



Rubizmo

Guidelines for creating supportive business environments



BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT TOOL

AUTHORS: JUSTIN CASIMIR, TORA
RÅBERG, MULUKEN ADAMSEGED,
PHILIPP GRUNDMANN, BRENDAN MULRY,
ANGELIKI FOUTRI, KAREN HAMANN,
CARMEN BIANCA SOCACIU

DATE: 30.09.2021



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement N° 773621

Technical References

Project Acronym	Rubizmo
Project Title	Replicable business models for modern rural economies
Project Coordinator	RISE - Research Institutes of Sweden
Project Duration	42 months

Deliverable No.	4.5
Dissemination level ¹	PU
Work Package	4
Task	4.3
Lead beneficiary	RISE
Contributing beneficiary(ies)	ATB, IRL, CLUBE, IRL, IFAU, G2G
Due date of deliverable	M32
Actual submission date	M41

¹ PU = Public

PP = Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)

RE = Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)

CO = Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)

Document history

V	Date	Beneficiary	Author
1.1	12 th May 2021	RISE	Justin Casimir
1.2	5 th July	RISE, ATB	Justin Casimir, Muluken Adamseged
1.3	30 th September	ATB, IRL, CLUBE, IRL, IFAU, G2G	Justin Casimir, Tora Råberg, Muluken Adamseged, Philipp Grundmann, Brendan Murly, Angeliki Foutri, Karen Hamann, Carmen Bianca Socaciu.



Summary

The aim of this deliverable is to propose solutions or guidelines to overcome challenges in the business environment faced by innovative and emerging businesses. The development of the guidelines or solutions are achieved through two steps. In the first step, we provided general guidelines which enables to overcoming barriers in the business environment. The guidelines are sub-divided into seven different sub-arenas (categories) including funding, technology and knowledge, institutional development, resource and infrastructure, market structure, training and education and consumer's need and value. The development of the guidelines are the results of both the empirical finding of about 50 business cases analysed and discussed in the various project deliverables and the experts view on the specific sub-arena.

In the second stage, we developed a structure and instructions on how to conduct a business environment workshop for actors initiating and implementing to find local and specific solution to barriers in the business environment. The workshop structure provides instructions to actors initiating and implementing business exploitation workshops. During the development of the workshop structure, focus has been given on making special attention to make the methodology as simple as possible to make it useful in different situations. The nature of the workshop structure also enables to bring relevant stakeholders together and give a platform to discuss the barriers and potential solution for its remedies. The deliverable also introduces the business environment concept and its seven sub-arenas.

During a business environment workshop, the participants learn about the seven sub-arenas framing the business environment framework. Moreover, they get general insights on how business environments can be supportive to rural businesses. In this sense, the workshop does not provide quick fix solutions, but rather the tools required to develop adapted guidelines fitting a given context and its needs.

The key messages from the guidelines show that the development of a conducive business environment for emerging and innovative business cases in rural areas are the coordinated effort of key stakeholders including public agencies, clusters, sector specific networks, research organizations, entrepreneurs, and other civil society organizations. The collaboration of stakeholders on different specific aspects are used to access funding, resources, infrastructure and essential knowledge and technology needed for innovative and emerging businesses in rural areas. Likewise, it enables coordinating lobby activities for reforms on rules and regulations. One of the key activities is awareness creation among the consumers and public agencies is found to be one of the important factors to create a conducive business environment on different sub-arenas.



Disclaimer

This report reflects only the views of the authors. The European Commission and Research Executive Agency cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein

Glossary of terms

Business Environment: refers to external settings including policies, rules and regulations, and conditions to access assets such as technologies, funding and other key resources which directly or indirectly affects the operations of a business.

Business Environment Tool: In this report, the Business Environment Tool refers to all material, knowledge and instructions required to implement the *Business Environment Workshop*. The Business Environment Workshop Tool is available [on Rubizmo's E-learning platform](#).

Business Environment Workshop: In this report, the Business Environment Workshop refers to an online or physical meeting where *Business Environment Shapers* collaborate to improve their support towards innovative businesses.

Business Environment Shapers: The business environment shapers are all stakeholders influencing the supporting level of the business environment. While screening through relevant business environment shapers, one could use the 7 *sub-arenas* to structure the task. Clusters, networks, associations, schools, universities, research centres, incubators, regional agencies, NGOs are examples for business environment shapers.

Initiator: In this document, *initiator* refers to an organisation initiating the process to implement the Business Environment Workshop and taking responsibility for its outputs. The workshop initiator has a strong interest to ensure that the business environment support innovative business in its region.

Moderator: In this document, *moderator* refers to an organisation/person supporting the initiator (see initiator) for the preparation, moderation, and follow-up of the Business Environment Workshop.



Project: refers to the RUBIZMO project receiving funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement N° 773621.¹

Sub-arena: refers to the seven components forming the *business environment*. Within each sub-arena, stakeholders and actions interact to facilitate access to various forms of resources in a given institution and governance structure.

The characteristics of business environments includes the barriers, challenges and opportunities that can hamper or promote the development of promising business.

¹ https://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/214741_fr.html



Table of Contents

TECHNICAL REFERENCES	2
DOCUMENT HISTORY	2
SUMMARY	3
DISCLAIMER	4
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS	6
BACKGROUND	8
AIM AND OBJECTIVES	8
DEVELOPMENT OF THE GUIDELINES	9
BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT WORKSHOP	9
BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT	11
FUNDING	12
General guidelines	12
What entrepreneurs say	13
TECHNOLOGY AND KNOWLEDGE	14
General guidelines	14
What entrepreneurs say	15
INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	16
General guidelines	16
What entrepreneurs say	17
RESOURCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE	18
General guidelines	19
What entrepreneurs say	19
MARKET STRUCTURE	20
General guidelines	20
What entrepreneurs say	21
TRAINING AND EDUCATION	22
General guidelines	22
What entrepreneurs say	23
CONSUMER'S NEED AND VALUE	24
General guidelines	25
What entrepreneurs say	25
ASSESSING THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT	26
CHECKLIST FOR ENTREPRENEURS	28



INSTRUCTIONS FOR WORKSHOP IMPLEMENTATION	31
BEFORE THE WORKSHOP	31
Set the scope	31
The settings of the workshop	32
The participants	33
Inviting the participants	33
Prepare the workshop	34
DURING THE WORKSHOP	34
Check-in and purpose of the day	34
Icebreaker	34
Introduction to the process	35
Introduction to the 7 sub-arenas of the business environment	35
Profile the current status	36
The supportive business environment	36
Group work	36
Gather feedback from the discussions	37
Wrapping up	37
Break(s)	37
AFTER THE WORKSHOP	37
Synthesise the results of the workshop and next steps	37
EXAMPLE FROM GREECE	38
Participants	38
Prior to the workshop	38
Workshop implementation	38
After the workshop	39
Reflections	39
FINAL WORDS	40
ANNEX 1: LINKS TO MATERIAL AND FURTHER READINGS	41



Background

Aim and objectives

The overall goal of the Rubizmo project (project by European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement N° 773621) is to identify and support the deployment of innovative businesses in rural areas working within three sectors: food, biobased value chains and ecosystem services. The aim of this deliverable is specifically to propose solutions to overcome challenges in the *business environment* faced by innovative and emerging businesses. This includes the development of guidelines to access various forms of resources, funding, technology, infrastructure, training, and other relevant activities for innovative and emerging businesses in rural areas.

An activity was dedicated at understanding and describing how businesses interact with their environments and what parameters and factors external to businesses influence businesses' performances. First, the Business Environment conceptual framework was developed and fine-tuned at the beginning of the project. This framework categorised the business environment into seven sub-arenas which includes; funding, technology and knowledge, institutional development, resource and infrastructure, market structure, training and education and consumer's need and value. The conceptual framework and the seven sub-arenas were used to analyse the nature and characteristics of innovative business cases in rural areas. The method, results and conclusion developed from this analysis laid the ground for the development of the guideline and the subsequent workshop structure presented in this document.

