Greene 4.0: a journey of discovery, collaboration and transformation

It began as an ambitious idea – what if we could help manufacturing SMEs not just talk about green and digital transition, but actually make it happen? Over three years, our international team traversed **seven countries**, hosted transnational workshops, met with SMEs, innovation intermediaries, pilot partners, and researchers, and together we uncovered insights that no theory alone could have provided.

This newsletter celebrates that journey – its challenges, inspirations, and what we leave behind for European manufacturers ready to change.

The heartbeat of Greene 4.0: listening to SMEs

Before building tools, we listened. In a large transnational survey, more than **400 manufacturing SMEs** from across Central Europe shared their realities – from cautious optimism about digitalisation to pressing concerns about costs, skills, and practical support. This wasn't just data; it was the pulse of industry telling us where the real bottlenecks and opportunities lie.

These voices shaped our roadmap and reminded the consortium that transformation isn't a one-size-fits-all journey – it is deeply contextual, human, and iterative.

From insight to practice: the User Acceptance Model

Early in the project, Greene 4.0 partners realised that SMEs needed more than inspiration – they needed a **framework to make sense of their green and digital readiness.**

Enter the **User Acceptance Model (UAM)** – a practical maturity assessment approach that helps companies evaluate where they are now, and where to focus next.

Rather than abstract indexes, the UAM guides SMEs through both **green** and **digital dimensions** – from operations and HR to strategy and enabling conditions – and helps translate assessment into actionable steps. Testing included workshops and pilot engagement with companies across partner regions.

To make the UAM truly accessible, the project also released user-friendly materials – brochures and a video tutorial – walking SMEs through the how and the why.

B2GreenHub: where the ecosystem comes alive

Perhaps the most visible outcome of our collective work is **B2GreenHub** – a digital ecosystem designed to bring coherence to what had been a scattered landscape of tools, services, networks, and opportunities.

Rather than being "just a website," B2GreenHub is a **living hub** where SMEs can:

- **explore tools and learning paths** relevant to green and digital transition

- **engage with innovation programmes and coaching**

- **connect with providers, demo centres, and peers**

- **find investment readiness support and templates**

It is our answer to the fragmentation that too often stalls progress – a place where inspiration meets action, and where solutions link seamlessly with real business needs.

B2GreenHub was officially **launched in late 2025** and continues to evolve as a resource ecosystem beyond the project's formal end.

Milestones and moments

The past three years were packed. A few snapshots from the journey:

- cross-border partner meetings in **Portorož, Budapest, and beyond**, where UAM, value chain pilots, and platform integration were refined together.

- a vibrant **Innovation Contest** spotlighting green and digital solutions from across Central Europe – pushing creativity and real-world application.

- transnational co-creation workshops designed to build new partnerships and value chains while weaving policy insights into practice.

- local SME sessions where green and digital challenges were discussed in everyday terms – practical, grounded, and immediately useful.

All of this added up to more than outputs – it shaped *a community*, a network of actors now connected across borders and sectors.

Looking Forward: What Comes Next

While the INTERREG phase of Greene 4.0 concludes, the **impact continues**:

- B2GreenHub remains open for all SMEs and innovation partners seeking support and collaboration.

- the insights from SME engagement and UAM add to a growing evidence base for green digital transformation policy and programmes in Central Europe.

- regional action plans and co-created tools pave the way for future transnational value chains built on sustainability and innovation.

"Thank you" to our Partners, SMEs and Supporters

From Austria to Poland, Slovenia to Hungary, Italy to Czechia and Germany – this was a truly European team effort. It was rich in perspectives, built on mutual curiosity, and fuelled by the belief that small and medium enterprises deserve both world-class tools and a supportive ecosystem to thrive in the green and digital era.

Here's to the next chapter – greener, smarter, and stronger together.