



Edible Cities Network – Integrating Edible City Solutions for social, resilient and sustainably productive Cities

EdiCitNet online Marketplace

Deliverable D6.3



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About this document

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1. Executive Summary

Many of the Edible City Solutions (ECS) supported by EdiCitNet have the potential to develop and provide more competitive products or services. These potential scenarios include the entire value-chain of food production, distribution and consumption as well as related services such as environmental education. Bringing ECS to global and local markets is a key-element of the project's up-scaling and knowledge transfer strategy.

For this reason, EdiCitNet is developing an online marketplace for ECS business development as an integral part of the EdiCitNet public website. The goal is to connect ECS, entrepreneurs and interested parties at the local, regional and global level, enabling global knowledge sharing and ECS replication or benefit from other products and services provided by ECS initiative all over the world. The marketplace is built around the opportunities demonstrated in the EdiCitNet Living Labs and beyond.

The "EdiCitNet online Marketplace" is designed as an online meeting place to initiate collaborations promoting the replication and marketing of ECS business models, products and services. Furthermore, the marketplace compiles features and tools that allow the support of a growing buyer/seller community of ECS, promote a diversity of ECS products or services, and drive sales.

The main objective is to test the impact and the functionality of an ECS marketplace. During the project time, the results and findings of the activities implemented by the Business Consulting Team (BCT) and the work around the valorization of ECS in the project will feed the marketplace and let it grow into an independent platform, serving as the primary trading place for ECS worldwide.

The pilot of the marketplace will be constantly updated and thus naturally lead to a stable and independent marketplace surviving even after the project' end. Our goal is to establish a sustainable platform, independent of the project website.

2. Why do we need an online marketplace?

An important challenge of many ECS initiatives is limited access to local or regional markets. Consequently, ECS initiatives are mostly volunteer based, economically fragile and are based on 'self-exploitation' or devalued personal labor. The EdiCitNet online marketplace will function thus as facilitating platform for several offers to address these challenges and foster self-sustaining, new business concepts.

On the one hand, the marketplace serves as a brokerage opportunity for quick and easy contacts between different providers of services and products. Many of these providers are being studied by the EdiCitNet consortium and will be

amplified step by step with the ongoing growing network. Therefore, the EdiCitNet website with the call to action button “**Make Business with ECS**” serves as a pilot platform for establishing collaborations between SMEs and other organisations. These connections are meant to lead to a knowledge exchange and to provide access to a wider network for all ECS that are partners or associated to the network of edible cities.

On the other hand, the platform also serves as a “supply and demand” website for allowing ECS to spread their offer of product and services. Addressing a broad range of ECS services and products also allows the potential customer to select from a variety of services and products and not only one specific product. This form of a marketplace is called a **horizontal marketplace**.

The main goals of the EdiCitNet online Marketplace are:

- Progressively attract ECS from outside the consortium, which in return can organise themselves as Living Labs with the support and guidance of EdiCitNet;
- Promote locally successful ECS services and products or proven business models to raise interest and stimulate demand from other cities and markets.
- Providing support of locally successful services and products to make the leap to other cities and markets;
- Offer direct collaborative networking and exchange, bringing together young entrepreneurs and start-ups with successful ECS businesses to help them set up robust business models and show them ways for a successful market entry (round tables, working groups, joint ventures;.
- Put the providers of ECS in the front-row and provide them with unique opportunities and tools to promote, transfer and valorise successful ECS concepts, services and business models world-wide.



The replication of business opportunities and joint ventures resulting from the marketplace are facilitated and advised by the Business Consulting Team (Del. 6.4) whose members support the business planning and development of the ECS businesses and initiatives. The first steps of this process take place on the EdiCitNet webpage. The call to action button “**Make Business with ECS**” is clearly visible and leads to a user-friendly knowledge portal. In EdiCitNet visibility actions, the webpage but also the online marketplace will be promoted.

These actions are already done by e.g. QR code Sticker on ECS products in several visibility actions, promoting the webpage in traditional visibility actions: Conferences, and other formats which are visited by our community.

The design and adaptation of tools and instruments to foster self-sustaining and sustainable ECS business concepts are also driven by other EdiCitNet formats and actions such as the ongoing work of the Business Consulting team (Del. 6.4) and the demand of ECS business partners. Especially in formats like EdiCitNet & friends (see Del. 7.5) the demand for consultancy on topics like market uptake, valorization and other important economic topics was strongly emphasized by all the attendees (mentioned also in Del. 1.5 Report from Annual Meeting EdiCitNet).

The EdiCitNet SMEs, NGOs, and organisations provide their expertise in a brief description triggering a first insight into the business portfolio. Beyond formal introduction data and information about size, this format will also provide

information on prosperity, goals and different business ideas. Other relevant topics in the development of an ECS marketplace are sustainability of the action mode and compliance rules in the organisation itself. Many ECS face barriers to expanding and upscaling of their organisations. These barriers and other questions will be addressed adequately and within the BCT we will try to find solutions for upscaling and replication issues. The main focus of many ECS on a local market also provides opportunities to regional and global cooperation among different ECS, that do not compete regionally or globally. Thus, the EdiCitNet online marketplace has a more collaborative than competitive character compared to conventional marketplaces.

The ECS online Marketplace structure will adapt successful formats from other marketplaces of green economy and grow by linking existing ECS offers on other marketplaces. The marketplace will promote a diversity of ECS products or services (resilient ECS portfolio) within the growing Edible City Network. We connect step by step a growing the buyer/seller community on ECS and thus will drive sales within the next 3-4 years.



Two main challenges need to be tackled by EdiCitNet.