The deliverable is organised in the following manner. In the following [section](#) a brief introduction and definition of the business environment as well as general guidelines are given. It also gives the conceptual framework developed and used within the Rubizmo project. Then, it provides the process of the [guideline development](#). The [second part](#) of the deliverable focuses on the instructions for workshop implementation which is aimed at the organisations wishing to implement and lead a workshop to improve (or maintain) the supportiveness of their business environment in their context (geographical context and sectorial context). This chapter will give to the reader the necessary tools to plan and hold a successful workshop, as well as following up on it.



Development of the guidelines

The guidelines are aimed at the *business environment shapers*, to support their mission to improve the support level towards businesses in rural areas. The development of the guideline is a two-step process.

In the first step, data of around 100 business cases were collected using desktop work and interviews. The business cases were selected using multi-stage sampling process including desktop review, phone interview with business owners, and two rounds of interviews using semi-structured interview methodology. The information gathered during the phone interview and the first-round interview following the semi structured methodology, enabled to categorise and identify the businesses in three key sectors including food, biobased value chain, and ecosystem services. After the second round of interviews over 45 business cases were included in the analysis of the business cases. The results of these cases provided empirical evidence on the challenges, threats, and opportunities of businesses in rural areas. The results highlighted the role of the business environment as driver or hindrance for the development of rural innovative businesses. The general guidelines proposed in this report are consolidated from the empirical study of the business cases and using expertise view from the Rubizmo consortium. The guidelines are divided into the seven different sub-arenas of the business environment. The guidelines found in this deliverable are general to remain useful in most contexts. These general guidelines aim to inspire policy makers, advisors, and other relevant stakeholders to overcome barriers in the business environment by illustrating how successful businesses benefited from their business environment.

To develop more specific guidelines, we developed instructions on how to conduct a business environment workshop to find local and specific tailored guidelines to overcome barriers in the business environment. The [workshop structure](#) provides instructions to stakeholders initiating and implementing *business environment workshops*. A group work session during the workshop will allow participants to develop customised guidelines answering their specific needs.

Business Environment Workshop

The business environment workshop is the main output of this deliverable. It aims to provide a comprehensive structure to improve the business support toward innovative rural businesses. The business environment workshop encompasses the methodology developed during the project (the [business environment](#) conceptual framework), and the main findings from analysing successful businesses (general guidelines) to inspire *business environment shapers* to act in a coordinated effort. Moreover, to keep the workshop accessible, inspiring examples from the studied businesses can be shared during the workshop. Suggestion on the structure of the



workshop and the different tools to be used before, during and after the workshop are shared in the [second part](#) of the deliverable.

During the development of the workshop structure, focus has been given on making special attention to make the methodology as simple as possible to make it useful in different situations. The nature of the workshop structure also enables to bring relevant stakeholders together and give a platform to discuss the barriers and potential solution for its remedies.



Business environment

A business environment is defined as external factors to a business which directly or indirectly affects the operation of the business. Using extensive literature review, empirical evidence, and analyses a comprehensive framework is developed to understand holistically the various challenges, opportunities, and threats that innovative businesses face. The framework categorized seven sub-arenas as relevant components to characterize a business environment. These include **Funding, Technology & Knowledge, Institutional Development, Resources & Infrastructure, Market Structure, Training & Education and Consumer's Need & Value**. Identified successful businesses within the food, biobased value chains and ecosystem services sectors have encountered challenges with their respective business environment. We have made analyses of 45 business cases to understand and characterize the business environment.

A brief introduction to each sub-arena is available in this section. *A three-minute-long video introducing the business environment and its 7 sub-arenas is available on [Rubizmo's YouTube Channel](#).*

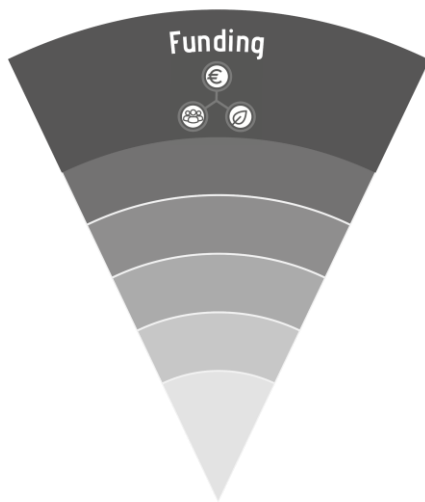
The experts from Rubizmo have developed guidelines for each of these sub-arenas, to assist decision-makers pave the way for future entrepreneurs. The guidelines suggested below are general and may not apply to all sectors and context. Reading a guideline in isolation from the other guidelines will not provide the silver bullet to improve considerably the status of your business environment. It is the sum and combination of the different guidelines from the different sub-arenas that support the development of a holistic yet specific set of guidelines that suits your context. The guidelines are kept general to remain inclusive and to offer an open forum where all stakeholders can meet. By developing general guidelines, we ensure that the *Business Environment Tool* is flexible and can be applied to different sectors and regions throughout rural Europe.

The general guidelines could be further specified into the individual local context using the workshop tool instructions. In this workshop, regional or local context guidelines will be developed due to the participation of key stakeholders.

A ten-minute long presentation introducing the guidelines below is available on [Rubizmo's YouTube Channel](#).



Funding



Funding sub-arena refers to the availability and access to the financial resources to establish and run a business. Not only start-ups but also existing and growing businesses often rely on available funding and access to financial resources to develop. The issues are even crucial to new and innovative businesses in rural settings within the food and bio-based sectors. The performance of this sub-arena depends on the access to information on funding sources, time, and cost of the application process as well as the diversity of financing sources.

These make the funding system complex and difficult to grasp. It is also ever changing over time and between, not only countries but also regions and sectors. Therefore, the business support system is of great importance to businesses in need of funding.

General guidelines

- There is no general funding scheme that can claim to be more successful than others. Businesses at different stage of their development and within different sectors require different type of funding. Therefore, it is important to illustrate the variety of funding opportunities so that each individual company can find what suits their own specific needs.
- The variation of conditions attached to different schemes are often difficult for enterprises to handle. It creates problem regarding long term planning and the constant changes of criteria and conditions makes it sometimes unmanageable or not worth the effort for some companies. The complexity of different funding schemes and grant application also contains a wide range of requirements from the applicant company. Most applications are also time limited and only available for a certain period. To be successful in getting funds, most enterprises would benefit from individual consultation, guidance and coaching with an organisation having a helicopter perspective of the funding opportunities.



- Depending on the maturity of the business - if it is a start-up company or a well-established intergenerational business - the need for funding and the different options available vary. Mapping the funding ecosystem in the region is a good strategy to create awareness of the different opportunities.
- Different funding bodies and funding sources demand different types of information from the applicant, such as transparent booking, sustainability analysis, business- and strategy plan. The earlier companies are informed about the specific requirements for funding schemes in the process, the better. Moreover, in some cases the funding ecosystem could facilitate the application to different funding schemes by aligning the funding requirements between funding actors. Yet the requirement varies among the types of financial schemes. For loans: it could be security and risk; for Equity: growth, IPR and management and for grants: fulfilment of grant objectives. However, this might not be relevant in the cases when funding bodies are competing.
- Partnership with other organisations is sometimes essential to apply for some grants, for example grants including research institutes. To actively facilitate the creation of business-research partnerships can make a considerable difference for businesses.

What entrepreneurs say

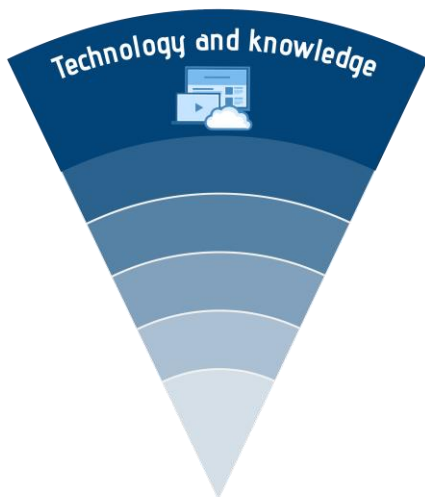


Biogas Brålanda, Sweden

To create joint biogas plant with several farmers was not a straightforward process for the [Biogas Brålanda](#) project. However, it illustrates well the benefit of a supportive funding sub-arena. They benefited from different type of funding (subsidies, grants, bank loans) from different funding bodies (municipalities, European funding programme, private banks). Moreover, their success to secure those funding is partly explained by the partnership they built with local stakeholders (energy company, municipalities, public agencies).

