

Integrating Sustainability Into SPIRE Project Management

From kick-off to final assessments



Context – In collaborative projects it is common for the sustainability assessment to be prioritised only towards the end of the project, when most of the data is available from case studies. This approach can result in sustainability just being a reporting exercise, missing the opportunity to influence decision-making as the project progresses.

Three Coordination and Support Action SPIRE projects ([STYLE](#), [SAMT](#) and [MEASURE](#)) reviewed sustainability assessments, in the context of SPIRE industries, and produced the following collated recommendations for *integrating* sustainability into SPIRE projects.

Recommendations

- **Define a benchmark** and communicate clearly the baseline against which the results have been assessed.
- Consider different aspects and dimensions of sustainability (environmental, economic **and social**). Inclusion of positive aspects and benefits within the assessments is encouraged.
- Apply life cycle based assessment methods and cover both upstream and downstream processes, where relevant to the system boundaries.
- Refer to accepted and well-known methods and indicators, and apply standardized methods and indicators and vocabulary, when available.
- Address uncertainty related to the applied methods, modelling choices and data, taking into

account the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of the assessed technology.

- Report transparently the applied **methods, functional unit, system boundaries, data sources, assumptions** and **limitations** of the study.

Plan to involve all the consortium in defining the benchmark and scope of the evaluation. Schedule time in the kick-off meeting, then at each period review, to at least discuss the expected qualitative impacts of your project. e.g. you might save resources, but use more energy.

Use the sustainability evaluation to help drive the project management. What claims do you need to prove? Which hotspots may make the innovation undesirable for exploitation? What data do you need to make the assessment more accurate?

A new SPIRE Sustainability Practitioners Group has also been launched to help share learning and develop methods across SPIRE projects. Project partners (from live, proposed, or past projects) can join the LinkedIn group here:

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12143240>

For more guidance on enhancing the impact of SPIRE projects, see: www.spire2030.eu/spring



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