

Place-Based Missions for Circular Economy Transitions

Capacity Building Modules

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Learning Journey

Module 1

Introduction to Place-Based Missions in the Circular Transition

Module 2

Engaging and Orchestrating for Mission Mobilisation in Circular Economy

Module 3

Shaping a Shared Mission Direction in the Circular Transition

Module 4

Designing Mission Portfolios in Circularity

Module 5

Implementing and Learning through Experimentation in Circular Economy

This module builds on and adapts the learning architecture and methodological foundations developed by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) under the Preparatory Action *Territories in Action – Innovation for Place-Based Transformation*.
The content of the modules has been created and adapted by **Climate KIC Academy**.

Module 5

Implementing and Learning through Experimentation in Circular Economy

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Learning Outcomes

Across the programme, participants will develop a shared understanding that enables them to:

Implement, experiment and adapt missions through structured learning and feedback processes

In this module, you will work towards the programme-level outcome by learning to:

A

Explain what mission implementation entails in the context of circular economy transitions, distinguishing it from traditional policy or project deliver.

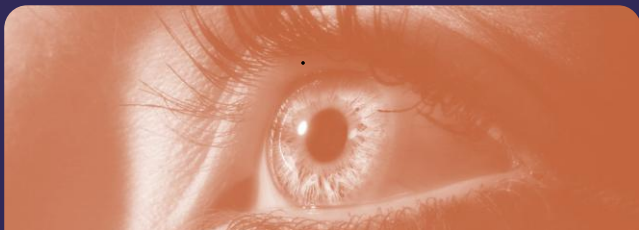
B

Design and use experimentation as a core implementation tool for circular economy mission portfolio, developing safe-to-fail initiatives that generate insights and inform decision-making.

C

Embed continuous learning and feedback mechanisms to track how circular economy actions are contributing to systemic change, adaptation and long-term mission evolution.

Structure of the Module



I

Conceptual framing

Introduction to **key concepts** for circular mission implementation, including experimentation and learning.



II

Guided practice

A **self-guided activity** to explore how your mission can be implemented.



III

Seeds of change from regions

Short **examples** showing how regions implement missions through experimentation, learning and scaling in practice.

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From Coordinated Action to Circular Transitions

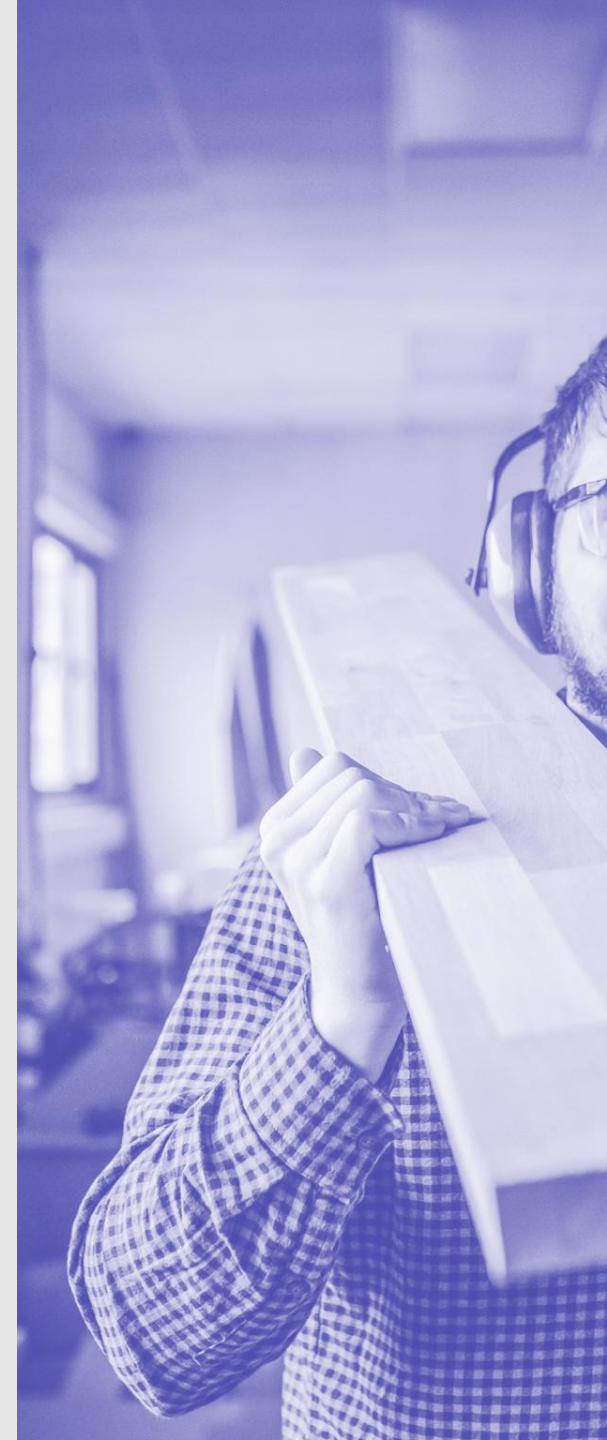
In practice

Circular economy missions create impact when they are **implemented in real territories**.

This means aligning:

- Policies, funding and regulation
e.g. circular procurement rules, funding calls for reuse models, standards for recycled materials
- Projects, pilots and infrastructure
e.g. repair hubs, composting facilities, industrial symbiosis pilots, shared logistics systems
- Actors across value chains and sectors
e.g. producers, waste managers, municipalities, SMEs, researchers and users working on packaging, agri-food or construction loops

And continuously testing, learning and adapting so actions reinforce each other over time.



Structure of the Module

Implementing Circular Economy Missions in Practice

The module is structured as follows

1

Opening Pathways for Implementation

How missions move from ambition to coordinated action through governance, policy, funding, actors and resources.

2

Using Experimentation where Uncertainty is High

How regions can test circular solutions, generate evidence and adapt before scaling or mainstreaming.

3

Embedding Learning into Implementation

How insights from action and experimentation inform decisions, adaptation and mission evolution.

Opening pathways for implementation

Moving from ambition to coordinated action
through different routes.

1

1

What do we mean by implementation?

From portfolio design to coordinated action

In the previous module, we explored how to design and orchestrate a mission portfolio, a set of interconnected and coordinated actions. Implementation is where that portfolio comes to life.

It is the **ongoing process** of translating circular economy mission into coordinated action in your territory – mobilising actors and aligning policies, funding and governance structures over time.

Implementation **is not a final step**, but happens in practice, as portfolios are put into action, tested and improved.



1

What Implementation is

And What it is NOT

What implementation IS

Mobilising and Aligning Multiple Actors around a shared mission.

Coordinating policy, funding, experimentation and delivery mechanisms.

Embedding learning and feedback loops into action

A collective capability developed over time, in context

What implementation IS NOT

Executing a fixed plan defined by one actor

Delivering isolated projects or interventions

Treating learning as something that happens after delivery

A purely technical or operational step

1

What Implementation is

And What it is NOT

Implementation brings the mission to life by coordinating the following steps, iteratively (see an example in the next slide).

Strategic ambition
Defining a shared direction that guides choices without prescribing solutions



Learning & Adjustment
Adapting actions and coordination over time through continuous learning



Deploying a Strategy
Making the system ready to act through governance, roles and accountability



Coordinated Action
Coordinating policies and actions into a coherent, evolving portfolio



Prioritising funds

Making strategic funding choices that signal priorities and shape behaviour



Circular construction with bio-based materials



Deploying a Strategy

Making the system ready to act

Define roles across municipalities, construction companies, architects, and bio-based material producers. Clarify coordination between public authorities, supply chain actors and knowledge institutions.

Coordinated Actions

Aligning instruments and initiatives

- Public procurement criteria for bio-based materials
- Support schemes for bio-based value chains
- Pilot buildings and demonstration projects
- Skills and certification programmes



Strategic ambition

Setting a clear direction

Increase the use of locally sourced bio-based materials (e.g. timber, hemp, agricultural residues) in public construction by 2030.



Learning & Adjustment

Adapting through practice

Learn from pilot projects:

- Do materials meet performance standards?
- Are supply chains reliable?
- What barriers exist in procurement or regulation?



**Construction
Material
Reuse**



Prioritising funds

Allocate funding to:

- Pilot public buildings using bio-based materials
- Support local production (forestry, agriculture – materials)
- Training for architects and builders

Implementation opens different pathways for action

Experimentation is one pathway, but not the only one

Circular economy missions are implemented by opening and coordinating different possibilities for action.

Depending on the context, this may involve:

- **Direct action:** launching or adapting concrete initiatives (e.g. repair hubs, reuse schemes, circular procurement pilots).
- **Policy and institutional change:** adapting rules, mandates or governance structures (e.g. procurement criteria, regional guidelines, coordination groups).
- **Resource mobilisation:** aligning funding, skills, infrastructure and knowledge (e.g. funding calls, training programmes, shared facilities).
- **Experimentation:** testing what is uncertain before wider adoption (e.g. living labs, testbeds, regulatory sandboxes or safe-to-fail pilots).

The key question is not “why project should we deliver?” but which combination of actions can support the mission move forward now?



Pause and Reflect

Taking stock of your starting point

1. From design to action

Looking at your portfolio (From Module 4), which initiatives are already being implemented?

Which ones are still not moving forward, and why?

(e.g. a pilot public building using bio-based materials is underway, but bio-based criteria are not yet integrated into procurement or building guidelines)

2. Making coordination work in practice

Where do you see challenges in aligning actors, funding or responsibilities during implementation (not in design)?

(e.g. municipalities are piloting bio-based construction, but there is limited coordination with material suppliers, certification bodies or construction firms, slowing down broader adoption)

3. Which actors would need to be involved from the start to implement this shift?

Where are the current gaps in coordination?