Glen Keen Sheep Farm, Ireland

Catherine and Jim took over the family farm in 1999, the [Glen Keen Sheep Farm](#). As they started to diversify the family business, they did not have the required securities to apply to bank loans and got support from the LEADER rural development fund and their Local Enterprise Office. This helped them to invest in a visitor centre allowing them to develop their business. The profit generated from this initial investment are re-invested into their business to develop their activities and renovate buildings. They are confident now that would be able to apply to bank loans in case they would need to do larger investments.



Technology and Knowledge

Innovative or emerging businesses may require new technologies or know-how knowledge to develop new products and services. The technology and knowledge sub-arena covers the generation and distribution of knowledge including research and the development of technical and non-technical innovations. It opens opportunities for potentially improving existing production and services or gives innovations and emerging businesses the required means and knowledge.

In an era where globalisation, digitalisation, sustainability, and specialisation are the goals to strive for, access to both technology and knowledge is key success factor for most businesses. Rural areas meet special challenges to reach a satisfying level of access to technology and knowledge which needs to address.

General guidelines

- Innovative rural business may need access to technologies and knowledge to develop their activity. It is essential to map all stakeholders with technological and knowledge expertise (Universities, Research Institutes, sector specific networks, Science parks) relevant for your context and region.



- Once the key stakeholders for this sub-arena are screened, it is essential to create good networking conditions for rural businesses to connect with those key stakeholders and facilitate knowledge transfer.
- When key stakeholders are not present regionally, exchange with relevant regions should be favoured and emerging enterprises guided towards them.
- Knowledge and technologies needed by innovative rural businesses may not be available. Research and Development projects are often an efficient way to develop technology, gain knowledge and develop a business network. To facilitate the participation of emerging and innovative enterprises in Research and Development projects will support their development.

What entrepreneurs say

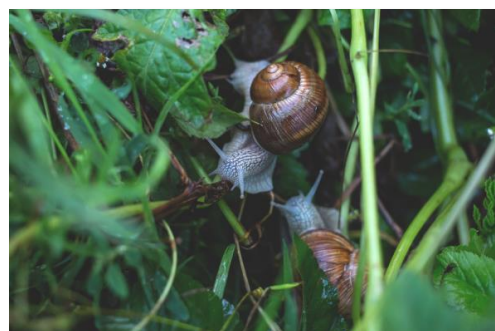
Bohus Seaculture, Sweden



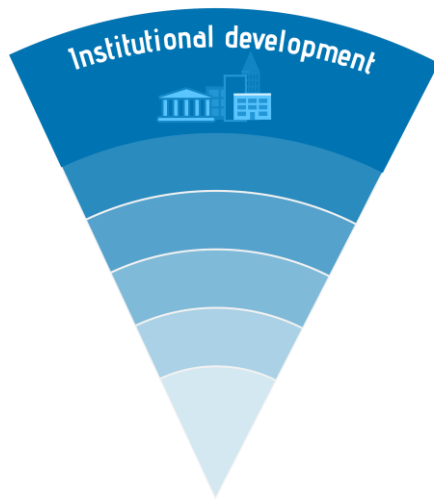
As a pioneer in seaweed growing in Sweden, it was not easy for [Bohus Seaculture](#) to access knowledge and available technology to develop their process. With the support from [Kristineberg Marine Research Centre](#), they were able to access research and knowledge to overcome some challenges. Thanks to this collaboration they not only developed their production process but also the transformation of their products for the food sector.

The Western Snail Farm, Ukraine

Being a pioneer in your region can be extremely rewarding but you are also the first one to implement this activity. Iryna and Ivan form the [Western Snail Farm](#) were the first enterprise to produce snails for the food market in Ukraine. As they could not get support from their business environment to acquire knowledge on snail farming, they had to travel abroad and learn from others. In this case, Western Snail Farm overcame this hinder on their own. However, an innovative way to support similar initiatives could have been to sponsor knowledge exchange with other regions or countries.



Institutional development



Institutional development comprises the rules, regulations, strategies, and policies designed by public agents, associations and networks, which could facilitate or hinder businesses, thus influencing their relative competitiveness in the sector. Rules and regulations are also referred to as enabling or governing institutions, as they determine, among other things, decision-making procedures, limits, and requirements for actions, as well as distribution of costs and benefits between enterprises and the society.

Misalignments may exist between the requirements of the businesses and the conditions offered by the business environment for rules and regulations. We recommend the following guidelines to create supportive institutions in case of misalignments.

General guidelines

- Rules and regulations are often perceived as a top-down measure, hence not always well received by the stakeholders at the operational level, for instance businesses. To ensure a supportive business environment, it is essential that public agencies and policy makers have a direct and systematic contact with all stakeholders, including among others with entrepreneurs. It is important to have an active dialogue early in the process of strategy and regulation development to ensure their efficient implementation on the long run.
- The institutional development sub-arena consists of different geographic layers (local, regional, national, European) and different responsibility areas (industry, agriculture, energy, social, etc.). Therefore, governance structures should enable the flow of information between the different institutional bodies.
- The different rules and regulations framing the activity of a certain sector can be located under the responsibilities of different agencies. Hence it can be difficult to get global vision of all rules and regulations applying to one specific sector. Therefore, all relevant information should be easily accessible on one place. This measure would also provide a mapping of the current rules and regulation, allowing actors to see real impediments and to identify misalignments. Moreover, extra

effort should be put into making rules and regulations as transparent as possible to ensure that entrepreneurs can easily implement them.

- Pioneer sectors often experience rules and regulations as strong hinder to the development of their activities. By supporting emerging and pioneer enterprises through the reduction of this hinder would accelerate the innovation process.
- Organisations supporting a specific sector often perform their own lobbying activity without merging forces with other relevant actors. By coordinating lobbying activities with other organisations would strongly benefit the lobbying effort on rules and regulations. Sector specific networks and clusters, in particular, play an important role in facilitating the demand and lobby for reform on specific rules and regulations and promoting good practice and quality policies, laws, and regulations.

What entrepreneurs say



Gårdsfisk, Sweden

Two friends joined forces to offer a sustainable alternative to industrial fishery and conventional fish farming and developed a process producing one of the most sustainable fish in the market. As pioneers in the land-based fish production in Sweden and Europe, Johan and Michael had few

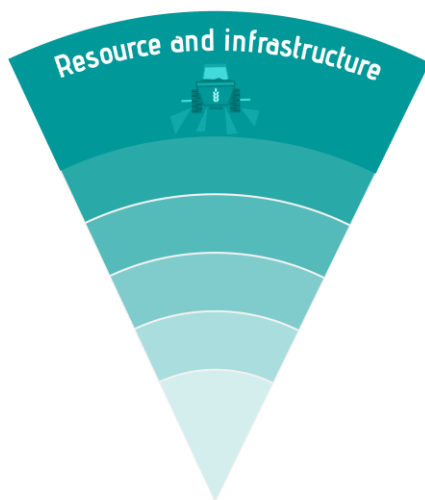
hinders on their way. One of them regards the institutional development sub-arena. To promote their products as extremely environmentally friendly products, [Gårdsfisk](#) were looking at relevant certification schemes to join. However, as being pioneers in their sector, no existing certification scheme would certify their products at first. After a long discussions and collaboration with the Swedish certification body [Svensk Sigill](#), they developed a set of criteria to “Climate certify” land-based fish farming; for instance continuous energy efficiency work, 100% renewable electricity, limited use of fish meal and fish oil for feeding, and re-use of nitrogen and phosphor as fertiliser in agriculture.

