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

# Action Plan of EdiCitNet ECS Business Consulting Team

## Deliverable D6.4

*Photo: Monica Løvdahl*

## About this document

**This deliverable is related to:** WP6 Consultancy, Business, Development and Market uptake
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# 1. Executive Summary

The **Edible Cities Solutions (ECS) Action Plan** is a description of activities that are going to be undertaken by the **ECS Business Consulting Team** during the lifetime of the project.

In the present deliverable we provide an overview of the role of the ECS Business Consulting Team and the milestones included in the Action Plan.

# 2. The ECS Business Consulting Team

In EdiCitNet, the ECS Business Consulting Team (BCT) skills and expertise are required to facilitate the key-activities in the project, in particular:

- **the business planning and development of the ECS businesses and initiatives including the Living Labs (FRC) and beyond.**
- **the planning, endorsement and implementation of the Transition Pathways of the Follower Cities (FC) and beyond.**
- **the set-up and maintenance of the ECS online Marketplace ([1]).**

## Goals and objectives of the ECS Business Consulting Team

The primary goal of the BCT is to identify ECS initiatives in the project (in FRC and FC) and beyond the project, which seek business consulting supported by EdiCitNet. Here, it is important to keep the focus on the complete value chain of ECS. This selection of ECS initiatives will provide a large portfolio of ECS covering different "best practice" cases, each case representing a different status of maturity, a different kind of business activity and a different kind of individual aim: for instance, turnover from initiative to start-up, leverage of investment and income streams, development of trade-offs/ spin-offs.

The objectives of this action contribute to the following expected impacts of the EdiCitNet project:

1. Establishment of EU Leadership in new global NBS market;
2. New economic opportunities, new products and services;
3. Leverage of investments;
4. New local green jobs.

These impacts aligned with the objective of Work Package 6 pave the way to integrate a broad variety of ECS both to the online marketplace of EdiCitNet and the European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities (EIP-SCC) marketplace. This link fosters the connecting of SMEs, NGOs, initiatives and other organisations seeking support for business uptake and valorisation of their goods, activities and services.

EdiCitNet will exploit results on three levels:

(1) ECS initiatives & business in the FRC by promoting the business development of existing and new ECS within the Living Labs;

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[1] See the strategy of Exploitation of EdiCitNet results in Section 2.2 of the description of the action, part B, and Task 6.3 in WP6.

(2) ECS initiatives & business created or incubated within the Transition Pathways in FC and additional replication in other cities;

(3) Realise business opportunities: ECS Business Consultancy and online Platform & Market Place, which will be the main pillars (and potential sources of revenues) to continue EdiCitNet after the end of EC funding.

**Goals from the WP6 in EdiCitNet:**

● Close knowledge gaps in the effectiveness and implementation of nature-based solutions (NBS), by explicating the sustainable, innovative business models of ECS, and show improvement, upscaling and replication potential of NBS via ECS in FRC and FC;

● Specify business formats and methodologies for successful upscaling and replication of NBS in individual ECS, and at city level;

● Create an online Market Place connecting ECS, entrepreneurs and interested externals, enabling global knowledge sharing and ECS replication;

● Provide important ECS and interested entrepreneurs with effective consultancy services to improve their business development and (marketing) strategies.

# Composition of the ECS Business Consulting Team

The core team of the ECS BCT (UBER and Nabolagshager) is multidisciplinary and multicultural. The ECS Business Consulting Team includes members of EdiCitNet WP6 and WP5 with the support of the Borderstep Institute, a consultancy agency, in order to achieve the project-specific objectives and impact for business development.

The target groups are very different ECS covering a variety of ECS, and this variety is referred to as **ECS portfolio.** This ECS portfolio should serve as a good and robust selection of ECS along the whole value chain identified in an enlarged stakeholder analysis.

The ECS portfolio includes ECS from the FRC and FC and beyond the project. These ECS were partially already identified in the event EdiCitNet & friends (WP7). The BCT team members hold the necessary skills and expertise required to facilitate the key-activities in the EdiCitNet project to foster and empower local initiatives in:

a) stepping over to a turnover from initiative to start-up;

b) to leverage investment and income streams; and

c) to develop trade-offs/ spin-offs.

Alexander Schabel, a senior consultant on business development at the Borderstep Institute, is in charge of supporting and guiding the BCT in its implementation plans, to make sure that the above mentioned goals are achieved.

# Tasks of the ECS Business Consulting Team

The BCT will launch and incubate the business activities first in FRC and FC. Beyond this the BCT will actively involve ECS outside the project and aim to grow the number of supported ECS in the 4 aforementioned goals.

