

ECOFEMSKILLS ERASMUS+ KA210



EcoFemSkills Learning Course

Creating a small business

Comprehensive document offering information, insights, tips and other strategies for creating a mission-driven business as an individual but also as a collective.

Developed by Fectoria Social



Developed by the EcoFemSkills Erasmus+ Partnership as follows

- **Plastic waste processing** - Asociación Ecologica Precious Plastic Canarias hacia una economía circular
- **Create a small business** – Asociación para la participación e integración social FACTORÍA SOCIAL
- **Addressing the gender-based biases** – Erifyli Center
- **Developing an ecological mindset** – Dafni Kek

This document has been produced by its respective partner and is part of a 4-part series. You can access the other three documents or the complete publication through the EcoFemSkills Erasmus+ Partnership [platform](#).



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Introduction

This handbook has been developed within the EcoFemSkills project, which aims to provide an intersectional approach to women and femininities' empowerment and proactive stance in relation to climate change.

The project has identified women and femininities as the main target group, as a way to deal with gender-based stereotypes around green practices, especially those that are of a more technical nature. This choice has not been made as a way to limit the involvement on non-female identifying persons, but rather to support the mainstreaming of a gender-neutral approach towards technical and decision-making activities.

Our course has been developed around 4 individual units, for everyone using this handbook to be able to choose which one seems more interesting and follow it independently of the other units if they wish so. The 4 units are:

Plastic waste processing (Unit 1)

An experiential guide with practical workshops suggestions to allow for a comprehensive understanding and knowledge gaining around small-scale plastic recycling, from recollection to final products. Plastic recycling is the practical ecological practice we suggest in the EcoFemSkills project as it combines a tangible example of what recycling looks like in practice (not just collection), understanding the science behind plastic and becoming more conscious in its use. For the case of the EcoFemSkills project, the partners implemented a series of workshops where these activities were implemented for learners to actually learn the whole process.

Developing a small business (Unit 2)

Through this unit you get to know the structural elements that make a small business run, from initial idea and design to actual everyday challenges and realities. The small business can be a very helpful "tool" in combating climate change in a meaningful, sustainable and motivating way, especially when it is a conscious choice and an example of a paradigm shift driven by intersectionality. This part can be studied either in a group or by oneself. For the case of the EcoFemSkills project, the content of the unit was implemented in a group setting.

Addressing gender biases (Unit 3)

This unit, as its name suggests, aims to go deep into the issue of gender identity, address traditional perceptions and expectations from the traditional gender binary and challenge beliefs and mentalities that dictate who can/should do something and who cannot/should not do it. As learners you will be able to gain knowledge on terminology, ideas and philosophical “test” that allow you to become more inquisitive on biases and stereotypes and thus address them within yourselves and the people around you. The content has been implemented in group settings, as with all the previous units.

Developing an ecological mindset (Unit 4)

This final unit addresses the notion of ecology and environmentalism in relation to the individual, the collective and the wider societal levels. This chapter follows a holistic approach to ecological mentalities, meaning that it doesn’t analyse only individual responsibility and practices, but goes a step further into how it is at its core a rather intersectional issue that reflects on the natural environment. As a chapter it integrates elements from all previous ones in terms of mentality related to them, without repeating information that has already been addressed. As was the case with all previous units, this one was also implemented in a group setting which helped refine its content and overall approach.

In this document you can access the content related to “Creating a small business”. For the other 3 thematics, please visit [here](#) to access the other 3 parts as individual publications or as part of the complete publication.

The handbook has been designed (as much as possible) to be used both in “classroom” setting, as well as for self-study.

As it is published under creative commons license, you are free to use, adapt and remix it as much as you wish and depending on the needs of your communities and yourselves, as long as you use it under the same conditions.

This course intentionally blends theoretical, practical, and case-based approaches to accommodate diverse learning styles. The document emerged from the expertise of four different organisations’ practitioners—we’ve preserved their unique voices to reflect the richness of the field.

Unit 2 |

Create a small business

Introduction

Self-employment can be an opportunity to explore new ways of generating income and developing skills. This manual is designed to give you a first glimpse into the world of entrepreneurship, helping you to discover what it means to start a business idea.

Throughout these pages, you will be guided through basic concepts such as what self-employment is, how you can identify a business idea that motivates you and what steps you can take to assess whether that idea is viable, giving you the tools to start thinking about new opportunities.

You will learn how to do a small skills analysis, how to observe your environment to detect opportunities and how to develop a value proposition that makes your idea attractive. We will also explore the different types of companies and legal options that exist so that if you decide to become an entrepreneur at some point, you will know where to start.

Finally, we'll talk about how you can manage a project, from creating a basic plan to using digital resources to promote it. All this with an accessible and practical approach, so that you can see self-employment as another possibility on your path.

In short, it invites you to explore new ways of thinking about work and the opportunities that may be available to you.

Here is an overview of the 7 different sections of this unit

1. What is self-employment and how to identify the business idea?
2. The business idea
3. Defining company types and national system
4. Social entrepreneurship and participatory leadership/management
5. Drawing up a realistic business plan and sustainability measures
6. Digital marketing and online services

2.1: What is self-employment and how to identify the business idea?

Objective: To encourage personal and critical reflection on the approach to self-employment and the definition of its purpose.

Self-employment is the work activity created by a person who works for themselves through a business they own, obtaining income from it and, over time, can generate employment and wealth not only for themselves, but also for other people.

It is a bet on the future in which the self-employed person will not only participate with his or her capital but also with his or her ingenuity, enthusiasm and potential.

People who work for themselves are called self-employed or self-employed and may, in turn, have other employees under them. Self-employment is therefore an important element of the labour market, because in addition to the creation of one's own job, one can also create the workers needed to develop the activity.

Many variables are involved in the business creation process, such as the professional profile, the capital, the assessment of market niches, etc. But before going into these issues, we would like to highlight the importance of identifying our purpose.

The definition of an objective is fundamental in the design of any project, whether it is a personal project or a work project. Entrepreneurship is a process that may entail certain economic risks and requires great dedication and effort. If we are not clear about our purpose, which is aligned with our values, it will be difficult to launch a successful business.

Being clear about our deepest purpose is equivalent to declaring a dream, the goal for which your project exists.

Only if we have well identified our purpose, can we move on to identify specific objectives, action strategies and activities.

Moreover, knowing how to tell other people about it will be the communication strategy that will allow you to reach potential allies or investors. Only if you get them to feel the same concern, the same purpose, will you get support.

Simon Sinek explains it very well in this video 'The importance of why' and his theory of the 'Golden Circle':



The entrepreneurial person

Many people believe that great entrepreneurs are born with something extraordinary, a 'gene', which makes these people 'extraordinary' and that they are lucky to succeed. The truth is that entrepreneurs develop certain characteristics, initial attitudes, which allow them to acquire the skills and competencies necessary for self-employment.

Here are some of the common characteristics that entrepreneurs have:

Passion	passion is a key ingredient in any entrepreneur's project, they like what they do, enjoy it and believe in it.
Vision	vision is the ability to visualise what your project or business will be like in 1, 3, 5, 10 and 20 years. Entrepreneurs have a vision as big as their imagination.
Learning ability	another of the characteristics of successful entrepreneurs is that they are constantly learning and training and they train in the area they need to learn at that moment in order to grow their business and take it to the next level
Confidence	self-confidence is developed day by day, believing oneself capable of solving the challenges, obstacles or problems that interfere with one's path through a process of self-knowledge, of the values and talents that we have.
Planning	they plan daily activities that lead them to the conquest of their monthly goals and thus, little by little, they begin to achieve bigger and bigger goals. There are many tools that help to have a better

	planning of the activities that you want to carry out in your company.
Achieve and celebrate results	the ability to achieve and recognise the results they obtain.
Persistence	persistence is one of the most important characteristics of a successful entrepreneur. There are many who start out, but very few who really persist until they get what they want from their venture
Determination and resilience	this is the ability to stay focused and keep going, even when difficulties or challenges arise, setting clear objectives and working steadily towards them.
Sense of opportunity	there is a fine line between stubbornness and persistence, which is why a sense of opportunity is so important. One of the mistakes that some entrepreneurs make when starting out is to have an idea, which we think may be great, but which we have not tested with a niche market to see if it is something that people really want and need or not.
Creativity	Creativity is the ability to create and we all have the ability to create anything. Entrepreneurs use their creativity to create solutions to their clients' problems, to find different paths that lead them to their goals or to discover how to grow their business. Creativity is infinite, don't limit it, don't limit yourself in using it to find the solution to any problem
Tolerance for uncertainty	it is advisable for people who are just starting out with their venture to have a plan A, B, C, D, E, etc. Taking into account the best- and worst-case scenarios and be prepared for both scenarios. Prepare for the worst and hope for the best.
Adapting to change	As I mentioned in the previous point, many times things don't go according to our perfect plan. And that is why adapting to change is another characteristic of a successful entrepreneur.
Discipline	Discipline is being able to do what you have to do when you plan to do it. By being a disciplined person, you gain control over yourself and over the things around you, which obviously have some control, because there are many other things over which there is no control at all. However, with control over you you have won a great deal of the battle.
Leadership	an entrepreneur needs leadership to transmit his vision and enthusiasm to his team.
Identifying the right people	many entrepreneurs start with a one-person business, but as they grow, they start to see the need to hire more people and form a team. So, in order to add a person to your team it is very important to know the type of person you are looking for, it is very important that they share your values and that they share the vision of your company.

