

SustainX

Partner identification and stakeholder mapping

T5.5 – Scaling the One-Stop-Shop localisation
support for SMEs



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WP5 – Marketing & Project Management

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Executive Summary

This document provides a practical replication guide for organisations and regions interested in adopting the SustainX One Stop Shop model for SME innovation support. It builds on the work carried out within SustainX, especially the One Stop Shop concept developed in WP3, and translates it into clear guidance for stakeholder identification, regional adaptation and future implementation under Task 5.5 – Scaling the One-Stop-Shop localisation support for SMEs.

The SustainX One Stop Shop was developed as a coordinated support model that helps SMEs access integrated services in EU funding, applied research and development, regulatory and certification readiness, market access, digital transformation, AI readiness and skills development. Its purpose is to reduce fragmentation in SME support systems by creating a clear entry point, a structured intake and diagnosis process, service matching, access to relevant experts and continuous follow-up.

The document explains that replication should not be understood as a copy of the original SustainX structure. Instead, the objective is to replicate the model's operating logic while adapting it to the needs, capacities, and priorities of each regional ecosystem. This means preserving the core elements of the model, such as the dual-track approach, the six service pillars, the SME journey and the monitoring framework, while allowing flexibility in the choice of institutional anchor, partner roles, service priorities and sustainability mechanisms.

A central part of the document is the identification and mapping of regional stakeholders that can support the replication of the One Stop Shop model. These include associations, clusters, European Digital Innovation Hubs, universities, research and technology organisations, chambers of commerce, regional development actors, funding experts, regulatory and certification specialists and public authorities. Each category can contribute differently, either by reaching SMEs, delivering services, providing technical expertise, supporting referrals, strengthening regional legitimacy or helping secure long-term continuation.

The document also presents a minimum replication package, including a coordinating organisation, a mapped partner pool, a basic service catalogue, an SME intake route, a referral mechanism and a monitoring system. These elements represent the basic conditions required for a region or organisation to launch a credible One Stop Shop replication process. The proposed selection criteria, mapping template, readiness checklist and outreach message are designed to support practical implementation and make the process easier to follow.

An important recommendation of this document is the adaptation of the One Stop Shop model to the local context. Each region should assess its own SME needs, priority sectors, available support organisations, existing innovation services and funding opportunities before launching the model. This ensures that the replicated One Stop Shop is not created as an isolated project activity, but embedded into the regional ecosystem and aligned with local economic and innovation priorities.

Overall, this document supports the long-term sustainability and transferability of the SustainX results. It helps other organisations understand what was developed through SustainX, what minimum elements are needed for replication, which actors should be involved and how the model can be adapted to different regional contexts. By following the guidance included in this document, regions can use the SustainX One Stop Shop approach as a practical framework for strengthening SME innovation support and enabling sustainable, investment-ready and cross-border innovation projects beyond the lifetime of the project.

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1. SUSTAINX PLAN FOR PARTNER IDENTIFICATION AND STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

A. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of **Task 5.5 Scaling the One-Stop-Shop (OSS) Localisation Support for SMEs** is to support the scaling of the One-Stop-Shop localisation support system for SMEs beyond the initial pilot phase developed within SustainX. During the final project scaling phase, covering months M19–M24, the focus is placed on identifying and engaging relevant partner associations, clusters and regional innovation actors that can contribute to the wider uptake, replication and long-term sustainability of the OSS model.

This working document is intended to support partner alignment, implementation follow-up and reporting activities by providing a structured basis for mapping potential organisations that could contribute to the scaling process. These may include business associations, sectoral clusters, innovation hubs, EDIHs, chambers of commerce, regional development agencies, research and academic institutions, and other intermediary organisations with direct access to SMEs.

The identification of potential partners is an important step in ensuring that the OSS support system can be embedded into existing regional and interregional ecosystems. By involving associations and clusters, SustainX aims to expand the reach of the OSS model, facilitate access to SMEs in different sectors and regions, and create the conditions for continued service delivery after the project ends.

The document will be used as a practical working tool to collect information on relevant stakeholders, assess their potential role in the scaling process, define possible forms of collaboration and monitor follow-up actions. It will also help partners clarify how each organisation could support the replication or adaptation of the OSS model, for example through SME outreach, dissemination, service co-delivery, referral mechanisms, participation in regional workshops, or integration into future sustainability and exploitation activities.

