



SME Sustainability, Advocacy and, coaching SYMBIO Workshop , Day 2

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Who we are



Andrea Boffi

- Lombardy Green Chemistry Association consultant
- CEO & Founder AB Corporation, EU Affairs Consultancy ;
- European Project Manager for R&I projects (Horizon Europe and I3 Programs) ;
- Lecturer and consultant for HEIs (e.g. Uni Catania, Uni Bari, etc) ;
- Member of the Scientific Committee of the Italian Association of EU Project Writers (AssoEPI).



Elisabetta Pesenti

- COO & Founder La Luna del Grano, Benefit Company ;
- IICF Certified Professional Coach ;
- Lecturer and consultant for Gender Parity Issues, and UniPdr 125 certification ;
- Podcaster, Author of Podcast “MIC” on work-life balance.





SME Sustainability Transition

Andrea Boffi, LGCA



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...Europe's 23 million small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of the EU economy, however while the vast majority of SMEs are implementing resource efficiency initiatives, actual investment in resource efficiency remains low: only 35% of SMEs surveyed in the Flash Eurobarometer 2023 invested in the field, and only +/- 1% of their turnover in this area in the previous two years...



Principles

- Sustainability means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. It is often broken down into three overarching topics or areas: environmental, social and governance (ESG) ;



Principles

- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are facing growing pressures and expectations to make their businesses more sustainable;
- Some SMEs are already proactively taking steps to adapt their businesses. However, at the same time, many SMEs and their advisors are unsure about the expectations to meet and what standards or criteria to follow. Moreover, some sustainability matters may be more relevant for certain SMEs than others.



Areas



Steps towards SMEs Sustainability Transition (1/3)



Steps towards SMEs Sustainability Transition (2/3)



Awareness

Understanding why the company should think about sustainability is the first step. This covers how the company will be affected by outside variables including the European natural gas and climate crises, the heightened emphasis on social responsibility and governance, laws, stakeholder information requirements, and general expectations.



Development

The second step is to assess the sustainability of the SME business model, and develop a sustainable vision and strategic targets for the future. It includes obtaining information about the business' sustainability impacts, which allows to determine a starting point for sustainability improvements.



Delivery

Making changes to one's company to become sustainable is the major goal of the sustainable transition. Developing a sustainable corporate vision through important goals and objectives, as well as determining the critical sustainability-related strategic targets and measures required to meet them, are all part of this third stage.



Steps towards SMEs Sustainability Transition (3/3)



Information

Business partners of SMEs could request more thorough reporting or certain sustainability indicators. Smaller companies need to be prepared for such inquiries. This step entails creating and sharing the company's sustainability metrics and advancements with authorities, suppliers, business partners, funding providers, and customers.



Demonstration

In the end, SMEs can be asked to show that the data they submit is an accurate, impartial, and significant representation of their sustainability initiatives, if requested by business partners. The [Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive \(CSRD\)](#) mandates this for listed SMEs, and it may be a growing need from the SMEs' business partners who need to trust the sustainability data they are revealing. In any event, this might be advantageous to the company. Using an impartial external assurance service provider, like an auditor, to conduct an assurance engagement is a best practice that SMEs might even set as a goal for themselves.



Where to start from?

https://www.durable.uliege.be/cms/c_20380323/en/sdg-impulse-a-new-tool-to-support-smes-in-their-sustainable-transition

<https://entrecomp4transition.eu/2023/self-assessment-tool/>

<https://www.oecd.org/en/about/programmes/oecd-platform-on-financing-smes-for-sustainability.html>





