

SustainX

D3.4 – One-stop-shop concept presentation



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Deliverable Information

D3.4 – One-stop-shop concept presentation			
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Executive Summary

This deliverable presents the concept, operational model, sustainability framework and replication pathway of the SustainX One Stop Shop (OSS), a permanent innovation support hub designed to strengthen SMEs' access to EU funding, applied research, regulatory expertise, market opportunities and cross-border collaboration. Developed within the SustainX project, the OSS is conceived not as a temporary project activity, but as a structural output with long-term institutional value, anchored by TUIASI and supported through the collaboration with Digital Innovation Zone.

The One Stop Shop responds to a clear need identified among SMEs: access to integrated, practical and coordinated support for transforming innovation ideas into fundable, market-oriented and scalable projects. By bringing together university expertise, innovation ecosystem partners, funding advisory capacity and international networks, the OSS provides SMEs with a single entry point for navigating complex innovation and funding processes. Its mission is to reduce fragmentation in the support system and provide tailored guidance from initial diagnosis to proposal development, R&D validation, regulatory compliance, market access and capacity building.

A key feature of the OSS is its dual operating model. During the SustainX project, the OSS supports companies mapped to the project's value chains through a SustainX-aligned track, financed through the project and focused on developing competitive EU consortium proposals. In parallel, the OSS is designed to activate an open, independent track for SMEs from Romania and the wider region, regardless of sector or funding instrument. This dual structure ensures that the OSS can build credibility and an initial client base through SustainX, while also developing the financial independence required for long-term operation beyond the project lifetime.

The service architecture is organised around six core pillars: EU Funding and Proposal Development; Technology Readiness and R&D Acceleration; Regulatory, Certification and Standards Advisory; Market Access and Internationalisation; Digital Transformation and AI Readiness; and Talent, Skills and Capacity Building. These pillars address the most common barriers faced by SMEs when attempting to innovate, access funding, validate



technologies, comply with EU regulations or enter new markets. The services are designed to be sector-agnostic and scalable, allowing the OSS to serve both SustainX value chain companies and a broader SME community.

The deliverable also outlines the SME journey through the OSS, beginning with an intake and diagnostic session, followed by service matching, active support, network integration and outcome tracking. This structured process ensures that each SME receives a personalised support plan and is connected to the most relevant experts, laboratories, funding opportunities and partner networks. The model combines physical infrastructure at TUIASI with digital and cross-border access through an OSS portal, virtual clinics, partner satellite points and integration with relevant European networks such as Enterprise Europe Network, National Contact Points and regional innovation agencies.

Post-project sustainability is a central element of the OSS design. The model is built to remain operational after SustainX ends through three main mechanisms: an expanding open client base, institutional anchoring within TUIASI, and a tiered fee structure adapted to the Romanian SME market. The project funding supports the establishment phase, while the open-track service model is intended to progressively finance ongoing operations. In this way, SustainX acts as the founding moment for a service hub that can continue generating value for SMEs, partner organisations and regional innovation ecosystems beyond the funded implementation period.

The deliverable further presents a replication model that enables other universities and research institutions across Europe to adopt the OSS architecture. The model is based on a standardised service catalogue, modular adoption, federated governance, financial independence of each node, and cross-referral between participating institutions. TUIASI is positioned as the anchor node and standard-setter, while future replicated OSS nodes may be developed by SustainX partners and, later, by other European regions. This approach transforms the OSS from a local or project-based support structure into a potential federated European innovation infrastructure.

The implementation plan is structured in three phases. Phase 1 focuses on establishment during Q3 2026, including formalisation of the OSS space, recruitment of the core team, launch of the digital portal and intake of SustainX SMEs. Phase 2, from Q4 2026 to Q2 2027, activates the open track, expands the service offer to regional SMEs and prepares replication pilots. Phase 3, from Q3 2027 onwards, foresees the independent operation of the OSS, with fee income, institutional support and the SustainX alumni network forming the basis for long-term sustainability.

Overall, the SustainX One Stop Shop represents a strategic and practical mechanism for ensuring the long-term exploitation of project results. It provides continuity of support to SMEs, embeds project knowledge into institutional structures, strengthens cooperation



between academia, business and innovation intermediaries, and offers a replicable model for other European regions. By combining sustainability, scalability and cross-border collaboration, the OSS contributes to the broader objective of SustainX: supporting SMEs in developing sustainable, innovation-driven and investment-ready projects with long-term impact.

