mentors drawn from the local entrepreneurial ecosystem (e.g. Chambers of Commerce, business networks). Their involvement has been confirmed through Letters of Support. The mentors will help refine the ideas developed in the workshops and address gaps and challenges. This process will not be limited to a fixed number of sessions but will extend over a defined period providing a minimum of 12 coaching & mentoring sessions. These sessions focus on practical feasibility, market readiness and alignment with the principles of the green transition. The mentoring will be delivered primarily online.

A III.3: Phase 3: Submission of mature business ideas and advanced consulting

Participants will submit one refined business plan per participant or team for final review to an expert committee, consisting of the steering committee of the project (1 scientific representative of each partner) and an expert from the engaged target group organizations, e.g. Chamber of

Commerce. This expert will be selected and invited according to the focus area of the business plan. Selected participants who demonstrate pre-training readiness according to AII.3 will receive extended consulting support by NKUA and external consultants will conduct the final assessment and provide tailored advice on potential next steps for implementation or further incubation.

A III.4: Feedback and evaluation of business ideas

This activity involves the final use of the Gamified Digital Lab by participants to repeat the readiness assessment. Their final results will be compared to the initial result (from Output III) to quantify the improvement. The results, along with qualitative feedback and overall participation (e.g. consistency in engaging with mentoring, responsiveness in refining their business ideas, and contribution to collaborative activities with peers and stakeholders), will be reviewed by experts who will determine the winner of the Green Spark Award. It will be awarded at the final event as a symbolic recognition of excellence (not monetary prize), to the top-performing business ideas. These experts include NKUA staff with relevant scientific expertise, experienced practitioners from partner organizations, and mentors drawn from the local entrepreneurial ecosystem (e.g. Chambers of Commerce, business networks). Their involvement has been confirmed through Letters of Support

Milestone (MS III.1): Completion of the training sessions (by Q1 2028)

Milestone (MS III.2): List of submitted green business ideas (by Q1 2028)

Milestone (MS III.3): Report on the overall green pre-incubator procedure (by Q1 2028)

Milestone (MS III.4): Completion of the Gamified Digital Lab and Awarding of the “Green Spark Award” (by Q1 2028)

Output IV:
Long-term sustainability & replicability is established; the project’s results are communicated and disseminated among the stakeholder community

This Output focuses on the effective dissemination of project results, policy uptake and cross-border co-operation. The aim is to ensure long-term impact and replicability by embedding good practices and learnings into local and regional policies and by raising awareness among stakeholders through a well-structured communication strategy.

Indicators for Output IV:

Indicator IV.1: Participation at third party events (national or European)		
Unit: Events	Baseline (start of project): 0	Target value and planned date of attainment: 6 [by March 2028]
Means of verification and a description of the verification procedure (e.g., data sources, data collection, measurement methods): - Agenda - Presentations - Photo documentation		

Indicator IV.2: Media & Publications		
Unit: Press releases, Articles, Newsletters	Baseline (start of project): 0	Target value and planned date of attainment: 19 in total [by March 2028] 8 press releases 8 project-related articles 3 newsletters

Means of verification and a description of the verification procedure (e.g., data sources, data collection, measurement methods): - Screenshots - Communication activities report - Web links

Indicator IV.3: Project website		
Unit: Website	Baseline (start of project): 0	Target value and planned date of attainment: 1 [by June 2026]
Means of verification and a description of the verification procedure: - Screenshots - Web link		

Activities corresponding to Output IV:

Work Package (WP 4): Exploitation and communication actions

Lead: *Municipality of Florina and Municipality of Novaci (with the support of NEA, CluBE and NKUA)*

WP4 ensures that the project results reach a wide audience and have a long-term impact. The structured dissemination strategy, combined with a compelling visual identity and targeted publications, guarantees high visibility and stakeholder engagement. Policy briefs and regional events will facilitate the uptake of lessons learnt and enable replication of successful practises in other regions. The final events in both municipalities will anchor the visibility of the project in the public discourse and foster cross-border dialogue on sustainable development and green entrepreneurship.

AIV.1: Strategic dissemination & communication plan

Design of a comprehensive dissemination strategy for target groups, including identification of objectives, channels and messaging. The strategy will define the structure of all communication activities and will ensure coherent visibility of the project throughout its life cycle. NEA and CluBE will each adapt it to their respective local level.

AIV.2: Visual identity, project branding and dissemination material

Development of project logo, templates, visual material for social media and dissemination materials (brochures, roll-ups, videos, etc.). These elements will ensure the recognisability and professional presentation of the project in all formats and will be used in all project-related events, including training sessions, workshops, conferences, the final event, as well as in dissemination through partners' networks and online channels.

AIV.3: Participation in local events

Organization or participation in at least six local and regional events on green transition and entrepreneurship. For example, CluBE actively participates every year in a series of events organized in the region of Western Macedonia, aiming to raise environmental awareness, engage youth, and promote the principles of the circular economy, such as the Environment Days of the Region of Western Macedonia, presenting activities and best practices that highlight the importance of sustainable development and the green transition and the annual Youth Fest, where young people from the region are informed and engaged in interactive activities related to energy, the environment, and green skills. NKUA participates annually at the Building Green Conference and Expo held in Athens highlighting projects, technical solutions and case studies on sustainability and green development. NEA participates in the International Scientific Agribusiness Conference "AgroMak", advancing sustainable and digital agriculture, building strong partnerships and synergies. Moreover, collaboration with other EUKI projects will be sought to maximise outreach and ensure mutual visibility.