Tasks:

- The BCT will provide knowledge and consultancy within the FRC and FC and beyond. To coordinate this action WP8 and WP7 will intensively support in calls and different visibility actions with BCT (like EdiCitNet & friends) to enlarge the number of potential ECS to be advised.

- Provide consultancy to ECS addressed in the FC within the Transition Pathways. This support is done via the matchmaking and knowledge exchange events (see point 6: "Easy uptake with SMBC") This knowledge exchange is also conducted in WP7 with WP3 and WP4. The matchmaking (already done at Annual Meeting in Girona (see Report, Deliverable 1.5) foresses to interlink the cities according to their needs.

- Co-develop with the ECS entrepreneurs and the Living Labs tailor-made business development and marketing strategies following the SBMC which advances the commercial, ecological and social potential of ECS involved in the FRC.

- Provide advice and training on the exploitation of a Sustainable Business Model Canvas for ECS (SBMC), within the framework of the local Living Lab and Transition Pathways. The BCT will support the testing of ECS in the Living Labs (T3.4), in terms of economic benefits and perspectives, as the LL plan to co-develop with ECS entrepreneurs tailor-made business development and marketing strategies.

- Helps the LL in modeling and planning their exploitation activities.

- Performs plausibility checks of business plans and the joint finding of the ideal finance mix (see WP3, Task 3.1.), in particular early-stage initiatives or inexperienced entrepreneurs.

- Ensures an effective market approach and support from local key-stakeholders, such as local authorities or sponsors.

- Engage FRC and FC ECS in further networking with cities beyond the consortium

- Coach interventions of the EdiCitNet Business Consulting Team in the open EdiCitNet


**More in detail**, with respect to the **Front-Runner cities and their living labs**, the BCT will:

- Provide consulting to the selected relevant small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that have been identified in the holistic stakeholder analysis for all EdiCitNet FRC. With this respect, we need to point out that in the project we plan to go beyond those enterprises that self-identify as startups, which are very few;

- Cluster and categorize suitable initiatives, possibly related to the FRCs;

- Guide all FRC and FC ECS to their respective desired goal in the following year and plan action for the goal in five years from that point onwards.


**With respect to the follower cities,** the BCT will:

- Match the guidance session (workshops and sessions to guide ECS initiatives, both 'on the ground' and online) with their selected FRC ECS, while FC ECS will get an overview over the clusters. If possible, these will be related to a FRC, if not we have to address ECS from boundaries to the cities;

- Conceptualise replication actions and search for ECS similarities.


## Long-term perspective of the BCT

Continuously optimising its services and skills during the project as part of an ongoing learning process, the BCT is expected to become an autonomous, innovative and sustainable ECS service, in

the form of a self-sustained network after the project's end, carrying on its tasks in supporting cities and communities interested in engaging in an ECS endeavor.

Another task of the BCT after the project's end is to develop cooperations with other green startup initiatives and activities. This could help the ECS initiatives to gain visibility and achieve their goals, as set in the business coaching.

# 3. The Action Plan of ECS Business Consulting Team

The action plan then foresees the development of tailor-made business plans with the **Sustainable Business Model Canvas (SBMC)** addressing the individually defined challenges and branches of NGOs, SMEs or other relevant initiatives and organisations involved in the FRC Living Labs. The action plan addresses entities beyond those that normally consider themselves a business or startup, as preliminary research from FRCs have uncovered that few of those that are involved in some kind of sales of edible city solutions, consider themselves a business or are organized as one, although they may have significant potential as such. Simultaneously, we see that many initiatives that consider themselves non-profit activities gradually evolve into startups as they may look for financial independence from the public sector, securing long-term staff contracts  or simply a way to continue the activities.

This will lead to an EdiCitNet ECS portfolio selection - a selection of specific and holistic approaches to address the innovative streams currently existing in a global context. This portfolio will be an example but also a collection which can be complemented. This collection will also serve the EdiCitNet Toolbox and support the user-friendly and applicable decision support system from WP2.

During the first official meeting of the BCT, the major tasks steps of the Action Plan have been identified. The details for each step need to be refined by the BCT team members. The detailed working version of the Action Plan will be compiled and structured by the Borderstep Institute, subcontracted by UBER (coordinator of EdiCitNet project).