Teamwork	as I said before, we can go further with the help of a team that shares the same values and wants to work in the same direction. And for you and your team to work in harmony, it is important to establish rules, activities and priorities for each of the members.
Be very clear that the customer is the most important thing	As an entrepreneur, you have to be very clear that, if you have reached the point, you are at, or the point you want to reach, it is because of your customers. You must always focus on solving your customers' problems, providing them with a good service and giving them value.
Integrity	A characteristic of a successful entrepreneur and leader is her integrity. Integrity as a professional and as a human being.
Knowing how to sell	If you don't have sales, there is no money coming into your business. So, it is very simple, you need to sell to generate income.
Managing money	There are many entrepreneurs who start out successful, but end up spending more money than is coming into their business and, therefore, end up putting their business out of business. And that is why another of the characteristics is knowing how to manage money. It's simpler than it sounds. You have to spend less than you earn.

We could go on listing many other characteristics such as: permanent networking, continuous training, fulfilment of commitments, courage, etc. All of these give us an idea of the type of person who is an entrepreneur and we will also be able to identify those who are likely to be successful entrepreneurs.

So far, we have not worked on the business idea, nor the planning, nor have we carried out a market analysis. So, what is clear to us is that a big part of being successful is your attitude and aptitude towards life and how you deal with it.

Experiential part

Activity 1. Discover your entrepreneurial potential

Objective: To facilitate understanding of the concept of entrepreneurship and self-employment, promoting collective reflection on what it means to be an entrepreneur, as well as identifying the key characteristics that allow you to develop your own

Brief explanation of self-employment:

- Introduces the concept of self-employment as a way of working on one's own account and re-solving market needs.
- Explain how it relates to the characteristics of the entrepreneur (creativity, resilience, vision, leadership).

Interactive Discussion

What does it mean to be an entrepreneur?

- The participants, in small groups, discuss for 5 minutes what it means to them to be an entrepreneur.
- They share their definitions and examples of known or local entrepreneurs.

Materials: sheets of paper, flipchart, markers or pens.

Activity 2. The entrepreneurial mirror

Objective: To promote self-knowledge and the identification of personal interests and values, facilitating the connection between participants to discover commonalities that can inspire entrepreneurial ideas aligned with their talents and principles.

Interactive Discussion

Each participant answers key questions about themselves:

- What are my greatest talents?
- What do I enjoy doing in my free time?
- What kind of problems would I like to solve in my community or environment?
- What are my most important values and principles?

Participants share their answers in pairs to identify common interests.

Materials: Individual worksheets or paper with reflective questions.

Activity 3. Opportunity detectives

Objective: To encourage critical observation of the environment and the generation of creative ideas, enabling participants to identify problems or needs in key areas and propose innovative solutions through collaborative work and brainstorming techniques.

Interactive Discussion

Exploration of the environment.

Form pairs or groups of 3 people. Each pair/group should identify problems or needs in specific areas (education, food, sustainability, technology, tourism).

Use a template where they answer:

- What problems have we detected?
- Who is affected by this problem?
- How could it be solved?

Guided brainstorming:

Pairs/groups generate business ideas that could solve the identified needs. For 10 minutes, they write down as many ideas as they can without constraint or judgement.

Materials: sheets of paper, poster board, post-it notes, markers or pens.

Activity 4. Am I the ideal person for this idea?

Objective: To facilitate personal and group reflection on the viability of a business idea, evaluating its alignment with the skills, willingness and areas for improvement of the participants.

Personal analysis

Each pair/group selects a previously generated idea and evaluates whether it aligns with the characteristics of an entrepreneurial person.

Questions to answer:

- Do I have the necessary skills to develop this idea?
- Am I willing to face the challenges it implies?
- What do I need to improve or learn in order to carry it out?

Group discussion:

pairs or groups share their reflections and receive feedback from each other

Materials: sheets of paper, pens, post-it notes, etc.

Session summary

 **Knowledge:** In this session we focused on understanding self-employment as a viable career path and exploring the entrepreneurial mindset. To achieve this we need to recognize personal passions, skills and values as well as develop the ability to identify market needs to create solutions through observation and creativity. We reviewed the importance of planning, resilience and adaptability needed in managing a business, and finally we looked into tools and strategies for leadership, teamwork, digital marketing and sustainability.

 **Reflection:** How can your personal strengths, passions, and values contribute to solving a problem or meeting a need in your community or environment?

 **Keywords:** Self-employment, entrepreneurial mindset, passion, resilience, market needs, creativity, leadership, sustainability

2.2: The business idea

Objective: To offer practical tools of analysis for the definition of the business idea.

Identifying a solid and viable business idea is a crucial step towards self-employment. Below are some basic concepts and tools that will help you to generate and evaluate business ideas

Self-knowledge

Self-knowledge is essential to generate ideas aligned with our interests and skills. A little thought will help us to identify opportunities where we can excel and enjoy working.

- **Interests and passions:** Reflect on your interests, skills and passions, as this drives motivation. Ask yourself: 'what do I enjoy doing' and 'what are my talents'.
- **Skills and competencies:** examine your technical skills, soft skills and specific knowledge to see what you can apply to your business - do you have communication skills, graphic design experience, knowledge of technology?
- **Experience and expertise:** consider your educational background, work experience and specific expertise you can bring to the table.

Market Research

Market analysis helps to find ideas that respond to real and current needs, so it is important to be observant and curious.

- **Problem identification:** observe the problems or needs in your environment. Ask people what difficulties they face and how you can help them. A business idea is often born out of a solution to a problem.
- **Market trends:** keep abreast of current market trends. Research growth areas and areas where there is unmet demand. For example, technology trends such as artificial intelligence or the green economy may be an opportunity.
- **Customer segmentation:** Identify customers with specific needs and consider how to satisfy them better than the competition.

Value proposition

Consider how you can differentiate yourself from the competition, why would customers choose your product/service over your competitors'? Some key questions to build a clear value proposition may be: What makes your offer unique? what problem are you solving? what unique benefits do you offer to customers? how will you improve the life or experience of consumers?

Idea generation

The creative process is fundamental to developing innovative and original ideas. Use methods to generate a large number of ideas without initially judging them:

- **Brainstorming:** be prepared to stimulate your brain, ask powerful questions, dig deep...the more ideas you generate, the more likely you are to find a viable one.
- **Mind mapping:** organise and relate concepts visually to explore possibilities from different perspectives.
- **Inspiration from other sectors:** review successful ideas in other markets or industries, sometimes adapting an idea to a new context can be a formula for success.

Strategy for evaluation (SWOT analysis)

The SWOT analysis is a fundamental tool to understand the internal and external environment surrounding your business idea and will help you to understand the market context, identify:

- **Strengths:** What resources or skills make you stand out?
- **Opportunities:** What trends or gaps can you take advantage of?
- **Weaknesses:** What limitations could affect your success?
- **Threats:** What external factors could hinder your business?

Evaluating ideas

Once ideas have been generated, it is important to analyse them to determine whether they are practical and have potential.

- **Feasibility:** analyse whether the idea is feasible. Consider whether you have the tools, knowledge and resources to execute it (budget, resources, skills and time needed).
- **Market Demand:** conduct surveys, interviews, pilot tests, etc. to validate the demand for your idea. Determine if there is an audience willing to pay for your product or service.
- **Competition:** research the competition - what are they doing well, what opportunities are they not taking advantage of?

Lean Canvas

The Lean Canvas is a simplified version of the Business Model Canvas. It allows you to quickly outline the key aspects of your business idea, this outline includes:

- **Problem:** define the main needs of your customers.
- **Customer segment:** identify your target audience.
- **Unique value proposition:** explain how you will solve the problem in a differentiated way.
- **Solutions:** list the possible solutions you will offer.
- **Channels:** describe how you will reach your customers.
- **Revenue stream:** define how you will generate revenue.
- **Cost structure:** identify the key costs associated with your business.
- **Key metrics:** determine how you will measure success.
- **Special advantage:** establish what makes you unique and difficult to imitate.

It is an excellent tool to start shaping a business model. It maintains the original nine-block Canvas Model outline, which will be the basis for developing the business model.

The value proposition is placed in the centre of the canvas, being the main element of the format and the basis for the rest of the modules. It is advisable to do the Lean Canvas in groups of 4 or 5 people, including potential partners and allies.



Experiential part

Activity 1. Market research

Objective: To develop participants' analytical, research and communication skills in order to identify entrepreneurial opportunities in local contexts, through collaborative work and the use of digital

Activity

Divide the group into small teams and assign them a sector or community to research local problems or needs.

- Conduct short surveys or mock interviews.
- Look for information on internet trends (mobile usage, social networking, reports).
- Present their findings to the group in a collaborative mural or presentation.

Materials: Survey templates, Internet access, whiteboards or large sheets of paper, poster board, markers, etc.

Activity 2. The challenge of differentiating oneself

Objective: To encourage critical thinking, creativity and communication skills in participants by identifying problems or needs, designing innovative solutions and effectively presenting value

Activity

Present a list of identified problems or needs. Each team selects one and defines:

- **Problem:** What need does it solve?
- **Solution:** How would they solve it?
- **Differential Value:** Why would they choose their solution over another?
- Each team makes an 'elevator pitch' to defend their value proposition in 2 minutes.

Materials: Board, coloured cards and timers for the pitch.

Activity 3. Idea generation

Objective: To promote group creativity and generate multiple ideas in a short period of time.

Activity

Using the brainstorming technique:

- Participants write ideas on post-its or cards.
- They are grouped according to similar themes and repeated ideas are eliminated.
- The most interesting and feasible ideas are voted on using sticky dots.

Materials: Post-its, felt-tip pens, voting stickers (stickers).

Activity 4. Group diagnosis

Objective: To develop strategic and analytical skills in the participants by carrying out a SWOT analysis.

Activity

Once an idea has been selected, the participants create a SWOT analysis in teams, analysing:

- Strengths: What do we have to highlight?
- Opportunities: What does the market offer us?
- Weaknesses: What do we need to improve?
- Threats: What could negatively affect us?
- Each team presents its analysis to the group, discussing solutions or strategies to overcome weaknesses and threats.