AIV.4: Media releases, press articles & publications

Publication of eight project-related articles and blog posts, three newsletters and eight press releases in both countries highlighting project milestones, participant experiences and success stories. Includes both traditional and digital media. As an effective tool for reaching and influencing

	policy makers, one policy brief will be written and delivered to the public authorities that are involved with policy making related to the transition from coal. **AIV.5: Workshop in the Municipality of Novaci to present the developed business ideas from the green pre-incubation procedure in Greece** A dedicated event will be held to showcase selected business ideas developed during the green pre-incubator phase in Greece to enable cross-border knowledge transfer and policy discussions. Stakeholders and local institutions (University and Municipality of Bitola, Centre for Civic Initiative, Renewable energy providers) will be invited to discuss the adaptation of similar approaches in North Macedonia. The event will take place in person with approximately 50 participants, however hybrid and online participation will be possible in case of unforeseen circumstances **AIV.6: Final event to present outcomes, facilitate cross-border networking, and ensure long-term uptake of results in the Municipality of Florina** Final event in Greece for the project to present key outcomes, distribute policy briefs, highlight success stories, award the Green Spark Award and facilitate networking among regional stakeholders. The event will be attended by approximately 50 participants and will promote sustainability and future cooperation beyond the project duration. The event will be in person, however hybrid and online participation will be possible in case of unforeseen circumstances. **Milestone (MS IV.1):** Dissemination & Communication Plan (by Q1 2026) **Milestone (MS IV.2):** Establishment of the project visual identity, branding & dissemination material (by Q1 2026) **Milestone (MS IV.3):** Policy briefing on the future of just transition (by Q4 2027) **Milestone (MS IV.4):** Final report on the project dissemination and communication actions (by Q1 2028)
4.7 Contribution to GHG emission reductions, avoidance or removals	**How does your project contribute to direct mitigation effects** (Sub-indicator IVa: Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduced, avoided or removed directly through finance of mitigation measures): No direct emissions reductions are expected from the project. The proposed “Green Pre-Incubators” project does not finance or implement physical mitigation measures such as renewable energy installations or reforestation during its duration. Instead, it focuses on capacity-building and technical assistance for early-stage entrepreneurs. Therefore, the project will not produce any immediate, measurable GHG reduction within its own activities. Any emission reductions will instead occur indirectly as a downstream effect of the startups the project will support. As a result, Indicator IVa (direct GHG emissions reduced or carbon stocks enhanced by the project) is effectively zero, since no direct mitigation investments are undertaken by the project itself. Under this scope, at proposal stage, we confirm Indicator IVa = 0 tCO_2e (no direct reduction), and we focus on the indirect impacts described next. **How does your project contribute indirect mitigation** effects (Sub-indicator IVb: Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduced, avoided or removed indirectly through technical assistance provided): The main contribution of the project is the indirect reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by enabling climate-friendly business start-ups. “Green Pre-Incubators” will enable early-stage green entrepreneurs to ideate new businesses in areas such as renewable energy, circular economy (waste minimisation) and sustainable agriculture. Through tailored training, mentoring and networking support – particularly to clustered individuals in regions undergoing transitions to cleaner growth models – the hub creates an enabling environment for these innovators to develop and later implement solutions that replace fossil fuels, reduce waste and cut methane emissions. This indirect pathway means that emissions are reduced outside the immediate scope of the project (at the level of the start-ups’ operations or their customers), often with a time lag, but causally linked to the project’s activities (through the support given to the start-ups).

