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**Updated modalities of engagement**  
**promoting the sustainability transition of businesses**  
**in the new era of the European Green Deal**

*[Hymnsheet to the attention of EBAE National Coordinators]*

**Context:**

Through the comprehensive EU Green Deal ambition, corporate eco-innovation (in products, services, methods and processes, management) is moving fast:

- from aspirational niche,
- to strategic mainstream **regenerative business models**.

**Seven Pillars of engagement with the business community across the EU:**

- 1/ The availability of mature digital solutions now allows the Commission to engage all-year long, 24/7 with the business world, in policy-oriented communities of practice:
  - [Circular Economy Stakeholders Platform](#)
  - [The EU Business@Biodiversity platform](#)
  - And soon the [Zero-Pollution Stakeholders Platform](#)
- 2/ The support mechanisms and financial resources for eco-innovation have never been so massive, with the NextGenerationEU 2021-2027 :
  - [Horizon Europe](#) €95.5 billion, [LIFE](#) €5.4 billion, [Innovation Fund](#)
  - [InvestEU](#) R&I window, [National Recovery and Resilience Plans](#)

- 3/ Eco-innovation is often place-based, and emerges from the interaction between various stakeholders. The diffusion of best practices also spills over via value chains. This is now fully recognized in the Commission’s toolbox (in which the Green Deal is always mainstreamed):
  - [European institute of Innovation and Technology](#) (EIT) and its Knowledge & innovation Communities (KICs) including [InnoEnergy](#), [Climate-KIC](#), [EIT Raw Materials](#)
  - Regional [Smart Specialization Strategies](#)
  - [European Cluster Collaboration Platform](#)
  
- 4/ In the new competitive landscape, businesses can distinguish themselves best by embracing DG ENV’s existing instruments
  - Any company can be certified [EMAS](#), obtain the [EU Ecolabel](#) for their products, secure an [ETV Environmental Technology Verification](#) for their breakthrough innovations
  - their representative organizations are now invited at the heart of the governing bodies (for instance: EuroChambres seating at the [European Ecolabelling Board](#))
  
- 5/ For companies genuinely willing to transition to a sustainable business model, a set of incentives and supporting tools is progressively put in place:
  - the smooth access to [sustainable finance](#) will be increasingly dependent on the compliance with taxonomy objectives (see the new user-friendly “[Taxonomy Compass](#)” available online) and the ‘do no significant harm’ principle;
  - As of 2022, the EEN Sustainability advisors ([tendering in progress](#)) will come into play to accompany SMEs in their green transition. A next generation of online calculators for ‘[organisation environmental footprint](#)’ based on [JRC methodology](#) can also be expected
  - Any unfair competition coming from “green washing” will be put under check with a new Commission [initiative on Green claims](#)

- 6/ The Commission will continue to carefully monitor progress in the green transition of business, notably via:
  - The [Eco-Innovation index and scoreboard](#) (see in particular the [Policy Brief](#) of July 2021)
  - The [SME performance review](#) (including some environment indicators)
  - The [Circular Economy monitoring framework](#)
  
- 7/ Finally, business efforts will still be recognized through a number of EU Awards

For instance: the [European Entrepreneurship Promotion Awards](#) has a specific category dedicated to Sustainability – it is not the enterprise per se, but the local public initiative creating the enabling conditions for green entrepreneurship that will now be celebrated. The shift will be from scattered individual role models, to dynamic local multipliers.

Some EU Awards remain open for startups, SMEs and/or large companies eager to seek special distinction. For instance:

- [The Startup Europe Awards](#)
- [The European Social Innovation Competition](#)
- [EIC Horizon Prizes](#)
- [The “Best EU Backed Sustainable Start-ups” ePitching event](#)

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