Materials: SWOT analysis templates, markers and large sheets of paper.

Activity 5. Demand simulator

Objective: To get to know simple tools for the elaboration and obtaining of quick information.

Activity

- Each group designs a short survey to validate their idea among potential clients/clients.
- They carry out mock surveys among the other participants, using free tools for this purpose.
- Analyse the results and determine if the idea has sufficient demand to move forward.

Materials: Survey templates, digital tools (Google Forms, Typeform, WhatsApp surveys...).

Activity 6. The business canvas

Objective: To encourage participants to structure and validate a business idea through the use of the Lean Canvas model.

Activity

- Each team chooses one of the ideas worked on in previous activities.
- Fill in a Lean Canvas (value proposition, customer segments, revenue streams, etc.) using a visual template.
- Groups present their canvas to the rest of the team, explaining each section and taking questions or suggestions.

Materials: Lean Canvas templates (physical or digital).

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Session summary

 **Knowledge:** In this session we focused on developing and refining entrepreneurial ideas through self-assessment, market research, creative brainstorming, and strategic evaluation using tools like SWOT analysis and the Lean Canvas model. These exercises aim to help us identify viable business opportunities, understand market trends, and build a differentiated value proposition to solve real-world problems effectively. Practical applications include simulated surveys, group diagnoses, and presentations to collaboratively refine concepts.

 **Reflection:** How can identifying personal strengths and market needs help you create a unique and impactful business idea?

 **Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Self-assessment, Market research, Brainstorming, SWOT analysis, Lean Canvas, Value proposition, Problem-solving

2.3: Defining company types and national system

Objective: To provide information on the different types of company within the framework of national regulations.

In Spain, the legal framework for business creation and self-employment offers various options for entrepreneurs, with a focus on encouraging entrepreneurship and facilitating the creation of new businesses. The most common types of company and the key aspects of the National System related to self-employment and entrepreneurship are detailed below.

When a person decides to enter the world of entrepreneurship, the choice is important, given the consequences that the law provides for each of them, each form implies a series of advantages and disadvantages, the choice will depend on the type of project that you want to start up.

As we will see below, carrying out the activity as an individual has greater personal implications, as one is liable with one's own assets, with one's present and future assets, on the other hand, one gains in simplicity in the management of the company and the initial procedures are also simpler and less onerous.

On the other hand, with a corporate formula, although it is more complex, both at the start and when it comes to managing the company, it has the great advantage of limiting economic responsibility to the share capital subscribed, although it is true that the company's management will be responsible with all its present and future assets for the success of the operations.

Lastly, we shall consider associationism as an option for self-employment, with special reference to the third sector.

Self-employment

A self-employed person or individual entrepreneur is defined as a natural person who habitually, personally and directly carries out an economic or professional activity for profit on his or her own account and outside the sphere of management and organisation of another person.

The basic legislation regarding the self-employed is contained in the Self-Employed Workers' Statute Law, although the general provisions of the Commercial Code and the Civil Code apply to their business activity.

It is necessary to be of legal age, to have free disposal of one's assets and to carry out, on one's own account and on a regular basis, a business activity. The owner of an establishment opens to the public as owner, lessee, usufructuary or another similar concept is presumed to be such.

The choice of this legal form may be justified for tax reasons and simplicity of incorporation and formal obligations, although it is important to bear in mind the high risk involved if a large investment is to be made. It is usually the form chosen by small businesses (small shops) and by professionals (lawyers) and trades (electricians, plumbers, etc.).

The Civil Partnership

This is a contract whereby two or more people pool goods, money or labour to carry out business and share the profits. There is no minimum shareholding and, depending on the nature of the contribution made, there will be two types of partners: capitalists are those who provide the company with goods or money and industrialists are those who provide the company with their labour.

The Limited Company

The limited company is the appropriate type of company for small and medium-sized enterprises: it will always have a commercial nature, whatever the nature of its object, and its own legal personality. The name must include the words 'Sociedad de Responsabilidad Limitada', 'Sociedad Limitada' or their abbreviations 'SRL' or 'SL'.

The share capital, made up of the members' contributions, may not be less than 3,000 euros. It must be fully subscribed and paid up at the time of incorporation. Only assets or property rights capable of economic valuation may be contributed to the company, but under no circumstances may work or the provision of services be the object of a contribution.

The company's assets are divided into shares, which are not securities, may not be represented by certificates or book entries and may not be called shares. The transfer of shares must be formalised in a public document.

Cooperatives

A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons who have voluntarily joined together to form a democratic organisation whose administration and management is to be carried out in a manner agreed by the members.

Its intention is to address their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through the use of an enterprise. The diversity of needs and aspirations (work, consumption, joint marketing, education, credit, etc.) of the members, which make up the social object or co-operativised activity of these enterprises, defines a very varied typology of co-operatives.

The cooperative form offers a model not only of entrepreneurship, but also a socio-productive model that aims to produce social impacts in its environment:

1. Cooperatives are a democratic and participatory business model that generates wealth, employment, innovation, social welfare and territorial cohesion in a more equitable and sustainable way.
2. Co-operatives constitute a particular socio-economic model, but one that is fully integrated into the surrounding society and economy.
3. Cooperatives are plural: there are cooperatives of all sizes, in all activities, throughout the territory and, of course, with all ideologies.
4. Co-operatives have been identified, due to their particular characteristics, as an ideal formula for tackling today's major challenges such as climate change, social exclusion and the digital revolution.
5. Although cooperatives have been more resilient than the average of the private sector during all crises (including the current one caused by COVID-19), they have been more resilient than the average of the private sector during all crises. Their role is not limited to crisis contexts.
6. Cooperative values are fully aligned with the principles of corporate social responsibility and the SDGs.

Third sector associations

The third sector is the group of entities (associations, foundations, etc.) that are neither public nor for-profit, but which carry out social action projects or defend the interests of groups of any kind (cultural, sports, consumer, alumni associations, etc.). This is done through the use of professionals and volunteers.

Third-sector entities arise mostly as a result of the drive of citizens or the interest of companies in getting involved with specific actions to improve the areas of work in

which they are interested. Most of the areas of intervention that are most represented in this sector are social, educational, health, humanitarian, environmental and animal protection, international cooperation, cultural, artistic, sporting...

Third sector organisations are institutionally organised, they have a structure, a mission, objectives and a budget that we allocate to the achievement of the objectives and mission. This allows them to be transparent, as they have to be registered in various public registers that depend on different ministries depending on the field of our work (social, health, education, cooperation...). This means that they are subject to the regulations and accountability required by these registers.

This element reassures partners about who we are, what we do and what is expected of us.

They are private entities. They are not part of the public sector, nor are they part of the state structure, which gives us greater independence in developing our mission, although this does not mean that they cannot receive public support in the form of subsidies. In this sense, there are third sector organisations of all kinds, some of them only operate with public funds, others only with private funds, and others combine both resources.

Entities and organisations are not for profit. In other words, no profits are distributed among the members or the members of the governing bodies. All profits made are reinvested in the achievement of our institutional missions.

They have self-governing bodies. Depending on the legal status, the organisation or entity has a body that ensures that the work plans are oriented towards the fulfilment of the mission and guarantees the correct administration of its assets.

In Spain, the government has established a series of regulations and measures to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship. These policies are aimed at supporting entrepreneurs and the self-employed through subsidies, tax incentives and training programmes.

- **Law on Support for Entrepreneurs and their Internationalisation:** This law provides a comprehensive support framework for entrepreneurs. It includes measures to simplify business start-up procedures, tax incentives and financing through venture capital or specific credit lines.
- **Flat Rate for the Self-Employed:** This measure allows the newly self-employed to pay a reduced Social Security contribution for the first 12 months, facilitating the start-up of the business activity without social security charges being an economic barrier.

- **Subsidies and Aid Programmes:** There are many public aid programmes to promote entrepreneurship and self-employment, both at national and regional level. These aids are aimed at financing projects, training and advice.
- **Network of Entrepreneur Service Points (PAE):** These offices facilitate the creation of new companies by offering advice, management of procedures and support in the start-up of the business.

Self-employment and Entrepreneurship Legislation

Self-employment regulations in Spain are extensive, with laws and decrees that seek to simplify the business creation process and protect entrepreneurs, mainly the following:

- **Statute of Self-Employment:** This establishes the regulations and rights of the self-employed, including aspects of contributions, social protection and access to retirement, among others.
- **Second Chance Law:** allows entrepreneurs who have failed in their business to take advantage of a restructuring process or debt exoneration, facilitating a new start without dragging unpayable debts.

In summary, both the choice of the type of company and the knowledge of the support system for self-employment and entrepreneurship in Spain are fundamental for any entrepreneur. With the current measures, it is possible to benefit from an environment that facilitates business creation and fosters economic development.

Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship in Greece: Opportunities and Challenges with Comparisons to Spain

In Greece, self-employment has traditionally constituted a significant part of the economy, mainly due to limited employment in the private and public sectors and the strong presence of small and family-run businesses. According to Eurostat data, Greece has one of the highest rates of self-employed individuals in the European Union, especially in sectors such as retail, construction, and agriculture.

However, the concept of innovative entrepreneurship, particularly with a social or environmental character, is still in a development phase—especially compared to countries like Spain. In Spain, in recent years, a series of measures have been institutionalized to support the social economy, cooperative structures, and the establishment of small businesses, with a particular focus on gender equality, social inclusion, and environmental protection.

Legislation and Support in Greece

In Greece, the basic legal tools for supporting entrepreneurship include:

- The General Commercial Registry (G.E.MI.) and the One-Stop Service for company establishment.
- The Registry of Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE), which promotes social enterprises.
- Subsidy for New Self-Employed Individuals, through programmes by OAED (now DYPA).
- NSRF and development laws, which offer funding or tax relief for newly established businesses.