(e.g. lack of involvement of forestry actors, material producers or training providers limits the development of a reliable bio-based supply chain)

Using Experimentation where Uncertainty is High

Reducing uncertainty through real-world testing.

2

2

What do we mean by experimentation?

Testing and learning in real conditions

Experimentation is about testing solutions, initiatives from your portfolio, in practice. It allows you to explore what works in your regional context, working with actual stakeholders, constraints and opportunities.

For example, a region may test the use of bio-based materials in a small number of public buildings, working with architects, construction firms and local material suppliers.

Its purpose is not to prove success, but to reduce uncertainty: understanding what works, for whom, and under what conditions. This is where portfolios learn fast, locally, and in an exploratory way.



2

When do we need Experimentation?

When regional teams face uncertainty before wider implementation

Not every implementation action needs to be an experiment. Some actions can be directly coordinated, funded or institutionalized, especially when the solution, actors and delivery conditions are already clear.

Experimentation becomes useful when there is uncertainty about how a circular economy solution will work in your territory: what will work, for whom, under which conditions, with which suppliers, users, rules, infrastructure or costs, or what needs to change in the system.

For example, before introducing reuse criteria across all public construction projects, a region may test them in one tender to learn whether suppliers can respond, whether materials meet standards, and which procurement rules need to be adapted.

In these cases, experiments help regional teams test, learn and adapt before expanding or embedding solutions more widely.



2

Experimentation is more than piloting

Moving beyond isolated projects

Experimentation is not about running pilot projects in isolation or demonstrating success.

For instance, a single construction reuse pilot may show positive results, but if it is not connected to procurement rules or funding, its impact remains limited.

The focus is not on delivering a project, but on **learning what needs to change across the system**: from policies and markets to infrastructure and behaviors, to enable circular solutions to scale.



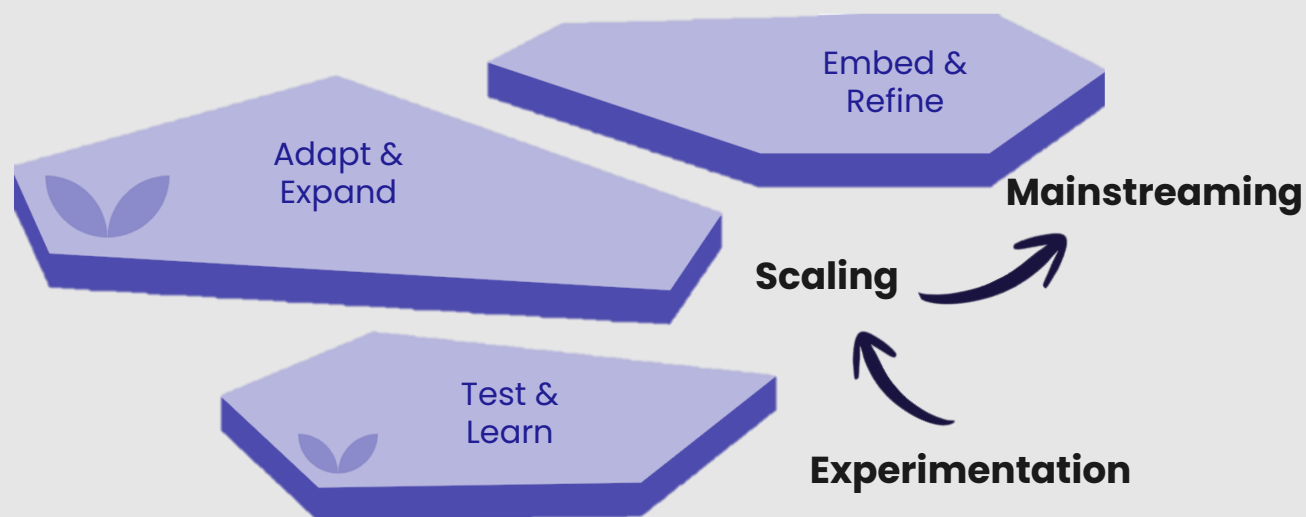
2 From pilots to institutional practice

How experimentation drives scaling and mainstreaming

Experimentation involves interconnected movements:

- **Test & Learn:** Exploring solutions in real conditions to understand what works, for whom, and why.
- **Adapt & Expand:** Adjusting approaches and involving more actors or contexts as insights emerge
- **Embed & Refine:** Integrating successful approaches into policy, funding and institutional practices, while continuing to improve them

These movements are not linear; they evolve over time and inform each other.

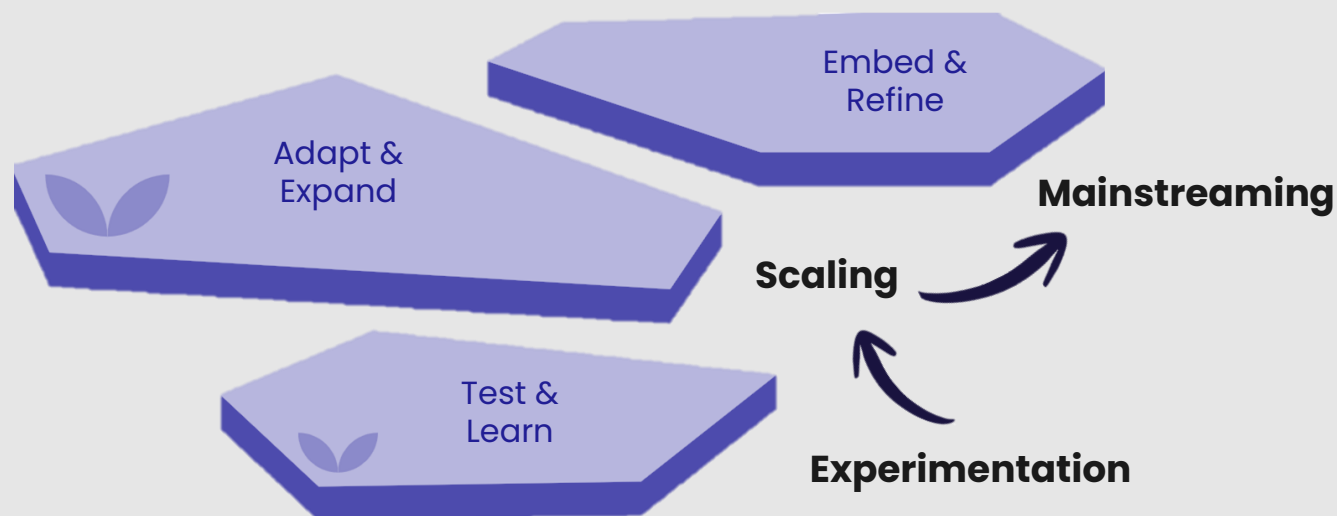


2 From pilots to institutional practice

How this looks in practice

Let's look at one specific example: Circular construction using bio-based materials

- **Test & Learn:** A municipality builds a pilot public building using bio-based materials (hemp), working with architects, construction firms, and local suppliers.
- **Adapt & Expand:** Based on results, more municipalities adopt the approach, additional actors join (material producers, certification bodies, training providers), and supply chain begins to stabilize.
- **Embed & Refine:** Bio-based criteria are integrated into public procurement, regional construction guidelines and funding schemes. Training and certification systems are developed to support market uptake.



2

What scaling means in practice

Adapting, not copying

Scaling is not about replicating a successful pilot.

Lessons from initial bio-based construction pilots are adapted to different municipalities, building types and supply conditions.

This often requires changes in procurement rules, building standards, and supply chain coordination.

Scaling is about translation and adaptation across contexts, not replication.



2

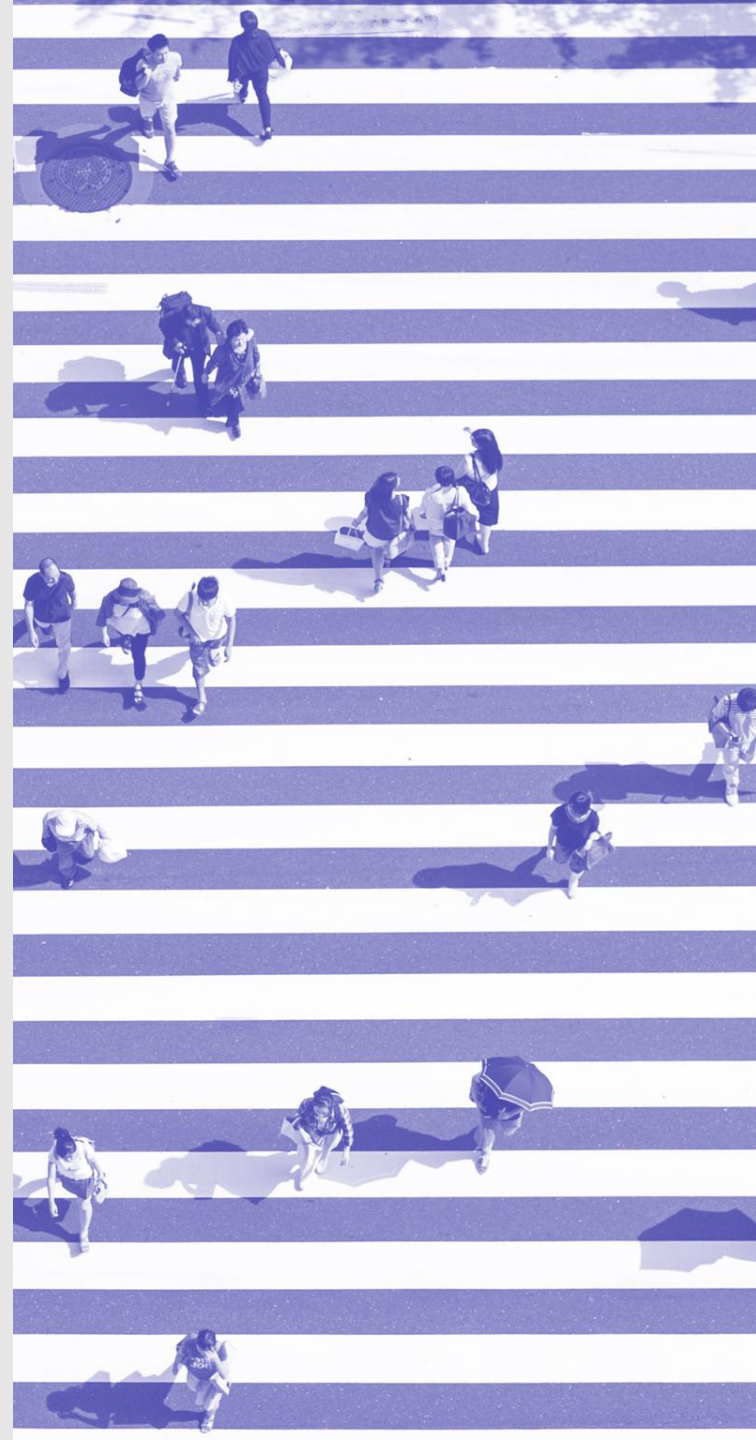
What is Mainstreaming

Making change part of how the system works

Mainstreaming is when new approaches become part of “how things are done”.

