



YOUTH
ECO-ENTREPRENEURSHIP

PROJECT NO. 2023-2-PL01-KA220-YOU-000178470

ECO-ENTREPRENEUR SURVEY REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The Youth Eco-Entrepreneurship Hub project team conducted extensive research activities. The first phase aimed to collect data on the attitudes of entrepreneurs from all five participating countries - Poland, Turkey, Italy, Germany and Spain - towards eco-activities. The results of this survey were compared with available reports conducted in the European Union. This comparison made it possible to assess how the data obtained correlates with European trends.

The Entrepreneurial Research Report developed (based on the national reports) highlights the shared commitment of young entrepreneurs to sustainable development, reflected in their innovative efforts and social engagement. Despite the different degrees of progress in the five countries, the similarities in challenges and opportunities highlight the universal importance of adapted strategies. Financial constraints, regulatory complexity and knowledge gaps emerge as recurring obstacles, highlighting the need for systemic reforms and targeted support mechanisms.

This comparative analysis highlights that overcoming barriers to sustainability requires a multifaceted approach involving education, financial incentives, regulatory reforms, collaborative ecosystems and cultural change.

The approach of young entrepreneurs varies from country to country. Some show a high level of environmental awareness and commitment to environmental initiatives, while others show a passive, unmotivated attitude or make only superficial declarations of environmental behaviour. Others make environmental decisions only when absolutely necessary, for example in response to legislation that mandates such action.

As the first stage of the study did not clearly identify the characteristics of the young eco-entrepreneur that could serve as the basis for the second stage of the research phase, it was decided to supplement the results obtained with data from the specialist literature. The criteria for the character of an eco-entrepreneur were drawn on the assumptions of the environmental attitude model, which consists of the following factors:

- 1. Ecological and social awareness,**
- 2. Innovation and openness to change,**
- 3. Ability to cooperate and build relationships with stakeholders,**
- 4. Ability to think strategically (long-term planning for organizational development),**
- 5. Risk resilience,**
- 6. Adaptability to changing conditions,**
- 7. Transparency in operations,**

8. High ethical standards.

For the purposes of this study, this model was named the Key Competencies Model of an Eco-Entrepreneur (KCME). The foundations for its development were derived from the following sources: Ellen MacArthur Foundation, Research by Michael Porter from the Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness at Harvard Business School, OECD reports, and UN Global Compact reports.

A questionnaire '*Eco-Entrepreneur Character Test*' was developed to check whether the assumed criteria for an eco-entrepreneur were appropriate. This was the second stage of the research focused on a different group of respondents, as it concerned successful eco-entrepreneurs. As in the earlier analyses, responses were collected from respondents from all five countries collaborating on the YEE-HUB Project (Poland, Turkey, Germany, Italy, and Spain). A total of 16 successful eco-entrepreneurs were surveyed (a minimum of 3 from each partner country).

The survey was conducted using the CAWI method, i.e. by providing an online version of the questionnaire. In addition to questions describing the respondent's profile (e.g. age, place of business, country, level of education, etc.), the answers to all other questions were described on a ten-point scale (sten scale).

The results were described on scale from 1 to 10 (sten scores) and showed that most of the results fell into the high score group (7-10). This means that the assumptions of the **Eco-entrepreneur Key Competence Model** have been confirmed.

The second stage resulted in a tool allowing entrepreneurs to verify their level of resources responsible for the effective implementation of a business-oriented pro-environmental attitude. Thanks to the obtained diagnosis, the entrepreneur obtains information on which areas he/she should develop in order to increase his/her effectiveness.

In the next step of this project, educational modules will be developed dedicated to each of the competencies included in the adopted model, which in turn will constitute a dedicated response to the development needs of individual entrepreneurs seeking an effective way to enhance their effectiveness in implementing green behaviours and decisions in business.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE ECO-ENTREPRENEUR SURVEY

The questionnaire was divided into 3 parts: a metric with 8 questions, a section on ecology with 5 questions and a section on business with 6 questions.