Although these tools exist, bureaucratic complexity, tax burden, institutional instability, and limited access to funding remain major obstacles for any individual wishing to start an entrepreneurial initiative.

Lack of Inclusive Approaches

One significant shortcoming in the Greek reality is the lack of inclusive approach to entrepreneurship, particularly for:

- women,
- LGBTQ+ individuals,
- persons with disabilities,
- migrants,
- and people from rural or disadvantaged areas.

By contrast, Spain already has structures such as Entrepreneur Service Points (PAE), which provide specialised support services and guidance for starting businesses in various regions and for diverse target groups.

Prospects for Greece

Greece needs a strengthened support system based on:

- simplified business creation procedures,

- access to funding for all individuals,
- training in entrepreneurial and digital transformation skills,
- and the systematic integration of gender and diversity dimensions.

Indicatively, programmes could be enhanced for women entrepreneurs in small business creation, youth cooperative initiatives, and eco-social enterprises, based on an ecofeminist approach.

Experiential part

Activity 1. What do you know about types of companies?

Objective: To facilitate understanding of the different types of company through practical analysis of examples and definitions, promoting active participation and clarifying the key characteristics of each type of company.

Activity

Divide participants into small groups.

Each group receives a card with a definition or example. They have to analyse it and guess what type of enterprise it corresponds to.

Each group presents their conclusions and the teacher clarifies concepts and explains the main characteristics of each legal form:

- Self-employment: a person who is self-employed.
- Sociedad civil: two or more people working together for a common purpose.
- Limited company (SL): ideal model for small companies with limited liability.
- Cooperatives: enterprises based on democratic participation and equitable distribution of profits.

- Associations in the Third Sector: non-profit groups with social or community aims.

Materials: Blackboard or flipchart, cards with definitions or real examples of the types of companies (self-employment, civil society, cooperative, etc.).

Activity 2. Analysis of types of companies

Objective: To develop business decision-making skills, enabling participants to evaluate and select the most appropriate legal form for different projects, considering key aspects such as type of activity, resources and purpose.

Activity

Divide participants into groups of 3-4 people.

Each group is given a case study (e.g. a rural tourism project, a shop for sustainable products, a social project).

The groups have to decide which legal form would be the most appropriate to develop such a project, based on:

- Number of people involved.
- Type of activity.
- Resources available.
- Profit or social purposes.
- Each group presents its analysis and argues its choice.

Materials: Worksheets with real or hypothetical examples of projects.

Activity 3. Entrepreneurship advisors

Objective: To promote practical learning about the different legal options and support available for entrepreneurs, developing advice and doubt resolution skills through research and analysis of regulatory documents in a simulated environment.

Activity

Each group takes on the role of an advice office for entrepreneurs.

A representative from another group visits the office and asks questions such as: What are the benefits of being self-employed in this case?

- What are the benefits of being self-employed in this case?
- What are the legal implications of forming an SL?
- How is a co-operative set up?
- What grants or subsidies does the Third Sector offer?

The groups should respond based on the regulatory documents and their own research.

Materials: Simplified documents with basic regulations (laws related to self-employment, tax advantages of cooperatives, statutes of an SL, etc.) or laptops and access to the Internet to do the corresponding research.

Activity 4. Plan for your business idea

Objective: To understand the key differences between the legal figures related to self-employment and entrepreneurship.

Activity

Each participant chooses a business idea that they would like to develop.

Reflects on the legal form that best suits their idea and justifies their choice.

They define the regulatory steps they should follow to start up their business.

Presentation: the participants briefly share their ideas and chosen forms, receive feedback from the group, identify which type of business best suits their projects, reflect on the benefits of collaborative models such as cooperatives and associations.

Materials: laptops, internet access, etc.

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Session summary

 **Knowledge:** Entrepreneurs and self-employed individuals have access to various legal frameworks for establishing businesses, each with its own set of advantages and implications. These include self-employment, civil partnerships, limited companies, cooperatives, and associations in the third sector. Each model offers distinct characteristics tailored to different types of activities, participant structures, and social or economic objectives. Additionally, many European countries provide robust support systems like tax incentives, subsidies, and simplified processes to foster entrepreneurship and economic development.

 **Reflection:** How can the choice of business model and legal framework impact the success and sustainability of an entrepreneurial project?

 **Keywords:** Limited Company (SL), Civil Partnership, Cooperatives, Third Sector Associations, Entrepreneurship Subsidies, Flat Rate for the Self-Employed, Second Chance Law, Social Entrepreneurship

2.4: Social entrepreneurship and participatory leadership/management

Objective: To understand the specific characteristics, objectives and ways of working of social enterprises.

The dimensions of social entrepreneurship

To easily understand what social entrepreneurship is, we could define it in one sentence: a business that is born with the intention of contributing to a better world.

Although social entrepreneurship goes back a long way, for example, to rural cooperatives, it is only now that more and more people are beginning to study this phenomenon, which is being embraced by more and more start-ups, organisations and even governments.

Beyond the intention of these companies to improve the world, this is the definition of social entrepreneurship: 'Social entrepreneurship is a business model that is not at odds with profitability and that seeks to finance through its action the development of solutions to social, cultural and environmental problems'.

Traditionally, the social function was carried out by NGOs (Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations) or by the administration itself. The former are financed by donations and government aid, while the latter are financed by public funds.

In this scenario, social entrepreneurship appears as a form of business, halfway between companies (whose main purpose is profit) and NGOs (which by definition do not seek business profits beyond self-financing).

With the shift in society's mentality towards individual values and actions as the driving force for a fairer world, social entrepreneurship has gained ground and become increasingly visible.

It is a business model with a social purpose (empowerment of a collective, food sovereignty, redistribution of wealth...), but which is not incompatible with profitability and which, in fact, seeks to be profitable.

The European research network EMES establishes nine criteria for identifying social enterprises, grouped into three blocks:

1. **The economic and business dimension**
2. **The social dimension**
3. **The participatory dimension**

The indicators of the **economic and business dimension** set the social enterprise apart from the third social action sector organisations:

- They are configured as a market producer, while the main source of resources of Third Social Action Sector entities does not come from the market.
- A continuous activity of production of goods and services.
- A significant level of economic risk.
- A minimal amount of unpaid work.

Regarding the indicators of the **social dimension**:

- The explicit objective of benefiting the community stands out.
- Social enterprises are the consequence of collective dynamics, directly involving groups of people.
- Profitability, since, albeit to a limited extent, the distribution of surpluses is allowed, as is the case in many cooperatives.

The third dimension, linked to the requirements of **participatory governance of social enterprises**, is probably one of the most significant differences between the EMES approach and North American approaches. The two indicators of this third dimension emphasise:

- The management and governance autonomy of the group of people who create and develop the business project, both in relation to the public authorities and to other private entities.
- They expressly point out the importance of democratic and participative decision-making processes, not linked to capital ownership.

This triple dimension of social enterprise in the EMES approach configures social enterprises as an integral part of the broad set of agents that make up the social economy and which, as will be seen below, make up the concept of social enterprise that has prevailed in the documents of the European Union institutions.

Types of social entrepreneurship

Social Product or Social Service Social Entrepreneurship: this type of entrepreneurship focuses on offering products or services that directly address a social or environmental problem.

- Example: Companies that manufacture water filters for communities without access to drinking water or education services for vulnerable sectors.

Labour Inclusion Companies: these companies are aimed at generating employment for groups at risk of social exclusion, such as people with disabilities, refugees or young people in vulnerable situations.

- Example: Workshops that employ people with functional diversity to make handicrafts or ecological products.

Worker or Consumer Cooperatives: Cooperatives are organisations formed by a group of people working together to meet common needs, such as employment, goods or services, through democratic and participatory management.

- Example: Farmers' cooperatives that market their products without intermediaries, guaranteeing fair prices and sustainability.

Technology Startups with Social Purpose: these are technology companies that use innovation to address social or environmental problems.

- Example: Recycling platforms that connect users with waste management companies or apps that promote online education in rural communities.

B companies: these companies seek to combine social impact with economic profitability. Although they have shareholders and generate profits, their model is designed to contribute to social and environmental well-being.

- Example: Companies that produce cosmetics with natural ingredients and fair trade.

Fair Trade Organisations: this type of enterprise works directly with local producers, ensuring decent working conditions and fair prices.

- Example: Shops selling coffee or textiles from small farmers or artisans in developing countries.

Focus on Cooperatives as a Social Entrepreneurship Model

Cooperatives are a model of social entrepreneurship with a unique structure that combines the principles of social economy and financial sustainability.

What is a Cooperative? A cooperative is an autonomous organisation formed by people who come together voluntarily to meet their economic, social and cultural needs through a jointly owned and democratically managed enterprise.

Basic principles of co-operatives:

1. Voluntary and open membership.
2. Democratic control by members.
3. Economic participation of members.
4. Autonomy and independence.
5. Education, training and information.
6. Co-operation between co-operatives.
7. Commitment to the community.

Types of cooperatives

Worker Cooperatives: these cooperatives are made up of workers who are also owners of the enterprise. They share decision-making and profits. Example: a cleaning services cooperative, where the workers manage the operations and distribute the profits equally.

Consumer cooperatives: group people together who seek to purchase goods or services at fair prices, eliminating intermediaries. Example: community shops where members buy food or basic products at lower prices.

Agricultural or Producers' Cooperatives: help small farmers or producers to market their products, guaranteeing fair prices and access to markets. Example: coffee cooperatives in Central America that directly export their products abroad.

Housing cooperatives: These cooperatives are formed to build or manage affordable housing for their members. Example: a cooperative that builds green housing and rents it out at affordable costs to low-income families.

Service cooperatives provide essential services, such as electricity, water, internet or insurance, in communities where these services are scarce or expensive. Example: a renewable energy cooperative that provides electricity generated by solar panels.