In this case, bio-based materials become part of standard construction practice, supported by procurement frameworks, market availability, and skilled professionals.

What started as a pilot, **becomes the new normal**, while continuing to evolve.



2

Not a linear process

How experimentation supports implementation

The movements of testing, scaling and mainstreaming often overlap.

As reuse practices expand, new barriers emerge that require further experimentation. Even once embedded, approaches continue to be refined and scaled.

Implementation progresses through learning, adaptation and institutionalization.



2

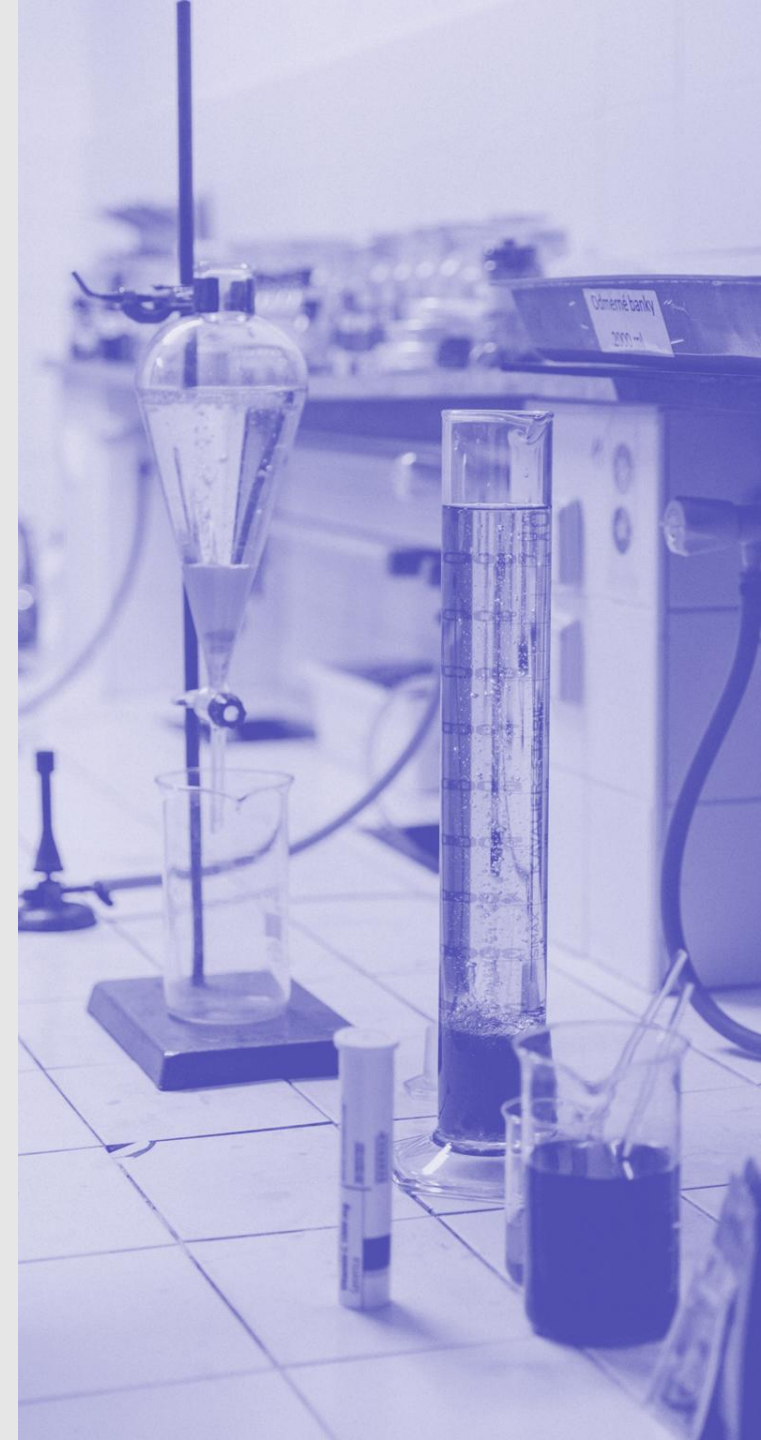
Types of experiments

Choosing the right approach for your context

Regions use different experimentation formats, depending on what they need to learn and what kind of uncertainty they face:

- **Living labs:** co-creating and testing solutions with users and stakeholders in real-life settings. Focus on social use, behaviors, and system interaction.
- **Testbeds:** testing technologies or solutions in controlled or semi-controlled environments. Focus on technical performance and feasibility.
- **Regulatory Sandboxes:** testing innovations under adapted regulatory conditions. Focus on rules, barriers and policy learning.

In practice, portfolios can combine these approaches to learn at different levels: users, technologies, systems and regulation. Living labs, testbeds and regulatory sandboxes are recognized experimentation spaces in the EU context.



2

Living Labs in Practice

Co-creating and testing with users in real-life settings

What it is

A living lab is an experimentation space based on co-creation and the involvement of users, citizens and stakeholders in real-life settings.

Example

A region works with one municipality to test the use of bio-based materials in a public building. The municipality brings together architects, builders, local suppliers, maintenance teams and future building users in a series of co-design sessions.

Together they explore practical questions: what materials are acceptable and feasible? What concerns do users or maintenance teams have? What support do builders and suppliers need?

What it helps learn

Whether solutions work in everyday practice for the people involved, what support different actors need, what practical barriers emerge, and what support is needed for wider adoption.



2

Testbeds in Practice

Testing technical performance before wider adoption

What it is

A testbed is an experimentation space used to test the technical performance of a material, technology or solution in controlled or semi-controlled conditions.

Example

A region works with a university to test bio-based construction materials, such as hemp panels for future public buildings. In the testbed, the panels are placed in a mock-up wall or small demonstration structure and exposed to practical tests:

How well do they insulate heat and cold? How do they react to humidity? Do they meet fire-safety requirements? Are they easy for builders to install? How durable are they over time?

What it helps learn

Whether the material is technically suitable, what conditions are needed for safe use, and what specifications should be included in future public tenders.



2 Regulatory Sandboxes in Practice

Testing technical performance before wider adoption

What it is

A regulatory sandbox is an experimentation space where innovations are tested in a controlled real-world setting, under temporarily adapted regulatory conditions, or with specific regulatory exemptions, safeguards and supervision.

Example

A region wants to reuse construction materials recovered from demolition sites in public renovation projects. Under normal procedures, these materials cannot easily be used because they lack standard product certification or complete traceability documentation.

Through a regulatory sandbox, the region creates a temporary approval pathway for a small number of projects, with alternatives evidence. Reused materials can be accepted if they pass agreed safety checks, technical inspections and documentation requirements. The sandbox adapts the approval process so reused materials can be tested legally and safely in real public projects, while authorities monitor risks, performance and compliance.

What it helps learn

Whether reused materials can be safely integrated into public construction, which safeguards are needed, and what procurement, certification or approval rules may need to change for wider adoption.

Pause and Reflect

Using experimentation to learn in circularity

- **From action to learning:** Where are you currently testing solutions in real conditions? What are you learning from these experiences that you did not know before?
(e.g., testing selective deconstruction in one public building to understand costs and material recovery potential).
- **From learning to adaptation:** How are these initiatives being used to adjust policies, funding or implementation?
(e.g., adapting procurement criteria based on lessons from early deconstruction pilots) .
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Who are you testing with? Are the right actors involved?
(e.g., supply chain, regulators, users).

3

Embedding Learning into Implementation

Turning insights into better decisions.

3

Learning drives how Missions evolve

From action to better decisions

Learning is what allows a mission to move forward in practice.

As regions implement and test initiatives, they generate insights about what works, what does not, and why. These insights shape how actions are adjusted, how resources are allocated, and how coordination is strengthened.

In a circular construction mission, early bio-based construction pilots may reveal barriers such as limited certification, lack of supplier capacity, or misalignment between procurement rules and available materials.



3

What do we mean by learning?

A continuous and collective process

Learning does not happen at the end of a project.

It takes place continuously, as different actors interpret what is happening and reflect on how to move forward. It combines data, experience and dialogue across departments, sectors and stakeholders.

For example, understanding why bio-based materials are not scaling may require combining data (costs, availability, performance) with dialogue between municipalities, architects, construction firms, material producers and regulators.