The **metric section** shows the demographic and business profile of respondents.

The majority of respondents (approximately 60%) fall within the 36-45 age range, with a balanced representation of both males (around 70%) and females (around 30%). Most entrepreneurs hold a Master's or Bachelor's degree (approximately 75%), while a smaller percentage have PhDs (around 15%) or postgraduate qualifications (around 10%). The respondents reside in a variety of settings, with about 50% living in large cities (over 600,000 inhabitants), 30% in medium-sized cities (150,000–599,000 inhabitants), 15% in small cities (60,000–150,000 inhabitants), and 5% in rural areas.

The entrepreneurs surveyed represent a variety of sectors, with services being the most common (around 50%), followed by manufacturing (around 30%), sales (around 15%) and education (around 5%). The size of the businesses varies widely, with around 40% employing 1-3 employees, 30% employing 4-10 employees, 15% employing 11-50 employees and a smaller percentage (around 10%) employing more than 250 employees. The length of time in business also varies: around 40% of companies have been in operation for 1-3 years, 30% for 4-6 years, 20% for 7-10 years and 10% for more than 16 years.

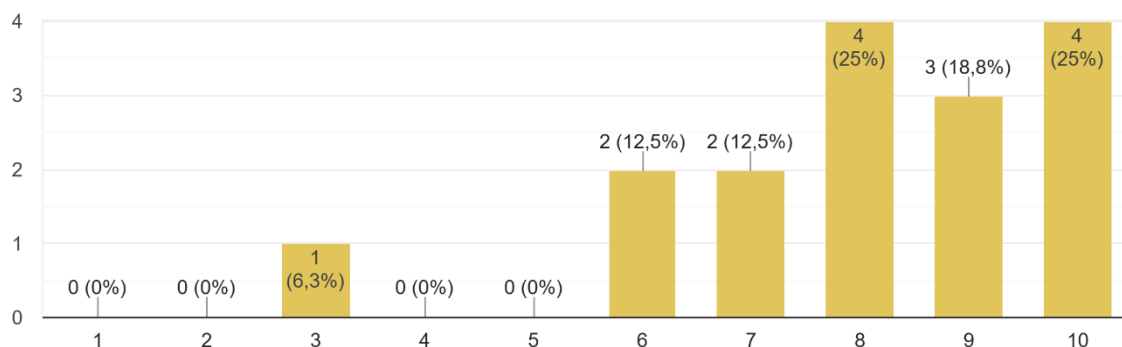
Most responses to the questions in the section on **Ecology and Business** are described on scale from 1 to 10, which assumes that indications between 7 and 10 represent high scores, 5-6 medium scores and 1-4 low scores. Indications of 7-10 are therefore interpreted as a high level of awareness, a strong agreement, belief or an affirmative answer to the question asked.

The detailed findings from these sections are presented below.

ECOLOGY

1. Indicate on the following scale the extent to which you are convinced that your company has an impact on the environment.

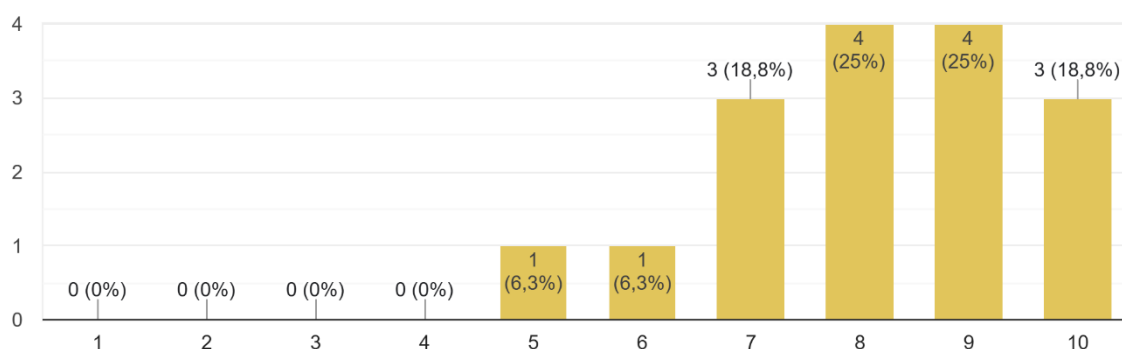
16 odpowiedzi



A strong belief in the environmental impact of their business is declared by 81.3% of respondents (answers 7-10 on the scale). This is a very large group, which can serve as a model for all those entrepreneurs who wish to act in a more ecological manner.

