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

EdiCitNet

Deliverable D6.3

EdiCitNet online Marketplace

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Authors:
Humboldt Universität zu Berlin (UBER): Suhana Reddy
Borderstep Institute: Alexander Schabel

Support:
Humboldt Universität zu Berlin (UBER): Thomas Wachtel,

Quality assurance:
NABOLAGSHAGER (NH): Laura Martinez Izquierdo

For any comments please contact: edicitnet-coordinator@eurtd.com

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1. Executive Summary

Many of the Edible City Solutions Initiatives (ECSI) supported by EdiCitNet have the potential to develop and provide more competitive products or services as well as socio-economic value[1]. These potential scenarios include the entire ECSI Value Chain[2] 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 ECSI development as an integral part of the EdiCitNet public website. The goal is to connect ECSI, entrepreneurs and interested parties at the local, regional and global level, enabling global knowledge sharing and ECSI concept replication or benefit from other products and services provided by ECSI in the local and regional context. The Marketplace is built around the opportunities demonstrated in the EdiCitNet Living Labs and beyond. It is designed as an online meeting place to initiate collaborations promoting the replication and marketing of ECS (business) models, products and services. Furthermore, the EdiCitNet Marketplace will compile features and tools that allow the support of a growing buyer/seller community of ECSI, promote a diversity of ECSI products or services, and drive sales.

The main objective is to test the impact and the functionality of an ECSI Marketplace. During the project period, the results and findings of the Blended Consulting Team (BCT) and the work around the valorisation of ECSI in the project will feed the Marketplace and grow it into an independent platform that will serve as the primary trading place for ECSI in their local clusters.

The pilot will be constantly updated and thus naturally lead to a stable and independent Marketplace that will survive after the project lifetime.

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[1] Emerson, Jed, and Mark Cabaj. "Social return on investment." (2000).

[2] ECSI Value Chain developed by Suhana E. Reddy

2. Why do we need an online Marketplace?

An important challenge of many ECSI is limited access to local or regional markets and the mainstreaming of their activities within cities. Consequently, ECSI are mostly volunteer based, economically fragile and reliant on 'self-exploitation' or devalued personal labor[3]. Thus the EdiCitNet Marketplace will function as facilitating platform for several offers to address these challenges and foster self-sustaining, new concepts:

Technical parts of the Marketplace

The Marketplace is part of the EdiCitNet website and provides the following technical services:

- Search function for ECSI in general
- Search function for expertise and needs
- FAQ section with growing portfolio of topics (four main pillars have been identified already[4] legal barriers, administration, hygiene concepts for food preparation and long-term financing for social enterprises)
- Newsletter and direct contact to marketplace experts and IT issues (edicitnet-marketplace-response@eurtd.com)
- Display of workshops and events especially shaped for ECSI in their specific region
- Download section for material and information
- Interaction with EdiCitNet Social Media tools
- Interaction with toolbox

The Marketplace serves as a brokerage opportunity for quick and easy contacts between different providers of services and products and interested organization. As an example, WP7 has already recruited some ECSI form the marketplace for several visibility and communication-actions during 2020 and 2021. The EdiCitNet website with the "call to action" button "Do Business with ECS" (see Fig. 1) serves as a pilot platform for linkages between SMEs and other organisations.

Figure 1: Call to action button – Do business with ECS-button leading to the Marketplace

These connections have already led to first knowledge exchanges and access to a wider network for all ECSI that are partners or associated to the network of edible cities. In addition, this platform will also serve as a "supply and demand" website to make it easier for ECSI to spread the word about their range of products and services. Addressing a broad range of ECSI services and products will also allow the customers to select from a variety of services and products along the ECSI Value Chain rather than just one specific product. The

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[3] Fichter, K. & Olteanu, Y. (2021). Green Startup Monitor 2021. Berlin: Borderstep Institut, Bundesverband Deutsche Startups e.V.