3

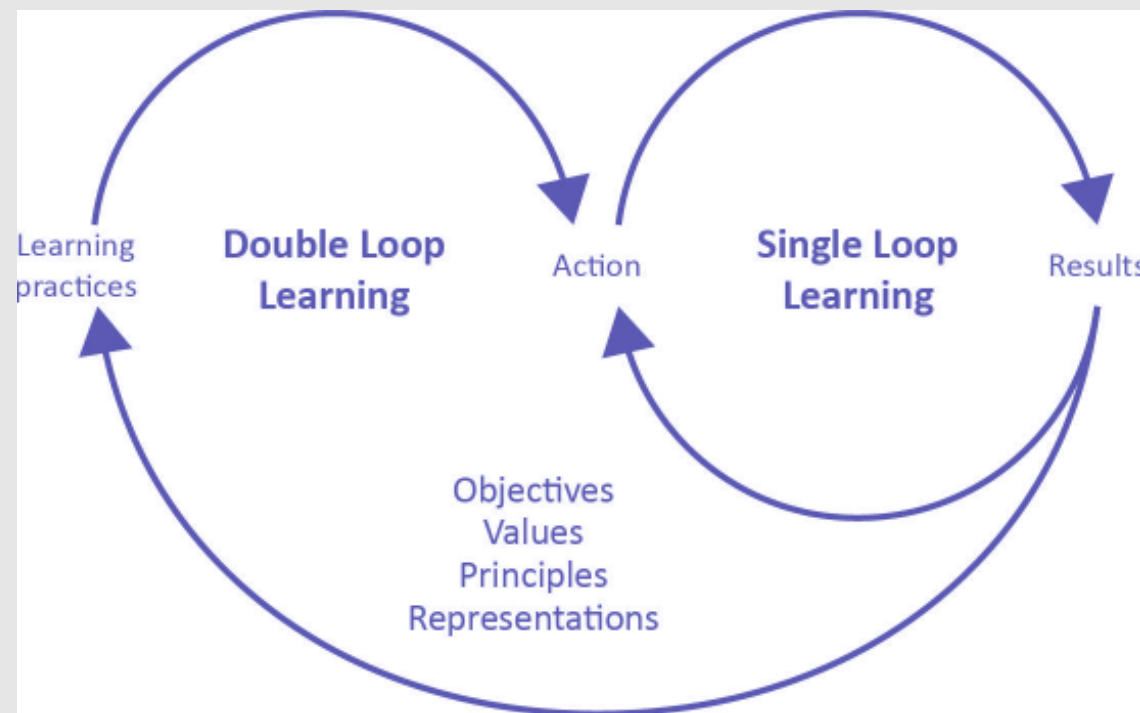
From improving actions to transforming systems

What kind of learning do we need?

We think often of learning as improving what we do. But in complex transition, as circular transitions, learning also means questioning the assumptions behind our actions.

In circular construction, this may mean moving from improving material efficiency, to rethinking buildings as material banks, redesigning construction systems around locally sourced bio-based materials and circular value chains.

Transformation happens when learning changes how we think, not only what we do.



Based on Argyris and Schon (1976):
https://ebrary.net/310234/political_science/chris_argyris_organizational_learning_military

3

What enables learning in practice?

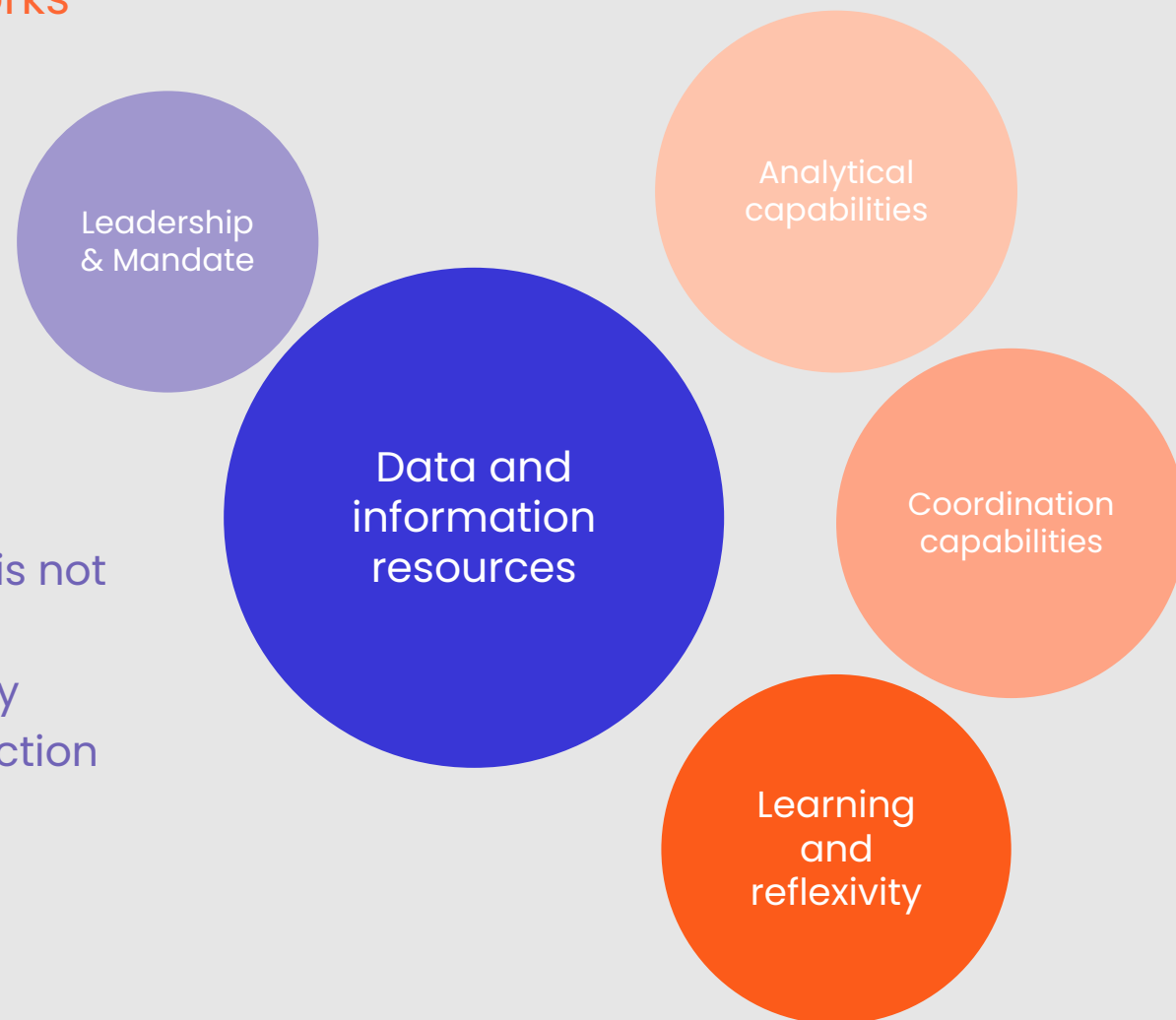
Learning depends on how the systems works

Learning does not happen automatically. It does not depend on a single element, like data. It emerges from a system.

It combines data and systems, methods and mechanisms, but also incentives, governance, culture, capacity and leadership.

In practice, improving bio-based construction is not only about having data, but about aligning procurement rules, certification systems, supply chains and skills across municipalities, construction firms, material producers and regulators.

Learning happens when these elements are connected and used together.



3

What makes a system able to learn?

What this means in practice for regions?

A learning system depends on three core capabilities that regions can actively strengthen:

Analytical Capabilities: Making sense of data and developments	• Exploring • Studying • Sensemaking • Interpreting data • Processing and developing new ideas and visions of the future	Understanding availability, performance and supply of bio-based materials in construction value chains.
Coordination Capabilities: Sharing knowledge and aligning actors	• Communicating with other stakeholders • Coordinating with other organizations • Transferring knowledge to other organizations and stakeholders • Co-creating	Aligning municipalities, architects, construction firms, material producers and regulators.
Learning & Reflexivity: Adapting actions based on experience	• Ability to develop and incorporate new understandings and adjust accordingly. • Adaptation • Recognizing failure in productive ways • Managing conflict	Adapting procurement, funding and standards based on insights from pilot projects.

How are these capabilities activated in practice?

Two complementary learning mechanisms

In mission-oriented implementation of circular transitions, learning is not optional. It needs to be structured, intentional and embedded in the governance of the mission.

At the system level, structured frameworks help define what to track, how to interpret change, and how to connect learning to transformation.

At the same time, learning happens continuously in practice, through how actors interact, reflect and make decisions.

Both levels are essential: one provides direction and consistency, the other enables real-time adaptation in complex circular systems.



How are these capabilities activated in practice?

Two complementary learning mechanisms

Structured Learning Frameworks

- Clarify what to track and why.
- Link actions to expected system change (theory of change).
- Help define indicators of progress and transformation.
- Support consistent and comparable learning over time.

Example: TIME Framework.

Practice-based learning processes

- Capture insights during implementation.
- Bring actors together to interpret what is happening.
- Translate insights into decisions and adjustments.
- Evolve continuously as the mission emerges.

Example: sensemaking sessions, coordination meetings, portfolio reviews.

3

Structured learning frameworks

Understanding transformative change

Structured learning frameworks help regions understand whether and how their coordinated set of actions contribute to transformative change, to the systemic change they are aiming for with their circular transition.

They shift the focus from what activities are delivered, to what changes in the system, and how.

One example is the TIME Framework (Transformative Innovation Monitoring and Evaluation), developed by KMU Forschung Austria and ZSI – Centre for Social Innovation).



3

TIME Framework

How does it work in practice?

At its core, the TIME Framework helps answer a simple question: How do we know if our actions are actually contributing to system change?

It does so by starting from the change you want to see and helping you make it observable. It can be structured into 3 simple steps:

1. Start from your mission and the change you aim to create.

- What should be different in the system?
- Where do you expect transformation to happen?

2. Identify what could drive that change.

- What mechanisms or actions can trigger it?

(e.g. new policies, business models, collaborations,...)

