

Policy Lab on “Strengthening a diversified rural economy in the post-2027 period”

ECOS

Powering Rural Innovation & Climate Resilience Living Labs

Group 2: Capitalising on new business models
and economic opportunities for rural areas ↘

Speaker: Thais Glod

Kotka (Finland) on 30 September 



ECOs Agenda

Innovation at the
Service of European
Rural Areas



How it started?



Rural ClimAccelerator



From Rural ClimAccelerator to Eco's



About Eco's



Looking Ahead Eco's

How it started?

EU Climate Pact
Ambassadors
commitment: Finding
100 Impact Innovations
to Support Green
transition



Look for the best
Partners how can help
us is this major task



From Green Cities
to Green Village
and all the way
around





Why Rural ClimAccelerator?

"Rural areas are the fabric of our society and the heartbeat of our economy. They are a core part of our identity and our economic potential. We will cherish and preserve our rural areas and invest in their future."

Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission

We firmly believe that innovations and technology can not only turn rural areas vulnerabilities into opportunities but also secure the future of these areas.

Rural ClimAccelerator

Innovation at the
Service of European
Rural Areas



ClimAccelerator

POWERED BY:  ClimateKIC



The first ClimAccelerator focused in rural areas challenge Climate KIC



We support TRL > 6 startups and spin-off scaling regenerative and resilient solutions.



20+ startups piloted solutions in real rural settings.



Flagship event: Rural Experience

- Albufera Valencia 2024
- Padrón Galicia 2025



Editions

1. Rural Spain ClimAccelerator- Beta 2024
2. Rural ClimAccelerator Iberian. Ongoing 2025
3. Rural ClimAccelerator Mediterranean -
Forthcoming 2027

Rural ClimAccelerator Topics

Supporting Rural Areas Needs

Enabling innovative business models, green entrepreneurship and new value chains that diversify rural economies, create jobs and strengthen the capacity of rural areas to attract and retain people, skills and investment.

Climate Resilience & Ecosystem Restoration

Strengthening the capacity of rural territories to adapt to drought, wildfires, desertification, biodiversity loss and other climate-related risks, while restoring natural capital and ecosystem services.

Sustainable Agriculture, Soil & Water Resilience

Supporting farmers and rural communities to improve productivity and resilience while reducing pressure on water, soil and natural resources through regenerative practices and innovative technologies.

Circular Bioeconomy & Local Value Creation

Turning agricultural, forestry and food-system residues into new resources, products and revenue streams, keeping more economic value within rural territories and supporting diversified rural economies.

Clean Energy & Rural Energy Communities

Enabling affordable, decentralised and locally managed clean energy solutions that strengthen rural energy resilience, reduce costs and create opportunities for communities and local businesses.

Rural Connectivity, Mobility & Access to Services

Improving physical and functional connectivity so rural residents can access essential services, employment and economic opportunities, while making rural territories more attractive places to live and work.