[4] Fichter, K. & Olteanu, Y. (2021). Green Startup Monitor 2021. Berlin: Borderstep Institut, Bundesverband Deutsche Startups e.V.

main goals of the EdiCitNet Marketplace are:

Goals of the Marketplace

- Gradually attract ECSI from outside the consortium, which in turn can organise themselves as Living Labs with the support and guidance of EdiCitNet.
- Promote locally successful ECSI services and products or proven business models to raise interest and stimulate demand from other cities and markets. Support locally successful services and products to make the leap to other cities and markets.
- Offer direct collaborative networking and exchange bybringing together young entrepreneurs and start-ups and other initiatives with successful ECS businesses to help them in creating robust (business) concepts and models and show them ways to successfully enter the market (round tables, working groups, joint ventures).
- Put the providers of ECSI in the front-row and provide them with unique opportunities and tools to promote, transfer and valorise successful ECSI 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 BCT (see D6.4) whose members support the blended planning and development of the ECSI businesses and initiatives. The first steps of this process took place on the EdiCitNet website. These actions have for instance been already implemented through QR code Sticker (see Fig. 2) on ECS products in several visibility actions, promoting the webpage: at conferences, and other events visited by our partners.

The design and adaptation of tools and instruments to foster self-sustaining and sustainable ECSI concepts are also driven by other EdiCitNet formats and actions such as the

ongoing work of the BCT (see D6.4) and the demand of ECSI & business partners. Especially in formats like EdiCitNet & friends (see D7.5) the consultancy on topics like market uptake, valorization and other important economic topics was strongly emphasized by all the attendees (mentioned also in D1.5 Report from Annual EdiCitNet Meeting).

The EdiCitNet SMEs, NGOs, organisations and associations will provide their expertise in a

Figure 2:QR Code for Webpage

brief description triggering a first insight into their activity-portfolio. Beyond formal introduction data and information about size, this format will also provide information on prosperity, goals and different concepts and business ideas. Other relevant topics in the development of an ECSI Marketplace are sustainability of the action mode and compliance rules in the organisation itself. Many ECS initiatives face barriers in expanding and upscaling their organisations. These barriers and other issues will be addressed adequately and within the BCT we will try to find solutions for issues of upscaling and replication. The main focus of many ECSI on a local market also provides opportunities to regional and global cooperation among different ECSI, that do not compete regionally or globally. Therefore, the EdiCitNet Marketplace has a cooperative rather than a than competitive character compared to conventional marketplaces.

The ECS Marketplace structure will adapt successful formats from other marketplaces of the green economy and grow by linking existing ECSI offers on other market places (e.g. The Marketplace will promote a diversity of ECSI products or services (resilient ECSI portfolio) within the growing Edible City Network. We connect step by step a growing buyer/seller community on ECS and thus will increase sales within the next 2 years.

The BCT (D 6.4) will gain more insight into how to make the platform self-sustaining and how to address financing issues in the long term as its work progresses. Current negotiations are looking at the idea of interconnecting the EdiCitNet toolbox (see. WP2) and the Marketplace and elaborate a common platform for EdiCitNet that provides many different services for different audiences. This would result in a multi-sided platform which underpins the variable benefit of ECSI and ECS to a broad society. This measure emerged because the collection of ECSI and the collection of ECS in our FRC and FC and beyond was not consistently differentiated. It has developed a merged systems of two platforms that includes ECSI. Therefore, WP6 and WP2 were in intensive discussion to boost and initiate the registration of ECSI under the Marketplace and insert environmental and socio-economic parameters into the EdiCitNet toolbox. This platform is the long-term cooperative platform between the two organisations UBER and ICRA. Negotiations are ongoing and will be determined accordingly.

2. From local networks to global impact

Supporting all ECSI operating along the Value Chain, mostly on closed loops and using sustainable practices, seems to be the proven approach to tackle social as well as environmental challenges in cities by supporting the local economy[5]. Th Marketplace, which is expected to evolve from a pilot up to an independent platform, must therefore address these challenges. Through its work, the BCT will gain information and data concerning clustering and typology of ECSI and their specific needs and demands, local knowledge and specific challenges. Distinct regions are accessed by the associated partners during their work and will thus grow the network. The EdiCitNet toolbox (WP2) is the tool used to gather sorted and structured information for all ECS as a measure for regenerating Cities.