Overall, this task contributes to the long-term sustainability of SustainX by transforming the One-Stop-Shop from a project-based support mechanism into a scalable model that can be adopted, adapted and continued by regional and interregional innovation ecosystems.

B. SOURCE BASIS AND ASSUMPTIONS

This document builds on the WP3 OSS concept. The OSS is defined as a permanent public-private innovation service hub connecting SMEs to EU funding, applied R&D, regulatory expertise and cross-border networks. It is designed as a structural output that should continue beyond SustainX, with TUIASI as institutional anchor and DIZ as ecosystem partner. The scaling approach proposed in this document is based on the OSS model developed under WP3, particularly the OSS concept, service architecture

and replication pathway. The table below translates the key elements of the WP3 OSS concept into practical implications for T5.5, showing how the original model can be adapted and extended during the final project phase. This helps ensure that the scaling activities remain aligned with what was already developed in SustainX, while also preparing the model for wider regional and interregional use.

Element from WP3 OSS concept	Implication for T5.5 scaling
Two-track operating model	Scaling should preserve both the SustainX-aligned track for mapped SMEs and the open independent track for wider regional SMEs.
Six core service pillars	Partner mapping and implementation should identify actors able to support funding, R&D, regulatory, market access, digital/AI and capacity-building services.
SME journey	All regions should use the same intake, diagnosis, service matching, active support, network integration and outcome follow-up flow.
Post-project sustainability	The scaled model should rely on an open client base, institutional anchoring, fee/cost-recovery options and regional co-funding where possible.
Replication pathway	Regional partners may start as satellite access points and later evolve towards replicated OSS nodes under a shared quality framework.

C. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this document is to identify the types of regional and interregional actors that can support the scaling of the SustainX OSS beyond the WP3 pilot phase. The mapping should help DIZ, TUIASI and SustainX partners select associations, clusters, hubs and support organisations that can act as outreach channels, service contributors, referral points or future OSS satellite nodes.

Expected result: a validated shortlist of partner associations and clusters able to support SME outreach, service delivery, regional anchoring and cross-border referrals for the OSS model.

D. PARTNER CATEGORIES TO BE MAPPED

To scale the OSS support system effectively, SustainX partners need to identify organisations that already have strong links with SMEs, innovation ecosystems and regional development structures. The table below presents the main categories of partners that should be considered during the mapping process, together with their possible role in the OSS scaling process and examples of concrete contributions they could provide. These categories are not exclusive, but they offer a practical starting point for building a relevant and balanced partner pool.

Partner category	Role in OSS scaling	Examples of contribution
Associations and business networks	Act as trusted access points to SMEs and help validate regional needs.	Promote OSS services, nominate SMEs, host information sessions, collect needs from members.
Clusters	Connect the OSS to sectoral value chains and specialised SME communities.	Identify innovation needs, support consortium formation, provide market intelligence.
European Digital Innovation Hubs and innovation hubs	Provide digital transformation expertise and existing SME support infrastructure.	Refer SMEs, co-deliver digital/AI readiness services, support diagnostic processes.
Universities and RTOs	Provide research expertise, labs, TRL assessment and talent development.	Offer laboratory access, validation support, mentoring, training and R&D liaison.
Chambers of commerce and regional development actors	Strengthen regional legitimacy and business outreach.	Mobilise SMEs, connect with local policy priorities, support public-private cooperation.
Funding and EU project support organisations	Support funding scouting, proposal development and consortium preparation.	Call mapping, proposal review, partner search, budget guidance.
Regulatory, certification and legal experts	Fill a high-demand advisory gap for SMEs.	Provide clinics on AI Act, GDPR, NIS2, standards, CE marking and certification routes.

E. SELECTION CRITERIA

Once potential partners have been identified, they should be assessed using a common set of criteria. The table below proposes simple selection criteria that can help partners evaluate whether an organisation is suitable for supporting the scaling of the OSS model. The scoring system can be used to compare organisations, prioritise outreach and select those actors that are most relevant, credible and ready to engage during the M19–M24 implementation period.

Criterion	Assessment question	Score 1–5
SME reach	Does the actor have direct access to SMEs that could benefit from the OSS?	
Sector/value-chain relevance	Is the actor relevant to SustainX value chains or priority regional sectors?	
Service complementarity	Can the actor contribute to one or more OSS service pillars?	
Regional credibility	Is the actor recognised by SMEs, public authorities or innovation ecosystems?	

