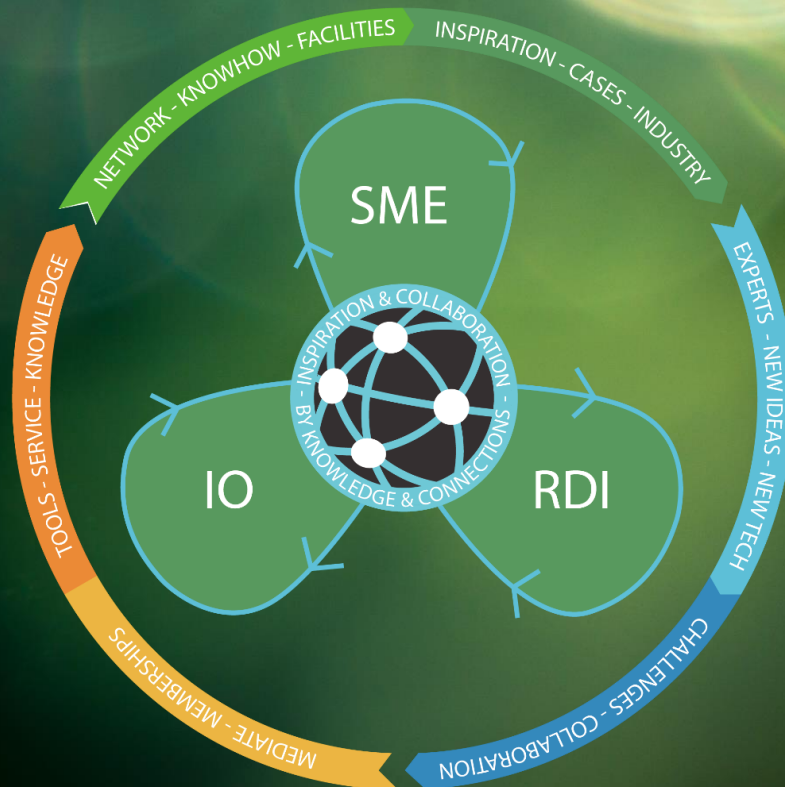


Lisbeth Jensen, VIA team, DK  
Stine Holm, VIA Team, DK

# THE EXTERNAL COLLABORATION MODEL

Introduction to the External Collaboration Model





## **ECOLABNET**

### **Network of service providers for eco-innovations in manufacturing SMEs**

Project number #R077

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VIA University College  
Birk Centerpark 5  
DK-7400 Herning

### **Writers**

Lisbeth Jensen, VIA University College  
Stine Holm, VIA University College

### **Research / development team**

- Lisbeth Jensen
- Katrin Meinert Maagaard

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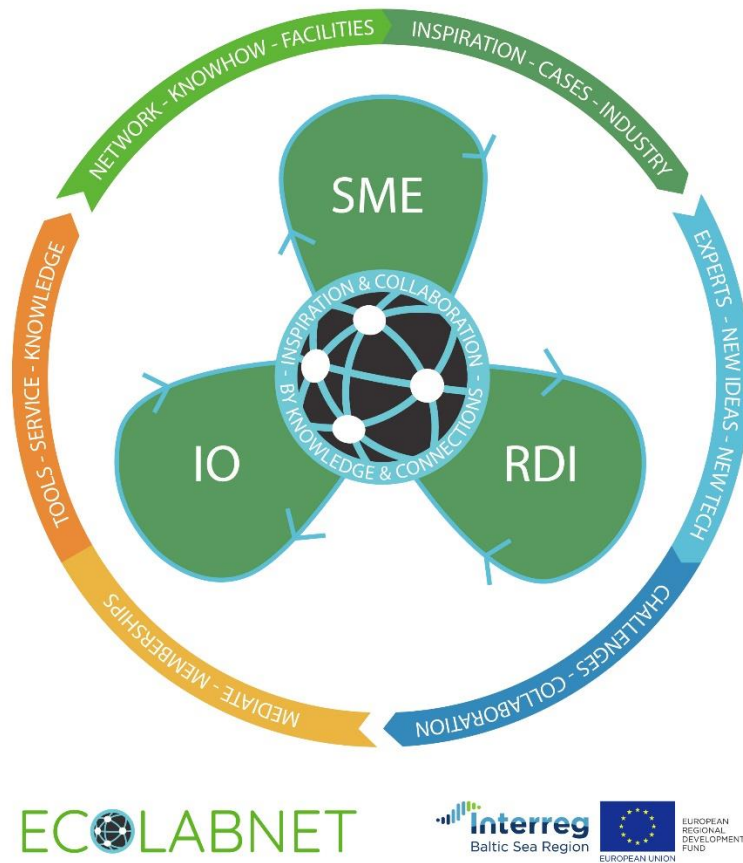
## ABSTRACT