3. Make change observable.

- Where would change be visible? *(actors, behaviors, systems)*
- What signals would show that change is happening?

3

Structured Learning frameworks

Key takeaways

The TIME Framework is one example of how learning can be structured in mission-oriented work. There are other approaches, but they share a common purpose:

- **Focus on system change**, not only on activities or outputs.
- **Look for meaningful signals**, not just predefined indicators
- **Adapt to the context**, rather than applying standard metrics
- **Support decision-making**, not just reporting.

The goal is not to measure more, but to better understand how change is happening, and how to act on it.



3

Practice-based learning

Turning insights into action through ongoing processes

While structured frameworks help define what to look for and how to understand change, learning ultimately happens through how people work together in practice.

It emerges from implementation, interaction and reflection, as actors make sense of what is happening and adjust their actions over time.

Learning is not a one-off activity, it is an ongoing process embedded in how missions are implemented.



3

How learning happens in practice

A simple cycle to connect action and decision-making

A simple cycle to connect action and decision-making

1. Capture Insights

What: Observe what happens in real projects and gather feedback from actors involved.

How: During implementation (not after), short check-ins with those involved (e.g., municipalities, architects, contractors). Focus on new signals: what is working, what is not, what is blocking progress.

2. Make sense together

What: Bring actors together to reflect on what is working, what is not and why.

How: Bring key actors to a sensemaking session, a meeting (e.g., coordination group, project actors). Combine data with experience and perspective. Identify what needs to change (e.g., supply issues, regulatory barriers, coordination gaps).

3. Use insights to adjust

What: Adapt policies, funding or coordination based on what is learned.

How: Translate learning into decisions. Adapt procurement criteria, funding or roles. Decide what to continue, change or expand.

Learning as a core capability for transformation

Connecting structure, practice and decision-making

In mission-oriented work, learning is not a separate activity: it is a core capability that enables regions to adapt and transform over time.

It requires both:

- **Structured approaches** to understand what to track and how change unfolds
- **Practice-based processes** to turn experiential insights into decisions and action.

Transformation happens when learning is continuously connected to action. The challenge is not only to generate insights, but to create the conditions to act on them.



Pause and Reflect

Turning learning into decisions

Capturing and sharing insights: How are insights from implementation and experimentation currently captured and shared in your region?
(e.g., lessons from bio-based construction pilots shared across municipalities, architects or project teams)

From insight to decision: To what extent are these insights influencing policies, funding or coordinating decisions?
(e.g., adapting procurement criteria or building standards based on lessons from early bio-based construction pilots)

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Short **examples** showing how regions implement missions through experimentation, learning and scaling in practice.

From Strategy to Action and Learning

What can **I** start doing in my region – **now**?

In the following slides you will find **practical entry points** to begin strengthening how your mission is implemented, tested and continuously improved.

These are not large-scale reforms, but concrete starting actions you can activate immediately.

Feel free to start small but **think systemically**.

Each action can help unlock stronger coordination, better experimentation, and more effective learning across your mission portfolio.



Practical Actions You Can Take

Step 1. Set up a coordination mechanism for implementation

What to do:

- Identify who will drive and coordinate the mission in practice
- Bring together the key roles needed across departments and actors
- Clarify: who leads, who coordinates, and who connects to external stakeholders
- Agree a simple way of working (e.g., regular check-ins, shared follow-up,...)

This can take different forms:

- A Transition Team (dedicated cross-department group)
- An existing coordination group or working group
- A lead unit with a coordination mandate
- A temporary task force for the mission

How to do it: 1-2 short internal alignment meetings, with key departments/actors to agree roles, responsibilities and working rhythm.

Example: A coordination group brings together environment, procurement and infrastructure teams to align material reuse actions.

The goal is not structure itself, but ensuring someone is responsible for driving and coordinating action.

Step 2. Choose a concrete focus to act on

What to do:

- Look at your portfolio of actions and select:
 - One ongoing initiative or
 - One blocked/critical area
- Define clearly:
 - Where you will act
 - With which actors

How to do it: a coordination meeting within Transition team to review what is moving/blocked and agree on one focus (1h)

Output: one clear focus area for action.

Example of focus area: Improving reuse of construction materials in public building projects.

Step 3. Define what you want to test

What to do: translate your focus into a small, concrete test

- Looking at the focus area of choice, decide:
 - What you will test
 - Where
 - With whom

How to do it: 1 working session (1h) with the coordination group + relevant actors to define what to test, where, and with whom.

Output: a clearly defined experiment ready to run.

Example: test reuse criteria in procurement for one public building tender.

Step 4. Run & Capture Insights

What to do: implement the test in real conditions

- Capture:
 - What happens
 - What works / what doesn't
- Gather feedback from those involved

How to do it: during implementation + light check-ins (15-30 mins) with project actors to capture observations and feedback.

Output: concrete observations and insights (keep it light, short notes, quick feedback loops, no heavy reporting)

Example: suppliers face difficulties meeting reuse requirements due to lack of standards or certification.

Step 4. Reflect & Adapt

What to do: Review insights and decide what to change

- Bring your coordination group together
- Discuss: what did we learn? What should change?
- Decide: What to adjust; what to continue; what to expand.

How to do it: 1 reflection meeting (1h) with the coordination group to discuss learning, agree adjustments, define next steps.

Output: clear decisions and updated actions

Example: adapt procurement criteria and expand reuse requirements to new projects.

Implementation is a continuous loop



Repeat the cycle to progressively strengthen your mission portfolio

Practical Tools for Implement Innovation Portfolios

The previous steps introduced what implementation of a portfolio involves in practice.

Now we move to how to structure and navigate it.

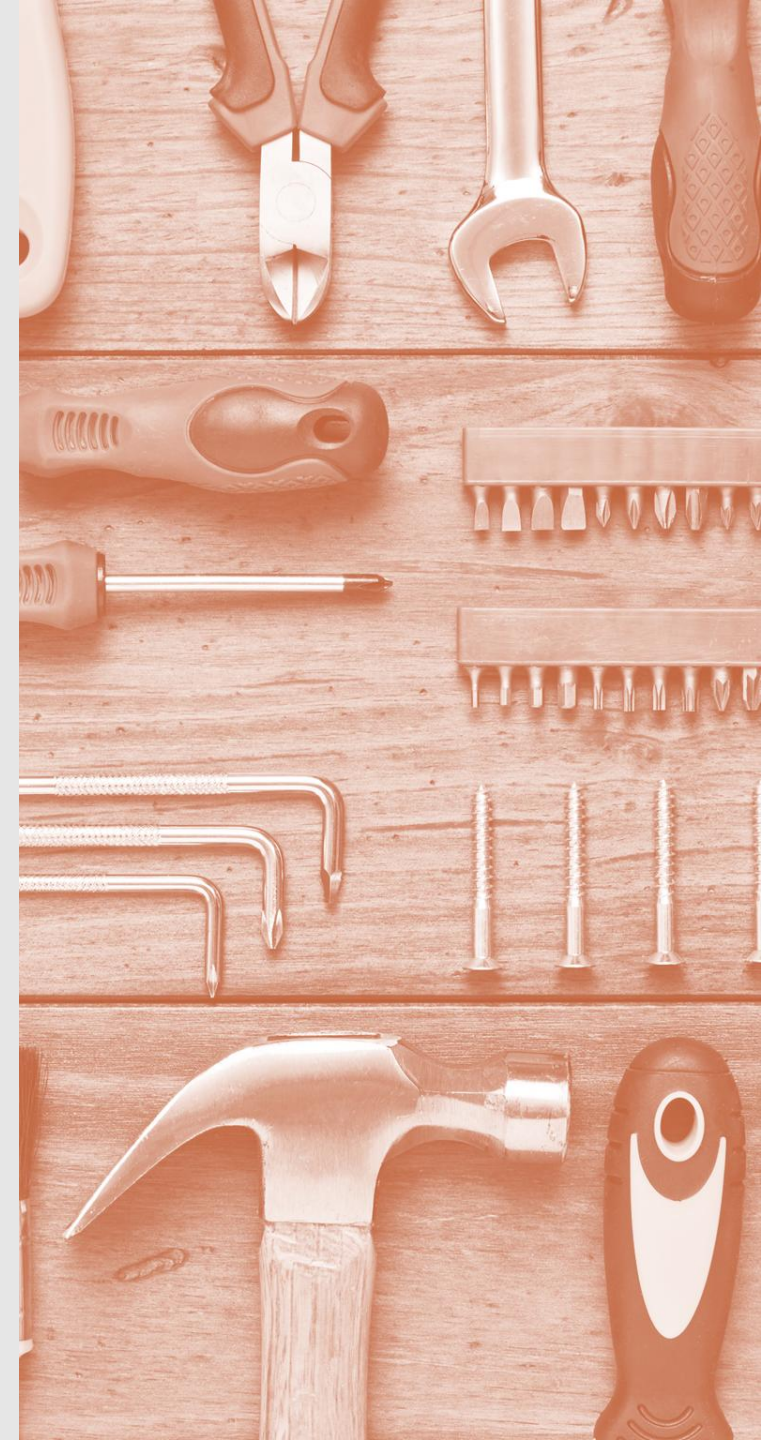
We introduce a simulation exercise that helps regional authorities experience how implementation unfolds, and what it takes to coordinate actions, actors and resources over time.

There is no single way to implement an innovation portfolio. This tool helps you experience and reflect on the key decisions, trade-offs, and challenges involved.

Start from your Portfolio (from Module 4)

Use the portfolio you have already developed as your starting point. Alternatively, you can use the example give here to experience the process.

All canvases can be found in this [Miro board](#).



Step-by-step guide to using the *A Simulation of portfolio Implementation*

Simulation: *Implementation of a portfolio to phase out disposable plastics and establish a fully circular material economy in the region by 2040.*

Prep-work: for running this exercise it can be done individually, or it strongly suggested to develop with the stakeholders that will manage the portfolio or transition teams.