Hermetia, Germany

Extracting protein from insect (black soldier flies) is the key business model of [Hermetia](#). After years of effort and investment in knowledge and technology development, the enterprise can produce protein rich insect food for pets. However, they were not able to sell their product as food for pets on the market due to the lack of rules and regulations, which allow or prohibit, in the existing legal framework. Consequently, there was a need for revision and addition of rules and regulations in the existing framework at the regional, national and EU levels. The process required a lot of resources and interaction with different public agencies and associations. Thus, the networks, clusters, and professional association, which Hermetia are members in, supported the process and lobbying of the different levels of public agencies. The enterprise created cooperation with networks, clusters, and professional associations at the national and EU levels. In particular, the cooperation and active participation in International Platform of Insects for Food and Feed (IPIFF) was critical to develop strategy for lobby and interaction with various policy makers at the EU level.



Resource and Infrastructure



Resources and infrastructures are key drivers of the business environment that complement the other sub-arenas to create a conducive business environment. It covers the availability and access to infrastructure including facilities (i.e., buildings, roads, power supplies, land), and services (i.e., communication, telecom, transportation, logistic), as well as access to raw materials and human resources. These are particularly critical for businesses working in rural areas where access is often more limited or poorly provided. Availability to these services not

only attract businesses and facilitates their activities in rural areas, but also attract skilled workforce and residents to rural areas.

When resources and infrastructures do not meet the needs and requirements of businesses, the condition of the business environment can be improved by implementing the following guidelines.



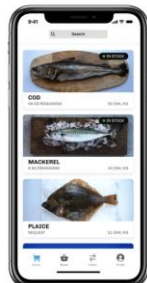
General guidelines

- Businesses and actors within a sector are often seen as competitors. However, many studies have shown the benefit of collaboration and cooperation between competitors: “coopetition”. By developing strategies allowing and encouraging various and interrelated business ventures to work together and share resources and infrastructure, you can create a strong basis for coopetition. This enables enterprises to reduce their costs and creates a stronger lobby voice to negotiate with agencies who provide services such as transport, ICTs, postal and other logistic services. This type of organisation be formal or informal clusters, which can create various funds and business opportunities.
- Most businesses today need and benefit from an internet access. Therefore, it is essential to develop a reliable and fast internet connection, avoiding black spots. Most businesses rely on such infrastructure daily to run their process but also access market. The lack of sufficient internet connection is a “no-go” for most enterprises.
- Access to public transport can be crucial for rural businesses. By developing public transportation services at all levels (not only around larger towns) one can ensure that both the workforce and in some cases the customers can physically reach the enterprise.
- Access to resources like feedstock, food, natural capital, or workforce can be problematic for rural businesses. Offering platforms to ensure that local resources are easily accessible for businesses can overcome this issue.

What entrepreneurs say

THE FIRST DIGITAL PLACE TO BUY AND SELL LOW IMPACT AND FAIR SEAFOOD

Our app connects chefs with low impact fishermen, we deliver you the best quality seafood straight from the harbor and pay the fishermen fairly.



Blue Lobster, Denmark

Christine and Nima, the founders of [Blue Lobster](#) realised after a market survey that fresh fish in Denmark took a minimum of three to four days before arriving the consumer’s plate. In some cases, up to 16 days! The two co-founders saw a business opportunity in improving the situation and consequently

developed an app to reduce the number of middlemen and the time from catch to the consumer’s plate. Thanks to a reliable internet access even in the seas, fishermen can sell their catch of the day even before reaching the harbour.



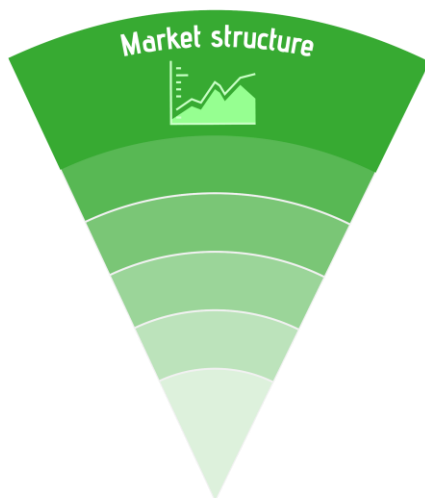
Moreover, the solution uses a logistics system currently dedicated to local restaurants to track the fishermen’s orders.

Coconat, Germany

The company offers an inspiring physical co-working space for digital workers to facilitate a balance between work and free time. The shared internet connection has both a high reliability and speed and there is a proximity to a main road for easy access. [Coconat](#) is situated close to a bigger city, but still located in the countryside where you can renew inspiration and increase efficiency. A wide variety of spaces to work from is offered, from cosy indoor rooms to the garden. Clients can take part in several activities including yoga sessions, massages, spa and sauna, but also hiking and biking to discover the beautiful landscapes of the region.



Market Structure



The market structure sub-arena includes the business competitors and other market players offering similar, substitute or complementary goods and services. The main characteristics of the market sub-arena refer to the types of market players and changes in the market, i.e., whether the market is emerging, growing, or reaching maturity. The structure determines the bases of the competition prevailing in the market.

Markets offer businesses a space to meet and trade. Therefore, in this capacity, well-functioning markets are fundamental for any business to develop and thrive. Stakeholders shaping the business environment could implement the following guidelines to support innovative businesses in their region.

General guidelines

- Entering a new market can be very complicated when competitors are already present on the market. However, there is a potential to encourage existing businesses to collaborate with actors entering the market by pinpointing the potential to develop through collaborating (co-operation).



New and complementary products and services can emerge from this type of collaboration.

- The availability to marketplaces is essential for businesses to deliver their products or services. Ensuring that new businesses get relatively easy access to existing markets will facilitate their development. Markets could take a physical (i.e., public marketplaces, specialised shops, wholesalers, etc.), or digital form (online platform, e-boutiques, etc.). Stakeholders should support the development of relevant markets to ensure that innovative businesses thrive in the region.

What entrepreneurs say



Coop Crowdfunding, Denmark

Coop Crowdfunding is an online crowdfunding service created by the consumer-owned supermarket chain Coop Denmark. Through a digital platform, the company has created their own market structure that bridges the gap between innovative food

producers and consumers willing to invest their money in small local projects. The company offers two different types of financing solutions: reward funding or loans. The collaborative funding matches the growing interest in local food production in Denmark and help small producers accessing larger markets and implement their innovative ideas. This initiative also relates to the funding sub-arena as it offers both accesses to market and funding opportunities.

Panier Local, France

There is a growing demand from consumers for high quality, locally sourced food. At the same time, producers are more and more willing to take back control of their marketing channels. Panier Local has created a tailor-made market through a web platform dedicated to food businesses



wishing to sell their products in short circuits. The software enables producers to pilot their sales in complete autonomy, from product offers, discounts and orders to invoicing, logistics and communication. Currently, 330 clients are using the platform, including both individual producers and producer groups, each having their own online shop and software access. As the costs are shared between all users, Panier Local can offer very attractive prices, accessible even by small companies, offering them the chance to reach a customer base. This example also relates to the Resource



and Infrastructure sub-arena, as Panier Local share its booking and logistic platforms among its clients.

Training and Education



The training and education sub-arena refer to all types of actions and measures that contribute to capacity building needed by businesses to innovate and/or improve processes, products, and services to enhance their competitiveness. These measures can be directed to the needs of the businesses, as in the case of vocational trainings, but they may also be addressed to society in general, as in the case of schools and universities. Actions in this sub-arena are in any case very relevant, as they contribute to the development of the labour force, increasing awareness and

building capacity of individuals and organisations in societies. In this sub-arena, we include factors such as the availability, frequency, and quality of education and training that is available for businesses and other actors (i.e., entrepreneurs, public agents, consumers, professional associations) at different levels of the business environment.

At this era of technology and globalization, there might be different options and opportunities for businesses to access training and education. However, this need to be tailored according to the sector and local condition. Below you will find guidelines to facilitate a better access to education and training services for the businesses.