*This model describes how the cooperation between Research, Development and Innovation Organisations (RDIs), intermediary organisations (IOs) and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) will function in the ECOLABNET. The collaboration model also describes how to inform the target groups about ECOLABNET. The model is developed based on the input from surveys that are analysed in the report “Manufacturing Companies and eco-innovation” and benchmarking other collaboration models. The aim of the model is to visualize the complex interaction between RDIs, IOs and SMEs.*

**Keywords:** Service design, Interaction, Collaboration

# THE EXTERNAL COLLABORATION MODEL

*This model describes how the cooperation between RDIs, intermediary organisations and SMEs will function in the ECOLABNET. The collaboration model also describes how to inform the target groups about ECOLABNET. The model is developed based on the input from surveys that are analysed in the report “Manufacturing Companies and eco-innovation” and benchmarking other collaboration models. The aim of the model is to visualize the complex interaction between RDIs, IOs and SMEs.*



*Model 1: The External Collaboration Model*

# 1. THE INTERACTION IN THE EXTERNAL COLLABORATION MODEL IN PRACTISE

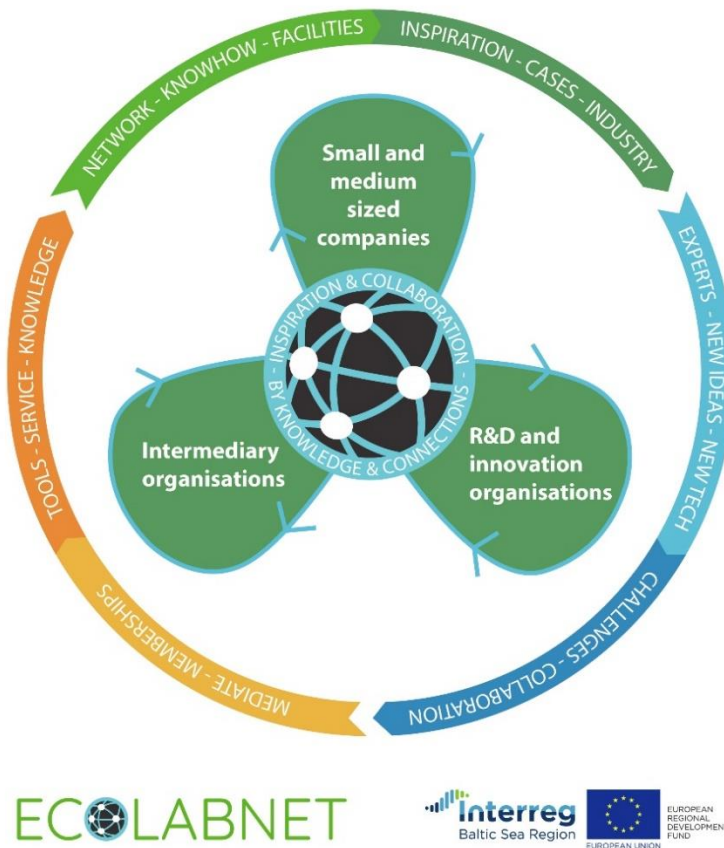
The collaboration model illustrates the complex system of collaboration between Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) actors, Intermediary Organisations (IOs) and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

The model illustrates how to inform the target groups about ECOLABNET, and how to establish and carry out collaborative projects to mutual benefit. ECOLABNET shares knowledge about eco-innovation and how to find expertise, facilities and funding.