Q&A on SME Sustainability Transition

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Advocacy

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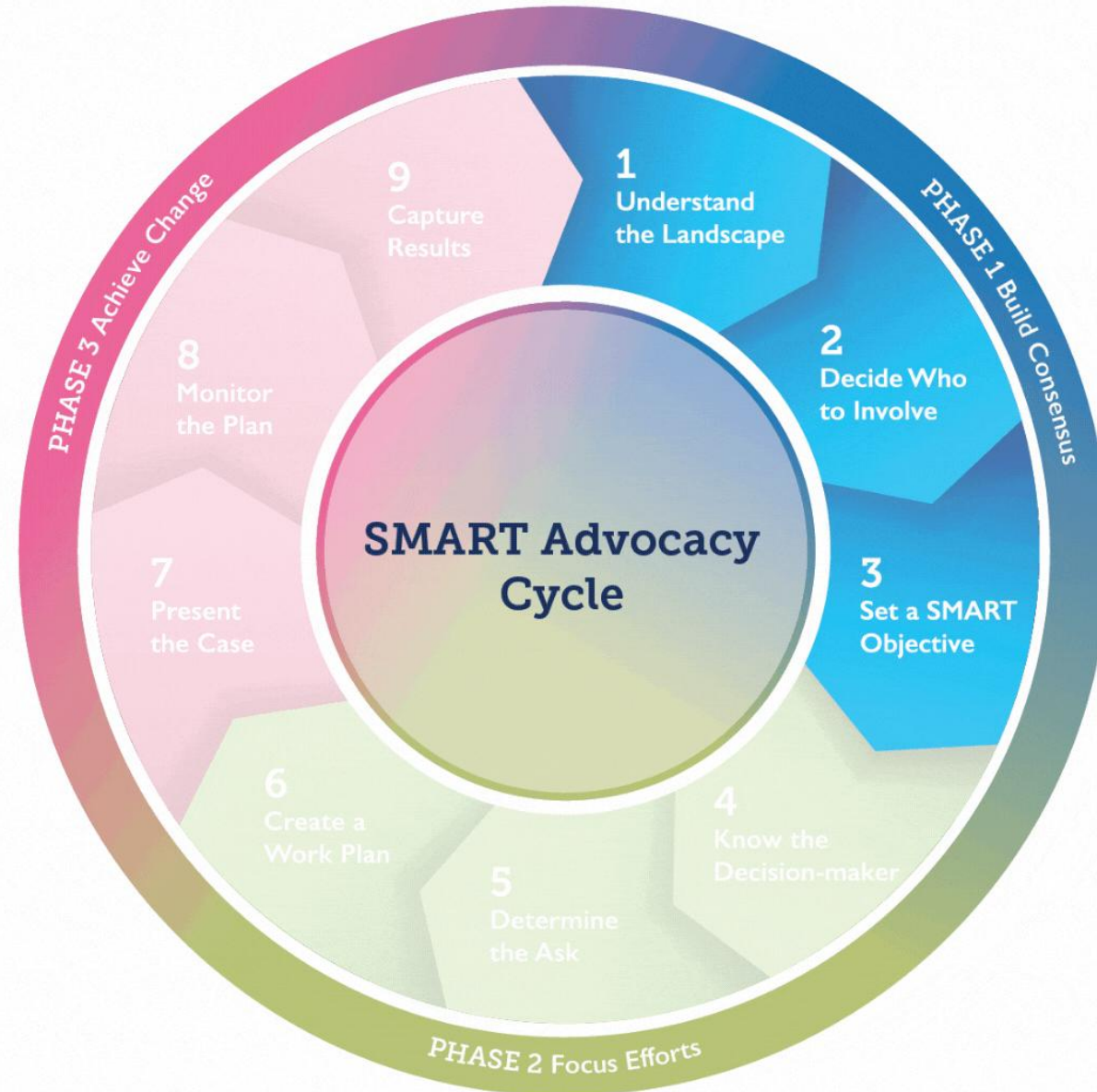
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According to [corporateeurope.org](https://www.corporateeurope.org), there are an estimated 25,000 lobbyists working in Brussels, representing 135+ areas of interest, from agribusiness to free trade and space.