The following steps are to be done:

The Marketplace has been launched on the EdiCitNet website and we will implement changes on the structure of the webpage to make it more interactive and attractive to potential visitors and organisations. These will actions include:

1. Questionnaire to create an organisational profile on the Marketplace. The questions were developed by UBER with the support of the Borderstep Institute. The form includes the following information:
- Organization's name and brand
- Type (SME, NGO, Research Institute, Initiative)
- Location (country/City/address)
- Contact information (Website, relationship to Edible City Solutions)
- Expertise
- Needs (to leverage the own work, this question has been added to allow a better matching process)
- Pictures 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/activities
- Option for including video link

2. All data submitted by the ECSI have been implemented into the section "Do business with ECS" (https://www.edicitnet.com/biz/) with technical support from a subcontractor

3. Insert a "login section" for all ECS initiatives already associated/registered to the EdiCitNet webpage for providing the possibility for a "private exchange" (with chat function, technical support from a subcontractor) - not yet implemented (August 2021).

4. Launch or showcase all ECSI on the Marketplace with more refined filter functions. This version includes the possibility to filter the following indicators:

a.   Country/Cultural area

Clustering ECS initiatives along their geographical proximity serves the brokerage and networking (see D. 6.4, BCT Action Plan) and local networks of ECSI. Here, the specific

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[5] Säumel, Ina, Suhana E. Reddy, and Thomas Wachtel. "Edible City solutions—One step further to foster social resilience through enhanced socio-cultural ecosystem services in cities." Sustainability 11.4 (2019): 972.

regions are the areas of the Front-Runner Cities. We intentionally did not refer only to the city area as many ECS initiatives are also active in the agglomeration area of the city (e.g. ECSI from the Rhine-Palatinate area between Andernach and Koblenz). Selection for the ECSI is now possible within their own local region, reinforcing the building of local markets and regional clusters for resilient economic activities (see Figure 4). The refinement of the platform towards communication possibilities and a secured virtual for Marketplace members only is envisaged.

b.   Region (state level or other types of administrative regions)

The regions support the local networks and serve as hubs also in nation-wide networking. This larger network addresses bigger value chains and distribution channels. It enables

upscaling and replication in other regions also outside a country yet it still emphasizes a focus on the regional products and services. Different regions can hence be interlinked to each other and should shed the light on common yet climate neutral distribution and supply chains.

c.   Type of organization (SME, Initiative, NGO, Research Institute, Other)

This information can be already found on the Marketplace in the profile of every ECSI registered. One of the key aspects here is the size and the legal form of ECSIs.

Restlos Glücklich

Our non-profit organization RESTLOS GLÜCKLICH is campaigning for more appreciation of food's value and sustainable food consumption. We educate people about climate-friendly nutrition through community projects, interactive activities, and individualized workshops. We educate people of all ages to raise awareness about conscientious ways of cooking and handling food. UNSERE KÜCHE: Workshops on climate-friendly and healthy nutrition and education against food waste in disadvantaged neighborhoods in Berlin; Small and simple changes in our kitchen already have a big impact on our health and climate. Look forward to creative cooking workshops and table talks with sustainable ideas on how you can cook healthy and delicious food in your everyday life without much effort

Gerettete Lebensmittel sortieren

Babybreikurs im Kosmosviertel

Getränke ohne Zusatzstoffe selbst herstellen in der NochMall im Auguste-Viktoria-Kiez

Gemeinsam Brot backen in ~~Dönhof~~

Region: **Berlin**
Country: **Germany**
Type: **NGO**

Contact:

hallo [at] restlos-gluecklich [dot] berlin

Wilhelm-Kabus-Straße 24
10829 Berlin

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Official Website »

← Previous   Next →

Figure 3: ECS association displaying the main value proposition and services on the EdiCitNet Marketplace

On the one hand the Marketplace should provide benefits to the ECSI, but on the other hand the EdiCitNet network should also benefit from their knowledge and experience. The Network already has a Manifesto which is the basic document to announce membership in the Network. In future the network and the map on the web page will be interconnected with the marketplace, displaying ECSI also in a world map.