Our Innovators

Rural Connectivity, Mobility & Access to Services



ROORAL

Tunnll

Climate Resilience & Ecosystem Restoration



TERRA
Farmers



CarBio-Solo



dendron
soluciones



Spawnfoam®

PlanetaiSpace
Group

Sustainable Agriculture, Soil & Water Resilience



Agrolinera

AFLatex
technologies

PLUVIIS
Natural irrigation

i-grape
laboratory

Clean Energy & Rural Energy Communities

zenIT

neargy

XIZANenergy

full&fast
CHARGING THE FUTURE NOW

Water2kW

Circular Bioeconomy & Local Value Creation

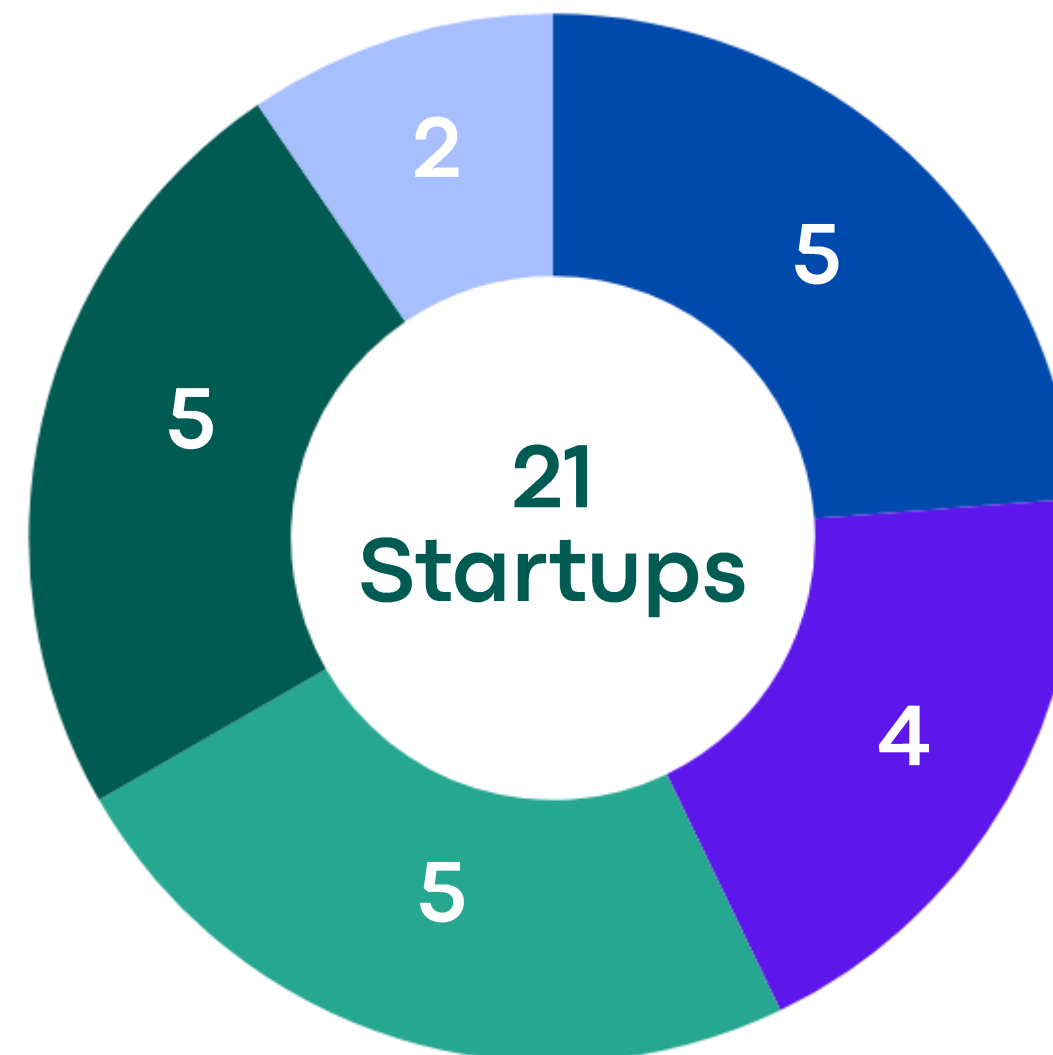
forestChain

FLOC
AMMONIA SOLUTIONS

CLIC RECYCLE
SAVOIR FAIRE UN NOUVEAU MONDE

NELLIE

NATURIX



Climatic Solution Pilots Needs

Current innovation ecosystems often operate in silos, limiting scalability and real-world impact.