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MISSION & VISION

What is the One Stop Shop?

"A permanent, public-private-anchored innovation service hub that connects SMEs to EU funding, applied R&D, regulatory expertise and cross-border networks – built through SustainX, designed to outlast it."

The One Stop Shop (OSS) is established within the SustainX project as a structural output, not a project activity. It is designed from the outset to operate independently of project cycles: serving SMEs across any sector, partnering with any institution, and generating its own revenue, while the SustainX value chains provide the initial user base and proof of concept. The OSS model is also explicitly designed for replication. Any university or research institution in a European region can adopt the same architecture – the service catalogue, governance model, operational tools and quality standards – and join a federated European OSS network anchored by TUIASI.

The OSS is not a project deliverable. It is a permanent institution that uses SustainX as its founding moment – providing continuity of support to SMEs long after the project ends, and a blueprint that any European region can adopt.

OPERATING MODEL

Two parallel modes of operation

The OSS operates simultaneously in two modes from day one. This dual operation is what enables post-project sustainability: the SustainX-aligned track builds reputation and pipeline; the open track builds financial independence.

	SustainX-Aligned Track	Open Track (Independent)
Target SMEs	Companies mapped to the 11 SustainX value chains across RO, ES, GR, LV, BG	Any SME in Romania or the wider region – any sector, any stage, any EU funding instrument
Funded by	SustainX project budget (EU grant – no fee to SMEs)	Tiered fee structure: free entry, cost-recovery core, fee-for-service advanced
Scope	Focused on building competitive EU consortium proposals aligned to SustainX themes	Full service catalogue across all innovation support needs, not limited to any thematic area



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	SustainX-Aligned Track	Open Track (Independent)
Consortia	Connects to the SustainX 5-country network and existing value chain mappings	Builds new connections via Enterprise Europe Network, EEN, NCP, EUIPO and regional partners
Timeline	Active during project lifetime (2025–2027) and in sustainability phase	Permanent and growing — target financial break-even by end of Phase 3 (Q2 2027)

SERVICE ARCHITECTURE

Six core service pillars

The six pillars address the most common barriers SMEs face when trying to innovate and access EU funding. They are designed to be sector-agnostic: applicable to any SME regardless of whether it is part of SustainX.

EU Funding & Proposal Development

- 01** End-to-end support: call scouting, consortium building. Covers Horizon Europe, EIC, Interreg, LIFE, Erasmus+, Digital Europe and national co-funding instruments. Open to any SME — not limited to SustainX value chains.

Call scouting · Budget planning · Consortium brokerage

Technology Readiness & R&D Acceleration

- 02** Access to TUIASI labs, university researchers and testing facilities. TRL assessments, validation protocols and co-development agreements. Available to any SME that needs to bridge proof-of-concept to market-ready product.

TRL assessment · Lab access · Co-development · Testing & validation

Regulatory, Certification & Standards Advisory

- 03** Expert guidance on EU regulatory frameworks: EU MDR, NIS2, ISO 27001, EPBD, AI Act, GDPR and sector-specific standards. Cross-sector applicability makes this pillar a core revenue driver in the open track.

EU MDR · NIS2 / ISO 27001 · EPBD / BREEAM · Food safety · AI Act

Market Access & Internationalisation

04 Support in entering new EU markets, identifying distribution partners, structuring commercial agreements and navigating cross-border legal and IP requirements. The SustainX 5-country network is the starting point; the EEN and partner network extend it further.

Market entry · Distribution partners · IP strategy · Commercial structuring

Digital Transformation & AI Readiness

05 Advisory and hands-on support in adopting AI tools, automation, data governance and Industry 4.0 solutions. AI Act compliance, GDPR and digital transformation roadmaps. High demand from regional SMEs independent of any EU project context.

AI ethics · GDPR compliance · Industry 4.0 audit · Digital roadmap

Talent, Skills & Capacity Building

06 Training programmes, workshops and mentorship. Innovation management, sustainability reporting (CSRD/ESG), project management and sector-specific upskilling. Delivered as open enrolment programmes beyond the SustainX partner circle.

