

Abstract: Competences for SMEs growth in innovative and eco-sustainable sectors. Gaps and policy options.

Europe is a global leader in eco-innovation and clean-tech sectors, with European companies representing the largest share of the global eco-industry market. Although in respectable fourth place in the rank of European countries, the Italian green and clean-tech industry still presents gaps and weaknesses. Many SMEs in these sectors still suffer a poor ability to manage technology, a lack of critical mass in financial resources, a limited digital culture, as well as weak research and networking capabilities. For these reasons, it is of a high strategic relevance to enhance SME innovation capabilities by creating infrastructures and services specifically conceived to support competitiveness in these fast-growing industries.

The project aims at drawing a set of potential avenues for gaining leadership in advanced technology sectors. The project will provide an analysis of gaps and opportunities for the consolidation of these sectors in Italy, as a basis for the design of a virtual eco-system aimed at fostering industry players' competitiveness, and leveraging their contribution to industrial performance. A core of a virtual Competency Centre for SMEs (CCS/LAB) will be developed by including information-disseminating activities, relational and collaborative practices, collaborative environments for the design and development of technological solutions, funding for technology, and information-sharing devices for processes and technologies.