Criterion	Assessment question	Score 1-5
Cross-border potential	Can the actor support interregional referrals or EU consortia?	
Operational readiness	Can the actor engage during the M19-M24 scaling period?	
Sustainability potential	Could collaboration continue after the project ends?	

F. MAPPING TEMPLATE

The mapping template below can be used by SustainX partners to collect and organise information on potential associations, clusters and ecosystem actors. It is designed as a practical working tool that can be updated throughout the scaling phase. Partners should use it to record the organisation name, region, type of actor, relevant OSS service pillars, possible role in the scaling process, contact status and priority level. The completed table will support partner coordination, reporting and follow-up actions.

Organisation	Region/country	Type	Relevant OSS pillar(s)	Potential role	Contact/status	Priority
Name	[RO/ES/GR/LV/BG/EU]	[Cluster/association/EDIH/etc.]	[Funding/R&D/Regulatory/Market/Digital/Skills]	[Outreach/referral/co-delivery/satellite node]	[Contacted / To contact / Confirmed]	[High/Medium/Low]
Name						
Name						
Name						

G. RECOMMENDED PROCESS

The following process outlines the main steps recommended for identifying, assessing and engaging potential partner organisations. It is intended to guide partners from the creation of an initial longlist to the definition of a validated partner pool that can support the regional and interregional scaling of the OSS model. Each step includes a concrete action and an expected output, making the process easy to follow and monitor.

Step	Action	Output
1	Create an initial longlist using partner networks, regional databases and existing SustainX contacts.	Initial stakeholder longlist
2	Score each organisation using the selection criteria above.	Prioritised list
3	Contact high-priority actors and validate their interest in supporting OSS scaling.	Validated shortlist
4	Define the collaboration role for each confirmed actor.	Partner role matrix
5	Integrate confirmed actors into roadmap and implementation activities.	Operational partner pool

H. IMMEDIATE PARTNER OUTREACH MESSAGE

The following short message can be adapted for communication purposes: *SustainX is scaling its OSS support model for SMEs beyond the pilot phase. We are identifying associations, clusters and innovation ecosystem actors that can help connect SMEs to integrated support in EU funding, R&D, regulatory readiness, market access, digital transformation and skills development. We would be pleased to explore how your organisation could contribute as an outreach, referral or co-delivery partner in the regional scaling process.*

2. REPLICATION PARTNER IDENTIFICATION AND STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

A. INTRODUCTION

This replication-oriented version translates the SustainX WP3 OSS concept into practical guidance that another region, association, cluster, EDIH, university or innovation intermediary can follow. The table below summarises the role of this document within SustainX Task 5.5. It clarifies the task addressed, the purpose of the guide, the intended users, how the document should be applied, and the specific OSS model that is being replicated. This overview helps ensure that all partners and external users understand the document as a practical replication tool, not only as a reporting annex.

Field	Description
Task	T5.5 – Scaling the One-Stop-Shop localisation support for SMEs
Document purpose	A practical guide for identifying the regional actors needed to replicate the SustainX OSS model

Primary users	SustainX partners, regional associations, clusters, EDIHs, universities, RTOs, chambers of commerce and innovation intermediaries
How to use it	Follow the step-by-step instructions, complete the templates, collect the suggested evidence and adapt the model to the regional ecosystem.
Model replicated	SustainX OSS: dual-track SME support model with six service pillars and a common SME journey.

B. THE SUSTAINX ONE STOP SHOP MODEL TO BE REPLICATED

The SustainX OSS (OSS) is a permanent innovation support hub designed to help SMEs move from an idea or business need to concrete innovation, funding, R&D, regulatory, market and capacity-building support. The replication objective is not to copy the institutional form exactly, but to reproduce the operating logic in another regional ecosystem.

Replication principle: keep the core method identical, but adapt the actors, services and financing to the regional context.

Before starting the stakeholder mapping process, it is important to understand which elements of the SustainX OSS model should be preserved during replication. The table below presents the core components of the model developed in SustainX and explains how they can be translated into another regional context. The aim is not to reproduce the exact institutional structure of the original model, but to keep the same operating logic: a coordinated support system for SMEs, organised around clear services, a common SME journey and a sustainability-oriented approach.