First and foremost, the BCT will gain more insight during its work on how it is feasible to make the platform self-sustaining and how to address financing issues in the long term. The questions of sponsoring, public-private-partnerships (PPP) or crowd- funding will be discussed thoroughly within the ECS community and with experts. All ideas also fundraising concepts or other tools for tackling different issues in financing questions will be raised and discussed. Solutions will feed the marketplace in suitable formats for downloading or as guidelines.

Second, legal aspects and guidance adjusted to the local conditions will be fed into sections in the marketplace and thus will form a robust system of guidance for ECS in different stages of maturity. With “maturity stage”, we refer to the following stages: very young initiatives seeking for business concepts, fragile but working ECS mostly very small and financially unstable, stable but interested to gain higher income to initiate a trade- off, other relevant stages.

To support all ECS which operate along the value chain, mostly on closed loops and sustainably acting seems to be the proven medium to tackle social as well as environmental challenges in cities by supporting the local economy. Thus, the marketplace will need to address these challenges from its first stage as a pilot project to the stage where the marketplace becomes an independent platform". The BCT will in their work gain information and data concerning clustering and typology of ECS and their specific needs and demands, local knowledge and specific challenges. Distinct regions are accessed by the associated partners during their work growing the network. The EdiCitNet database (WP2) is the tool which is able to gather and provide easy knowledge for uptaking sorted and structured information for all interested ECS.

At the moment a pilot of the marketplace is launched at the EdiCitnet website.

The following steps are planned:

We will implement changes on the structure of the webpage to design this webpage more interactive and attractive to potential visitors and organisations. These actions include:

1. Questionnaire for refining the interface and the data displayed (finished by the end of January 2020, excerpt questions are listed below under a.);
 - a. The questions are developed by UBER with the support of the Borderstep Institute (questions launching mid-term of February 2020); the following issues will be addressed: ORGANISATION NAME, WHO ARE WE? (approximately 600-1000 characters with spaces), ORGANISATION TYPE (SME, NGO, RESEARCH INSTITUTE), LOCATION/Main office (country/City/address), WEBSITE, Relation/Connection to Edible City Solution or Edible Cities (approximately 200-300 characters), Expertise, In which other networks are you involved?, contact email of your organisation, Picture and Logo, Founding Year, Three Highlights or Achievements (This serves as inspiration as well as potential indicator for our impact analysis), Position in the ECS value chain? (Options to select: Producer, Distribution, Education, Other...), Number of actors involved (can be employees, volunteers etc.), legal entity, core product/service/output, Option for including video link;
2. Feed in all data into the section “make business with ECS” (<https://www.edicitnet.com/biz/>) with technical support from a subcontractor (mid-term of February 2020);
3. Insert a “login section” for all ECS already associated to the EdiCitNet webpage for providing the possibility for a “private exchange” (with chat function, technical support from a subcontractor);
4. Launch all ECS with their factsheet/profile. Position in the ECS value chain? (Options to select: Producer, Distribution, Education, Other...).

We include lessons learned based on several good practice examples for functioning and vivid marketplaces such as *StartGreen* (<https://start-green.net/>), which is an online information and networking portal for the green start-up scene in Germany. Here the green start-up scene (green founders, green start-ups, green investors and capital providers, sustainably oriented business incubators and many more) can exchange their knowledge and experience. The marketplace will be accessible under “Make business with ECS” and it will lead to the following new sections:

News

Network

Financing Awards

Tools

School



The setup of the EdiCitNet online marketplace is an ambitious task aiming at the resilience of the ECS businesses. ECS are a vast pool of technical, digital but also natural solutions for making urban areas more socially resilient but also to produce food in small quantities for neighborhoods and local communities. For a self-sustained platform like the ECS online Marketplace we need to first set up a stable community. Therefore, the platform is currently placed on the webpage and is a prototype exploring the benefits and the barriers of such a platform. A business consulting specialist will support the objective of the ECS marketplace. The current phase aims at co-creating this marketplace in order to make it long-lasting beyond the project time.

Often it is especially the delivery of services that needs to prove sustainability in their processes and production of goods. The holistic approach to anchor this platform in the wide range of ECS companies, initiatives, SMEs or social entrepreneurs needs a profound exploration of data which will be collected throughout the next months by the Business Consulting Team. After that, the analysis will nurture a robust concept of the EdiCitNet online marketplace.

Glossary

Abbreviation	Description
BCT	a team of Business Consultant that foster the innovative ECS to enhance and support market uptake as well as upscaling and replication world-wide
Del.	Deliverable of EdiCitNet: all deliverables can be downloaded from https://zenodo.org/communities/edicitnet
EdiCitNet	Edible City Network
ECS	Edible City Solutions (excerpt from grant agreement): the systemic use of urban landscapes for food production is a major step towards more sustainable, livable and healthier cities. A multitude of initiatives around the world, however fragmented, are prospering, forming a global movement of Edible Cities. Their products, activities and services – the Edible City Solutions (ECS) – empower local communities to overcome social problems by their inclusive and participatory dynamics and to create new green businesses and jobs, and thereby generating local economic growth and fostering social cohesion. <i>(this definition is under revision by the consortium and the EdiCitNet project – July 2019)</i>
EdiCitNet	Edible City Network
NGOs	Not for profit organisations
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises

About the EdiCitNet project

EdiCitNet is demonstrating innovative nature-based solutions (NBS). Edible City Solutions (ECS) are going one step further: We include the whole chain of urban food production, distribution and utilisation for inclusive urban regeneration and address societal challenges such as mass urbanisation, social inequality and climate change and resource protection in cities.





Thank you!

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