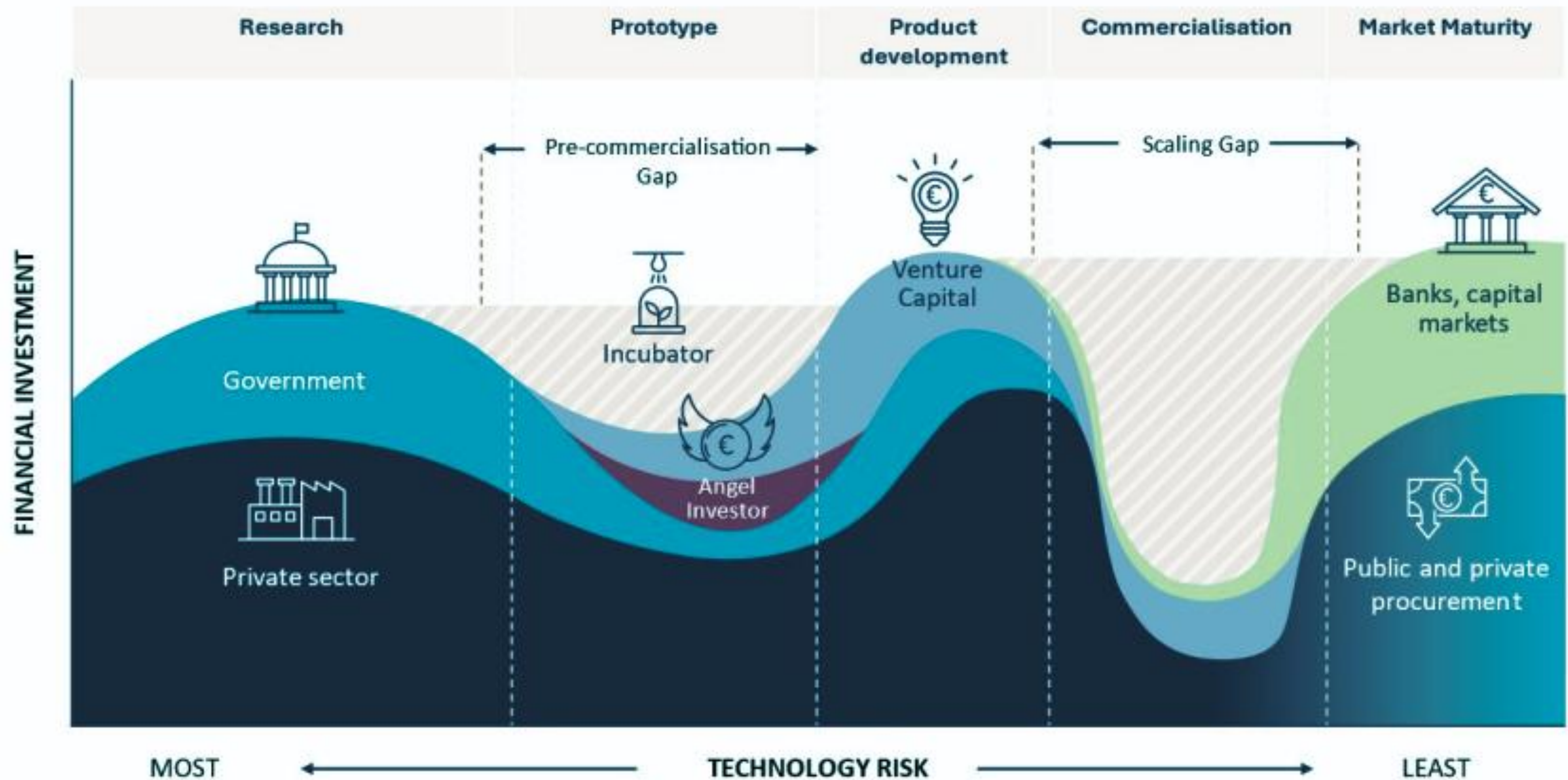
Startups struggle to access validation platforms, investors, and cross-sector collaboration.