Advantages of Cooperatives in Social Entrepreneurship

Collective Ownership and Participatory Democracy: each member has one vote, regardless of his or her economic contribution. This fosters equality and commitment.

Direct Social Impact: cooperatives are often deeply rooted in their communities, providing employment, access to basic services and development opportunities.

Sustainable Model: their focus on meeting common needs, rather than maximising profits, makes them sustainable over time.

Reducing Inequalities: they promote the equitable redistribution of resources and wealth generated.

Women's cooperatives

Cooperatives formed exclusively by women/femininities are an inspiring model of social entrepreneurship, as they promote economic empowerment and gender equality. These initiatives often emerge in contexts where women/femininities face significant barriers to employment, education or financing. Below are some outstanding examples of women's cooperatives around the world:

- **SEWA (Self-Employed women's Association) - India:** is a trade union organization that includes several exclusively women/femininities-led cooperatives focused on providing employment, financial services and community development to self-employed women/femininities workers.
- **Mujeres Unidas en Cooperativa (MUCOOP) - Costa Rica:** This cooperative focuses on coffee production, managed exclusively by women/femininities farmers. MUCOOP supports women/femininities in owning their land and provides training in sustainable agriculture.
- **Women for Sustainable Agriculture - Morocco:** In Morocco, a group of rural women/femininities established cooperatives for the production of argan oil.

These cooperatives not only provide employment, but also enable women/femininities to actively participate in community decisions.

In Spain, there are also many examples of cooperatives created by women that stand out for their social, economic and cultural impact. These cooperatives are the result of collective initiatives that seek to empower women/femininities, especially in rural, artisanal and service sectors. The following are examples:

- **Cooperativa Feminista Labio (Madrid):** a cooperative created exclusively by women/femininities who work on training, advisory and policy design projects to promote gender equality in companies, institutions and communities.
- **Women's Cooperative "Candelita" (Madrid):** is dedicated to social inclusion, training and employment projects for women/femininites in vulnerable situations. They also manage textile recycling initiatives, catering and educational activities.
- **Almazara de las Mujeres - Cooperativa Agroecológica (Granada):** a group of rural women founded this cooperative to produce and market organic olive oil. Its aim is to combine sustainability, tradition and female empowerment.

In the Canary Islands, and specifically in Tenerife, there are also cooperatives formed by women that stand out for their impact on the local economy, sustainability and social cohesion. Here are some relevant examples:

- **Cooperative "Rural Women of Tenerife":** this cooperative is made up of rural women who work in the production of organic and artisanal agricultural products. They also manage rural houses to promote sustainable tourism.
- **Asociación de Mujeres Pesqueras y Marisqueras de Canarias** (Tenerife and other islands of the archipelago): this association promotes the creation of women's cooperatives dedicated to shellfish and artisanal fishing. These initiatives focus on environmental sustainability and community management of marine resources.
- **Cooperativa Textil Artesanal "Tejiendo Redes" (La Laguna):** founded by women artisans, this cooperative is dedicated to the production of textiles using traditional Canary Island techniques. They also offer workshops and training in textile crafts to preserve tradition.
- **FADEMUR Canarias (Federation of Rural Women's Associations):** has promoted several rural women/femininities's cooperatives in Tenerife, focused

on the management of sustainable projects such as the implementation of renewable energies on agricultural farms and the production of organic food.

- **Women Farmers in the Orotava Valley:** a group of women farmers in this municipality joined together to create a cooperative that produces organic fruits and vegetables for local consumption and export.

Inspiring experiences of social entrepreneurship in rural areas:

Video presenting the story of the social cooperative “Corazón de olivo, piel de almendra”, made up of women/femininities who work together to promote sustainability in rural areas.

- Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Tjbc3l9QQ>

Documentary of a group of women/femininities who have managed to improve their living conditions through cooperative work, highlighting the importance of solidarity and joint effort.

- Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4E3zNyhK8c>

Social entrepreneurship and systems thinking

As we have seen, what characterizes a social enterprise, distinguishing it from a commercial one, is that its ultimate purpose is to promote social change in a context that we detect as problematic. Economic profitability, rather, is configured as a means to solve a social problem or, as is often said, to “improve the world”.

To lead a social enterprise initiative, it is necessary to have competencies and skills common to other types of entrepreneurs. However, they must be oriented towards participatory leadership and democratic and transparent governance systems, which can also be found in commercial enterprises.

The challenge of social entrepreneurship is to transform reality by building community. This is undoubtedly a difficult goal to achieve. That is why in this topic we will approach “systems thinking” as an approach that allows us to understand

reality in all its complexity, taking into account all the actors involved to build an effective social change project.

If we think of a system, we imagine it as made up of different people, organizations, reactions between them... structures that make things work in a certain way. Perhaps you also consider values, beliefs or mental models that underlie things to be the way they are.

We also assume that a social system is designed for a purpose, it responds to an objective, even if this objective is not necessarily positive or obvious.

Systemic thinking is the ability to understand this internal coherence, the interconnections between the different elements and how this interdependence leads to the production of certain effects (Martín Díaz, 2020).

As social entrepreneurs we introduce a key variable: to understand this system in order to intervene positively and ecologically. Trying to transform certain elements and relationships to produce a concrete effect of improvement.

We have understood that intervening in a system is very complex and cannot be achieved by acting alone, but we need to build networks and communities. It is a matter of involving multiple and diverse collaborators and allies to achieve the objectives.

If you want to further deepen the modalities of intervention in a system, we recommend reading the article ["Dancing with the system"](#) by Donella Meadows.

Next, we will look at the four fundamental stages of systemic intervention:

Building community (Engage key stakeholders)

- Engage key stakeholders by valuing diversity. Acknowledges different points of view, as all voices need to be heard.

- Establish common ground for intervention by emphasizing “what unites us”. Focus on the why is necessary to understand the causes. All actors have precious knowledge, even if they have different ideas. Let's concentrate on the common goal instead of wasting time in discussions.
- Practice nonviolent conflict resolution.
- Strengthen relationships.
- Strengthen the systems thinking of all parties involved.
- Empathy builds and strengthens relationships.

Understanding the current situation

- Builds collaborative knowledge, drawing on the knowledge of different groups.
- Involves as many diverse people as possible.
- Analyzes mental models.
- Stimulates awareness, assertiveness and willingness to work together.
- Build explicit and collaborative commitment to the future.
- We need to mobilise the inspirations of the people who are involved in the project.
- Empathise with the system: you may discover that there are groups that resist change and that in some cases there are benefits to maintaining the status quo, which have multiple causes that you need to be aware of.
- Create short- and long-term solutions. Sometimes people worry about what might happen or what might be lost until the more distant future.
- Always remember the initial purpose, the ideal that drives the action.
- Accept that you may find groups that do not want to participate in the process at all, impossible to mobilise.

Evolve

Look for comprehensive solutions. The key is not to make many changes, but to be able to sustain a few strategic changes over time.

Experiential part

Activity 1. Chain impact

Objective: To promote understanding of the social impact of business, enabling participants to analyse positive changes in the community.

Activity

Present examples of real social businesses that have generated positive impact on society.

- Each group is given a hypothetical case of a social business (e.g. a cooperative of women/femininities artisans).
- Using cards and post-its, they should create an 'impact map' where they depict:
 - Direct beneficiaries (craftswomen/femininities).
 - Indirect beneficiaries (their families, local suppliers, etc.).
 - Social impacts (greater equality, employment, improved living conditions).
- Elements can be connected with thread to show relationships.
- Each group shares its map and reflects on the social scope of the business.

Materials: Cards, string or yarn, post-its

Activity 2. Inspiring stories

Objective: To explore the impact of women/femininities's cooperatives in the social economy, analysing real cases to identify challenges and solutions, and encouraging reflection on how to

Activity

Briefly outline the impact of women/femininities's cooperatives in the social economy.

Each group receives an index card with the history of a women/femininities's cooperative.

Discuss what they learned, what challenges the women/femininities faced and how they overcame them.

Reflect on how they could replicate a similar model in their context.

Materials: Handouts with real cases of women/femininities's cooperatives or laptops and access to the internet for them to search

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Session summary

 **Knowledge:** Social entrepreneurship focuses on creating businesses that address social, cultural, or environmental challenges while maintaining financial sustainability. Various models such as cooperatives, fair trade organizations, and technology startups demonstrate how profitability and social impact can coexist. Cooperatives, in particular, emphasize collective ownership, democratic decision-making, and community engagement, serving as a powerful tool for reducing inequalities and fostering sustainable practices.

 **Reflection:** How does the participatory nature of cooperatives and social enterprises contribute to building stronger communities and improving social equity?

 **Keywords:** Social entrepreneurship, Cooperatives, Participatory governance, Economic sustainability, Women empowerment, Social impact, Fair trade, Community building, Systems thinking, Inclusive decision-making

2.5: Drawing up a realistic business plan and sustainability measures

Objective: To learn how to draw up a viable business plan and identify sustainability measures.

When deciding to set up a company, it is necessary to do so from a global and long-term planning point of view, i.e. in terms of defining the activity to be carried out, risk assessment, financial capacity, business viability, market study, etc.

The preparation of the business plan (also known as the business plan) will constitute the presentation letter of the company to third parties interested in it. Therefore, when drafting it, it is important to be clear about who will be the final recipients of the plan and what is the objective to be achieved (the entry of a new partner; obtaining a loan from a financial institution, which will seek the profitability of the project presented; the granting of a subsidy by the Public Administration, which will focus on analysing whether the project contributes to job creation, uses new technologies or provides social benefit, among other aspects...) so that it contains the information that really interests the recipient and helps us to achieve the proposed objective.

Setting up a business requires strategic planning to ensure its success. To do so, it is crucial to develop two key documents: the **feasibility plan** and the **business plan**, both of which are essential for organising ideas, assessing risks and setting clear objectives, but serve different functions and must be carried out in a specific order.