Core element	What SustainX did	What a replicating organisation should do
Institutional anchor	The OSS is anchored by TUIASI, with DIZ as ecosystem and SME-support partner.	Select one organisation responsible for coordination, quality, data collection and continuity.
Dual operating track	A SustainX-aligned track supports mapped SMEs; an open track serves wider regional SMEs.	Keep one track for project/prioritised SMEs and one open track for any SME that needs support.
Six service pillars	Funding, R&D, regulatory, market access, digital/AI and skills services are organised as a single catalogue.	Map which local actors can deliver each pillar and start with the pillars where capacity already exists.

Core element	What SustainX did	What a replicating organisation should do
SME journey	All SMEs pass through intake, diagnosis, service matching, active support, network integration and follow-up.	Use one common intake form and one case-management workflow for all SMEs.
Sustainability logic	Project funding supports setup; open-track services, institutional support and partnerships support continuation.	Create a realistic continuation model before the end of the project period.

C. MINIMUM REPLICATION PACKAGE

The table below defines the minimum elements that should be in place for another organisation or region to replicate the SustainX OSS model in a credible and practical way. These elements do not require a fully developed structure from the beginning, but they provide the basic conditions for launching a coordinated SME support mechanism. The evidence column indicates what each replicating organisation should keep for reporting, internal coordination and future evaluation.

Component	Minimum requirement for replication	Evidence to keep
Coordinator	Named lead organisation and one named operational contact.	Decision note, email confirmation or signed cooperation note.
Partner pool	Associations, clusters, EDIHs, universities/RTOs, chambers, regulatory experts and funding experts identified.	Stakeholder map and contact log.
Service offer	Simple catalogue based on the six SustainX pillars, even if only 2-3 pillars are active at launch.	Service catalogue, flyer or webpage.
SME intake route	One channel where SMEs can request support and receive an initial diagnosis.	Intake form, list of SMEs supported, anonymised case notes.
Referral mechanism	Process for connecting SMEs to the right expert, lab, programme, partner or funding opportunity.	Referral log and follow-up status.
Monitoring system	KPIs, feedback form and lessons-learned process.	KPI dashboard, feedback summaries, final evaluation notes.

D. WHY STAKEHOLDER MAPPING IS THE FIRST REPLICATION STEP

The OSS cannot be replicated by one organisation alone unless it already has all six service pillars internally. In SustainX, the value of the model comes from connecting

SMEs to a coordinated network: university expertise, innovation intermediaries, funding advisory capacity, regional stakeholders and cross-border contacts. A replicating region should therefore start by identifying who can help deliver, promote, validate or finance the model.

E. ADAPTATION TO THE LOCAL CONTEXT

The SustainX OSS model is designed to be replicated, but not copied in a rigid way. Each region has its own economic profile, SME needs, institutional landscape, innovation capacity, funding opportunities and policy priorities. For this reason, any organisation or region interested in replicating the OSS model should adapt it to the local context while preserving the core operating logic developed through SustainX.

The main elements that should remain consistent are the coordinated support approach, the SME intake and diagnosis process, the service matching mechanism, the use of clear service pillars, the involvement of relevant ecosystem actors and the monitoring of outcomes. These elements ensure that the OSS remains a structured and practical support mechanism for SMEs, regardless of where it is implemented.

At the same time, the way in which the model is organised and delivered should reflect the local ecosystem. For example, in one region, the institutional anchor may be a university or research organisation, while in another region it may be an EDIH, a cluster, a chamber of commerce or a regional development agency. The important point is that the selected anchor organisation has the capacity to coordinate partners, manage SME requests, ensure continuity and maintain the quality of the support process.

The service offer should also be adapted to local SME demand. While the SustainX model is built around six service pillars — funding, R&D, regulatory and certification support, market access, digital and AI readiness, and skills development — not every region needs to activate all pillars at the same time. A region may start with the services for which it already has strong capacity, such as funding support or digital transformation, and gradually expand the offer by involving additional partners and experts.

Partner roles should be defined according to existing strengths in the region. Associations and clusters may be best placed to mobilise SMEs and identify sectoral needs. Universities and research organisations may provide technical validation, laboratory access or expertise for TRL assessment. EDIHs and innovation hubs may support digital maturity, AI readiness and innovation diagnostics. Chambers of commerce and regional development agencies may provide visibility, legitimacy

and links to wider economic priorities. Regulatory, legal and funding experts may be involved where SMEs need specialised support.

The financing and sustainability model should also be realistic for the local context. Some regions may rely mainly on institutional support and public funding during the first phase, while others may be able to introduce cost-recovery services, fee-based advisory packages or membership-based models. What matters is that the continuation model is discussed from the beginning and not only at the end of the project or pilot phase.