ClimaTech solutions are hardware. Scaling TRL6-8 imply a significant investment



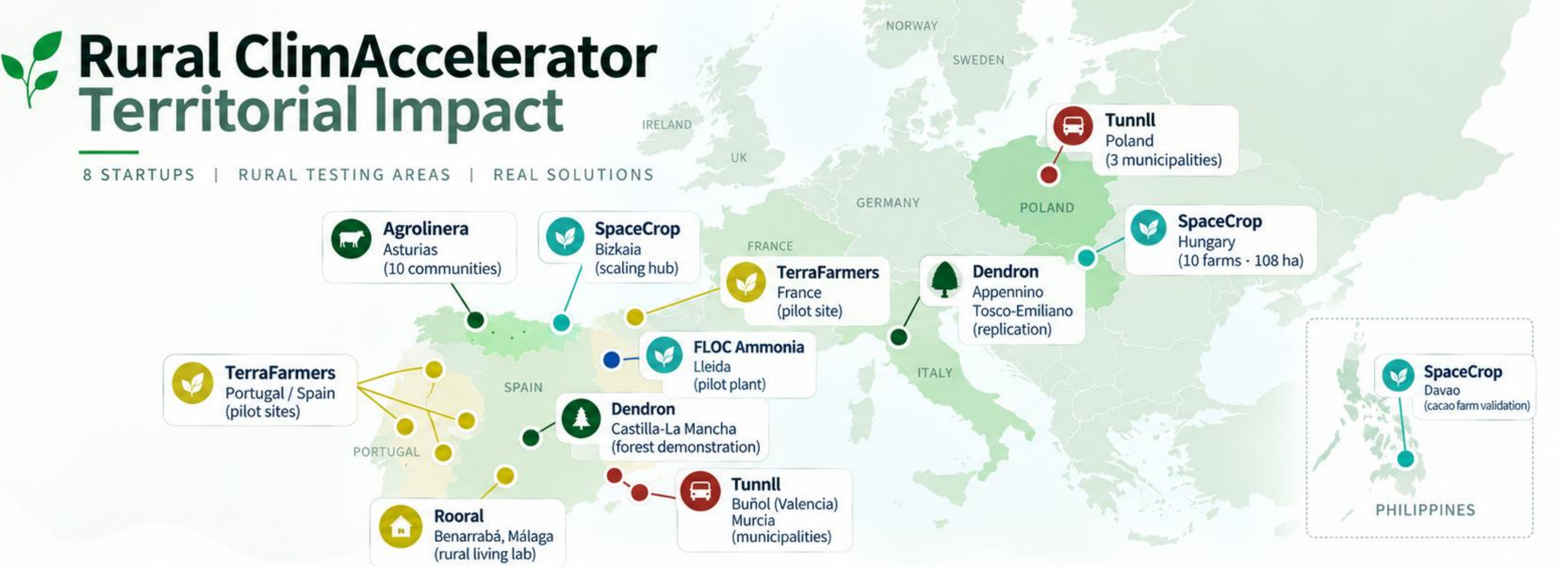
Startup Double Valley of Death



The EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy - Choose Europe to start and scale, May 2025

Rural ClimAccelerator Territorial Impact

8 STARTUPS | RURAL TESTING AREAS | REAL SOLUTIONS



AGROLINERA Dairy by-products to local energy and biofertiliser Asturias (10 communities) TRL 6 → 8	DENDRON Sustainable forest management and ecosystem services Castilla-La Mancha + Appennino (IT) TRL 6 → 8	TERRAFARMERS AI-powered reforestation and ecosystem restoration Portugal / Spain / France (5 pilot sites) TRL 6 → 8	FLOC AMMONIA Nutrient recovery from livestock waste Lleida (pilot plant) TRL 7 → 8	TUNLL Demand-responsive mobility for rural areas Buñol (Valencia), Murcia + 3 in Poland TRL 7 → 8	ROORAL Rural living and remote work ecosystems Benarrabá, Málaga TRL 6 → 8	SPACECROP Satellite-based climate intelligence for agriculture Hungary (10 farms · 108 ha) Bizkaia (scaling) Davao (PH) TRL 6 → 8	CLIC RECYCLE Regenerative agriculture & circular biomaterials Spain (testing location TBC) TRL 6 → 8
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Policy framework

Bridge between three EU agendas

1. RURAL DEVELOPMENT



Rural Vision 2040 /
Rural Pact
Startup Villages /
Smart Villages
Territorial cohesion /
Right to Stay

WHERE & FOR WHOM

2. INNOVATION & COMPETITIVENESS



Startup Villages
Territorial cohesion Right to
Stay
New European Innovation
Agenda
Regional Innovation Valleys

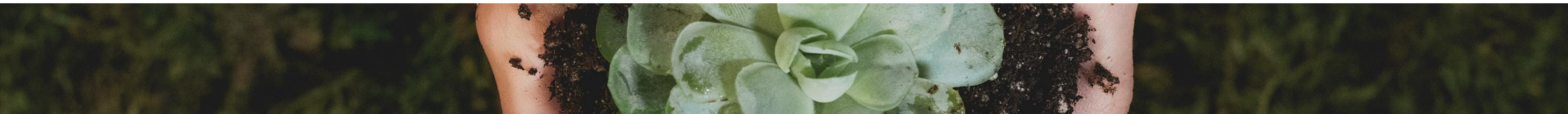
HOW EU CONNECTS & SCALES

3. GREEN / CLIMATE TRANSITION



European Climate
Resilience Framework –
SOTEU 2026
New European Bauhaus
Clean transition, water &
energy resilience
EU Green Deal

WHY NOW THIS MATTER



Big picture: Triple Challenge

1. RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural territories face demographic, service and economic pressures, while their assets, knowledge and potential to host new economic activity and innovation remain underused.

UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

2. INNOVATION & COMPETITIVENESS

Europe generates innovative climate solutions, but many still lack accessible real-world environments to test, validate and demonstrate their value before wider deployment.

THE TESTING GAP

3. GREEN / CLIMATE TRANSITION

Rural areas are increasingly exposed to climate risks, yet locally adapted resilience solutions need to move faster from innovation to practical implementation.

THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP

One challenge
Three dimensions
One opportunity

*What if rural challenges could become opportunities
for European innovation?*

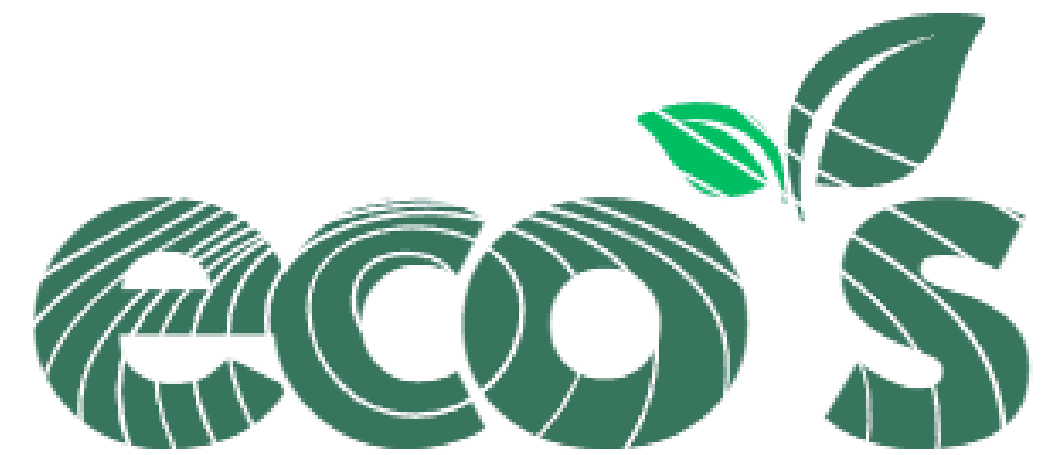
OUR CALL

What if: *Rural areas have the potential
to become hubs of innovation and
experimentation?*

Showing the big picture

ECO's

Proposal to transform depopulated European towns into living labs where impact scaleup can test green tech solutions in real escenarios, creating compound results impact



oikos=home
e



Climatic Living Lab



Real Life
Validation



Rural Economic
Impact



Cocreation
Space

Looking Ahead

Ecos: A Scalable Living Lab Model

A new model embedding Startup Villages + Innovation Valleys into real territories.

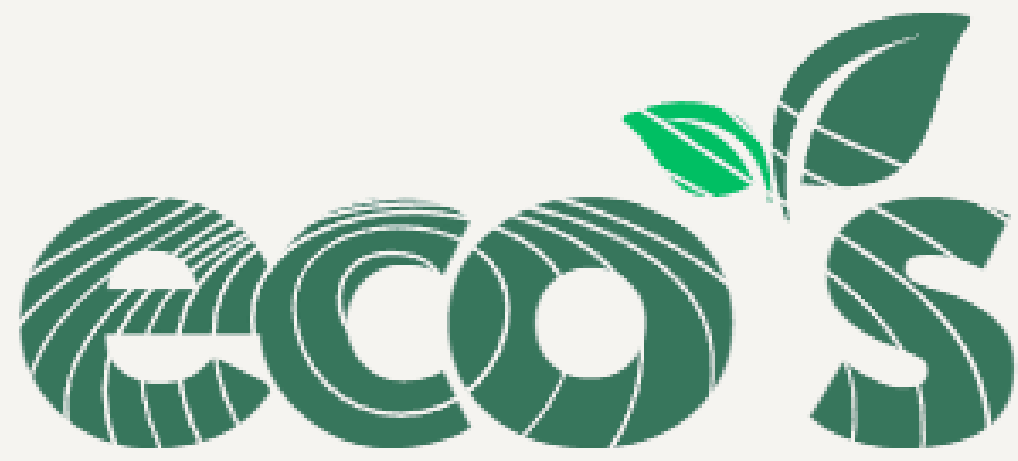


A scalable space to mainstream rural territories as catalysts of climate innovation