Open enrolment training · Mentorship · ESG / CSRD · Project management

SERVICE CATALOGUE

Detailed service offer

All services are available to any SME. SustainX-mapped companies access core and advanced services at no cost during the project period. All other SMEs follow the standard tiered pricing model.

Service	Description	Pillar	Type
Funding Landscape Scan <i>Personalised EU call mapping – any sector, any TRL</i>	2-hour intake session + written report identifying 3–5 priority funding instruments, timelines and eligibility requirements.	Funding	★ Free entry
Consortium Building Service	Matchmaking sessions, partner profiles, NDA templates and facilitated	Funding	Core service



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Service	Description	Pillar	Type
<i>Structured partner introductions. SustainX matching, 5 countries + network for project EEN network members; EEN network for open-track SMEs.</i>			
Proposal Support <i>Collaborative drafting with TUIASI's EU projects office</i>	Co-Writing Section-by-section proposal development: work package design, budget, impact narratives and review cycles.	Funding	Advanced
TRL Assessment & Roadmap <i>Technology readiness baseline and uplift plan</i>	TUIASI researcher-led evaluation of current TRL, identification of validation gaps, and a 12-month R&D roadmap. Open to any sector.	R&D	Core service
TUIASI Lab Access Programme <i>Physical access to university labs and testing facilities</i>	Structured access to TUIASI's materials, electronics, software and biomedical labs with researcher supervision and formal testing reports.	R&D	Advanced
Pilot Site Brokerage <i>Connecting SMEs to clinical, industrial and public pilots</i>	Facilitated access to hospitals, municipalities and industrial facilities. SustainX gaps are the priority; the service scales to any sector request.	R&D / Network	Network
Regulatory Compliance Clinic <i>Monthly drop-in sessions – open to any SME</i>	Expert-led sessions covering EU MDR, NIS2, EPBD, AI Act, food safety and GDPR. Written compliance gap assessment included.	Regulatory	Core service
CE Marking & Certification Pathway	Preparation support for conformity assessment, notified bodies, technical file	Regulatory	Advanced

Service	Description	Pillar	Type
<i>Step-by-step guidance to EU product certification</i>	review and audit preparation.		
Export & Market Entry Advisory <i>Cross-border market strategy and partner introductions</i>	Country-specific market briefings for ES, GR, LV, BG and beyond; commercial partner introductions; legal entity advisory.	Market Access	Core service
IP Strategy Workshop <i>Protecting innovation assets before and during EU proposals</i>	Patent landscape analysis, trade secret vs. patent decision support, licensing model design and IP agreement templates.	Market Access	Advanced
AI Readiness Audit <i>AI Act compliance and digital maturity assessment</i>	Structured audit of AI systems, risk classification under the EU AI Act, data governance gap analysis and mitigation roadmap.	Digital / AI	Core service
Industry Transformation Programme <i>6-month structured digital transformation journey</i>	Needs assessment, technology selection, vendor scouting, pilot implementation support and ROI measurement.	Digital / AI	Advanced
Innovation Management Training <i>Workshops open to any SME – free entry sessions</i>	EU project management, open innovation, sustainability reporting (CSRD/ESG) and value chain collaboration skills.	Capacity Building	★ Free entry
SustainX Academy → OSS Academy <i>Sector upskilling programme – open enrolment post-project</i>	Modular online and in-person training that begins with SustainX themes and expands to full open enrolment as the OSS grows beyond the project.	Capacity Building	Network

OPERATIONAL MODEL

How the OSS works — SME journey

Every SME — whether a SustainX partner or a new walk-in client — enters through the same intake process. The navigator team routes them to the right services and determines whether project funding covers the cost or standard pricing applies.

1 Intake & Diagnosis	2 Service Matching	3 Active Support	4 Network Integration	5 Outcome & Follow-up
Free 2-hour session. Profile the SME, identify sector, TRL, funding readiness and regulatory gaps. Assign to SustainX track or open track.	OSS navigator produces a personalised service plan. SustainX-funded services marked. Fee estimate provided for open-track services.	Concurrent access to relevant pillars. OSS team coordinates internal TUIASI experts and external partner network.	SustainX SMEs: matched to value chain consortium. Open-track SMEs: connected to EEN, NCPs, regional accelerators and cross-border networks.	Proposal submitted, partnership formalised, or certification achieved. OSS tracks outcomes and uses data to improve service delivery.