Local adaptation should also take into account language, accessibility and SME readiness. Communication materials, intake forms, workshops and advisory sessions should be available in a format and language that SMEs can easily understand. The OSS should avoid overly complex procedures and should provide a clear and simple entry point for companies that may not be familiar with European funding, innovation services or cross-border cooperation.

To support local adaptation, each replicating region should carry out a short needs assessment before launching the OSS model. This assessment should identify the main SME challenges, priority sectors or value chains, existing support services, gaps in the ecosystem, available partner organisations and possible sources of funding. The results of this assessment should guide the selection of active service pillars, the partner mapping process and the implementation roadmap.

In conclusion, the replication of the SustainX OSS model should be based on a balance between consistency and flexibility. The core method should remain the same, but the institutional setup, service priorities, partner roles and sustainability mechanisms should be adapted to local realities. This approach increases the chances that the OSS will be useful for SMEs, accepted by regional stakeholders and sustainable beyond the project period.

F. STAKEHOLDER CATEGORIES AND THEIR REPLICATION ROLES

A successful OSS replication depends on the capacity to mobilise the right regional actors around the same SME support process. The table below identifies the main categories of stakeholders that should be considered and explains their possible role in the replication process. Each category contributes differently: some actors help reach SMEs, others provide technical or regulatory expertise, while others support policy alignment, funding access or long-term sustainability.

Stakeholder category	Replication role	Typical contribution	When to involve
Associations and business networks	SME outreach and trust-building	Promote the OSS, nominate SMEs, host sessions, collect SME needs.	From the beginning.
Clusters	Value-chain access and sector expertise	Identify sector needs, support consortium formation, connect companies around common challenges.	From mapping and validation.
EDIHs and innovation hubs	Digital and innovation support delivery	Provide digital maturity, AI readiness, transformation and business innovation services.	From service design.
Universities and RTOs	R&D, lab access and technical validation	TRL assessment, testing, co-development, student/talent links and applied research support.	From service design.
Chambers of commerce	Regional legitimacy and SME mobilisation	Disseminate the offer, convene business actors and connect to regional economic priorities.	From outreach.
Funding and proposal experts	Funding readiness and consortium preparation	Call scouting, proposal structure, partner search, budget guidance and review.	Before SME support starts.
Regulatory/certification /legal experts	Compliance and market readiness	Guidance on standards, certification, AI Act, GDPR, NIS2, CE marking or sector rules.	Before clinics or advisory starts.
Public/regional authorities	Policy alignment and continuation support	Connect the OSS to regional strategies, funding sources and institutional sustainability.	From roadmap validation.

G. STEP-BY-STEP STAKEHOLDER MAPPING PROCESS

- Define the region or ecosystem where the OSS will be replicated. This may be one city, one region, one country or one interregional value chain.
- List the six SustainX service pillars and identify which organisations already have capacity in each pillar.

- create a longlist of potential partners using existing SustainX contacts, regional cluster directories, EDIH networks, university partnerships, chambers and SME associations.
- Score each organisation using the criteria below. Prioritise organisations that combine SME reach with operational capacity.
- Validate the shortlist through short meetings or a joint workshop. Focus the discussion on what each organisation can practically do in the next 3–6 months.
- Assign a role: outreach partner, referral partner, co-delivery partner, expert provider, satellite access point, funding/policy supporter or future OSS node.
- Document the result in a partner role matrix and use it as the basis for the scaling roadmap and implementation plan.

H. PARTNER SELECTION CRITERIA

After the initial stakeholder longlist is created, each potential partner should be assessed using a common and transparent set of criteria. The table below provides a simple scoring framework that helps partners compare organisations and identify those most suitable for OSS replication. The scoring should focus not only on reputation, but also on practical capacity, SME reach, service relevance and willingness to continue the collaboration beyond the project.

Criterion	Assessment question	Score 1–5	Notes
SME reach	Does the actor have direct access to SMEs that could use the OSS?		
Service relevance	Can the actor contribute to at least one of the six service pillars?		
Operational availability	Can the actor actively participate during the scaling period?		
Regional credibility	Is the actor trusted by SMEs or public/regional stakeholders?		
Cross-border potential	Can the actor support international referrals, consortia or market access?		
Sustainability potential	Could the collaboration continue after project closure?		