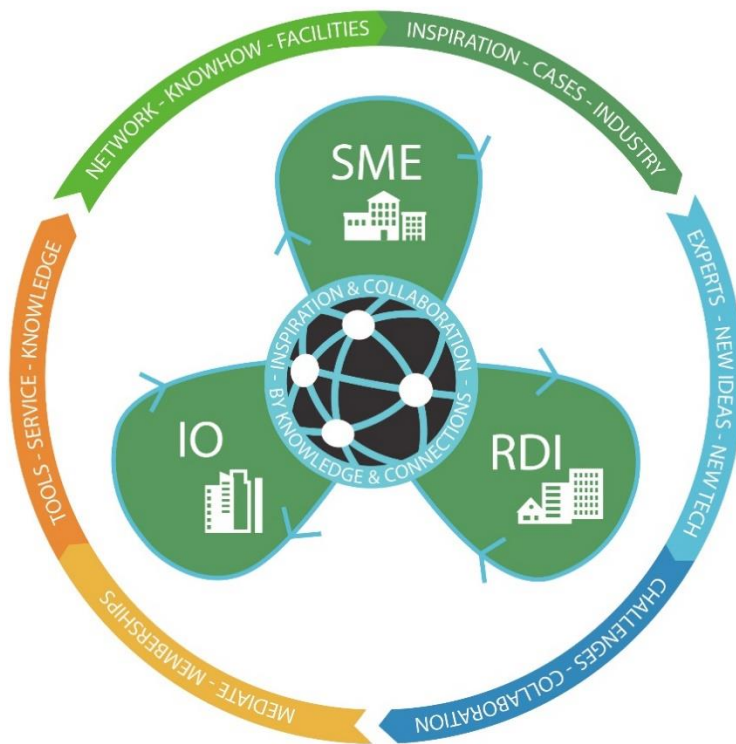
Intermediary Organisations and RDIs inform about ECOLABNET and invite their SME contacts to register in the ECOLABNET database. After the registration in the ECOLABNET database, the communication about eco-innovation takes place in ECOLABNET's information channels (LinkedIn, Webpage etc.). Invitation to network arrangements and conferences can be done through ECOLABNET. Furthermore, invitations to collaborate in projects and handling specific challenges can be carried out in ECOLABNET.

The External Collaboration Model can be used as a shared collaboration between all collaborative countries in ECOLABNET, as well as on regional, national and international level.

The model is illustrated in 3 different text-versions, depending on the further use of them.



*Model 2: The External Collaboration Model – full text*



ECOLABNET

Interreg  
Baltic Sea Region



*Model 3: The External Collaboration Model – short text & symbol*



## 2. THE ENGINE OF THE MODEL - INSPIRATION AND COOPERATION BY KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTIONS



### *Model 4: The External Collaboration Model – centre*

The ECOLABNET “Engine” handles the incoming challenges, and helps to match and connect experts with project partners.

All project partners contribute with their knowledge and facilities, and gain benefit from the shared knowledge. Specific agreements on how the collaborative projects will be structured, and how gained knowledge can be used afterwards, will be agreed upon in a contract between the participating partners.

“The Engine” is the “back office” of ECOLABNET for serving SMEs in a more efficient way. It creates access to expertise and facilities related to eco-innovation. SMEs, RDIs and IOs register in the digital database.

The RDIs and intermediary organisations can register their services and expertise in the ECOLABNET database, and specify a challenge that they seek partners to collaborate on. SMEs can register their specific challenge and idea for a project in the digital database, and ECOLABNET will help combine experts and partners to help the SMEs with their challenges.