Physical Infrastructure at TUIASI

1. Dedicated OSS reception desk and navigator office — TUIASI Innovation Hub
2. To be further decided on the precise numbers of consultation rooms for confidential advisory and regulatory clinic sessions
3. Co-working zone for visiting SMEs and consortium partners (To be further decided on the precise numbers of desk capacity)
4. Seminar room for workshops, open training and consortium meetings (To be further decided on the precise numbers of seats)
5. Direct connection to TUIASI labs: Materials Science, Electronics,

Virtual & Cross-Border Reach

6. Digital OSS portal: service request, document upload, progress tracking and partner directory
7. Monthly virtual clinics connecting SMEs across all 5 SustainX countries and EEN network
8. To be further decided on the satellite access points at partner organisations in ES, GR, LV and BG — scalable to replicated OSS nodes
9. Shared consortium database with live TRL, gap and primary allocation data
10. To be further decided on the precise numbers of the multilingual support: RO, EN, ES (with translation capacity for GR, LV, BG)
11. Integration with DIZ, EUIPO, Enterprise Europe Network, NCP portals and regional



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POST-PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

Independence from the SustainX project

The OSS is designed to reach financial self-sufficiency after the SustainX project ends. Three mechanisms ensure this: an expanding open client base, an institutional anchor in TUIASI, and a fee model calibrated to the Romanian SME market.

Phase	During project Q3 2026–Q4 2026	Scale-up Q1–Q2 2027	Post-project Q3 2027 onwards
Primary clients	SustainX-mapped SMEs (40+)	SustainX SMEs + open-track intake (regional outreach begins)	Open client base dominant; SustainX alumni remain as repeat clients
Revenue source	EU project budget covers OSS operations entirely	Mixed: project budget + growing fee income from open-track services	Primarily fee income, TUIASI in-kind, national/regional co-funding
Staffing model	Core team recruited and trained under project	Full team operational; navigator capacity expanded if demand warrants	Permanent institutional staff; TUIASI employment contract or spin-off entity
Value chain focus	All 11 SustainX value chains as primary focus	SustainX value chains + open sectors	All sectors; SustainX themes remain a specialism, not a constraint
Network	SustainX 5-country partner network	SustainX network + EEN integration + replication pilots launched	Federated European OSS network (see Replication Model)

Key sustainability principle: the OSS does not “close” after SustainX ends. The project funds the setup; the open-track service model funds the operation. TUIASI’s institutional commitment provides the anchor. The SustainX alumni network provides the first client base.

REPLICATION & EUROPEAN NETWORK

Scaling the model across European regions

The TUIASI OSS architecture is designed to be adopted by any university or research institution in a European region. TUIASI acts as the anchor node and standard-setter; partner institutions replicate the model under a shared quality framework and join a federated network.

Replication Principle	What This Means in Practice
Standardised service catalogue	Each replicated OSS offers the same six service pillars and core service definitions. Local adaptation is permitted within a defined quality framework. Clients moving between nodes receive consistent standards.
Modular adoption	Regions do not need to launch all six pillars at once. A phased rollout (starting with Funding + Regulatory, adding R&D and Market Access as capacity grows) is the recommended path for new nodes.
Federated governance	An OSS Network Board (one representative per node) sets shared standards, approves new node applications, manages the brand, and coordinates cross-border client referrals.
Financial independence per node	Each node is financially self-sustaining. TUIASI does not subsidise other nodes. Initial setup support may come from Interreg, ERDF or EIC grants; ongoing operations are fee-based.
Cross-referral and co-delivery	Nodes refer clients to each other when cross-border expertise is needed. Co-delivery of proposals and pilot sites is a core value proposition of the network – replicating the SustainX multi-country model at scale.

Replication pathway – from pilot to network

1 Anchor Node (TUIASI)	2 Pilot Replications (SustainX partners)	3 Federated Network Launch	4 Open Replication (Any EU region)	5 Self-Sustaining EU Network
OSS established, operated and refined at TUIASI. Standard model	Partner institutions in ES, GR, LV, BG adopt the model using SustainX project	OSS Network Board established. Shared portal live. Quality framework published. First	Any European university or RTO can apply to join the network. Application reviewed by OSS	Network operates independently. TUIASI role shifts



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documented. First 12 months of operations generate evidence base.	support. Each runs a satellite OSS or full replication.	cross-referral and co-delivery cases documented.	Network Board. Onboarding support provided by TUIASI.	from operator to standard-s etter and network coordinato r. Funded by node membersh ip fees.
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The replication model transforms the SustainX project from a 5-country consortium into a permanent European innovation infrastructure. Each node is independent; the network is what creates value beyond the sum of its parts.