2. To what extent do you think taking care of the environment is your responsibility as an entrepreneur?

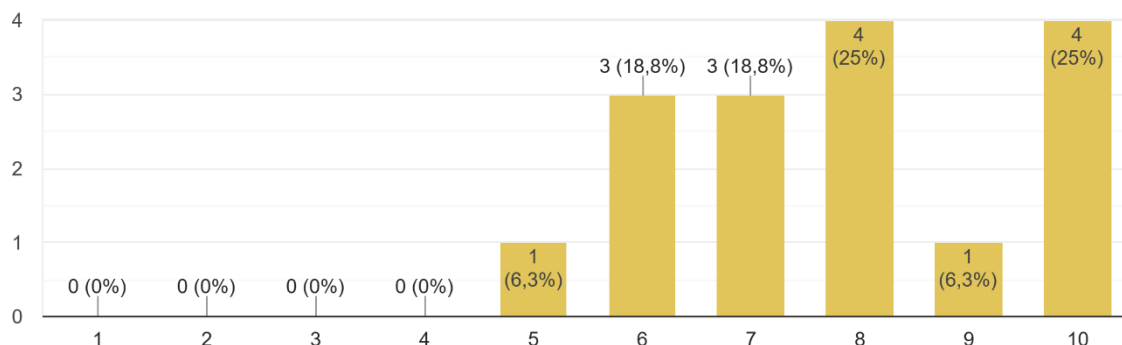
16 odpowiedzi



As many as 87.6% of eco-entrepreneurs declare caring for the environment as their duty. The sum of the scores interpreted as high, i.e. between 7 and 10, indicates this.

3. Rate your level of knowledge about the environmental impact of the economy. How well do you know the following topics: ESG implementation, clo..., greenwashing, carbon footprint monitoring, etc.?

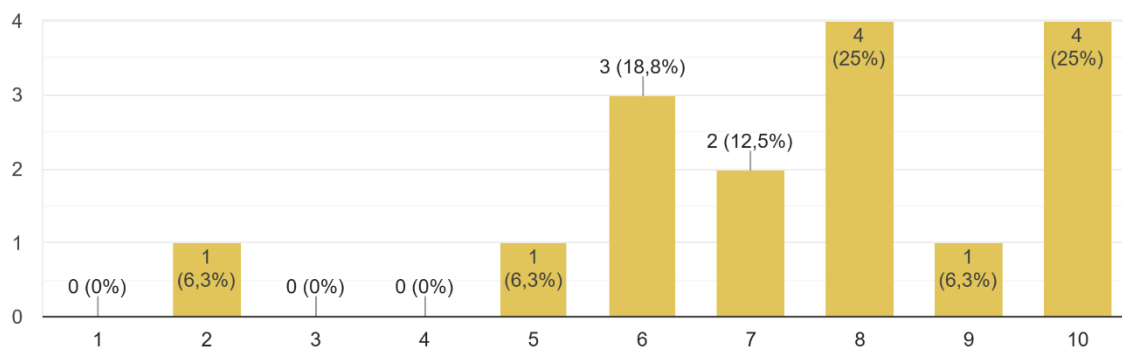
16 odpowiedzi



Respondents also rate their level of knowledge of the economy's impact on the environment highly. They rank 75.1% in the high score section (answers 7-10 on the scale). The result is very optimistic - especially in the context of previous studies giving open access to all entrepreneurs.

4. To what extent are you convinced that high ethical standards can be a source of competitive advantage for your company?