d.   Position in Value Chain / Product or Service Category (Raw Resource Input, Production, Preparation and Consumption, Processing, Resource and Waste Recovery, Education).
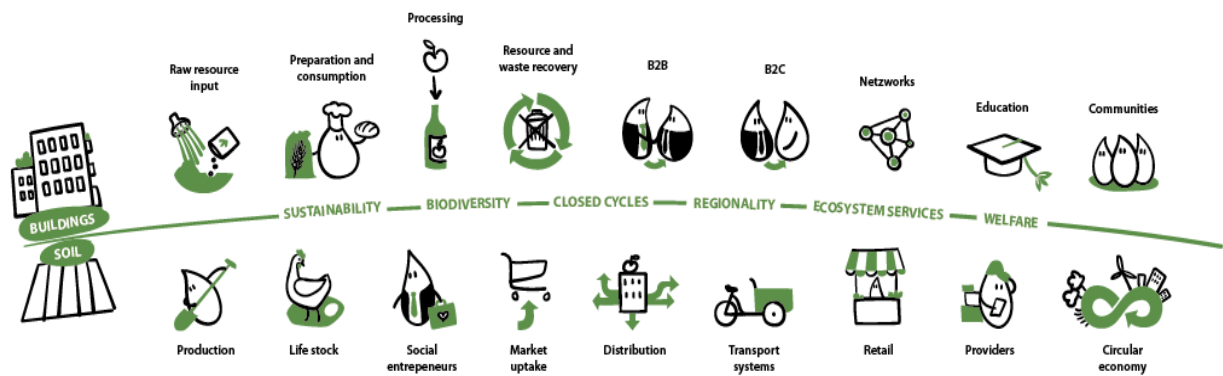

Figure 4: ECSI Value Chain developed by Suhana Reddy, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin

In this category, multiple answers/selections should be possible. The ECSI Value Chain was developed to structure and locate the ECS initiatives along their local network and to visualise networking and matching points.

e.   Expertise (key areas of expertise based on the answers given in the questionnaire)

Experts from the different ECS initiatives registered at the Marketplace are clustered under a dedicated area. Experts from SMEs will be the organisations providing their insight to "newbies" and inexperienced ECS initiatives. The experts will also arrange sessions like online excursions which were already very successful during the post doc academy at IRI THESys for Transformational Leadership. Here, an ECSI organized a virtual excursion with the Post docs and answered questions addressing the abovementioned topic (find more details in D.7.6).

f.   Needs (sometimes also mentioned as "needs & demands" (key areas of needs based on answers given in the questionnaire and individual assessment in the BCT).

The structure is compatible with the segments of the ECS business model canvas used in the BCT (D. 6.4). This initial step is necessary and reflects the basic approach of the Business Consulting and the tailor-made workshops. The collection and classification of the needs from ECS initiatives is a key activity in both the Marketplace and the BCT. Needs will be clustered and categorized and can subsequently be matched with expertise from other ECSIs. This process will in the beginning be guided by UBER as part of BCT. At a later stage, the actors on the Marketplace will also be able to carry out the matchmaking on their own. Similarly, the Marketplace serves as the

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starting point for the selection of participants for the BCT brokerage events described in D. 6.4. This is not yet implemented due to technical issues. The IT support is currently working on a plug in which can solve this technical problem.

The successful functioning of the Marketplace is therefore based on (1) the continuous flow of registrations via the website; (2) the mechanism of classification and categorization described above; (3) the matching of "needs" and "expertise", which will be done manually in the beginning and increasingly automatic in the future. This iterative approach guarantees that there is still room for corrective action and improvements to safeguard the goal of positioning the Marketplace as a sustainable platform.