GOVERNANCE & TEAM

Organisational structure

OSS management (Signed partnership TUIASI & DIZ)	SME navigator team (*3)	R&D liaison officers (*2)
OSS Board (TUIASI TTO, DIZ) Academic lead — strategy, institutional relationships, EU project coordination, OSS Network Board chair.	Front-line case managers who conduct intake sessions, produce service plans and coordinate delivery. One navigator per cluster: SustainX track, open track, and replication/network support.	TUIASI researchers embedded in the OSS to connect SMEs with the right labs, supervise TRL assessments and co-develop validation protocols. Dual role: serve OSS clients and strengthen TUIASI's third-mission profile.

Regulatory & legal expert	Funding & proposals manager	Network & replication coordinator
Specialist in EU regulatory frameworks (MDR, NIS2, AI Act, EPBD, food law). Core revenue driver in the open track — regulatory advisory is in high demand from regional SMEs	Experienced EU project professional responsible for call scouting, proposal co-writing, budget preparation and post-award management. Works across both SustainX and open-track clients.	Manages relationships with replicated OSS nodes, coordinates the OSS Network Board, and supports onboarding of



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independent of EU
projects.

new nodes. New role
activated in Phase 2.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Launch Roadmap — three phases to independence

PHASE 1 · Q3 2026

Establishment — SustainX focus

Formalise OSS space at TUIASI. Recruit Navigator team and Regulatory Expert. Launch digital portal. Conduct intake for all 40+ SustainX SMEs. Deliver funding landscape scans for VC4 and VC5. Document service model for replication.

PHASE 2 · Q4 2026–Q2 2027

Scale-Up — open track activation

Open all six pillars to regional SMEs (open track). Launch Regulatory Compliance Clinic publicly. To be further decided on the SustainX partners replication pilots in ES, GR, LV, BG. OSS Network Board established. Target: 20+ open-track clients by Q2 2027.

PHASE 3 · Q3 2027 onwards

Independence — post project operation

OSS operates fully independently. Fee income covers operational costs. SustainX alumni form core repeat-client base. Network Board governs replication. Open replication applications accepted from any EU institution.

CONCLUSIONS

The SustainX One Stop Shop represents a key structural outcome of the project, designed to ensure that the support provided to SMEs does not end with the project implementation period. By creating a permanent, institutionally anchored innovation service hub, SustainX establishes a practical mechanism through which SMEs can continue to access funding guidance, research expertise, regulatory advice, market support and capacity-building services after the project's closure. The strength of the OSS model is its capacity to combine project-based support with long-term operational independence. The dual model ensures that the OSS is not dependent exclusively on project funding, but can progressively evolve into a self-sustaining service structure. The six service pillars proposed within the OSS respond directly to the main challenges faced by SMEs in the innovation process. These include identifying suitable EU funding opportunities, building strong consortia, improving technology readiness, accessing applied research infrastructure, complying with EU regulations, entering new markets, adopting digital and



AI solutions, and developing internal skills. Through this integrated approach, the OSS reduces fragmentation and provides SMEs with coordinated, personalised support.

The institutional anchoring of the OSS within TUIASI, combined with the partnership with Digital Innovation Zone and the wider SustainX network, strengthens the credibility and practical value of the model. It connects academic knowledge, applied research capacity, innovation support expertise and cross-border networks in a single operational framework. This creates benefits not only for SMEs, but also for universities, innovation intermediaries, regional stakeholders and European cooperation networks. Overall, the One Stop Shop provides a concrete pathway for sustaining and scaling the results of SustainX. It transforms the project's knowledge, networks and value chain work into a permanent support mechanism for SMEs. By combining sustainability, institutionalisation, financial independence and European replication, the OSS contributes directly to the long-term objective of strengthening innovation capacity, competitiveness and cross-border collaboration among SMEs in Romania and across Europe.

SustainX



<https://sustainx.digital-innovation.zone/>

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