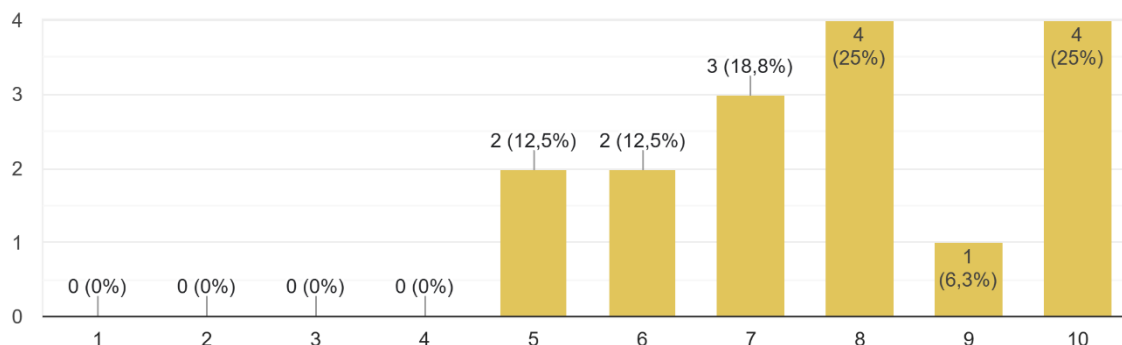
16 odpowiedzi



The level of belief that high ethical standards can be a source of competitive advantage is also quite high. It is declared by 68.8%, which gives us a value of more than two-thirds of all respondents.

5. How willing are you to invest company resources in creating and maintaining high ethical standards in your company?

16 odpowiedzi

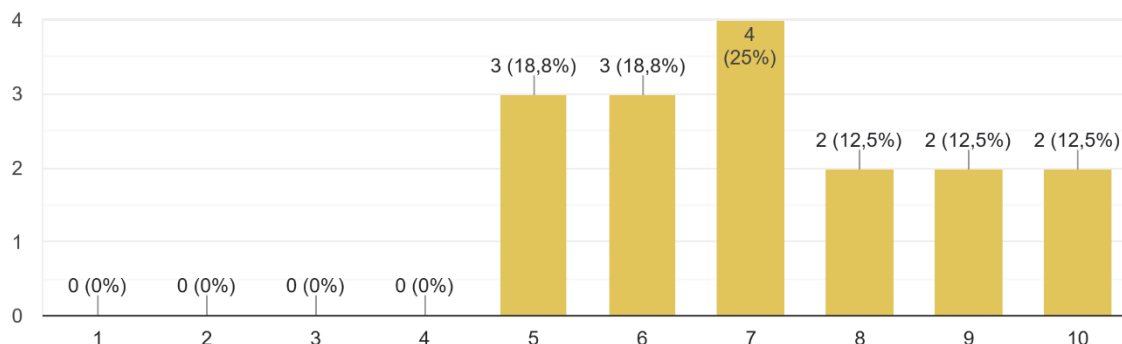


The willingness to invest in high ethical standards is expressed by 75.1% of respondents. This is already more than three-quarters of all respondents. This is very encouraging information, especially in the context of the still current model of managing companies only through the prism of profits. A higher value than in the previous question allows us to conclude that some respondents see acting on the basis of high standards as a value in itself, without the need to justify action in this direction with economic gains.