General guidelines

- Different type of organisations provides training and education activities, and it can be difficult for entrepreneurs to grasp how the different offers complement each other. Networking and collaboration between stakeholders make education and training outcomes easier to achieve. Engagement and relationship building between education providers and external partners is most effective when given commitment and structure through a formal collaborative agreement for instance.
- There are different learning styles, and no one-size fits all. A constructivist approach to learning where knowledge is co-created by the learner is a natural fit. The importance of reflective practice as a part of the process should be emphasised. A blended approach to



training and education delivery creates collaboration and wider stakeholder engagement and facilitate networking. Training and education are also for people open to taking tentative steps on an entrepreneurial journey. Education and training activities both formal and informal, in divergent contexts can do much to foster rural enterprise culture.

- All rural enterprises are different, i.e., are in different stages in the business cycle and have different education and training requirements. Individualised coaching should therefore be prioritised.
- Joining a formal education programme, through university for instance, can be seen a challenging process. A sheltered training and education environment offered by the likes of incubators and enterprise hubs can therefore provide a safer harbour for rural enterprise development.

What entrepreneurs say



Glen Keen Farm, Ireland

Glen Keen farm offers a wide range of services, enabling tourists to dive into the history of the place while learning about the traditions of sheep breeding and sheep farming. Before diversifying the business, the owners discussed with local tourism operators to learn from their experiences and get some advice

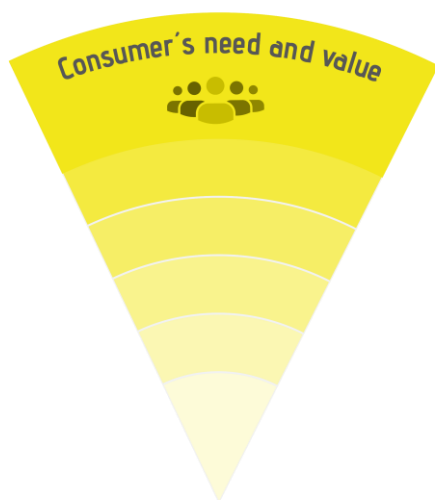
and statistics on the tourism market in the region. The owners received support (i.e., course in entrepreneurship) and funding from the local enterprise office to develop their Wild Atlantic Way brand. Glen Keen was successful with the development of their sheep farm thanks to the support of both private actors (tourism operators) and public bodies (enterprise office). However, they were lacking customer service trainings for the farm’s employees and developed their own in-house training structure to enhance clients’ experience on the farm and earn the trust of tour operators.

The Western Snail Farm, Ukraine

The Western Snail farm is breeding edible snails for consumers in Ukraine and abroad, but they had to overcome the lack of a supportive business environment to get where they are today. There were no specialists providing training in snail breeding in Ukraine, so the founders solved the obstacle by studying in Europe. They learnt about the technology, varieties, equipment, irrigation, feed, timing and more. Having gained experience in this field, they now use it as a resource and share the knowledge to help other farmers in Ukraine to develop their production. About 1000 people have already been trained on the farm, of which about a third have started their own snail farms. They also offer trainings for beginners and start-ups. The “Western Snail” farm constantly develops its business and tries to make their offers more competitive. Even though the Western Snail farm did not get support from its business environment, it is an interesting case as it turned the lack of training in their sector as a business opportunity. In some cases, business environments support trainings and knowledge exchange activities abroad by sponsoring them.



Consumer’s Need and Value



Consumers’ knowledge, values, norms, awareness, perception, attitudes and expectations towards products and services are key aspects for emerging and innovative business models. A change in consumer values and needs is one of the key factors driving future demand, particularly of innovative products and services. Consumer demand depends on the awareness, knowledge and understanding of the value deliver by the product or service. The sub-arena refers to actions that directly or indirectly affect the decisions and actions of consumers, with exception of those actions taken by the

businesses themselves, i.e., advertising or lobbying.

In a context where consumers’ need and value need to be changed, we recommend the following guidelines to create a supportive business environment.



General guidelines

- For innovative and sustainable rural businesses to succeed, it is important for them to match the needs and values of consumers. Consumers understanding the challenges related to sustainability are more willing to pay for a product or service with high sustainability values. Therefore, it is essential for innovative and sustainable businesses to have access to consumers with high awareness on sustainability issues to ensure a fair remuneration of their products or services.
- Working in a region where lobbying actors create consumer awareness and knowledge on sustainable values is an asset for innovative and sustainable businesses. Supporting actors should be aware of these actors and support the contact with relevant businesses willing to collaborate with these actors.
- In some cases, consumers sharing social and/or environmental values develop their own consumer groups (associations, cooperatives, informal networks). By encouraging their activities, support actors facilitate innovative rural businesses to reach a critical mass.
- Entrepreneurs do not have a lot of time to screen through current trends. Therefore, facilitating their access to information about consumers' behaviour and trends will support their businesses. This information can come from official statistics, trade reports, trade magazines, fairs, and consultancy work and support businesses in gaining detailed insights about consumers' motivation to buy products and services.

What entrepreneurs say



Taina Vie, Romania

[Taina Vie](#) apiculture farm is open to the public and offers tastings and explanations on how to obtain apiculture products by organising tourist visits during the summer period tourist and educational activities in their ecological apiary. Products are diverse and include different types of honey and propolis resins for health and lifestyle applications and even low-

immunity kits for people suffering from pollen allergy. The farm uses social media, numerous fairs, and events to build the brand for both online commerce and in-person visits. Taina Vie aims to actively involve the community and local economy, environmental-friendly activities towards a well-defined target group. This has proved to be a successful strategy.

Hermetia, Germany

The company Hermetia produces protein-rich food based on black soldier flies (*Hermetia illucens*) and meeting the nutritional and physiological requirements of carnivorous fish species. Insect proteins are very suitable for poultry farming and pig fattening. The metabolic physiological suitability of such a protein for poultry and pigs is beyond question.



These proteins, which are rich in essential amino acids, are also ideal for birds, reptiles, dogs, and cats. However, acceptance of using insect as a food for pets among European consumers was very low. Even pet food stores were not willing to accept Hermetia’s products. Thus, the enterprise has struggled to educate decision makers and potential buyers. However, in early 2010s things have started to change due to the importance of insects for food and feed. In particular, the report from FAO on “Edible insects: future prospects for food and feed security” has played an important role. In addition to this, medias have made significant contribution in distributing the news enriching potential consumers and the wider community. The strong conviction of the many benefits of the product has played an important role in the enterprise’s growth and development.

Assessing the business environment

Knowing the current situation as well as the desired situation is essential to develop the business environment. To support you to assess your business environment, a set of questions has been developed. The purpose of the survey is to assess the level of support needed from the business environment and the actual level of support for each of the seven sub-arenas in the business environment. The survey adopts a multi-stakeholder approach so that all the stakeholders, including entrepreneurs are invited to give their perception on the current and desired level of support for each sub-arenas (on a scale from 1-no support to 5-high level of support). The result of the survey enables to understand the gaps between the need and the current conditions. The results should be seen as an indicator or trend as the answers given by the respondents are subjective. The following questions can be used to assess the business environment.

Question 1: How would you rate the level of support required by the different sub-arenas for a business to emerge and develop successfully?

- 1 = Low level of support needed
- 3 = Medium level of support needed
- 5 = Very high level of support needed



Question 2: How would you rate the current supportiveness of the sub-arenas in the business environment?