The current status of the Marketplace has already led to the informal formation of ECSI in Berlin. In Berlin UBER organised several public events despite the pandemic in WP7. These public events (e.g., open Humboldt, Wissenstadt and others) were complemented by ECSI in Berlin presenting their products and services to the public. The constantly growing local network already enabled different opportunities e.g., for the ECSI Dida Seed and Insec2eat, to underpin the idea of an edible city through their products and services. UBER in WP6 and WP7 have formed a tandem to communicate the key message via the ECSI in Berlin and have already connected them in an informal manner. Furthermore, their participation in the BCT workshops have intensified the local network and fostered the development of regional groups exchanging their experiences and knowledge. The registration was regulated over the Marketplace and has hence boosted the visibility. Nevertheless, other regions have to make the next move.
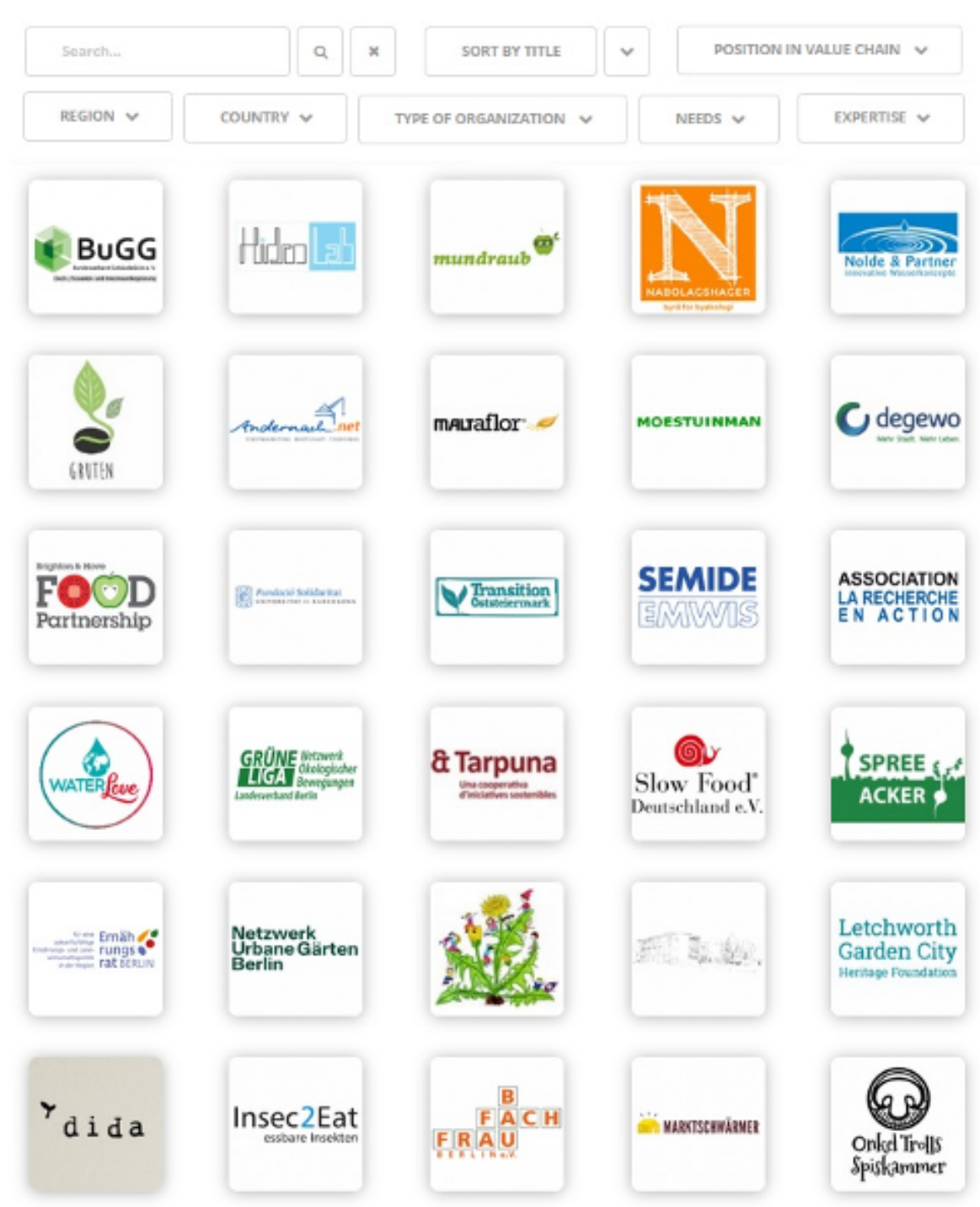
Figure 5: Marketplace with selection tool and regional and additional filter options

We include lessons learned based on several good practice examples for functioning and vivid market places 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 opened under "Do business with ECS": as of August 2021, the Marketplace is home to 41 different ECS initiatives. The screenshot (Figure 4) shows a selection of the listed participants.