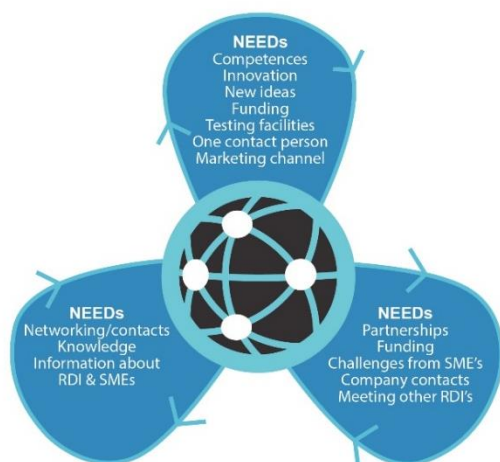
## 3. THE PROPELLER - NEEDS AND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ACTORS IN ECOLABNET

The External Collaboration Model illustrates the external collaboration between all partners in ECOLABNET, but underneath the models is an understanding of what each actor needs and how they contribute. It can be illustrated with layers of needs and contributions while ECOLABNET acts as a connection point.

Information on the needs of the SMEs and what each partner can contribute with is gathered through a survey on SME needs, interviews and ECOLABNET partners’ workshop, from the earlier stages of developing ECOLABNET.



### 3.1 The first layer: Need



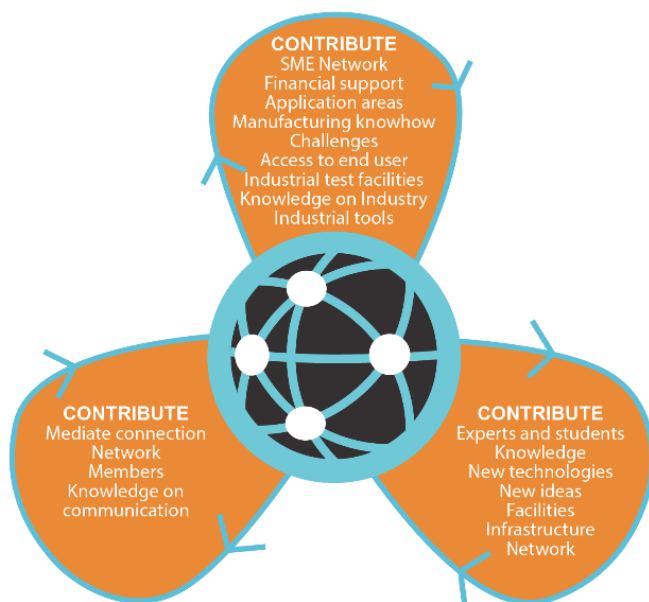
The first layer of the model illustrates the needs of each partner group in eco-innovation. All partner groups agree that they need network and partnership to meet the needs and this collaboration can help fulfil this by other partners in the network. Each partner can contact ECOLABNET to seek the partner they need. The project and collaboration may need additional funding to cover the costs of external expertise. The needs mentioned in the wings of the propeller illustrate the main needs of the partner groups.