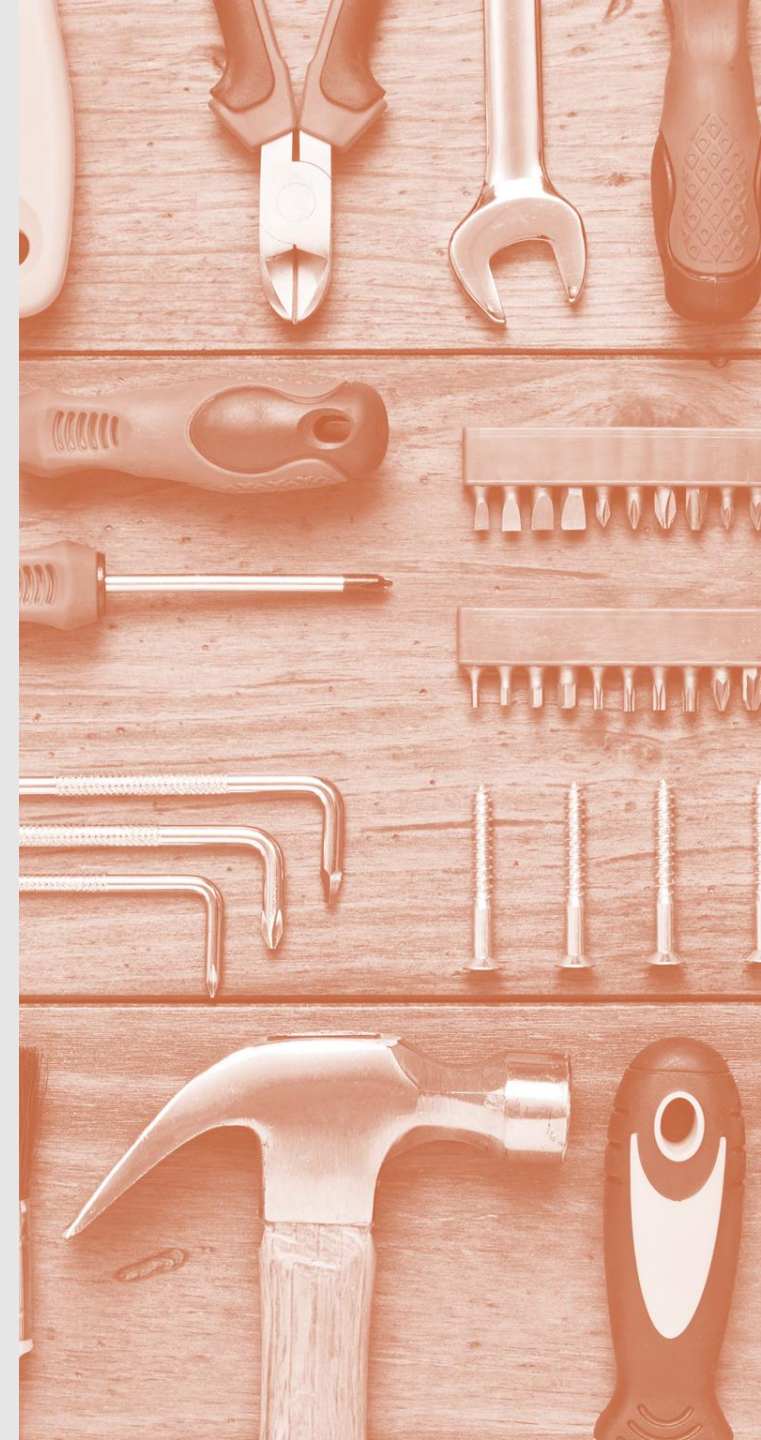
This exercise is designed to be a collaborative "stress test" for regional transition. Whether working individually or as a team, you will move from high-level strategy to the practical "who" and "how" of governance.

The Journey:

Step1: Portfolio Review: Understanding the 4 strategic pillars.

Step 2: Stakeholder Mapping: Identifying who is at the table (and who isn't).

Step 3: Governance Co-creation: Building the framework for implementation.



STEP 1 Review Portfolio

The Mission: 4 Pillars of a Plastic-Free 2040

Before acting, we must understand the levers of change. The portfolio consists of four integrated pillars:

- **Policy & Incentives:** Mandating phase-outs and taxing virgin plastic production.
- **Material Innovation:** Accelerating R&D for biodegradable packaging and biopolymers.
- **Infrastructure for Refill:** Standardizing physical and digital systems for a "sharing" economy.
- **Advanced Recycling:** Creating industrial-scale chemical recycling to return plastics to their primary state.

In the next slide you will have an example for portfolio actions. Review the actions proposed have in mind the following questions:

-What other actions are missing in order to promote a fully place-based portfolio?

Portfolio to phase out disposable plastics and establish a fully circular material economy in the region by 2040.

1. Mandate and incentivise the phase-out of single-use plastic and high-risk polymers

- a. Policy phase out scheme, introducing a legally binding scheme to ban specific single-use plastic over a 5 year period, paired with financial support for companies for this transition.
- b. Introduce a tax on virgin plastic production that would be re-invested in supported early-stage innovation in plastic reduction efforts
- c. Use government procurement to contract products that do not contain harmful polymers (i.e. PVC or multilayered plastics), supporting the growth of plastic free service providers.

2. Accelerate the development and adoption of novel, biodegradable packaging materials

- a. Create specialised R&D facilities for testing and development of biopolymers
- b. Update testing and certification practices and schemes to ensure safety and biodegradability of this packaging material.
- c. Incentives technology transfer schemes for packaging producers to adopt biodegradable options, including upskilling schemes as well as machinery and infrastructure replacement.

3. Deploy and standardize the physical and digital infrastructure for seamless, large-scale consumer and commercial refill and sharing schemes.

- a. Provide co-funding and support in urban planning for the establishment of public and private refill stations, following a standardised process.
- b. Develop, with industry and consumers, a regional refill standard
- c. Conduct awareness campaigns and micro-incentives for the public to move to refill solutions.

4. Achieve near-total collection and advanced recycling capability to return all remaining essential plastics to their primary use state.

- a. Introduce "design for recycling" rules, expanding EPR, where companies using multi-material, hard to recycle plastic pay higher fees.
- b. Create one large scale, industrial chemical recycling facility to handle contaminated, multilayer plastic.
- c. Raise public procurement mandate on recyclability to 50%

STEP 2 Stakeholder Mapping Review

Current Landscape: Who is involved?

We have mapped key players across four sectors:

- **R&D:** Labs like *Ost Baranduin AI Lab* (precision mapping).
- **Industry:** Innovators like *Sarn Ford Polymer Recovery* and *GreenSeed Bio-Foundry*.
- **Government:** Regulators like the *MWRO* (Waste & Reclamation) and *Circular Health Council*.
- **Finance:** *Horizon Climate Insurance*
- **Citizens** : *The Heritage Guild* (farmers/ecological wisdom)

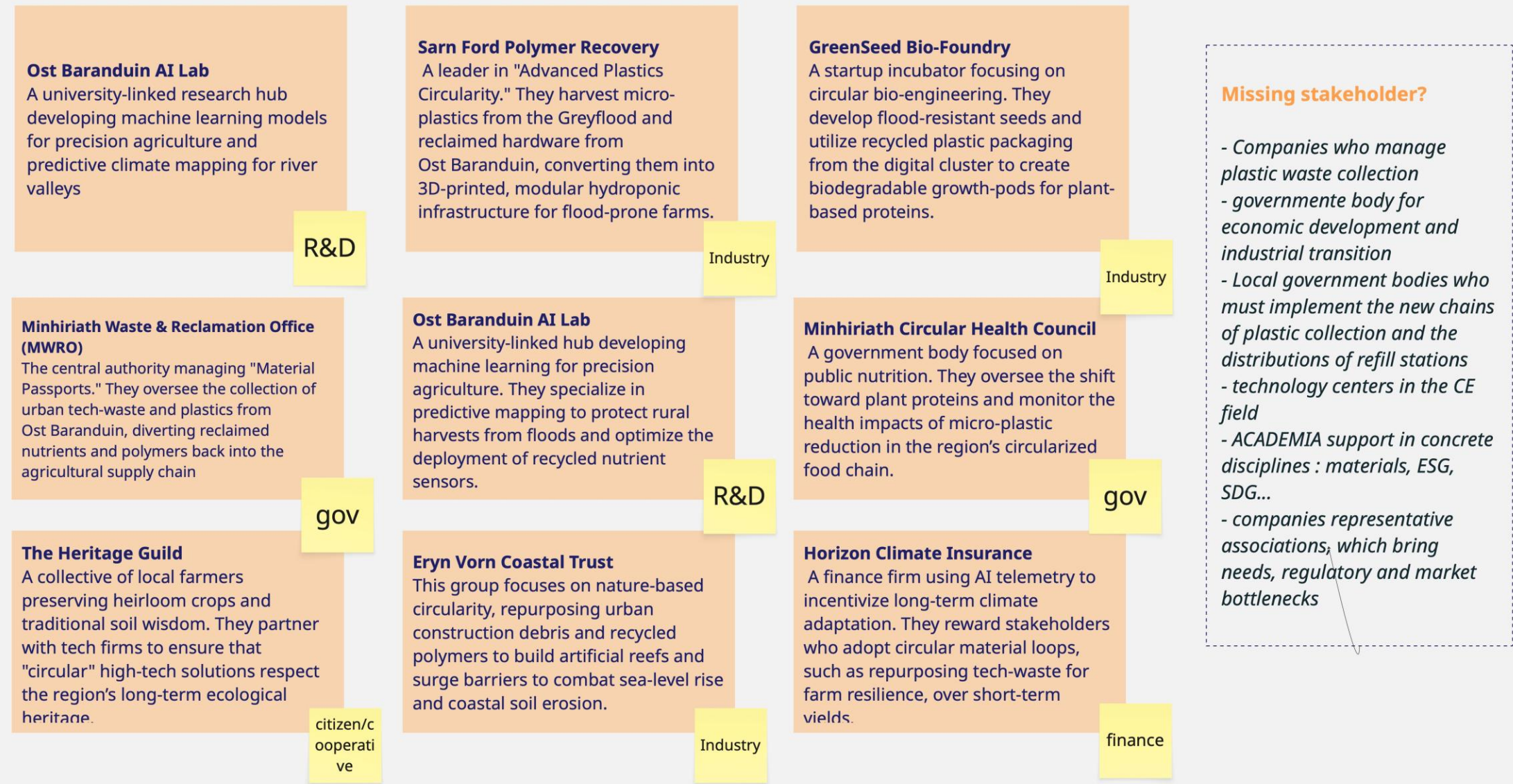
STEP 2 Stakeholder Mapping Review

Reflection: Who is missing from the table?