BUSINESS

1. Determine to what extent you are prepared to take risks when making decisions about your company's operations?

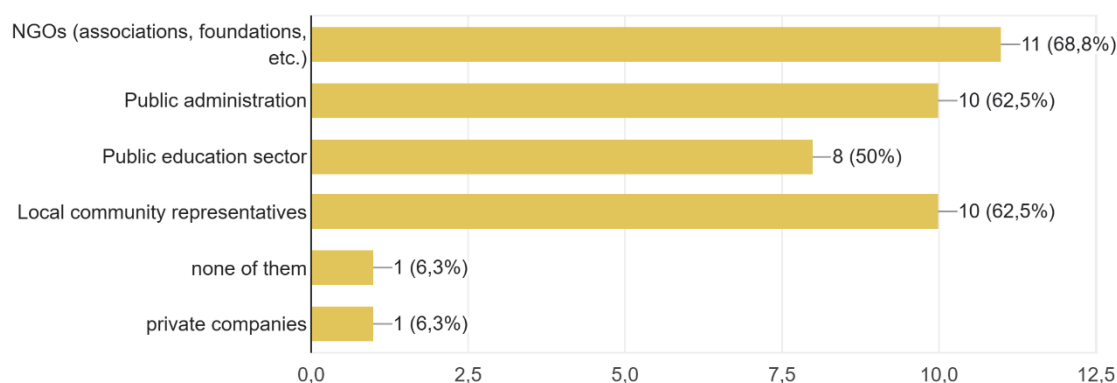
16 odpowiedzi



The willingness to take risks in the study group should also be considered quite high. 62.5 per cent fall into the high-performance section and a further 37.6 per cent into the medium-performance section. As not every branch of business requires the same level of risk appetite, we can consider these results satisfactory.

2. Mark which external parties you work with in running your business? (excluding your suppliers and customers)

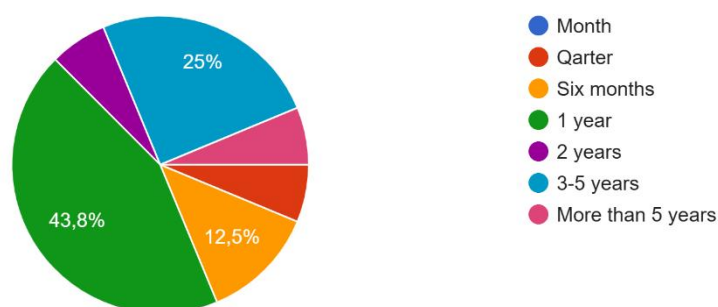
16 odpowiedzi



One of the factors of the Eco-Entrepreneur Key Competence Model is the ability to cooperate and build relationships with stakeholders, which in the case of pro-environmental business development also applies to non-governmental institutions. As the chart above indicates, only 6.3% of respondents do not build such relationships. This means that 93.7% of the participants in the study (eco-entrepreneurs) form relationships with business environment entities.

3. I plan the development of my company in the perspective of

16 odpowiedzi



In this question, we obtained confirmation that the great majority of eco-entrepreneurs plan to develop their businesses in the long term:

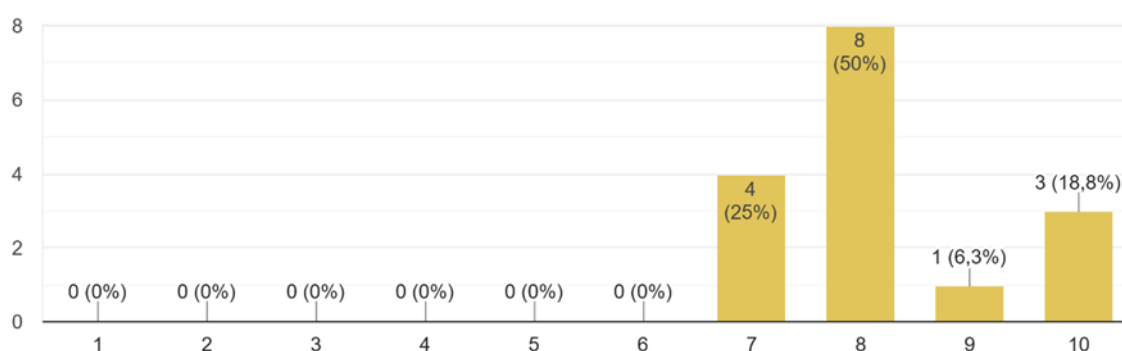
- More than 5 years - 6.3%
- 3-5 years - 25%

- 2 years - 6.3%
- 1 year - 43.8%

Under the current dynamics of changing business conditions (from 2019 - the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the significant increase in inflation in the European Union, the armed conflict in the Middle East involving Israel and Palestine, the implementation of ESG legislation in the countries of the Union), which affect globally the operation of companies of all sizes, planning beyond one year (12 months) is already seen as long-term planning. This is fostered not only by the increasingly popular but also required, in terms of adaptability and business efficiency, agile approaches. In total, we are talking about 81.4% of eco-entrepreneurs who plan their business development in this way.