Criterion	Assessment question	Score 1–5	Notes
Data/reporting readiness	Can the actor provide basic evidence, KPIs and feedback?		

I. STAKEHOLDER MAPPING TEMPLATE

The following template can be used to organise the results of the stakeholder mapping process. It allows partners to record key information about each organisation, including its type, region, relevant OSS service pillar, proposed role, contact status and priority level. The completed template will help create a clear overview of which actors can support the replication process and where additional partners may still be needed.

Organisation	Type	Region	Relevant pillar(s)	Proposed role	Contact/status	Priority
Name	[Cluster/association/EDIH/university/etc.]	[Insert]	[Funding/R&D/Regulatory/Market/Digital/Skills]	[Outreach/referral/co-delivery/satellite]	[To contact/contacted/confirmed]	[High/Medium/Low]
Name						
Name						
Name						

J. OUTPUTS

- A completed stakeholder longlist and shortlist.
- A partner role matrix showing who can support each OSS pillar.
- A contact and validation log.
- A list of confirmed organisations to involve in the roadmap and implementation phase.
- A clear understanding of gaps that must be filled before replication can work.

K. REPLICATION READINESS CHECKLIST

The checklist below helps partners verify whether the basic conditions for replication are in place before moving to the roadmap and implementation phase. It can be used as a self-assessment tool by each region or organisation interested in replicating the OSS model. Where the answer is “No”, the proposed corrective action should be followed before launching or formalising the replication process.

Question	Yes/No	Action if no
Is there a named coordinating organisation?		Nominate a regional anchor or joint coordination pair.
Are at least three stakeholder types mapped?		Add associations/clusters, research actors and SME support organisations.
Is each active service pillar linked to a delivery actor?		Reduce the initial service offer or identify additional experts.
Are outreach partners confirmed?		Schedule validation meetings with business associations and clusters.

3. CONCLUSIONS

This document provides a practical overview of the work carried out within SustainX to develop and prepare the scaling of the OSS support model for SMEs. It brings together the main elements of the approach developed during the project, including the institutional anchoring of the OSS, the dual-track operating model, the six service pillars, the SME journey, the stakeholder mapping process and the minimum conditions required for replication.

The SustainX experience shows that the OSS model can become a useful mechanism for connecting SMEs to coordinated innovation support. Its value comes from bringing together different types of expertise in one structured support pathway: EU funding guidance, applied R&D, regulatory and certification advice, market access, digital transformation and skills development. Instead of offering fragmented support, the model provides SMEs with a clear entry point, an initial diagnosis, a tailored service plan and access to relevant regional and cross-border actors.

A key lesson from SustainX is that replication does not require another region to copy the original model exactly. What should be replicated is the operating logic: a coordinating organisation, a mapped partner ecosystem, a clear service catalogue, a common SME intake process, referral mechanisms and a monitoring framework. Each region can adapt the institutional setup, partner roles, financing model and service priorities according to its own ecosystem, available capacities and SME needs.

The stakeholder mapping process is therefore a critical first step for any organisation or region interested in replicating the OSS model. No single actor is expected to

deliver all services alone. Associations, clusters, EDIHs, universities, research organisations, chambers of commerce, funding experts, regulatory specialists and public authorities can each play a specific role in the replication process. By identifying these actors early and assigning clear responsibilities, the OSS model can be embedded into existing regional structures rather than created as an isolated project activity.

For replication to be successful, the model should be implemented gradually. A region may start with a limited number of active service pillars, such as funding support, digital readiness or regulatory advice, and expand the offer as additional partners and expertise become available. This phased approach makes the model realistic, easier to manage and more sustainable beyond the project period.

The long-term sustainability of the OSS depends on its ability to move beyond project-funded activities. SustainX demonstrates that the model should be designed from the beginning with post-project continuation in mind. This means ensuring institutional commitment, maintaining an open track for SMEs beyond the original project beneficiaries, exploring cost-recovery or fee-based services where appropriate, and connecting the OSS to regional strategies, innovation programmes and future funding opportunities.

Overall, the SustainX OSS model offers a replicable framework for strengthening SME innovation support at regional and interregional level. By following the steps, templates and recommendations included in this document, other organisations can understand what was done in SustainX, assess their own readiness, identify the partners they need and adapt the model to their local context. In this way, the work developed through SustainX can continue to generate value beyond the project and support a wider community of SMEs in developing sustainable, innovation-driven and investment-ready projects.

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