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Communications approach

1. Communication of what the marketplace is and what is our intention is should be more strongly emphasized within the consortium and towards the city's administrations. First efforts were in Summer 2020 and should be supported by all partners. An internal communication measure has been established. The efforts to launch the Awards for ECSI at the Marketplace have unfortunately failed,

2. After pilot actions on visibility and outreach with WP7 were quite successful in Berlin the Marketplace team is planning to intensify actions to connecting ECSI and to leverage the attractiveness of the marketplace within a local context. These actions should be supported in the different regional and local clusters around the FRC and FC. The Marketplace team plans several actions and open-air formats in collaboration with WP7 to intensify the exchange of knowledge between ECSI and ECSI and the general public both, in public and / or scientific formats. The integration of ECSI in formats like "City Teams meet City Team" (WP7) but also within the BCT as experts which provide knowledge has already led to a growing marketplace.

3. The marketplace and the toolbox currently look for adequate solutions in order to avoid further confusion on registrants from the vast pool of ECSI to the marketplace or toolbox. 4.

The Brokerage events (D6.4) and other physical events should leverage the activities on the one hand for the ECSI in their local context and for the marketplace on the other. During the pandemic the situation for the ECSI was quite difficult and additional programmes like the BCT workshops or registering at the marketplace were not the priority task for many ECSI. Therefore, we now expect more activities within 2021 and 2022, which have already begun during the stabilization in the last months in Europe. Although several ECSI struggled to stay alive the immediate help could not be provided by a project like EdiCitNet.

Key performance indicators

The suitable indicators are consequently the number of persons we reach in public events and the number of registrations at the Marketplace per year. Additionally, the number of followers on our Social Media channels gives an indication of the number of ECSI that follow us and in turn we monitor the number of ECSI we follow with our EdiCitNet Social Media tools. Visitors to the website are collected and can be differentiated by visits on the marketplace and other subpages. Furthermore, a question about knowledge of the marketplace is asked when registering for the workshop (Are you registered at the marketplace if not why?). Questions in the registration poll for the). All additional questions can be found here. These measures will lead to an approximate number of around 200 ECSI by the end of the project.

Description of technical issues related to the initial launch of the Marketplace:

Technical issues have led to the repeated delay in the initial launch of the Marketplace on the EdiCitNet website. The issues centered around the filter options in the Marketplace menu and profile pages. The main reason for this was problems related to interaction different *wordpress* plugins provided by third party providers. To solve the issues, the providers needed to create updated versions of their plugin which the subcontractor needed to test and ultimately implement on the EdiCitNet website. This process took a lot of time, as documented in the ticket log and email exchanges between the contractors.

4. Summary

We have set up a prototype of a Marketplace which is growing constantly. By the end of the project this Marketplace will be a platform for local networks for several products and services provided by ECS initiatives. The local and regional networks support the local economy and thus contribute to sustainable regional development. This is one of the major goals of several funding programmes and calls from the European Commission (EC).