4. Indicate to what extent you are willing to invest in implementing new solutions in your company.

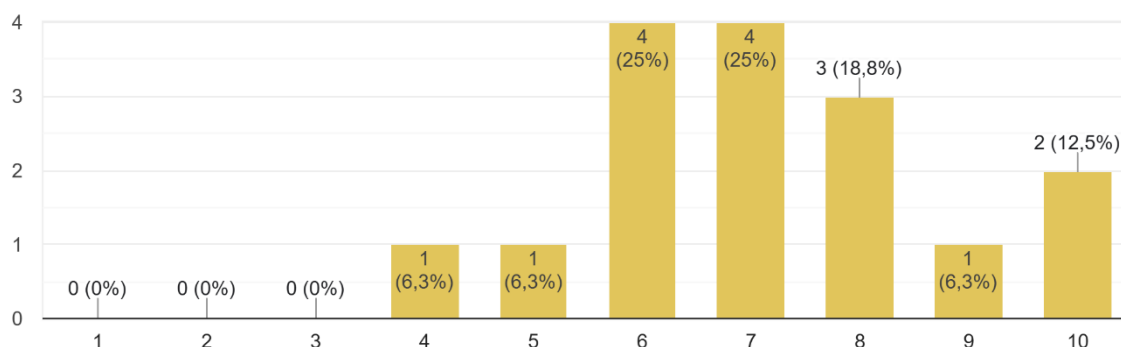
16 odpowiedzi



The above question relates to innovation and readiness to embrace change. As the data illustrated by the chart shows, 100% of respondents are ready to invest in the implementation of new solutions (7-10 scores). In the context of the previous question, we find further confirmation of the strategic approach of eco-entrepreneurs to the development of their businesses. Awareness of the need to implement new solutions and willingness to invest for this purpose, especially in industries highly exposed to external factors (such as global demand, international law, changing social and economic conditions, among others) planning must consider an adequate time perspective.

5. Determine how quickly your company is usually able to adapt to changing business, legal, and social conditions

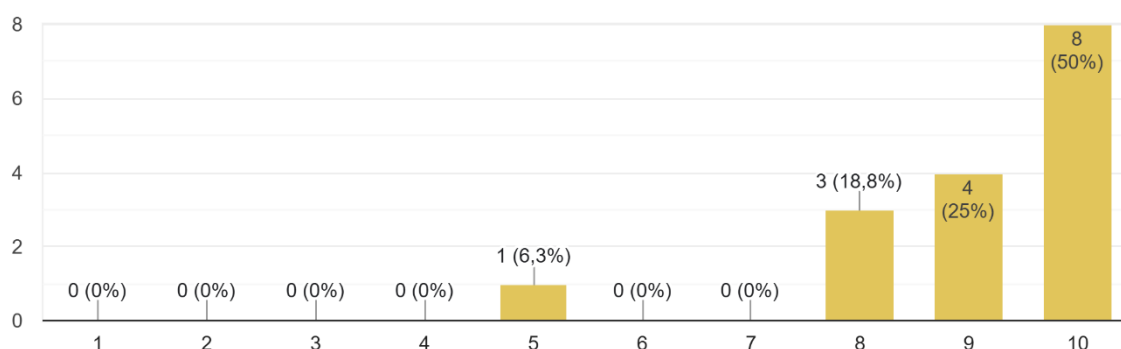
16 odpowiedzi



The entrepreneurs had to consider a number of factors when describing the adaptability of their business to change. Not only their own attitude and openness to change or the flexibility and versatility of the staff they employ. The implementation of change in many industries requires approvals and permits from the relevant public administration bodies (such as new environmental permits, licences or approvals for structural changes to buildings). Thus, the answers obtained also consider limiting factors, both external - mentioned above - and internal - such as access to financial resources). In this context, the value of 62.6%, which is close to 2/3 of all respondents, should be interpreted as quite high.