1 = not supportive

3 = somewhat supportive

5 = very supportive

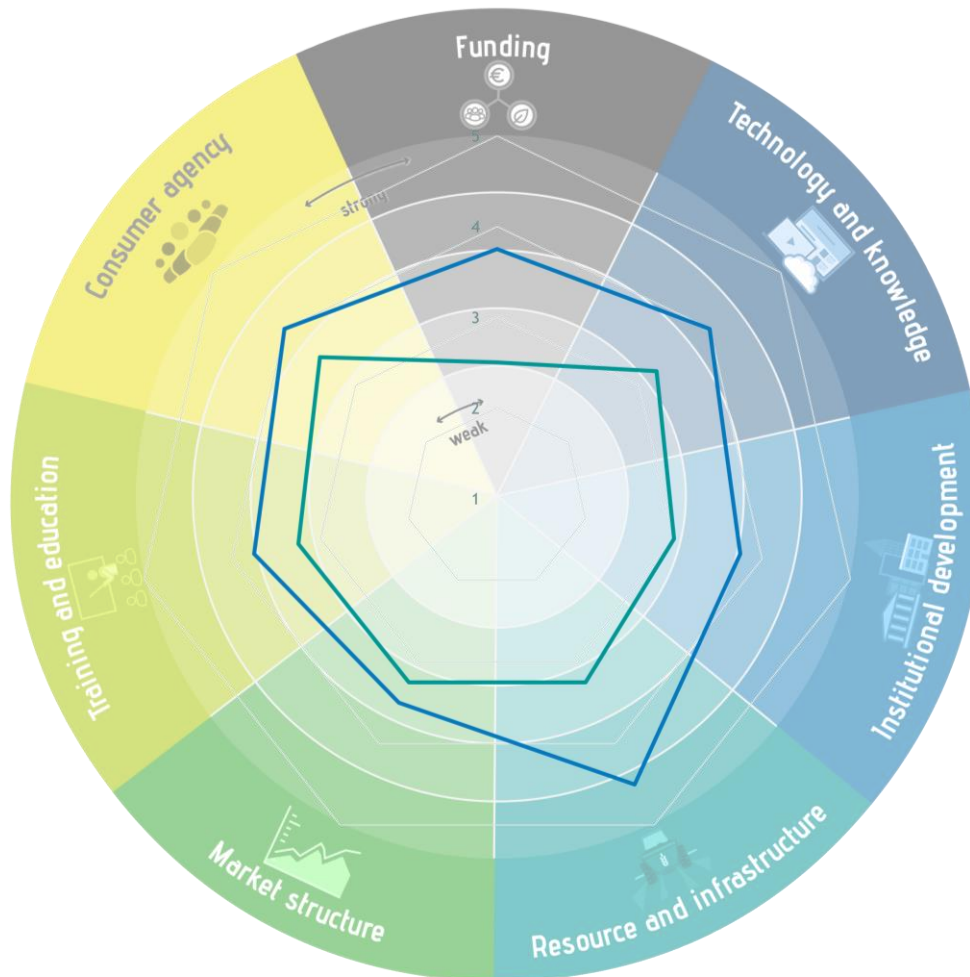


Fig.1 Graphic representation of the Business Environment assessment, the blue line represents the required support and the green line the current support level. This is only an example and will differ from case to case. Background illustration by ESCI, 2021.

The graphic representation above represents a hypothetical business environment using a spider web diagram. To assess the Business Environment is a key step of the Business Environment Workshop (see [Instructions for workshop implementation](#)). The results provide material for discussion by highlighting which sub-arenas are lagging (biggest gap between the green and the blue lines). Moreover, the results could show if the stakeholders have a heterogeneous or homogeneous perception of the current level support and the required level of support.

Checklist for entrepreneurs

Based on the general guidelines above, a checklist for entrepreneurs was developed. This checklist was developed to ensure that entrepreneurs are taking full advantage of their business environment. The checklist takes the forms of questions aimed at entrepreneurs and support them to easily screen potential supportive actors and initiatives in their region. The checklist is not sector nor region specific to enable most rural entrepreneurs to make the best of it.

In RUBIZMO we have identified 7 sub-arenas in the business environment that are crucial to access for many of the entrepreneurs in the rural areas in Europe, figure 2 (see [Business environment](#)). If one of the sub-arenas is too weak there is a risk that

establishment and growth of companies will be inhibited. The business environment is created by several stakeholders to facilitate the success of both start-ups and growing businesses. This checklist makes it easier for entrepreneurs to identify where there is a lack of support from their business environment and which local stakeholders could implement a business environment workshop to strengthen the business environment.

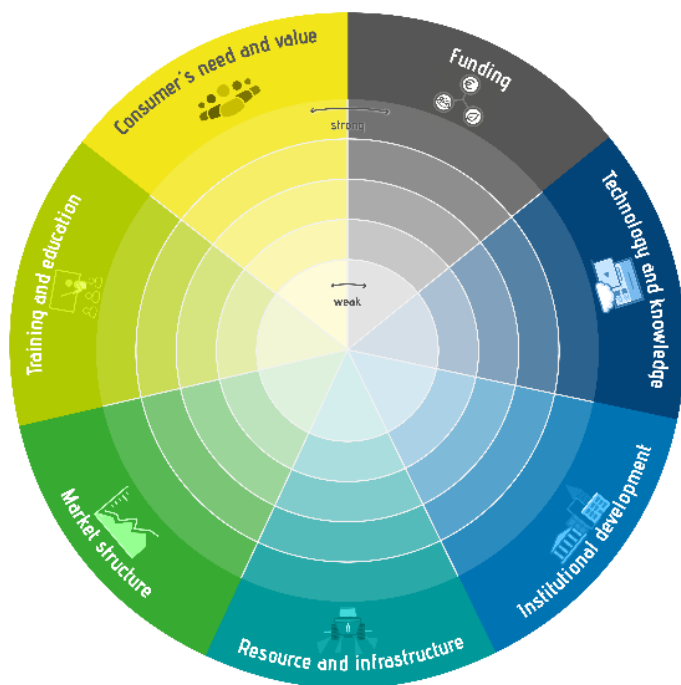
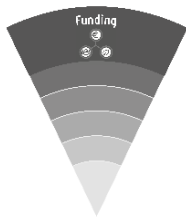


Fig. 2: The Rubizmo wheel of the seven sub-arenas composing the business environment. Illustration by ESCI, 2021.

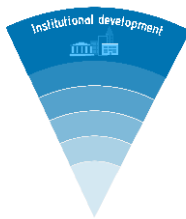
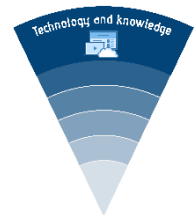


Funding

- ✓ I am aware of funding opportunities suitable for my business (sector and stage of development)
- ✓ I am aware of the requirements to apply to funding
- ✓ I know which organisation(s) could support and guide me to find and apply for funding

Technology and knowledge

- ✓ It is easy to find business partners to collaborate with
- ✓ There is knowledge exchange within and between regions
- ✓ There are stakeholders interested in collaboration around research and development
- ✓ I can access the technology needed for my company
- ✓ I know where to find stakeholders with the knowhow for my specific industry and technology

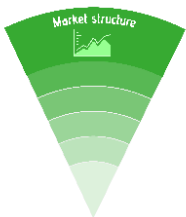
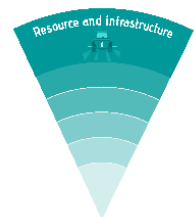


Institutional development

- ✓ I know the rules and regulation that apply to my business segment, and know which stakeholders to ask
- ✓ There are supporting actors for facilitating the development of start-ups, innovations, and pioneering sectors
- ✓ I am aware of the different regional/European regulations that can affect my business development

Resource and infrastructure

- ✓ I have reliable and fast internet connection
- ✓ I can find suitable employees
- ✓ There are well-maintained roads facilitating logistics
- ✓ There is public transport available for employees and customers to reach my location
- ✓ I can access the raw material and spare parts that I need
- ✓ There are opportunities to share resources and infrastructure with other companies (maybe if your company is a part of a formalised business cluster)



Market structure

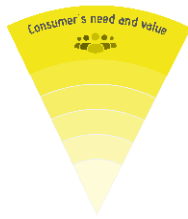
- ✓ There is collaboration between established businesses and start-ups to develop complementary products and services to reach new markets
- ✓ There are existing relevant marketplaces (physical or digital) easily accessible

Training and education

- I have access to the training I and my employees need
- The type of training available fit my needs (level of prerequisite, online, face-to-face, etc.)



Consumer's need and value



- My business offer meet consumer needs and values
- I know how to create awareness and share knowledge about the value of my products/services
- I am aware of existing and accessible consumer groups sharing my values
- I am aware of relevant lobbying organisations and in contact with them

If there are areas that you can conclude as weak in your direct business environment there can be valuable insights to gain from contacting your local development agency/municipality, region, and ask them to arrange a business environment workshop.