ECOLABNET



*Model 5: The External Collaboration Model – first layer/ Need*

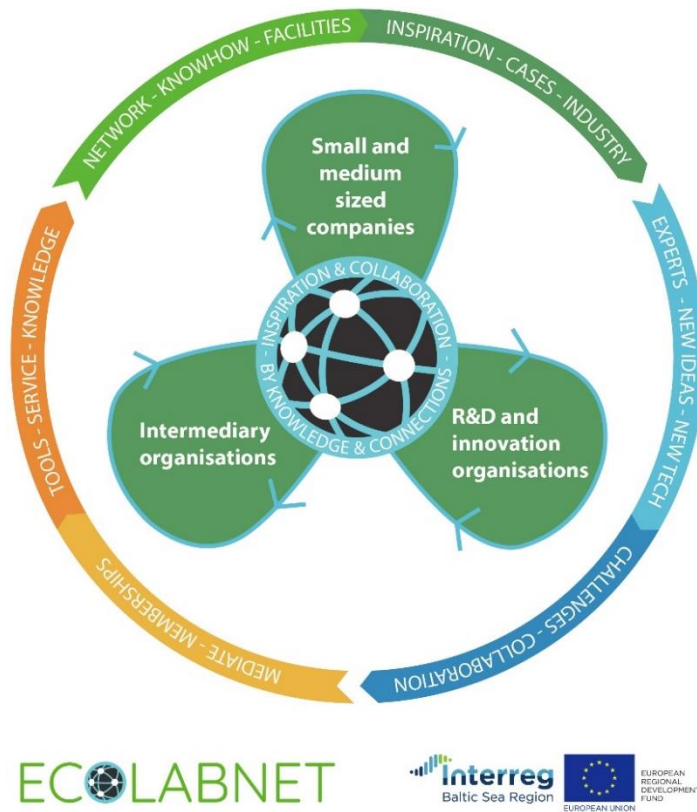
### 3.2 The second layer: Contribute



The second layer describes what each partner group contributes to ECOLABNET. Typically, contribution describes the strengths of the partner and their key competences and activities. There is more variation between what each partner group contributes with. SMEs mainly contribute with their manufacturing know-how and production facilities. They can also provide challenges or cases to the RDIs' researchers, experts and students as well as provide collaboration with end-users. The RDIs contribute with e.g. experts, knowledge and new technologies while intermediary organisations contribute with their knowledge on communication and mediate the connection between potential users of ECOLABNET.

*Model 6: The External Collaboration Model – second layer/ Contribute*

### 3.3 ECOLABNET External Collaboration Model



The final layer is what ECOLABNET provides to each partner group. ECOLABNET is a connection point and an enabler for collaboration. It creates the link between challenges and solutions, information needs and knowledge as well as inspiration for eco-innovation. Therefore, the platform for networking is important.

The purpose of ECOLABNET is to bring RDIs, SMEs and IOs together and collaborate and help SMEs with ECO-innovation. In addition, the purpose is to gain knowledge and help the ECO-innovation become more transnational. This model shows the ideal way of helping each other.

*Model 7: The External Collaboration Model – final*

## 4. THE CIRCLE – BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION

The propeller illustrates energy, dynamic and circular movements, and that the eco-innovation, eco-information and eco-knowledge will flow – as wind – around each part of the propeller. The circle around highlight some of the collaborative words that ECOLABNET combine in this external collaboration.

### 4.1 Intermediary Organisations

MEDIATE - MEMBERSHIPS

TOOLS - SERVICE - KNOWLEDGE

Intermediary organisations (IOs) have knowledge of communication with SMEs through their network and membership, they know the challenges and needs of SMEs. IOs will mediate the contact to SMEs, since they have the regular contact to them. IO personnel often connect with SMEs through their membership of the IOs, and they can use this connection to invite SMEs to ECOLABNET. IOs can help apply for funding to eco-innovative projects.

The IOs can through collaboration in ECOLABNET expand their network and knowledge. The collaboration in ECOLABNET can provide IOs with more tools to serve SMEs in eco-innovation.

### 4.2 Research, Development and Innovation Organisations

EXPERTS - NEW IDEAS - NEW TECH

CHALLENGES - COLLABORATION

Research, development and Innovation actors (RDIs) will through ECOLABNET provide experts in specific fields of knowledge within eco-innovation, provide new ideas for eco-innovation within products, services and business solutions. They also provide knowledge on new technologies and new materials. In projects they contribute with knowledge and students that could be future employees for the companies. Together in ECOLABNET they create solutions.

RDIs will through SMEs collaboration in ECOLABNET get challenges and cases to solve, and the possibility to collaborate with other experts and IOs to build up better knowledge in eco-innovation and expand the network.

RDIs need contact to companies and possible cases for developing new knowledge and access to industry facilities to help develop new solutions.

### 4.3 Small & Medium sized Companies

#### INSPIRATION - CASES - INDUSTRY

#### NETWORK - KNOWHOW - FACILITIES

The small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) can provide the collaboration with cases, industry knowledge, inspiration and in specific cases also industrial tools and industry test facilities. Companies have both the real cases, challenges and good examples that could lead to eco-innovative projects and access to the end-users and knowledge of the market.

In return, the SMEs will through ECOLABNET have easy access to networks for RDIs, IOs and other experts that can help them with eco-innovation and new ideas. They have access to knowledge in eco-innovation and in some cases specific facilities to develop or test. In ECOLABNET, SMEs have an access point to collaboration and a network to help combine the right experts and partners in eco-innovative projects.

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