6. To what extent are you convinced that your company's operations should be fully transparent?

16 odpowiedzi



The last question of the questionnaire concerns the area of transparency of operations, which, in the context of the above-diagnosed areas, seems to be a kind of dot over the i's of the entire survey. As the chart above clearly shows, as many as 93.8% of eco-entrepreneurs consider this area to be important in the context of their business operations.

CONCLUSIONS

The data reflects that respondents represent environmentally conscious entrepreneurs who prioritise ethical standards, transparency and adaptability. Most are committed to sustainable practices and are willing to invest in maintaining high ethical standards in their companies.

The analysis shows that the individual elements of the Eco-Entrepreneur Key Competence Model are confirmed by the research carried out and are common to all participating countries. The assessment is based on the sten scale (1-10) described earlier, where scores of 1-4 are interpreted as low, 5-6 as medium and 7-10 as high. This allows for a very precise diagnosis of the areas under investigation and a subsequent description of the results obtained with a high degree of accuracy. The information collected allowed the conclusion to be drawn that the study proved the validity of the assumptions of MKKE, as among the eco-entrepreneurs surveyed, as many as 83.58% confirmed that they have the resources listed in the model at their disposal. This unequivocally confirms the achievement of the assumed indicator of more than 80%.

Based on the results obtained, as mentioned in an earlier section of this report, a method for verifying the competencies and beliefs of entrepreneurs has been developed, which will allow a diagnosis to be made of their areas of development, in the context of developing an eco-entrepreneurial attitude. The result obtained will provide the opportunity for the entrepreneur to tailor a dedicated educational module (created in the next stage of the project) that will allow him/her to develop the deficient area.

Such a solution is a coherent response to the need to shape and develop pro-environmental attitudes among entrepreneurs, as it provides a concrete path of action:

- Tool for diagnosing the resources of an effective eco-entrepreneur
- List of areas for development
- Dedicated educational module for each of the diagnosed areas requiring support.

After completing all the modules, the entrepreneur can repeat the self-diagnosis and verify the level of growth of the developed resources.

In the context of the research and analysis carried out, we can conclude that the project was carried out properly and was successful in defining the key competencies of eco-entrepreneurs and designing their development in those owners and managers of organisations who aspire to the name of pro-environment.

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ANNEXES

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ECO-ENTREPRENEURS

Personal data

1. Age

- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-35
- ☐ 36-45
- ☐ 46-55
- ☐ 56 - 65
- ☐ over 65

2. Gender

- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Man
- ☐ other
- ☐ I don't want to declare

3. Educational level

- ☐ Primary
- ☐ Secondary
- ☐ Master's or Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Postgraduate university degree
- ☐ PhD

4. Place of residence

- ☐ Large city (more than 600 000 inhabitants)
- ☐ Medium city (150 000 - 599 000 inhabitants)
- ☐ Small city (60 000 - 150 000 inhabitants)
- ☐ Rural area

5. The country in which you run your business

- ☐ Germany
- ☐ Italy
- ☐ Poland
- ☐ Spain
- ☐ Turkey

6. How long have you run your business

- ☐ Less than one year
- ☐ 1 – 3 years
- ☐ 4 – 6 years
- ☐ 7 – 10 years
- ☐ 11 – 15 years

- ☐ Over 16 years

7. What is the profile of your business?

- ☐ Sales
☐ Services
☐ Production
☐ Other

8. How many people work in your company apart from you?

- ☐ No one else - I work alone
☐ 1 – 3 employees
☐ 4 – 10 employees
☐ 11 – 50 employees
☐ 51 – 250 employees
☐ Over 250 employees

Ecology

1. Indicate on the following scale the extent to which you are convinced that your company has an impact on the environment.

No impact at all									High impact
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2. To what extent do you think taking care of the environment is your responsibility as an entrepreneur?