The Smart Advocacy Cycle



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Advocacy: potential impact in business model

Single-Use Plastics Directive overview



Product bans



Design requirements



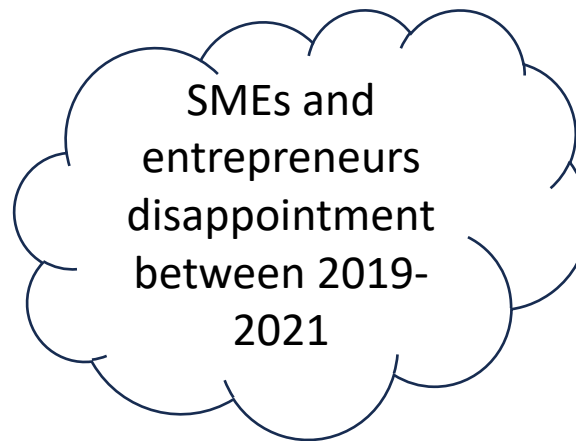
Plastic bottle collection target



EPR obligations



Awareness-raising measures



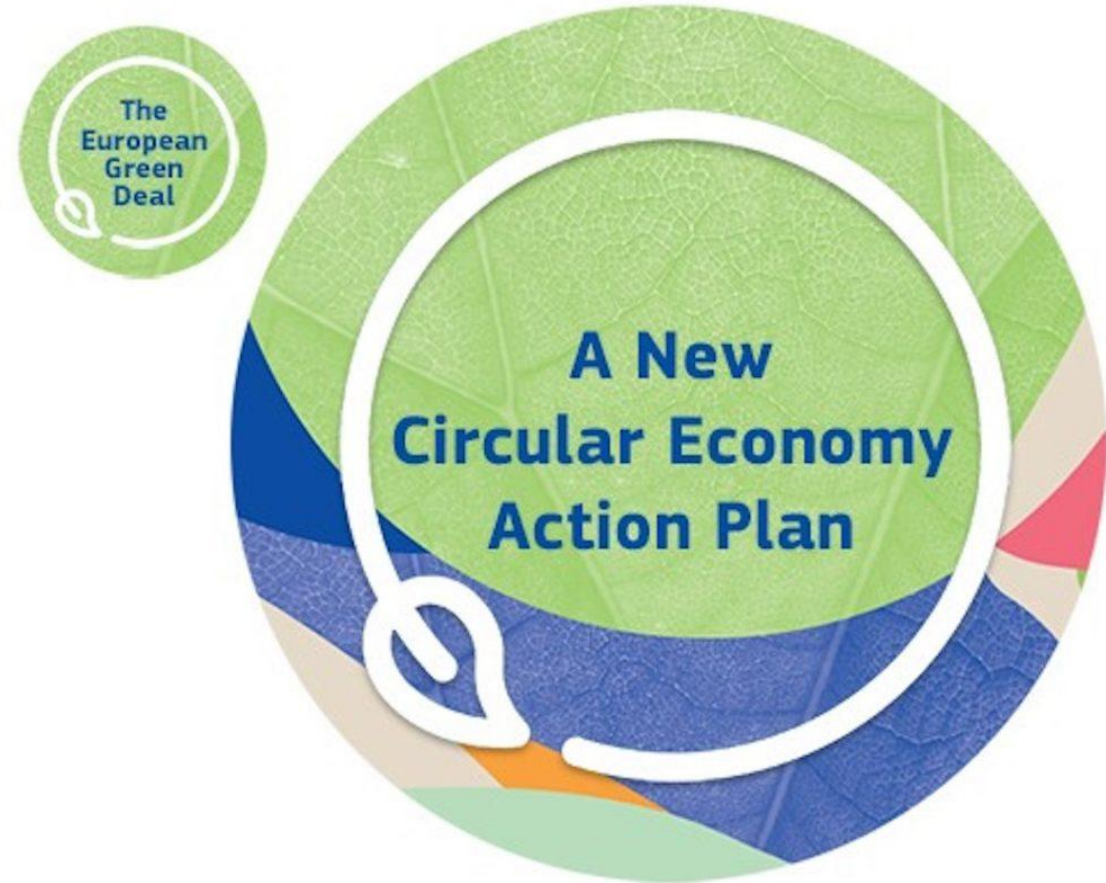
.....BUT.....