After the presentation of the Borderstep Institute, the following items were addressed:
- Defining who is part of the core team. Namely: Laura Martinez and Adam Curtis (Nabolagshager) and Suhana Reddy, Thomas Wachtel and Ina Säumel including Alexander Schabel (UBER), with the support of Alice Bischof and Emiel Wubben (Wageningen University);
- Clarifying discussion on SBMC [2] and tripod BMC [3] - usability for a broader target group beyond experts and scientific approach;
- Clarifying that there is **no** connection between point 5 and Deliverable D6.6.

The BCT agreed on setting deadlines for structuring the work is mentioned in points 1-4:

1. Set up the BCT, timetable and Gantt chart for the BCT (deadline: April 2020)
   - This task fixes the times and months of (internal) deliverables, the Gantt chart and timetable provides an overview and will structure the time of the BCT and the Borderstep Institute.
2. Set up an intertwined pert chart of matching and interlinked objectives and impacts of EdiCitNet to holistically address the projects outcomes as a whole. This also includes the consultation of WP3 members and Living Labs Coordinators (deadline: April 2020)
   - This allows the insights of the BCT to integrate into the relevant WPs of EdiCitNet at the right time. The pert chart will show all connections and dependencies

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[2] Sustainable Business Model Canvas
[3] Triple bottom line Business Model Canvas

connected to the actions. The BCT has an overarching task and is thus a steering group which is of interest for all stakeholders of this project.

3. Set up of a specific monitoring scheme with NIBIO (WP5 Lead, Monitoring) to coordinate and align all actions undertaken in the monitoring (deadline: May 2020)
   ○ To measure the impact of WP6 and the overall impact of the BCT on the project, suitable indicators have to be selected. We want to measure the leverage effect of the work of the BCT on the selected, potential ECS. In addition, we want to measure the impact of the BCT work on society and the general public.
4. Complement and adjust the EdiCitNet Stakeholder List of ECS for each FRC in order to provide comparable yet different ECS categories. This aims at selecting a set or portfolio of ECS which provide a holistic base for replication in other cities (deadline: May 2020).
5. Identify suitable parameters and categories for creating an EdiCitNet portfolio of ECS initiatives/business for the various sections service, products and valorisation of other goods and services along the whole ECS value chain.
6. "Easy uptake with SBMC"
   ○ In this section we will develop a set of knowledge sharing events and trainings on SBMC to provide guidance and individual support for selected ECS. We here elaborate a specific yet holistic business uptake plan in steps for the ECS. After that we set up a portfolio of ECS which were successfully supported and represent the different ECS along the whole value chain.
7. Undertake a refining of an existing knowledge sharing and workshop cascades for easy replication in Follower Cities and other "followers".
8. Experiences and results will lead to adjusted trainings with new and additional members focusing on different parameters and different participants of the training.

Report on the implementation status of the steps above will be provided in the WP6 first periodic report.

The BCT agreed on points 1-4 and the deadlines to implement these points. However, the process might reveal deviations from the action plan due to new results and findings.

Currently, we have agreed that points 5-8 in the plan show the direction and the upcoming actions as far as this is predictable at the moment. We intend to report at the latest in June 2020 whether the BCT can refine the actions. BCT agreed to an online meet once a month.

# Glossary

| Abbreviation | Description |
|---|---|
| BCT | Business Consulting Team - a team of business consultants that foster the innovative ECS to enhance and support market uptake as well as upscaling and replication world-wide |
| 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. (*this definition is under revision by the consortium and the EdiCitNet project – July 2019*) |
| EdiCitNet | Edible City Network |
| EIP-SCC | European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities |
| FC | Follower City |
| FRC | Front Runner City |
| NGOs | Not for profit organisations |
| SBMC | Sustainable Business Model Canvas, a variation of the common strategic business development tool developed by A. Osterwalder, which often replaces conventional business plans, extended to incorporate questions related to sustainability |
| SE | Social Entrepreneurs |
| SMEs | Small and medium enterprises |
| 3BMC | The Triple Layered Business Model Canvas, a specialized variation of the BMC into a triple bottom line model that also includes the environmental and social aspects of a business model. |

## 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.

*City Teams* are the backbone of the project. They are steering groups in each city which ensure participation of citizens, SMEs, NGOs, and other relevant organisations.

*Living Labs* are temporal spaces. Cities give strategies and processes for anchoring ECS in cities a try in protected rooms for enhancing social cohesion and better living conditions.

*Masterplans* are a systemic approach for planning urban infrastructure. Masterplans foresee a collaborative planning to make a city attractive for all citizens.

*Network* EdiCitNet Network provides knowledge sharing, open access to all information of ECs and round ECS. The network is integrative and beneficial to all which want to change the world.

# Thank you!

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