The Value Chain completes a structure based on country/ geographical regions, which is the basic approach for clustering the ECS for further leveraging their work and contribution to sustainable and resilient cities all over the world. The Marketplace will also be an online platform for knowledge exchange and FAQ as well as a dissemination platform for the exploitation of the results of the BCT (D.6.4).
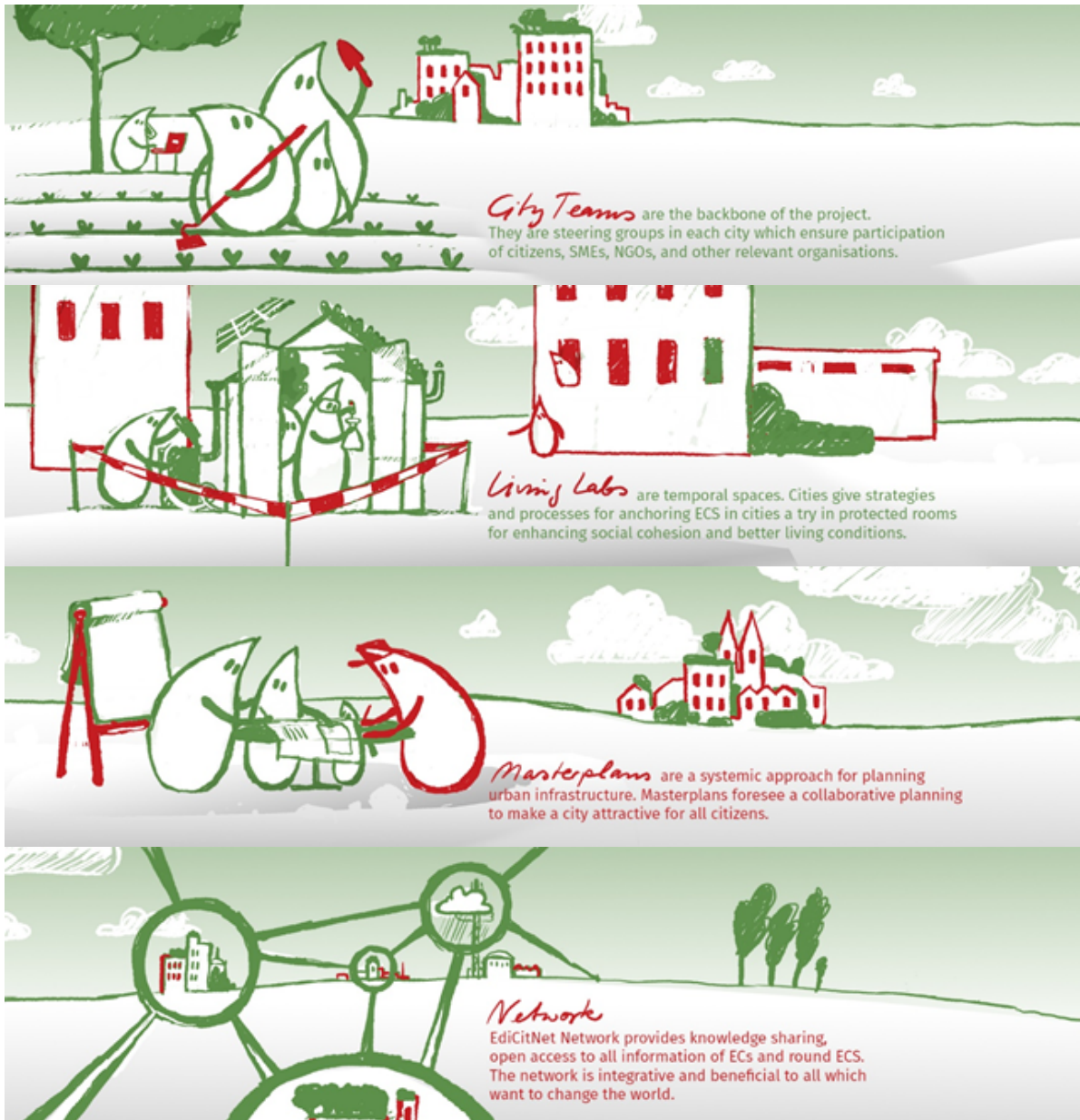
Therefore, the Marketplace will grow and provide more support to the local and regional ECS clusters. Hereby we contribute to the Economic Strategy for People and Planet Fostering Aspect of the Green Deal roadmap. ECS will therefore support the economic growth which is also in line with the sustainability goals of the EC. Especially, fairness and environment are addressed by ECS and their productivity contributes at least to the well-being of humans and society in general. ECS are nature-friendly and biodiversity-friendly measures that enhance the resilience of cities. The Marketplace will be an online platform that also makes these opportunities visible to innovative investors and can therefore lead to the leverage effect for very different ECS initiatives throughout the world. Especially under the light of the pandemic ECS are also gaining more importance as productive spaces within cities.

The Marketplace should thus serve as an example for alternative job creation and ideas in the Green Economy.

Glossary

Abbreviation	Description
BCT	Business/Blended Consulting Team
EdiCitNet	Edible City Network
ECS	Edible City Solutions
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
NGO	Non-Govermental Organisation
SME	Small and Medium-sized enterprises
SBMC	Sustainable Business Model Canvas
ECS BMC	Edible City Solutions Business Model Canvas
NBS	Nature-Based-Solutions
ECSI	Edible City Solution Initiatives - All Initiatives providing products and services around ECS nor matter of profit-oriented or non-profit oriented are assembled under this term

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.

About the EdiCitNet project

Thank you!

Twitter: @edicitnet

Insta: edicitnet

edicitnet-coordinator@eurtd.com

Reports in #openaccess #OA in Zenodo
https://zenodo.org/communities/edicitnet