Instructions for workshop implementation

The aim of the workshop is to develop specific and adapted guidelines to improve the support level of the business environment for innovative entrepreneurs. Implementing the workshop to develop a supportive business environment requires a rigorous preparation. Therefore, it is important that the *workshop initiator* has the required capacity but also a strong interest to improve the degree of support in the business environment for thriving local businesses. The initiator would benefit from the support of a *moderator*, guiding [the participants](#) throughout the workshop and enabling the initiator to take a more active part to the discussions.

This section gives a brief description of the recommended steps to follow. Hence, this section is mostly aimed toward workshop initiators and moderators.

Before the workshop

A rigorous preparation will improve the quality of the results from the workshop and thereby lead to an improved business environment as the stakeholders are key players in transforming the business environment.

Set the scope

To ensure the development of specific and relevant guidelines, it is recommended to define a clear scope before organising the workshop. The first point to decide is the **geographic scope**. This depends on the workshop initiator’s interest and its network. You could cover a whole country or region or focus on one or few aggregated villages. The second points to decide upon is the **sector to be covered** during the workshop. It is recommended to keep it simple and specific to start with.



The Rubizmo project looked at three interrelated sectors: the food, bio-based, and ecosystem-services sectors. It could be relevant to focus on one these sectors, or even a sub-sector (i.e., plant-based protein, bio-chemicals, agro-tourism, etc.) to keep the scope of the workshop focused.

The settings of the workshop

The workshop can be held both “in-real-life” or remotely using simple digital tools (i.e., video call platform, digital white-board platform²). At the time of writing, the workshop has only been implemented online.

The timeframe for the actual workshop is flexible and will depend on the number of participants and how deep the group discussions and activities go. However, it is recommended to plan for at least 2,5 hours (including a short break). A suggested agenda with a timeframe is found below. The agenda below has been implemented during several occasions, but the workshop initiator is free to modify it.

Activity	Aim	Time
Round table	Break the ice	15 minutes
Introduction to the process	Get a common understanding of what to expect with the workshop	5 minutes
Presentation of the scope of study	Set the boundaries for the rest of the workshop	5 minutes
The 7 sub-arenas of the business environment	Get familiar with what is a business environment and its 7 sub-arenas	5 minutes
Profile the current status	Understand the current bottlenecks	20 minutes
Break	Stretch your leg, refill your cup, and gather new energy	10 minutes
What is a supportive business environment	Get inspiration from real cases and how the business environment can be supportive to entrepreneurs	15 minutes
Instructions before the group work	Ensure everybody is on board for the group work	5 minutes
Group work: Develop adapted guidelines	Be a creative problem solver	30 minutes
Gather the discussions from all groups	Share the results of the different discussions and comment	20 minutes
Wrapping up	Summarise the main results from the workshop, agree on potential next steps, and fill the workshop evaluation	15 minutes

² [7 best online whiteboards for team collaboration in 2021 | Zapier](#)



The workshop initiator could decide to split the workshop in two different sessions and extend the duration of desired activities if required. Each step will be further explained in the following paragraphs.

The participants

To ensure a fruitful workshop, a multi-stakeholder approach should be adopted. It is also recommended that the workshop initiator make the best use of its existing network.

Initiator: Their role is to initiate the process and take responsibility for the workshop outputs. The workshop initiator should have a strong interest in ensuring that the business environment supports the innovative business in its region. The nature of the initiator can vary from sectorial clusters, networks, or associations, to municipal, regional, or national development agencies, and local actions groups or smart villages.

Moderator: Their role is to prepare and lead the workshop as well as reporting the outputs of the workshop. As the workshop initiators should have a strong interest in enhancing the support level of the business environment, it is most likely the *initiator* will actively take part of the discussions. Therefore, it is important the *initiator* get support from a workshop moderator. They could hire a professional moderator or set a specific and competent staff member to take on this role.

Business Environment Shapers: The business environment shapers are key stakeholders affecting the [business environment](#). While screening through relevant business environment shapers, one could use the 7 sub-arenas of the business environment to structure the task. Clusters, networks, associations, schools, universities, research centres, incubators, regional agencies, NGOs are examples for business environment shapers.

Entrepreneurs: Even though it is not the entrepreneurs' first goal to create a supportive business environment for fellow entrepreneurs, their opinion is highly valuable for this workshop. Their perception of the needs to thrive and assessment of the current situation is extremely relevant. As it can be hard to get some entrepreneurs to participate to this workshop, some organisations could represent their interest (network of entrepreneurs, chamber of commerce, farmers associations).

Inviting the participants

Once all relevant participants are screened, it is time to invite them. It is important to be clear about the goal and timeframe of the workshop from the first contact. Find a date(s) suitable for all/most participants and make sure you share the final



date(s) in due time. As the *initiator* you could also suggest follow-up activities ensuring a long-term implication from the participants.

To support the participants before the workshop, information about the business environment should be shared. This includes the introductory [video](#) of the business environment and the conceptual framework developed in [deliverable 4.1](#).

Finally, once the date is set, participant should be encouraged to answer the survey aiming to assess the business environment (see [Assessing the Business Environment](#)).

Prepare the workshop

Before the workshop, the *initiator* in collaboration with the *moderator* should edit some of the slides of the suggested PowerPoint presentation³. Extra slides could be added if necessary. The answers of the survey sent to the participants should be compiled and added to the PowerPoint presentation. A simple template⁴ was developed to support with this task. To prepare the group work (see “[Group work](#)” below), a template of a whiteboard is available on Mural⁵.

Finally, it is essential that the moderator and initiator are familiar with all supportive documents developed through the Rubizmo project⁶.

During the workshop

The role of the moderator is crucial during the workshop. The moderator acts as a guide during the workshop, keeping track of the time but also ensuring that the participants focus on the aim of the workshop.

Check-in and purpose of the day

Make sure everybody has arrived and brief the participants and the purpose of the day.

Icebreaker

Short introduction by everyone. Name, what organisation they represent and their expectations. Make sure everybody feels comfortable within the group, checking potential technical issues. More personal questions related to the scope of the workshop could also be asked to allow participants to “warm-up” at the start of the

³ download the PowerPoint from [Business Environment Tool](#)

⁴ download the template from [Business Environment Tool](#)

⁵ Mural template available via this [link](#). For your own convenience, duplicate the Mural to your own dashboard to avoid several workshops working on the same canvas

⁶ See Material list in the [Business Environment Tool](#)



workshop. Even though this exercise is extremely important for the success of the workshop, ensure it does not last too long.

Introduction to the process

Present the aim and scope of the workshop to participants. This enables to set the boundaries in terms of geography (national, regional, or local level) and sector specificity. In addition, questions or doubts on the aim, scope, or process of the workshop from participants should be clarified. At this stage, all workshop participants are expected to have a common understanding of the overall aim and process of workshop.

Introduction to the 7 sub-arenas of the business environment

Before the workshop, the participants are expected to have already watched the [introductory video of the 7 sub-arenas](#) (see [Inviting the participants](#)). During the workshop, a presentation will be given to further elaborate and discuss the 7 sub-arenas. To present the 7 sub-arenas during the workshop, the moderator can choose to play the [video](#) (sub-titles are available in most languages) or hold their own presentation based on the available supporting documents. Questions and doubts from the participants on the sub-arenas will be clarified and discussed. At the end of this session, all the workshop participants would have a common understanding of the 7 sub-arenas.