Feasibility Plan

The feasibility plan is the first step in the creation of a company. Its objective is to determine whether the business idea is viable from an economic, technical and market point of view. This preliminary analysis helps to identify potential obstacles before committing resources and time.

Key aspects of the feasibility plan:

- **Market analysis:** Is there demand for the product or service? Who are the competitors?

- **Financial study:** Projection of income and expenses, initial investment needed and sources of financing.
- **Technical feasibility:** Is it feasible to produce or deliver the service with the resources available?
- **Risk assessment:** Identification of factors that could affect the viability of the project.

A positive outcome of the feasibility plan indicates that the business has the potential to succeed, allowing it to move to the next step.

Business Plan

If the business idea has proven to be viable, the next step is to develop a **business plan**. This more detailed document is a roadmap for starting and managing the business.

It is also essential if you are seeking external funding, as investors and banks often require a well-structured business plan.

Main components of a business plan:

- **Description of the company:** define the mission, vision, products or services to be offered (idea and activity to be developed).
- **Market study:** detailing who the target customer is, analysis of the competition, demand, suppliers and growth opportunities.
- **Internal and environmental diagnosis (SWOT)** to identify strengths and weaknesses and establish a realistic strategic plan.
- **Organisational structure:** defining the entrepreneurial person or team (management team, key roles within the company, etc.).
- **Marketing plan:** strategies to attract and retain customers, pricing policy, market positioning, sales channels, distribution policy.
- **Financial plan:** detailed projections of revenues, expenses, cash flows and expected short- and long-term profitability.
- **Operational plan:** description of the production or service provision process.

The **business plan** not only serves to provide clarity on the next steps, but is also a fundamental document for the day-to-day management of the business, helping you to assess whether you are achieving your objectives and adjusting your strategy where necessary.

The **feasibility plan** is developed first to validate the business idea, while the **business plan** takes that idea and turns it into a detailed operational strategy. Both documents

are critical to creating a realistic and sustainable business, but should be followed in that order to reduce risk and optimise resources.

Start-up funds

The initial funding of a business/project is the money needed to set it up. Knowing the costs that we are going to have when opening or managing a business will help us to boost the project or the business idea we have within a market ecosystem.

There are 2 basic questions:

- What should the initial investment be?
- How to get financing?

Knowing in detail everything we need to get started will help to decide what is the most appropriate type of financing, what resources are available, what will be the costs to be incurred? It is important to establish the business idea and draw up a financial plan for the first 2-3 years, projecting both income and expenditure lines with logical estimates.

If we focus on expenses, it is important to consider the following:

- Materials or equipment needed.
- Legal expenses (company registration, licenses).
- Space rental (if necessary).
- Marketing or basic advertising.
- Product or service development costs.

Taking the above into account, we can make an estimate of how much is needed to start up and, above all, look at the fixed costs (electricity, rent, etc.) and variable costs (materials that change depending on sales).

Types of financing

- Self-financing (personal savings or support from friends, family).
- Bank financing:
 - **Loan:** this is one of the most common forms of financing and is based on requesting a fixed amount of money from a bank or financial institution, with a commitment to pay it back within a set period of time together with interest.

- **Microcredit:** a form of lending aimed at individuals or small entrepreneurs who do not have access to traditional banking, either because of a lack of collateral or because they are starting small businesses.
- **Line of credit:** a more flexible type of financing that allows access to an amount of money according to needs, but without receiving all the money at once. Instead of getting a fixed loan, you are given a credit limit that you draw on as you need it.
- Capitalisation of unemployment (one-off payment).
- Incentives for entrepreneurs and the self-employed (specific entrepreneurship programmes).
- Other aid and/or subsidies (at local, national and European level).
- Crowdfunding: is a way of raising money for a project or business through small contributions from many people, usually through online platforms. The project is presented on a crowdfunding platform (such as Kickstarter, Indiegogo or GoFundMe) explaining the idea, the objectives, what is needed, how the money will be used and people donate small amounts of money. If the requested amount of money is raised, it is given to the entrepreneur, otherwise it is returned to the donors.

Accounting

Accounting is a key tool for managing a business, as it allows us to keep detailed control of all the financial operations we carry out. Through accounting, we can record income, expenses and other economic movements, which helps us to know precisely the financial situation of our enterprise.

Keeping good accounts is essential for making informed decisions, detecting savings or investment opportunities and ensuring that we are complying with our fiscal obligations, such as paying taxes.

The basics of bookkeeping include:

- **Recording income and expenses:** recording all incoming money (sales, services, etc.) and outgoing money (purchases, payments, salaries, etc.).
- **Reporting:** preparing regular reports such as the balance sheet (what the business owns and owes) and the profit and loss account (income minus expenses) to understand the financial situation of the business.
- **Budgeting:** planning the use of money to avoid unnecessary expenses and to ensure that resources are used efficiently.

- **Tax obligations:** Complying with the payment of taxes and other legal obligations, such as VAT or personal income tax returns, on the dates indicated by the regulations.

Although bookkeeping may seem complicated at first, there are tools and computer programmes that make this task much easier. It is also advisable to have the support of an accountant or bookkeeper, especially if the business is starting to grow or if the tax obligations are more complex.

Among the free tools or software that make accounting easier we can find:

- **Wave Accounting:** allows you to keep records of income, expenses, and generate invoices (invoicing, bank reconciliation, financial reports, expense management, etc.).
- **GnuCash:** supports double-entry bookkeeping, which is useful for more structured businesses (management of bank accounts, income and expenses, invoicing, bank reconciliations, etc.).
- **SlickPie:** allows very simple online bookkeeping. It offers basic accounting and automation functions (invoicing, income and expense tracking, basic financial reporting).
- **Manager.io:** is available both online and as a desktop version and is easy to use, allowing double-entry bookkeeping, invoicing, expense tracking, inventory management.

In short, accounting not only helps us to comply with the law, but also gives us a clear and up-to-date view of our business, facilitating its management and growth.

How to manage the business - the ‘village’

Running a successful business requires a global vision that involves several areas. The concept of the ‘village’ refers to the importance of collaborating and networking with other people and entities surrounding your business, such as customers, suppliers, and the wider community.

Networking and collaboration

Imagine that your business is part of a village where everyone plays a key role. In managing your business, it is vital to foster collaborative relationships with other businesses, suppliers, partners and the community. These relationships can not only generate new business opportunities, but also mutual support in difficult times.

Active listening and communication

In this 'village', open and constant communication is essential. It is important to maintain a fluid communication channel with your customers to understand their needs and expectations, and with your suppliers to ensure the quality and continuity of your products or services. Actively listening to feedback and suggestions will also allow you to improve and adapt to the environment.

Resource management

A successful business in the 'village' requires proper management of resources: financial, human and material. Maintaining a balance between what you invest and the benefits you get is essential for long-term sustainability. Prioritise efficient use of resources and reinvestment in improvements that drive growth.

Social responsibility

Being part of this 'village' also means having a commitment to the environment and society. Implementing sustainable and socially responsible practices not only helps your business meet ethical standards, but also allows you to strengthen your image and connect more deeply with your clientele.

In short, running a business is similar to participating in a village where every interaction counts. The key is to build strong relationships, optimise resources, and always be aware of opportunities that arise from the environment.

Sustainability measures

Sustainability refers to the ability to meet our current needs without compromising resources and the well-being of future generations. In the business context, adopting sustainability measures not only helps to reduce environmental impact, but can also improve business reputation, reduce long-term costs and increase customer loyalty.

Some sustainability measures that entrepreneurs can apply are:

1. Efficient use of resources

- Implement practices that reduce energy consumption, such as using LED bulbs, taking advantage of natural light and using energy-efficient equipment.
- Reduce water waste through good practices, such as installing low consumption taps or recycling water where possible.
- Encourage the use of digital documents and avoid unnecessary printing, saving paper and ink.

2. Waste management

- Reduce waste by minimising waste in all areas through process optimisation and the use of recycled or reusable raw materials.
- Establish an appropriate recycling system for the different types of waste generated (plastics, paper, glass, etc.) and ensure that it is properly managed.
- Seek opportunities to reuse materials or products that may still have value before discarding them.

3. Sustainability in the supply chain

- Collaborate with suppliers who share a commitment to sustainability by choosing environmentally friendly or ethically produced products.
- Prioritise the purchase of local products to reduce the carbon footprint associated with transportation and support the community economy.

4. Designing sustainable products

- Create products (eco-design) with their environmental impact in mind throughout their life cycle, from the extraction of materials to their final disposal, including their ability to be recycled or reused.
- Sustainable packaging: Reduce the use of plastics and opt for biodegradable, recyclable or reusable packaging materials.

5. Sustainable mobility

- Encourage the use of green modes of transport such as public transport, bicycles, or electric vehicles to reduce carbon emissions associated with staff commuting or deliveries.

- If your business requires product distribution, optimise routes to reduce fuel use and improve logistics efficiency.

6. Education and awareness

- Educate employees, partners and customers about the importance of sustainable practices and how they can contribute to environmental care.
- Inform customers about the sustainable initiatives of the business, promoting green products and services and encouraging responsible consumption.

7. Carbon offsetting

- For businesses that inevitably generate carbon emissions, there is the option of investing in projects that offset these emissions, such as tree planting or renewable energy initiatives. This can help achieve carbon neutrality by offsetting the negative impacts generated.

Benefits of implementing sustainability measures

Implementing sustainability measures not only contributes to the care of the environment, but can also bring several benefits to your business:

- **Cost reduction:** Saving energy, water and materials reduces operating expenses.
- **Improved image:** A business committed to sustainability is perceived positively by customers, which can increase loyalty and attract new customers.
- **Regulatory compliance:** Adopting sustainable practices can help you comply with environmental regulations and avoid penalties.
- **Innovation:** Finding sustainable solutions can inspire new ideas and business opportunities, improving competitiveness.