To move from a plan to a reality, we need to fill the "blind spots." Based on the Portfolio actions, consider:

- **Logistics:** Who manages the physical collection and waste transport?
- **Local Authorities:** Who actually builds the refill stations in urban centers?
- **Academia:** Where is the support for ESG metrics and material science?
- **Associations:** Who represents the industry bottlenecks and regulatory hurdles?

Stakeholder Mapping



STEP 3 – Governance & Implementation

The Canvas: Building the "Engine" of the Mission

Now, use the final canvas to define the operational structure. You must answer:

- **The Lead:** Who holds the mandate? Is it a single agency or a multi-org coalition?
- **Capacities:** What skills are needed? (e.g., technical knowledge, community engagement, or legal legitimacy).
- **Barriers:** What are the 2–3 things that could kill this mission? (Think: Lack of public trust, funding gaps, or lack of transparency).

Who should lead? What mandante, capacities should this (these) leads have? <i>The mission can be led by one or more organisations, depending of the model of coordination of your choice</i>	What other roles and capacities are needed for the implementation of this mission? <i>Think of the capacities needed to enable a mission: knowledge, stakeholder engagement, legitimacy, etc. Which ones are important in managing the mission?</i>	What are the 2-3 things that, if not addressed, will prevent this mission from being implemented in practice? In communication and building legitimacy ?
		To involve secure resources that enable the activities of the portfolio?
		To ensure accountability, compliance, transparency and learning?

Who should lead? What mandante, capacities should this (these) leads have?

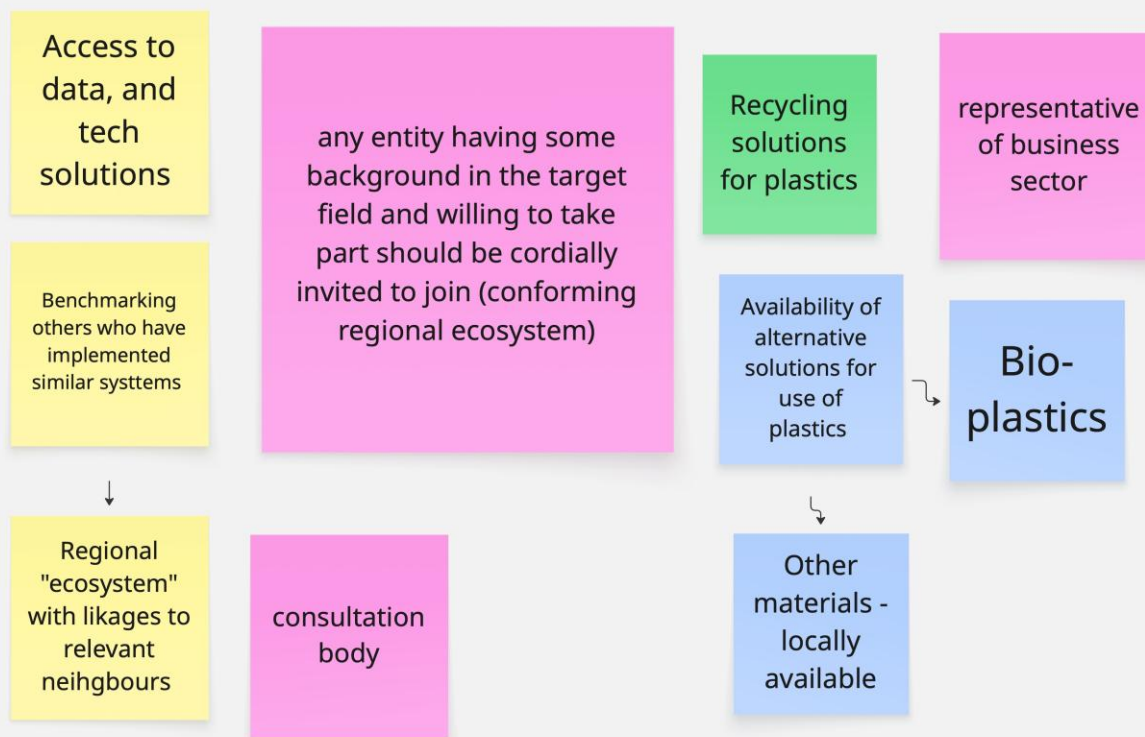
The mission can be led by one or more organisations, depending of the model of coordination of your choice

Gov organization with regional mandate & responsibility for long term development + funding to boost the actions

RIS3 framework: Government (Policy-makers+Waste management + Consultation body + workgroup + operational coordinator

What other roles and capacities are needed for the implementation of this mission?

Think of the capacities needed to enable a mission: knowledge, stakeholder engagement, legitimacy, etc. Which ones are important in managing the mission?



What are the 2-3 things that, if not addressed, will prevent this mission from being implemented in practice?

In communication and building legitimacy ?

1. participation of policy-makers
2. enagement of key stakeholders

Stakeholder
collaboration
+
commitment

Signs of
success -
visibility to
progress

To involve secure resources that enable the activities of the portfolio?

public incentives to boost cooperation between academy, companies, public bodies at the local level

piloting projects for CE in the bio-based plastic production, recycle and refill/reuse in the non bio-based plastics managed and re-oriented towards a super-selective collection and recycling of the different plastics typologies

partnerships with BANK System to allow credit to those projects, given the great social value

Linkages between various development projects, investments etc. -

Orchestration of actions - so that they are complementary, not conflicting each other

To ensure accountability, compliance, transparency and learning?

Define a public accountability strategic plan in which the public value produced by the new CE processes lead to better measurable targets about LESS COST in plastic waste disposal (that leads to minor corresponding taxes from citizens)

MORE ECONOMY for agriculture producing raw material for bio-based plastic and for synthetic plastics producers and transformers which pay less taxes for their minor production-linked processes

VISIBILITY to actions and results

Action & Next Steps

Moving from Simulation to Practice

The goal of this exercise is not just to fill boxes, but to ensure accountability and learning.

- **Refinement:** Update your governance model based on stakeholder feedback.
- **Accountability:** How will we measure success?
- **Transparency:** How do we keep the public informed and engaged?

Other resources

About Learning:

- **Working with Systems-Informed Theory of Change.** A practical introduction (Climate KIC, 2024). A practical guide to using Theory of Change as a living learning tool for adaptive implementation, reflection and course correction. Read [here](#).
- **Operationalizing Transformative Change in Research and Innovation Policy Evaluation: The TIME Framework** (Wieser & De Pagter, 2025). A policy brief introducing the TIME framework (Transformative Innovation Monitoring and Evaluation) to help policymakers, funders and evaluators define indicators for transformative change in R&I policy. Useful for connecting experimentation with evaluation and learning. Read [here](#).
- **System-informed MEL** (Climate KIC). A practical self-paced course on monitoring, evaluation and learning for complex systems, with a focus on evidence, sensemaking and adapting strategy over time. Read [here](#).

About Testing and Experimentation:

- **Test and Learn:** A Playbook for Mission-Driven Government (Nesta & Behavioural Insights Team, 2025). A practical playbook on using test-and-learn approaches to design, improve and adapt policies and public services. Read [here](#).
- **Institutionalising experimentation** in innovation policy: challenges and solutions in upscaling (JRC, 2025). Read [here](#).
- **Policy Experimentation in Research and Innovation** (European Commission). A concise policy resource explaining experimentation as a structured, evidence-driven way to test, refine and improve policy interventions. Read [here](#).

Structure of the Module

I

Conceptual framing

Introduction to **key concepts** for mission implementation, including experimentation and learning.

II

Guided practice

A **self-guided activity** to explore how your mission can be implemented.

III

Seeds of change from regions

Short **examples** showing how regions implement missions through experimentation, learning and scaling in practice.



Case Study:

Regulatory Experimentation

The Azores, Portugal

Exploring simpler agricultural-support and
advisory-service arrangements

Key Information

- **Region:** *the Azores*
- **Country:** *Portugal*
- **Promoter:** *Direção Regional da Ciência, Inovação e Desenvolvimento*
- **Partnership:** *Direção Regional do Desenvolvimento Rural, Terra Verde, Direção Regional da Agricultura, Veterinária e Alimentação*
- **Time-framework:** *2025–2030*
- **Budget:** *n/a*
- **Team:** *Cristina Moscatel and Fábio Vieira*

Overall Strategy:

Overarching Strategy/Project:

Strengthen food security and agricultural resilience in the Azores.

Thematic Focus:

Test and learn how to simplify administrative processes and reduce barriers in agricultural support (sandbox).

Impact:

Improve access to agricultural support, contributing to agricultural resilience and food security in the Azores.



Initial Exploration

Simplifying CAP Payments

Focus Activity:

Explore whether a selected CAP measure could be tested using Simplified Cost Options (SCOs) and Funding Not Linked to Costs (FNLCs).