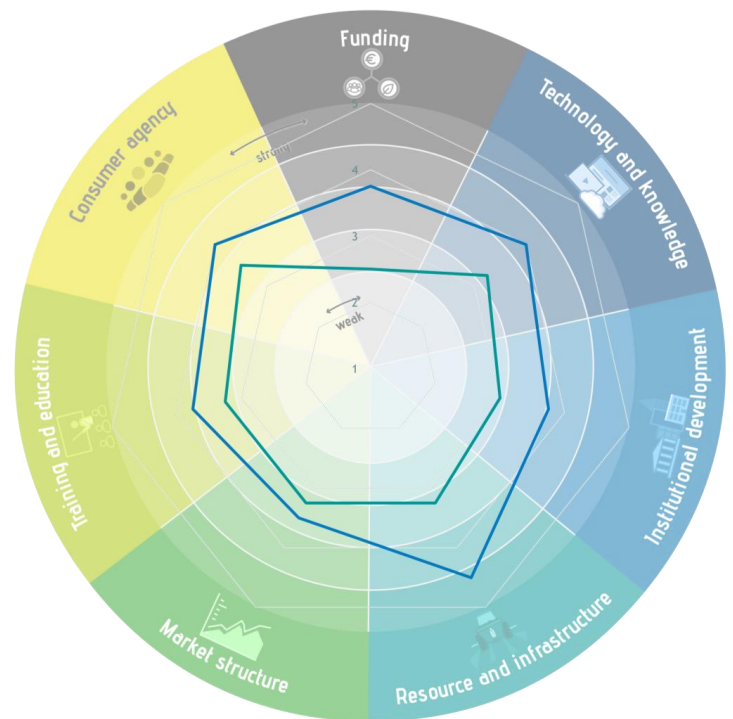


Profile the current status

The results of the survey (which is to be completed before the workshop) will be presented and discussed among the participants. The results are expected to show the key issues and the critical aspects of the sub-arenas for the scope of the workshop. Workshop participants can further comment and discuss the results. At this stage, the main problems that businesses face in the business environment will be identified. This gives inputs for the group discussion to take place later (see [Group work](#)).

Beside in figure 3 you can find a graphic representation of business environment, summarising the answers from the survey sent before the workshop to the participants (see [inviting the participants](#))

Fig.3 Graphic representation of the Business Environment assessment, the blue line represents the required support and the green line the current support level. This is only an example and will differ from case to case.



The supportive business environment

This presentation aims to give actual examples from real business cases and their related business environment. This would enable to show the way and process, how key stakeholders in a business environment can create supportive conditions for innovative businesses in rural areas. It also serves as inspiration for the participants. The selection of the cases and the business environment need to be in line with the scope and aim of the workshop. As a moderator you could show this [video](#) (subtitles available in most languages) during your workshop or use it to support your own presentation.

Group work

The group discussion mainly focuses on developing guidelines to improve the supportiveness of the business environment. Using the inputs from the previous sections and participants' own experience and expertise, potential guidelines will be reflected and discussed. The participants should be divided in smaller groups of 4 to 6 participants with one person assigned to facilitate the discussion and present the



results of the discussion, later, in the feedback session. This [Mural canvas](#)⁷ is free to use to facilitate the process. Assigning different sub-arenas to each group will ensure that all/most sub-arenas are covered during the group work.

Gather feedback from the discussions

Each group will share the main guidelines to improve the business environment, which are recommended by the respective group. The moderator will facilitate the presentation and discussions. Suggestions or reflections on the recommended guidelines will be discussed from other participants. The second part of the [Mural canvas](#) can be used to gather all guidelines.

Wrapping up

The moderator summarises the main points of the workshops, questions, challenges, and feedbacks gathered during the workshop. The moderator also summarises the main guidelines recommended to create a supportive business environment. Further, it gives the way forward for next activities and dissemination of the workshop results. Next steps could be to prioritise the guidelines to implement first, to share the conclusions from the workshop to a larger group, to get more entrepreneurs to comment on the suggested guidelines, or to agree on a roadmap and follow up.

Break(s)

Do not forget to give the participants time to stretch, move, and refill with energy and fluids.

After the workshop

Synthesise the results of the workshop and next steps

The role of the moderator at this stage will be to summarise and synthesise all the questions, feedback and discussions that took place during the workshop. This summary could take the form of a preliminary roadmap or action plan.

It is important to include the results from the different surveys as well as the presentations to create a one-stop-shop with all relevant results and material.

⁷ For your own convenience, duplicate the Mural to your own dashboard to avoid several workshops working on the same canvas

Moreover, based on the outcome of the workshop, the initiator could share the next coming steps, and suggest a follow-up meeting to monitor the effect of the implemented guidelines.

Example from Greece

In May 2021, CluBE (Cluster for Bioeconomy in Western Macedonia, Greece) implemented the Business Environment Workshop to test the workshop process in practice. The scope focused on the development of businesses within the bioeconomy sector in Western Macedonia. CluBE has a long experience in working with SMEs in the agri-food sector in Western Macedonia and thus found particularly interesting to explore this direction using the Business Environment Tool. The workshop was held remotely using the Zoom meeting platform.

Participants

For this pilot workshop a limited number of participants were invited. Ten persons representing the academy, policy, research, SMEs (through a network) and a training organisation were invited to the Business Environment Tool workshop. In total, six organisations joined meeting.

Prior to the workshop

To hold a Business Environment Workshop requires information that needs to be processed and incorporated in the presentation. The questionnaire to assess the required and actual support level for each sub-arena was sent to the participants before the meeting. The information was gathered in time, but it took significant effort to meet the deadline (follow up emails and some phone calls). CluBE also edited the PowerPoint presentation that support the workshop process.

Workshop implementation

The meeting lasted two and a half hours and its main structure was the following:

- A. Welcoming – Introduction of the process – Getting to know the tool
- B. Analysis of the current situation – Inspiration of pilot cases
- C. How to – Discussion of the trends and solutions – Summary

The workshop was held in Greek except for the Rubizmo videos that were in English but with Greek subtitles on. The Mural template⁸ was used to collect the participants feedback on a bottleneck/measures/who matrix.

⁸ Mural template available via this [link](#). For your own convenience, duplicate the Mural to your own dashboard to avoid several workshops working on the same canvas



After the workshop

A follow up email was sent to the participants with the presentation and Mural notes. CluBE expressed its intention to continue the discussion on the topic and invited all to contribute.

Reflections

Overall, the workshop was relatively easy to implement. However, the initiator and moderator should not underestimate the time needed to prepare the workshop. It was also relatively easy to explain and share the Business Environment concept and its 7 sub-arenas.

It is important to share the material to the participants before the actual workshop to save time (i.e., links with the explanatory videos). Even doing so, the moderator should expect that a part of the participants would not have seen the videos and thus have any prior knowledge of the tool.

The guidelines discussed and developed during the workshop were specific to the context. Participants agreed to further exploit the outcome of the workshop and to meet again. CluBE support the Regional Development Agency of West Macedonia (ANKO S.A.) to be the initiator for the next workshop to fully explore the potential of the tool, but it has not been realized yet.



Final words

After reading this deliverable, the reader should:

- have a good understanding of the aim of the business environment workshop,
- know how to implement the business environment workshop
- be aware of the benefits of implementing the business environment workshop
- have a basic understanding of the Business Environment framework and its 7 sub-arenas.
- and, after exploring all linked materials, have a deeper understanding of the importance of the business environment for the development of innovative businesses in rural areas

To ensure an updated material, a dedicated page for this workshop is available on Rubizmo's E-Learning platform⁹. This way, material can be kept up-to-date and could be easily used in other contexts.

Even though the workshop was developed to support the improvement of business environments for innovative businesses in rural areas, its structure allows it to be implemented for other contexts. Indeed, the aim of the workshop could be relevant for other sectors, and its flexible design allow its implementation to a wide range of contexts.

⁹ [Rubizmo :: European initiative - E-Learning](#)



Annex 1: Links to material and further readings

Direct access to the Business Environment Tool: <https://rubizmo.eu/e-learning/business-environment-workshop>

Videos introducing the Business Environment sub-arenas:

- [RUBIZMO Tools & Exercises #03 - Business Environment Tool \(short video\) - YouTube \(1min30sec\)](#),
- [RUBIZMO Tools & Exercises #02 - Business Environment Tool - YouTube \(3min\)](#)

Video introducing the general guidelines for a supportive business environment:

- [RUBIZMO Tools & Exercises #06 - Business Environment Tool Presentation - YouTube \(10min\)](#)

Direct link to the [Mural canvas](#) (to be duplicated to your own dashboard)

Further readings:

- [D4.1: Characterization of business environments for innovative businesses](#)
- [Scientific publication: Adamseged & Grundmann 2020, Understanding Business Environments and Success Factors for Emerging Bioeconomy Enterprises through a Comprehensive Analytical Framework](#)