	Results chain - Casual pathway: Project activities (capacity building, coaching, linkage with the business sector) → stronger climate-related startups → deployment of clean technologies or practises by these startups (post-incubation) → avoided GHG emissions. The procedure will be documented for each business idea (e.g. a composting business diverting waste from landfill to avoid methane) and quantify the impact where possible with the use of recognised methodologies, particularly the GHG Protocol for Project Accounting, to estimate and later verify the reductions. Emissions will be calculated as the difference between the baseline scenario and the alternative solution. At the end of the project, an updated overall and quantitative emission reduction forecast will be presented, based on realised outcomes and plausible scaling. Our aim is to create the basis for a scalable, long-term emissions reduction that is in line with the EU's decarbonisation goals. Evidence from similar initiatives confirms this potential. Startups from the EU Climate-KIC Accelerator, for example, have avoided a total of ~25 million tonnes of CO_2 by scaling their innovations. Even though this project operates on a smaller scale, it aims to replicate this indirect impact by creating a pipeline of climate-positive ventures. To summarise, Green Pre-Incubators contributes to climate action by creating a new generation of green businesses that will reduce GHG emissions in the energy, waste and agriculture sectors. While the project itself does not generate direct reductions, its legacy lies in the cumulative impact of the supported ideas. We are committed to quantifying this indirect impact in tCO_2e, reporting biannually and at the end of the project, clearly distinguishing between planned and actual outcomes.
4.8 Technical, political and economic risks	**Risk 1** **Type/name of risk:** Lack of engagement from target groups (Outputs I) **Extent of risk and degree to which it can be influenced:** Low – Participation in activities may be lower than anticipated due to competing priorities, lack of time, or limited confidence in entrepreneurship. The consortium has considerable influence through early engagement and trust-building actions. **Strategy to minimise risk:** The interest of many stakeholders in both regions has been expressed through the 17 letters of support provided. **Risk 2** **Type/name of risk:** Limited support from local authorities (Output III) **Extent of risk and degree to which it can be influenced:** Low – Public authorities may not fully integrate project findings or pre-incubation frameworks into their local development strategies. The consortium has moderate influence via capacity-building. **Strategy to minimise risk:** Involving municipalities as project partners from the beginning. Co-develop policy briefs, hold joint workshops (Output IV), and use the clustering data and success cases as policy arguments. **Risk 3** **Type/name of risk:** Implementation and application of the IT tool (Output II) **Extent of risk and degree to which it can be influenced:** Low – Some participants may face barriers to using the Gamified Digital Lab. The consortium can strongly influence this risk through design and support. **Strategy to minimise risk:** Provide onboarding support, mobile-optimized platforms, user friendly environment, in-person guidance (Output II). Pilot tests will allow early detection of accessibility issues. Cooperation with experienced external IT experts. **Risk 4** **Type/name of risk:** Limited participation in the pre-incubation phase (Output III) **Extent of risk and degree to which it can be influenced:** Low – Participation in pre-incubation programs is traditionally low in sparsely populated or economically transitioning regions.

	Strategy to minimise risk: Use of tailored outreach, early-stage community engagement, cooperation with local institutions (municipalities, chambers, youth networks), and regional clustering (Output I). Visibility campaigns and simplified application process will be used. **Risk 5** **Type/name of risk:** Low number of idea submission (Output III) **Extent of risk and degree to which it can be influenced:** Medium – Participants may hesitate to formalise or submit their ideas, especially if lacking experience or confidence. **Strategy to minimise risk:** Provide step-by-step guidance from early stages of the programme. Mentors and digital prompts in the Gamified tool.
4.9 Ensuring sustainability	<u>Social and human sustainability</u> The long-term value of "Green Pre-Incubators" lies primarily in the social capital, capacity building and institutional co-operation it promotes. While participation rates in green entrepreneurship programmes in low population density regions may be modest, the intangible outcomes of the project are designed to outlast the formal duration of the project and provide a foundation for continued transformation. By engaging public authorities, young professionals and civil society actors throughout the project, "Green Pre-Incubators" creates the conditions for a cultural shift towards green transition readiness. The project empowers municipalities to adopt more inclusive and climate-conscious approaches to local development, not through technical mandates, but through education, dialogue and policy co-creation. Through joint workshops and structured interactions, public officers in Florina and Novaci are expected to internalise new knowledge, build trust with community stakeholders and incorporate the idea of just transition into the local agenda -including employment planning, youth programmes and business sector support. The project invests in the people behind the transition. Participants, especially young and underrepresented individuals, will improve their entrepreneurial awareness, their orientation towards a green economy and their ability to plan for the long term. Through targeted guidance and evaluation processes, critical thinking, goal setting and self-assessment, skills will be fostered – skills that are transferable beyond the immediate business context. Even if participants do not pursue a start-up path immediately, they will be better equipped to engage in the green economy as professionals, employees or policy makers. Replicability in this field is further ensured by the structured curriculum and the documented pre-incubation process, which together create transferable knowledge. These elements can be adopted by other municipalities, universities and business networks, supporting replicability in similar coal-dependent regions and enabling upscaling at national and EU level. <u>Institutional sustainability</u> The project builds a resilient human ecosystem of skilled individuals with a heightened awareness of environmental responsibility and socio-economic change. The "Green Pre-Incubators" project emphasises mutual learning and building trust between different stakeholders - youth, educators, business mentors and local communities. This interaction creates new channels of communication and co-operation that will remain active beyond the project. Public authorities, as driving forces in local planning, will continue to use the knowledge produced by the project. <u>Cross-border cohesion</u> By promoting joint initiatives and aligning interests between regions, the project also contributes to a transnational mindset where local development is increasingly viewed through the lens of shared challenges and solutions. These soft mechanisms of cohesion are crucial for sustaining just transition efforts across borders and over time. <u>Financial and structural sustainability</u> The structured training programme will be documented and key materials (e.g. programme outline) will remain available through the project website. The Gamified Digital Lab will remain accessible to implementing partners and local authorities, ensuring that the knowledge base created can support further replication and adaptation. As communities experience more equitable access to opportunities, active participation in shaping local solutions and recognition of their ideas, the public legitimacy of the transition policy increases. This leads to long-term social acceptance, which mitigates resistance and ensures smoother implementation of future environmental strategies.