Purpose

Reduce submission costs and simplify CAP payment procedures.

Why this mattered

Make agricultural support easier to access and administer, contributing to agricultural development in the Azores.



What the exploration revealed

Constraints identified

Several conversations were held with local stakeholders, particularly the local government department that manages the agricultural sector.

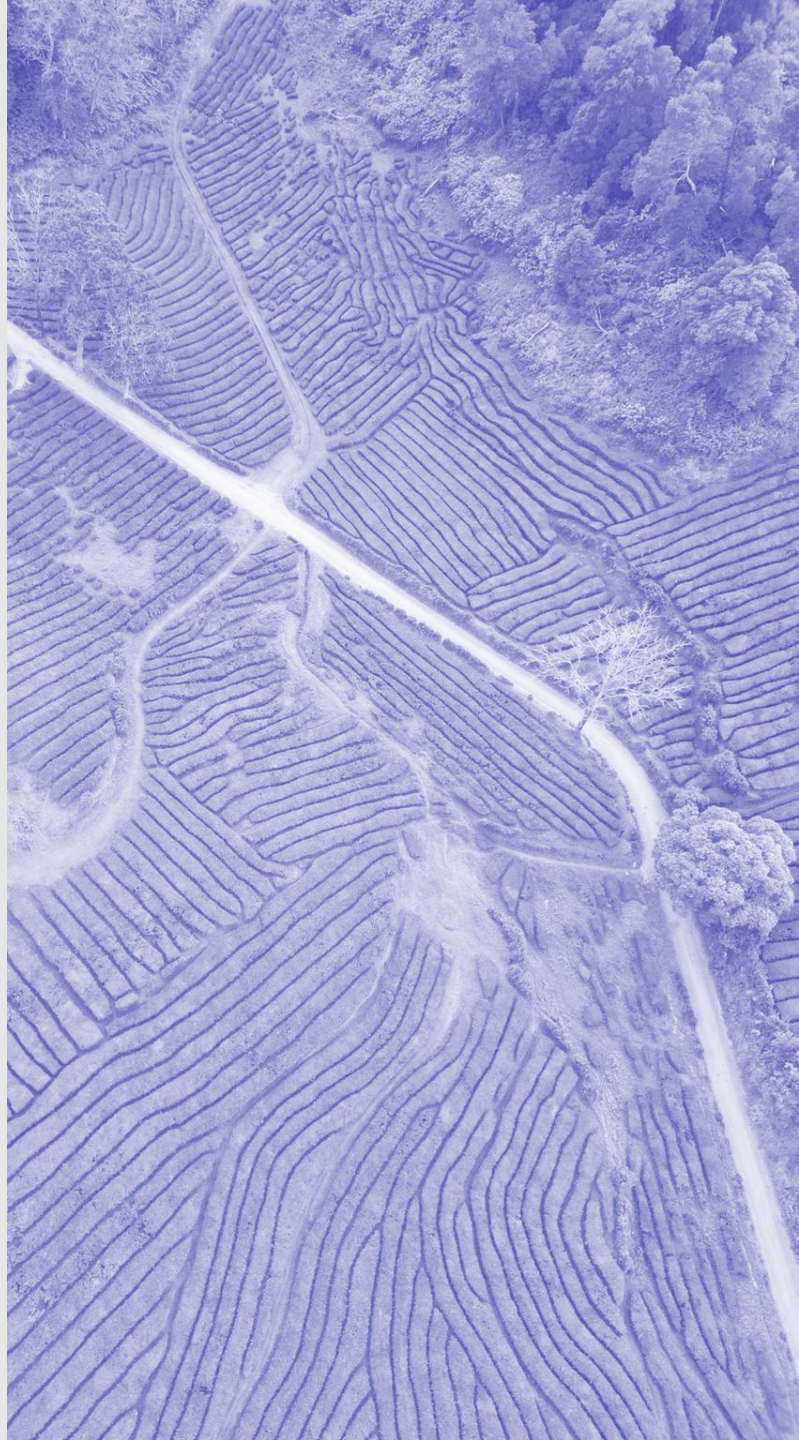
This led to the realization that existing multi-level legislative layers would make the development of a regulatory sandbox very difficult, mainly due to agenda timings, complexity of the process and project implementation deadlines.

Alternatives Explored

An alternative path was to focus on eco-schemes for organic Farmer.

Why this alternative was not pursued

This option was not available for the Azores since there is already direct support for the implementation of organic farming or integrated production by the Regional Government through the simplified cost system.



Emerging direction

Farm Advisory Services

This led to an alternative strategy, to focus instead on **Farm Advisory Services**, as a possible new entry point for regulatory experimentation.

In the Azores, these services are currently utilized to help farmers with cross-compliance obligations. The proposed direction is to strengthen their role in supporting knowledge, innovation and agricultural development.

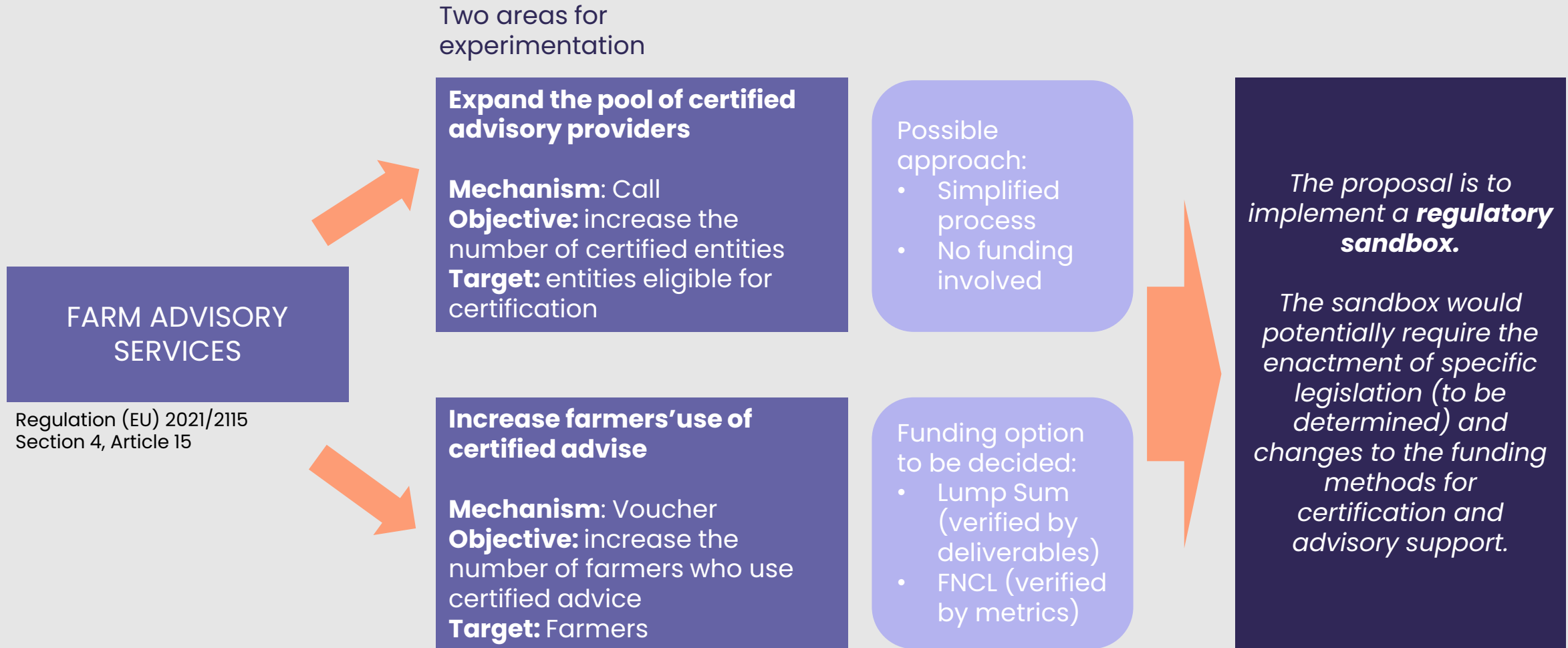
The next step was to identify which parts of the current system could be tested and adapted through a regulatory sandbox.

The sandbox would focus on how advisory services are certified, accessed and funded.



Learning Activity:

This led to the development of a regulatory sandbox to explore two options for these Farm Advisory Services



Learning Activity:

Timeline:

The process began with structured consultations with relevant stakeholders to identify CAP-related areas where a regulatory sandbox could provide practical added value.

This preparatory phase lasted approximately 18 months.

The final six months were dedicated to designing the regulatory sandbox, including its implementation model, operational scope, governance arrangements, and potential beneficiaries.

Results:

The Regional Directorate for Rural Development is available to implement a pilot project based on the approach proposed under EUPA. If the pilot proves successful, the Regional Directorate may consider integrating this methodology into the Farmers' Advisory Services in the Azores.



Learning Activity:

Learnings:

- This type of approach can be particularly useful for public authorities, as it enables the testing of new regulatory or administrative solutions before wider deployment.
- Regulatory sandboxes may be applied in several areas to simplify existing procedures, while simultaneously assessing their effectiveness, risks and operational feasibility.
- CAP-related sandboxes present specific challenges due to the complexity of multilevel governance and the strict regulatory framework applicable at regional, national and EU levels. Although regulatory sandboxes may be relevant for testing innovative approaches, current national and EU legislation does not provide clear eligibility pathways under CAP rules. As a result, most pilot projects can only be tested at regional level, using regional resources, rather than under the CAP framework itself.

Tips for other peers:

- It is essential to secure the technical, institutional and political support of all relevant stakeholders from the outset.
- In CAP-related initiatives, the competent Directorate-General of the European Commission and the national authorities should be involved and take ownership of the initiative from the beginning. This will significantly increase the likelihood of successful implementation and future scalability.





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