Experiential part

Activity 1. Feasibility plan

Objective: To develop the ability to assess the feasibility of a project through technical, economic and commercial analysis, enabling participants to apply these criteria to a practical case and determine the viability of a product or service in the market.

Activity

After explaining the feasibility of a project:

- Technical: Can the product or service be made?
- Economic: Is it profitable?
- Commercial: Is there a market?

Each group is given a case study (e.g. opening a shop selling organic products) and fills in a worksheet:

- Describe the product or service.
- Identify the initial costs and sources of income.
- Estimate market demand.

Materials: Worksheets with key questions, calculators, simple business examples

Activity 2. Business plan

Objective: To foster a comprehensive understanding of a business plan through collaborative analysis of its key sections, enabling participants to develop and build a complete business plan through teamwork and joint reflection.

Activity

After explaining sections of the business plan.

- Divide participants into teams. Each team receives a flipchart with one section of the plan (e.g. marketing).
- Answer key questions related to that section:

- Marketing: Who is your customer? How will you attract them?
- Human Resources: What profiles do you need?
- Finance: How much do you need to get started?
- Groups rotate through each section, building a joint business plan.

Materials: poster boards with sections of the plan (idea, market, marketing, human resources, finance), cards with key questions.

Activity 3. Basic accounting

Objective: To develop skills to manage the profitability of a business by teaching participants how to calculate monthly profit using practical examples and encouraging reflection on possible adjustments

Activity

After explaining basic concepts: income, fixed costs, variable costs, profit.

- Each group is given an example of a business with fictitious income and expenses (a coffee shop, an online shop).
- They calculate:
 - Break-even point (how much they need to sell to cover costs).
 - Monthly profit.
- They discuss what adjustments they would make to improve profitability.

Session summary

 **Knowledge:** In this session we emphasize the importance of developing both a feasibility plan and a business plan for ensuring the success of a business. The feasibility plan evaluates the technical, economic, and commercial viability of an idea, while the business plan serves as a detailed operational roadmap, covering aspects such as market studies, financial projections, marketing strategies, and organisational structure. Additionally, implementing sustainability measures, proper resource management, and fostering collaborative relationships ("the village" concept) are mentioned as vital for long-term business success. Finally, we word on practical activities to engage with these concepts, including exercises on feasibility plans, business plans, and basic accounting.

 **Reflection:** How can the concept of the "village" and sustainable practices be integrated into the planning of your own business model to ensure long-term success and community impact?

 **Keywords:** Feasibility Plan, Business Plan, Sustainability Measures, Resource Management, "The Village" Concept, Networking, Collaboration, Break-even Point, Profitability, Market Study, Financial Plan, Technical Feasibility, Sustainable Mobility, Carbon Offsetting

2.6: Digital marketing and online services

Objective: To learn how to use the main digital tools for the promotion of the company

Digital marketing

Digital marketing encompasses all those actions and advertising or commercial strategies that are carried out in the media and channels of the Internet.

This phenomenon has been applied since the 1990s as a way of transferring offline marketing techniques to the digital universe.

Parallel to the development and evolution of digital technology, online marketing has been experiencing, progressively and very quickly, profound changes both in the techniques and tools used and in the possibilities it offers.

New tools have appeared in the digital sphere, such as immediacy, new networks that emerge every day, and the possibility of real measurements of each of the strategies used.

In its beginnings, online marketing was based on **web 1.0**, where companies transferred their traditional advertising (television, radio, press) to simple online catalogues. Although limited, it offered advantages such as global reach and up-to-date content. With the advent of **Web 2.0**, digital marketing evolved. Now users not only receive information, but also share it through social networks, forums and platforms. This allowed direct interaction between brands and customers, making feedback a key element.

Digital marketing offers a variety of tools that allow from small low-cost actions to complex strategies that combine multiple techniques and resources.

The main tools are:

- **Web or blog:** these are two tools from which to centralise a digital marketing campaign, to attract and convert users through valuable content. They are complemented with other digital actions to give greater visibility such as social networks, video platforms or forums.

- **Search engines:** Google, Yahoo or Bing are tools that allow internet users to find content related to what they are looking for. In order to successfully position a website or blog in the top positions and get visitors, it is essential to carry out organic positioning actions (SEO) or paid positioning (SEM) in your online marketing strategy.
- **Display advertising:** These are visual advertisements (banners) that are similar to traditional advertising, but in digital format, they occupy a space on websites in an **attractive and eye-catching way**.
- **Email marketing:** effective and veteran tool that sends messages such as newsletters, bulletins, catalogues, to a database of contacts to maintain interest, build loyalty, and convert potential customers into real customers.
- **Social Networks:** Popular platforms to disseminate content, create brand communities, and carry out targeted advertising campaigns such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Digital marketing is an essential strategy for brands due to the great opportunity for growth, positioning and sales or customer acquisition that it represents, as most customers are constantly connected to the internet from their computers and, in recent years, through their mobile phones or tablets.

This context has brought about certain advantages such as:

- **Affordable costs:** buying through traditional channels (television, radio or press) is more economical and affordable.
- **Control and optimisation:** it allows to review results in real time, adjusting and improving campaigns easily.
- **Flexibility and dynamism:** campaigns can be quickly modified according to results and user behaviour.
- **Precise targeting:** ads/campaigns can be targeted to specific groups based on demographics, interests and online behaviour.
- **Accurate campaign measurement.** You can accurately track campaign results, including revenue and return on investment (ROI).

Types of Digital Marketing

Inbound Marketing: is a type of marketing, but also a strategy. It focuses on creating and sharing valuable content to attract users, convert them into contacts in a database and guide them through the buying process in a non-intrusive way.

Content Marketing: is focused on creating and distributing valuable content to engage an audience. It is about sharing information that helps to solve or resolve a problem that our target audience has. Thanks to platforms such as Google, Youtube and others, people can find your content and discover your company.

Search Engine Marketing: optimises a website for search engines to crawl, improving your ranking in search results and increasing traffic to your site. Search engine optimisation is divided into:

1. On-Page SEO (on-page SEO)
2. Off-Page SEO (off-page SEO)

Marketing Automation: automate tasks such as social media management, lead generation and email marketing campaigns to act in a personalised and scalable way with users.

Email marketing: uses email to establish a direct relationship with each customer in a database. It can also automate support team functions and develop loyalty programmes.

Social Media Marketing: social media strategies to promote your brand, build communities and disseminate messages that can go viral.

Affiliate Marketing: affiliates are in charge of promoting advertisers or companies through different strategies. In return, affiliates receive a commission or payment when an action is performed: a click on a banner, a registration, a purchase, etc.

Affiliate marketing has 3 actors:

1. The affiliate promotes the advertiser through its website, newsletters, social media profiles, etc.
2. The advertiser provides the affiliate with the necessary promotional tools, and pays the affiliate per click (CPC) or more commonly per referred sales (CPA).

3. The customer is the one who finally makes the purchase (or any kind of targeted action) on the advertiser's website, after having been referred by the affiliate.

Influencer Marketing: brands collaborate with social media influencers to promote products and increase sales through their visibility and credibility.

Permission Marketing: consists of sending communications to users only when they have given their consent to receive communications, ensuring that messages are anticipated, personalised (content responds to people's needs) and relevant (high audience interest).

Conversational Marketing: seeks to get customers, both current and potential, to speak positively about your products or services on behalf of the brand, creating valuable experiences that encourage recommendations.

Deciding which one or ones to implement will depend on the business objective and the budget you have. Only in this way, you will be able to develop your strategies in the best way to get the expected results.

As you can see, there are many types of marketing because it accompanies the behavioural changes of society and needs to adapt constantly, as we are in a constantly changing market. But knowing what the marketing models are is not enough, it is necessary to think strategically about how and when you are going to use these tools to achieve your objectives.

This is where the Marketing Plan comes in so that you can make the most of your resources and efforts, instead of doing isolated actions, the plan allows you to connect all the pieces and make sure they are aligned with what you want to achieve: reach your customers, position your brand and increase your sales.

Marketing plan

A marketing plan is a document generated jointly between the different actors with interests in commercial and positioning objectives, in which the marketing team and the commercial team intervene to fulfil the commercial objectives of the brand.

This plan will take into account: market research carried out by the company, marketing objectives to be achieved, strategies to be implemented and the planning

to be followed. Production, finance and logistics should also be involved in this planning to ensure the correct production and distribution of our sales assumptions.

Therefore, the plan will help you to define important aspects such as:

- Who is your target audience.
- What messages you are going to communicate.
- What channels you will use.
- Budget you are going to provide.
- How you will measure if your actions are working.

In short, the marketing plan turns your ideas into a concrete strategy, with clear steps to grow your business effectively.

Digital marketing uses a huge variety of tools in order to optimise the tasks in the different areas involved in our activity.

We list some of them divided by area:

- **Web Analytics**, allows you to measure and analyse user behaviour on your website. It helps to understand where visitors come from, what pages they visit, how long they spend on the site and what actions they take. This helps to make informed decisions to improve the customer experience. Examples: Google Analytics, Search Console, Majestic, etc.
- **Paid Media** (paid advertising) consists of paid advertisements on different platforms to increase the visibility of the business. It helps to reach a wider audience and drive traffic to your website or products quickly and effectively. Examples are: Google Ads, Bing Ads, Facebook Ads, Twitter Ads, etc.
- **SEO (Search Engine Optimisation)**, helps to improve the visibility of your website in the search results of Google and other search engines. Increasing SEO means that more people will find your page when searching for keywords related to your business, which can lead to more visitors and potential customers. Examples: Moz, OnCrawl, Screaming Frog, Yoast, Ahrefs, Semrush, etc.
- **Social media** (Social Networking), refers to the use of platforms to interact with your audience, promote products or services and build a community around the brand, serve for social media management. Examples include: Hootsuite, Later, Buffer, All Hashtag, Storrito, etc.