What led to the adoption of the EU Single-Use Plastics Directive?

With plastic pollution high on the global sustainability agenda, **the European Commission created a circular economy plan** to ensure resources could be more stringently and efficiently handled. **Its failure in 2015 to pass**, due to a perceived impact on the private sector, brought a backlash from non-governmental organizations (such as Greenpeace) and the business community, including Nestle, Unilever and P&G.

The Commission sought a much more firm and ambitious change to existing laws, and adopted the **Circular Economy Action Plan** later that year (2015). It established concrete actions, with measures covering a product's entire lifecycle: from production and consumption, to waste management and the market for secondary raw materials.



What led to the adoption of the EU Single-Use Plastics Directive?

Flowing on from the Circular Economy Action Plan, lawmakers wanted to put additional focus on the top-10 most littered items in coastal areas of the European Union, in order to reduce ocean plastic. Their efforts resulted in the **SUPD, which was proposed in May 2018, and entered into force on 2 July 2019** - with broad support and in record time, after just 13 months. Member states have had time to transpose and include the provisions of the SUPD into their own laws until 2 July 2021.



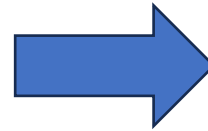
SMART Advocacy Application: potential real-case scenario



1. Understanding the European Legislative Triangle and the EU decision – making process: assessing when and how intervening ;

2. Study the European Commission legislative roadmap (Work Plan): to understand which legislative procedures will take place in the coming months and see if one or more affects the sector of our industry ;

3. Define the potential target (policy) of the advocacy action



Example: Bioeconomy Strategy 2025

... « *browsing* » « *European Commission Bioeconomy Strategy 2025* » ...



Potential real-case scenario: Bioeconomy Strategy 2025



It can be either legislative or not legislative.....

Objective: understanding if it is going to be a legislative proposal

Who to involve at this stage? Whom to contact?

Non-political level

While browsing, we noticed some position paper: [ERRIN – BIC](#), [OECD](#), [Flanders Circular](#), etc.

Policy level

- a) [Legislative train schedule](#)
- b) Browsing “EU Bio-economy strategy” to understand the involved stakeholders

...[first findings](#)...

...[second findings](#)...



Potential real-case scenario: Bioeconomy Strategy 2025



4. Knowing the decision maker → Public Conference + “EC Directory Who is Who”

→ “EU Bioeconomy conference” (look for past and future events on line) ;

Speakers = stakeholders = contacts !! ([example](#))

→ “Policy-makers”:

- [European Commission Who is Who](#) ;
- [European Parliament Committees](#)