It's definitely not my responsibility									It is entirely my responsibility
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3. Rate your level of knowledge about the environmental impact of the economy. How well do you know the following topics: ESG implementation, closed-loop economy, fourth nature, corporate social responsibility, greenwashing, carbon footprint monitoring, etc.?

I'm not familiar with these terms									I know these terms and can explain them
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4. To what extent are you convinced that high ethical standards can be a source of competitive advantage for your company?

Definitely not going to give me a competitive advantage									They can definitely become a source of my competitive advantage
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

5. How willing are you to invest company resources in creating and maintaining high ethical standards in your company?

I definitely have no such plans									I'm very keen to invest company funds in the development of ethical standards
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Business

1. Determine to what extent you are prepared to take risks when making decisions about your company's operations?

I definitely don't want to take risks									I'm definitely ready to take risks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2. Mark which external parties you work with in running your business? (excluding your suppliers and customers)

- ☐ NGOs (associations, foundations, etc.)
- ☐ Public administration
- ☐ Public education sector
- ☐ Local community representatives
- ☐ Others

3. I plan the development of my company in the perspective of

- ☐ Month
- ☐ Quarter
- ☐ Six months
- ☐ Year
- ☐ 2 years
- ☐ 5 years
- ☐ More than 5 years

4. Indicate to what extent you are willing to invest in implementing new solutions in your company.

I'm definitely not ready to implement innovation in my company									I'm definitely ready to implement innovation in my company
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

5. Determine how quickly your company is usually able to adapt to changing business, legal, and social conditions.

We make any changes very slowly									We implement any changes very quickly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6. To what extent are you convinced that your company's operations should be fully transparent?

It is our company secret how we operate									Our customers and suppliers should know exactly how we operate
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

1. Ecological and social awareness.

Questions:

B. Ecology: 1, 2, 3.

2. Innovation and openness to change.

Questions:

C. Business: 4

3. Ability to cooperate and build relationships with stakeholders.

Questions:

C. Business: 2

4. Ability to think strategically (plan the development of the organization in a long-term manner).

Questions:

C. Business: 3

5. Resistance to risk.

Questions:

C. Business: 1

6. Ability to adapt to changing conditions.

Questions:

C. Business: 5

7. Transparency of conduct.

Questions:

C. Business: 6

8. High ethical standards of action.

Question:

B. Ecology: 4, 5

RESULTS CALCULATION TABLE

Nr	Area of interest	Question	Result			Action	Total score
1	Ecological and social awareness	B: 1, 2, 3	1	2	3	(1+2+3)/3 =	
2	Innovation and openness to change	C: 4				-	
3	Ability to cooperate and build relationships with stakeholders	C: 2	0 indications		2	-	
			2 indications		4		
			> 2 indications		8		
4	Ability to think strategically (plan the development of the organization in a long-term manner)	C: 3	Month		2	-	
			half a year				
			year		4		
			2 years		8		
5 years							
> 5 years							
5	Resistance to risk	C: 1				-	
6	Ability to adapt to changing conditions	C: 5				-	
7	Transparency of conduct	C: 6				-	
8	High ethical standards of action	B: 4, 5	4	5		(4 + 5)/2 =	

Score 1 – 4

This is the low-score section. If your score falls into this section on any of the scales, it means that this is a deficit area for you and requires development. Invest time and energy in training and consulting in this area, it will allow you to be more effective as an eco-entrepreneur.

Score 5 – 6

This is the average results section. It means that you have the foundation to effectively cope in this area. At the same time, it is an area that is worth strengthening and developing so that your results in the future can be in the high results section. Consider training or consulting in the ranges where your results fall between 5 and 6 on the scale.

Score 7 – 10

This is the high score section. This means that the areas where your score is between 7 and 10 are sufficiently developed for you to allow you to fulfill yourself as an eco-entrepreneur. Update your knowledge of new solutions and constantly changing regulations to stay up to date.

If your score is 7, which is on the edge of the average score section, take a closer look at the area it concerns. It may require your support in the form of additional activity, such as training, mentoring, consulting or coaching.