- **Email Marketing** consists of sending emails to a list of contacts to inform them about news, offers or relevant content. It is a direct way of communicating with your customers and can be very effective in increasing sales and customer loyalty. Examples: ClicExperts, MailChimp, Sendinblue, ConvertKit, etc.
- **Design**, allows you to create attractive and coherent visual elements that represent your brand (such as logos, graphics and website design). Good design is fundamental to attract and retain the attention of users, as well as transmitting the identity and values of your business. Examples: Photoshop, GIPHY, GIMP, Canvas, Unsplash (stock photo platform), etc.
- **IT (Information Technology)**, use of technological tools and systems that support all digital marketing activities, such as database management, web infrastructure and the implementation of software solutions that facilitate analysis and communication. Examples: Wordpress, cPanel, MySQL, WpBakery Page Builder, Notepad++, FileZilla.
- **Reporting**, the process of collecting and presenting data on the performance of your marketing actions. Reports allow you to evaluate which strategies are working and which need adjustment, helping you to optimise the use of resources and maximise results. Examples include: Google Data Studio, Google Spreadsheets, Power Point, etc.
- **CRM (customer relationship management)** helps to manage customer relationships and co-communication. A CRM system stores information about potential and current customers, making it easier to track interactions, sales and customer service, which improves customer satisfaction and sales effectiveness. Examples include: Zoho, Salesforce, HubSpot, etc.

Online services

Online services refer to tools and platforms available on the internet that facilitate the management, promotion and growth of a business. These services allow to automate and optimise processes such as product/service sales, customer communication, project management and digital presence, without the need for infrastructure or software installed on the computer.

The main advantage is that they are accessible from anywhere with an internet connection and often offer free options or affordable plans for entrepreneurs or small businesses. They facilitate day-to-day management and are therefore key to saving time, and most of these tools are designed to be intuitive, without the need for advanced technical knowledge.

Among the main areas of online services, e-commerce, also known as e-commerce, refers to the buying and selling of goods or services over the internet. In this model, commercial transactions are carried out digitally and virtual shops or online shops become the point of sale for displaying and selling products to a global audience. This shopping method is very convenient, because it avoids travelling, you can make immediate comparisons, you can pay in different ways, etc.

There are currently several main types of e-commerce:

- **Own online shop:** this can refer to a fully online business or to the digital version of a physical shop. To make purchases you just have to look for the shop you are interested in and follow a few steps:
 - Register.
 - Browse the website in search of the products or services you are interested in.
 - Select the product/service you are interested in and add it to the basket or shopping cart.
 - Pay and indicate the place where you want it to be sent.
- **Marketplace:** platform on which different companies or brands sell their products or services; it is a digital shopping centre. The platform acts as an intermediary between sellers and customers, although sometimes it also acts as a seller, for example, Amazon or Aliexpress.

In this category you can find:

- **Ebay**, unlike Amazon, this platform only facilitates the sale between buyers and sellers, it is not itself a seller.
- **Wallapop** is a marketplace for the sale of second-hand goods.
- **Etsy** is a platform where artisans, artists, creators, small and medium-sized businesses can sell products made by hand or with manual processes.
- **Artesanum**, this is another Marketplace dedicated mainly to the sale of handicrafts, the sellers are mainly from Spain, but you can also find shops from Mexico, Italy, Peru, etc.
- **Agroboca**, this Marketplace, which is committed to sustainable and quality agriculture, puts fruit and vegetable producers in direct contact with private and professional buyers.

Before choosing an online service, it is important to analyse the one that best suits your business/project:

- **Assess needs:** do you need an online shop, manage customers, improve your visibility on social media or have an attractive website?
- **Try it for free:** many services offer free trials, use them to familiarise yourself with
- **Adjust services:** make sure that the different services you use can be integrated with each other to ease the workload.
- **Technical support:** choose services that offer customer support to solve any problems that may arise.

Experiential part

Activity 1. Digital marketing

Objective: To encourage creativity and the practical application of digital marketing concepts, enabling participants to create effective social media ads promoting a fictitious business.

Activity

Once key digital marketing concepts have been explained

- o Each group creates a social media advert promoting their fictitious business.
- o They include:
 - An appealing slogan.
 - An image or picture.
 - A call to action (CTA).
- o Present their ads to the group and vote on the most creative one.

Materials: Computers and Canva - Social media ad templates, real examples, markers

Activity 2. Pitch to investors

Objective: To encourage the presentation of a business plan in a clear and concise manner in a limited time.

Activity

Each group prepares a 3-minute presentation of their business plan.

- They highlight the idea, target market, marketing strategy and financial viability.
- They present their plan in front of a fictitious jury (other participants).
- The jury evaluates what convinced them and what they could improve.

Materials: Templates for structuring the presentation (idea, market, finances)

Session summary

 **Knowledge:** In this session we explored the fundamentals of digital marketing and online services, emphasizing their importance in modern business practices. We highlighted various tools and strategies such as social media marketing, email marketing, content creation, and search engine optimization (SEO). Then we reviewed the benefits of digital marketing—such as affordability, precise targeting, and real-time tracking—and outlined types of e-commerce platforms, including online shops, marketplaces, and their subcategories. Finally we worked with experiential activities like creating social media advertisements and pitching business plans to investors.

 **Reflection:** How can businesses effectively integrate digital marketing tools and online services to enhance customer engagement and drive profitability while maintaining cost efficiency?

 **Keywords:** Digital marketing, Online services, SEO (Search Engine Optimization), Social media marketing, Email marketing, Content marketing, Affiliate marketing, Marketing plan, E-commerce, Marketplace platforms, Web analytics, Paid media, CRM (Customer Relationship Management)

Practical issues and pedagogical considerations

Formalities

- Content covered
- Objectives
- Learning outcomes - Relation to EQF levels
- Transferability aspect (if applicable)
- Promoting cooperative learning
- Related literacies (and/or life skills)

Implementation

- Trainer requirements
- Infrastructure requirements
- Base vs ideal number of sessions/hours
- Considerations about learners based on their specific needs/context
- Tips for self-study
- anything else that we come up with

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Annexes

Accessibility review - note

For each unit's content, ensure the following accessibility considerations are addressed:

- Provide materials in multiple formats (e.g., text, audio, video, braille, and large print) to accommodate various needs.
- Utilize high-contrast visuals and accessible color schemes for presentations, slides, and documents.
- Include closed captions and transcripts for all video and audio content.
- Ensure all digital resources are compatible with screen readers and other assistive technologies.
- Offer alternative assignments or exercises for learners with sensory or physical limitations.
- Ensure physical spaces for in-person sessions are wheelchair accessible and equipped with assistive listening devices.

For the course as a whole:

- Incorporate flexibility in deadlines and participation requirements to accommodate learners with varying schedules and abilities.
- Provide clear navigational guidance for course platforms and tools, ensuring ease of use for all learners.
- Regularly audit materials and tools for compliance with accessibility standards such as WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines).
- Include ongoing feedback mechanisms for learners to share accessibility challenges and to adapt the course accordingly.
- Train educators and facilitators on best practices for inclusive teaching and accessibility support.

Notes and Considerations Based on Specific Units

For technical units with diagrams or charts:

- Provide textual descriptions or audio explanations of visual elements to support learners with visual impairments.
- Ensure diagrams are labeled clearly and use accessible fonts and sizes.

For collaborative or interactive sessions:

- Offer alternative formats for participation (e.g., virtual discussions or asynchronous forums) to accommodate different learner needs.
- Provide clear instructions and expectations for group activities to minimize confusion.

Code of conduct

Code of Conduct for Learners

Engage actively with learning materials and exercises, striving to apply terms in practical contexts such as examples or case studies.

Respect the accessibility measures provided, utilizing glossaries, textual descriptions, audio explanations, and alternative formats as needed.

Participate in forums, discussions, or group activities with an open mind and respect for diverse perspectives and needs.

Follow clear instructions for collaborative sessions, ensuring equitable contribution and understanding.

Adhere to respectful communication practices, fostering a positive environment for all learners and educators.

Code of Conduct for Educators

Design learning materials that are accessible and inclusive, offering simplified explanations, glossaries, and accommodations for visual or other impairments.

Ensure all diagrams and charts are clearly labeled and utilize accessible fonts and sizes.

Provide alternative participation formats for collaborative or interactive sessions to accommodate diverse learner needs.

Set clear expectations and instructions for activities to reduce confusion and enhance learning outcomes.

Promote an environment of patience, respect, and encouragement, recognizing the varying needs and capabilities of each learner.

Code of Conduct for Collaboration Between Learners and Educators

Maintain a mutual respect for each other's roles, contributions, and perspectives in the learning process.

Communicate clearly and constructively, ensuring that all participants feel heard and valued.

Work collaboratively to address and accommodate diverse needs, utilizing available resources and alternative formats effectively.

Encourage curiosity and feedback to refine and improve learning materials and methods.

Prioritize inclusivity and accessibility, striving to create an equitable and engaging learning environment.



This document is part of the EcoFemSkills Learning Course, a set of thematic units for addressing issues of ecological transition from an intersectional perspective. The publication has been developed in the context of the Erasmus+ project EcoFemSkills: Rural Women Pioneering Sustainability, whose working team consists of the following organisations:

- Asociación Ecologica Precious Plastic Canarias hacia una economía circular (Spain) [[facebook](#) / [Instagram](#) / [website](#)]
- Asociación para la participación e integración social - FACTORÍA SOCIAL (Spain) [[website](#)]
- Erifyli Center (Greece) [[website](#)]
- Dafni Kek (Greece) [[website](#)]

Available at: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2023-2-ES01-KA210-ADU-000181192>

Alternative sources: [EcoFemSkills minisite](#) + partners platforms



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