Potential real-case scenario: Bioeconomy Strategy 2025



5-6. Stakeholder map and work plan

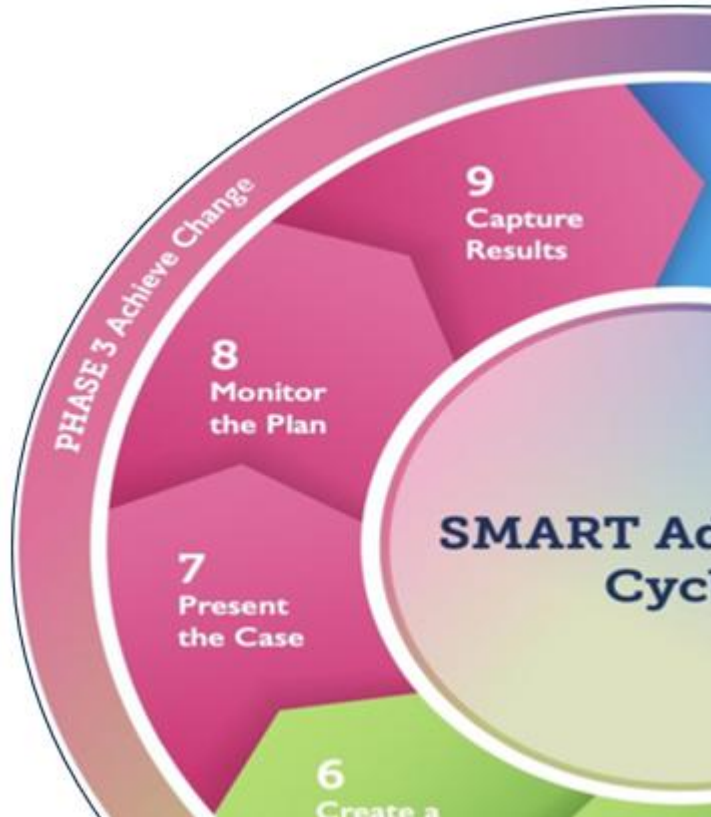
→ Stakeholder map

→ Work Plan: who does what ? Is It worth to meet her/him? Why? (Scope of the meeting)

→ Setting up agenda (IN ADVANCE – Time Counts!)



Potential real-case scenario: Bioeconomy Strategy 2025



7. Present the case

→ Be prepared! Who are we going to meet? (profiling) + defending our position (*strong basis in line with EU values – e.g. enlarging competition*)

8. Monitor Plan

→ Follow Up! (*people forget*)

9. Results

→ Follow the final legislation process and assess the consequence of the work done





Q&A on advocacy session





Thank you for your
attention!

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Coaching and mentoring

Elisabetta Pesenti, LGCA



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WHAT IS BUSINESS COACHING

The art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another through powerful questions



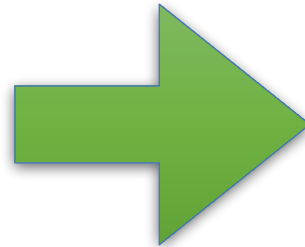
WHAT IS MENTORING

The art of supporting the growth and development of another through career guidance and trusted advisory



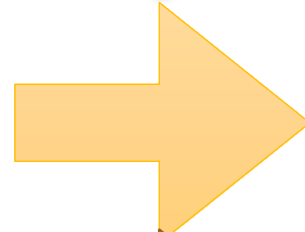
COACHING VS MENTORING

FOCUS



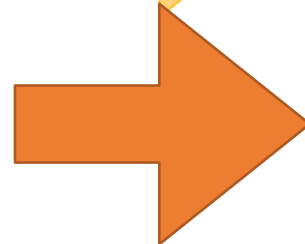
SPECIFIC GOALS/ CAREER
DEVELOPMENT

DURATION



TIME BOUND/LONG TERM

DIRECTION

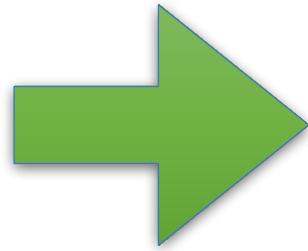


STRUCTURED APPROACH/
ADVISORY



COACHING VS MENTORING

FOCUS



Specific goals and skill development in a specific area, achieving a specific business outcome, or improving performance in a specific area

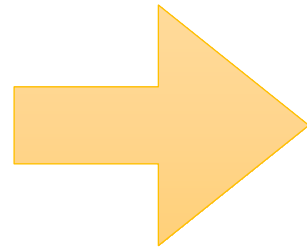
Broader focus on career development and personal growth, long-term aspirations. Guidance on long-term aspirations, on exploring career opportunities



COACHING VS MENTORING

Time-bound & goal oriented, with a specific timeframe. The relation is tied to the achievement of specific goals