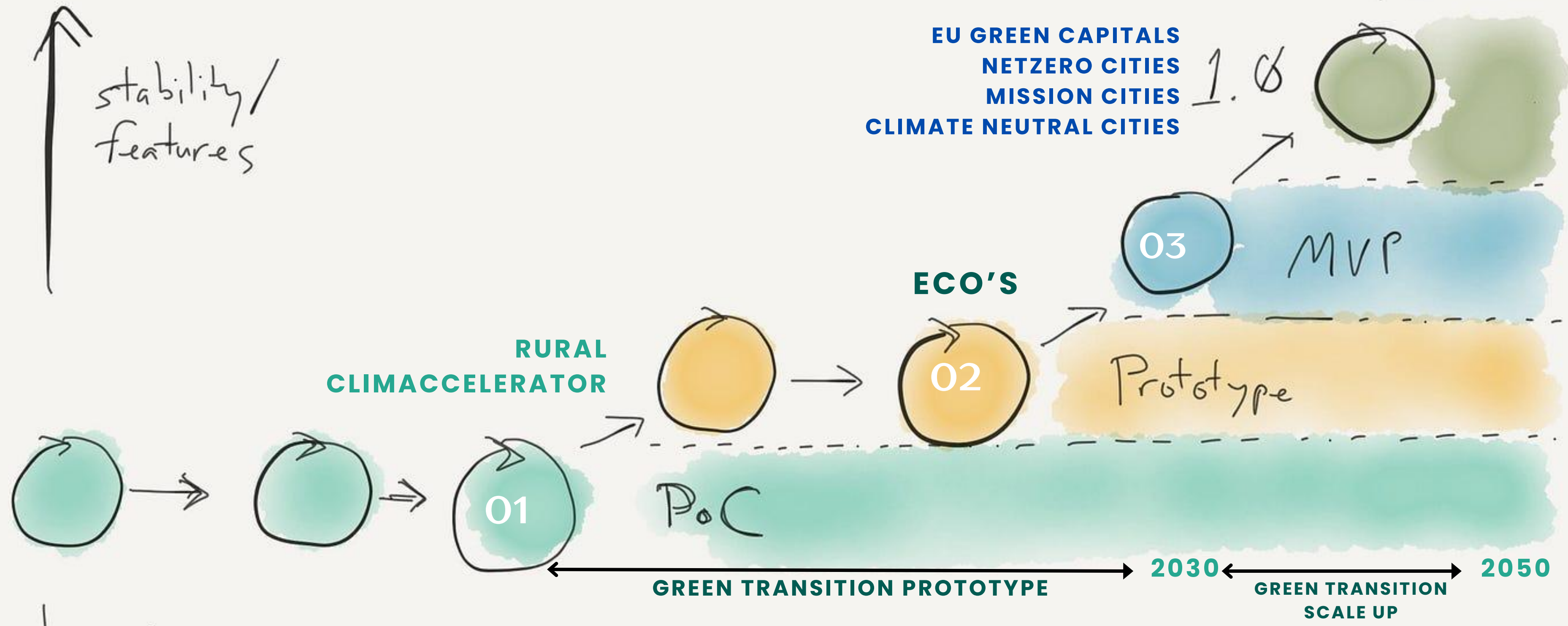


A compound model of green transition innovation at the service of territories

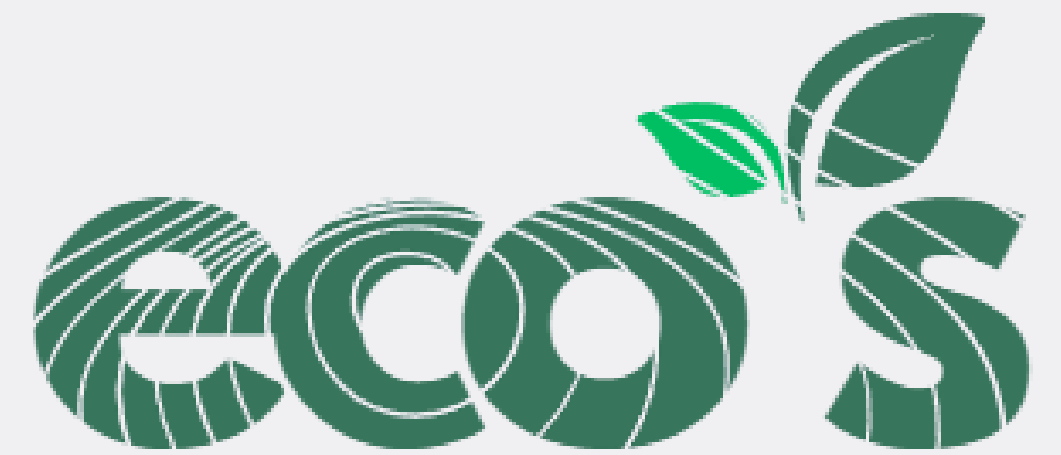




A REMINDER OF THE SEQUEL OF SERVICE AND PRODUCTS EVOLUTION



Our next steps



Validate Eco's approach
and find our allies for
implementation

1. Prepare

1. Prove

1. Connect

1. Replicate

Let's Connect



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POWERED BY:  ClimateKIC