DURATION

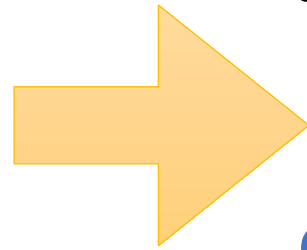


Long-term and sometimes ongoing support system, even for years



COACHING VS MENTORING

DIRECTION



Structured and directive approach with regular progress reviews and challenges, through specific tools and techniques

Collaborative and advisory role, more on providing encouragement and sharing experience and views, less on direct questions



HOW AND WHERE TO START?

- **Assessment of organisational needs** and focus on 'why'
- **Identifying Candidates**
- **Setting Objectives** and **expectations** (or specific performance goals)
- **Choosing the Right Fit** (internal/external, young/experienced ecc)
- **Creating Structure** (framework development and progress evaluation)
- **Onboarding** and **Training**



CASE STUDY (2024)



- ASSESSMENT OF **ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS** AND FOCUS ON ‘WHY’
- HOW? THROUGH **SURVEYS AND INTERVIEWS** THROUGH DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS AND LEVELS
- **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES DEFINED** - therefore **APPROACH DEFINED**
- SELECTION OF CANDIDATES THROUGH INTERVIEWS, TO ENSURE ALIGNMENT WITH PROGRAM’S GOALS AND **COMMITMENT** TO GROWTH
- **AGREEMENT** WITH MANAGERS AND HR, OUTLINING THE SCOPE, FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS, EXPECTATIONS
- **AGREEMENT** ESTABLISHMENT OF A **STRUCTURED FRAMEWORK** FINAL **ONBOARDING**



The impact



For Individuals: these programs can enhance self-awareness, boost confidence, and develop essential leadership skills. They can also help individuals navigate career transitions, overcome challenges, and achieve their full potential.



For Teams: Teams benefit from improved communication, increased collaboration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. When team members receive coaching and mentoring, they become more aligned, motivated, and productive.



For the Organization: this experience can increase employee engagement, reduce turnover, and improve performance. These programs can also foster a culture of innovation, learning, and continuous improvement.



CASE STUDY (2023)



- ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL **NEEDS** : PARENTS “BACK TO WORK”
- HOW? THROUGH **SURVEYS AND INTERVIEWS** FOCUSED ON DIFFICULTIES AND MAIN CHALLENGES
- **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES DEFINED** - therefore **APPROACH DEFINED**
- SELECTION OF CANDIDATES THROUGH INTERVIEWS, TO ENSURE ALIGNMENT WITH PROGRAM’S GOALS AND **COMMITMENT** TO GROWTH
- **AGREEMENT** WITH MANAGERS AND HR, OUTLINING THE SCOPE, FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS, EXPECTATIONS
- ESTABLISHMENT OF A **STRUCTURED FRAMEWORK** - IN THIS CASE **GROUP COACHING**
- FINAL **ONBOARDING**



Existing tools - where to start?

- **Establish a Mentoring Program:** Create a formal mentoring program that pairs experienced businesses with emerging ones. Reverse, Peer, Cross-Departmental, External: **depending on the goal, the approach is different**
- **Offer Coaching Services:** Provide access to professional business coaches to support businesses in their transition to a circular economy. Executive, Performance, Teams, Group, 1:1 coaching: **depending on the goal, the approach is different**
- **Organize Workshops and Webinars:** Host workshops and webinars to share best practices and knowledge. Awareness-raising webinars, skill development workshops.
- **Create a Community of Practice:** Foster a community of practice where businesses can connect, share experiences, and learn from each other.



Conclusions

Coaching and mentoring are a valuable tool to foster growth at both individual and organizational levels.

Invest in these programs, they can lead to a more engaged, skilled, and resilient workforce





Q&A on coaching and mentoring





Thank you for your attention!

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