



Ecology Awareness of Sustainable Green Development: Collaboration of  
Universities and Local Actors

2023-1-SK01-KA220-HED-000161639

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW REPORT

TÜRKIYE



Co-funded by  
the European Union



UNIRI



# FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW REPORT



## FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW OBJECTIVES

The data collection and content development processes for ECOUNTRY GUIDE AND ACTION PLAN include three focus group interviews and a comparative analysis based on the country-based legal practices regarding environmental protection and SGD.

The first leg of the data collection process comprises Focus Group Interviews with:

- University employees who work with external stakeholders (NGOs, local authorities) daily in researching and disseminating knowledge on environmental issues
- External stakeholders who cooperate with project team members
- Undergraduate students to identify areas where the cooperation between universities and external stakeholders, including NGOs and local authorities, can be improved and to determine the expectations from universities about the forms and content

Focusing on organising 3 focus group interviews with HEI employees, NGO and local authority representatives and students the data will be collected regarding the inquiry about what should universities do and how should they take action to contribute to more interactions with other local actors to ensure sustainable green development.



# WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

## Focus Group Interviews:

- **Welcome and introductions:** Focus Group Moderators briefly introduce the project, focus group interview objectives, and participants.
- **Presentations:** FGI moderators deliver brief presentations on relevant topics as follows:
  - o A better understanding of the expectations of stakeholders in relation to universities' collaborations with local actors.
  - o Insight into the motivations and barriers to university local actor collaborations in environmental protection and sustainability activities, and the potential strategies for increasing cooperation.
  - o University student engagement in local actors' SGD activities.
- **Brainstorming and group discussions:** Participants encourage participants for focused discussions based on prepared questions.
- **Data provision:** Participants capture key insights and ideas from discussions using designated note-takers, voice recorders, or collaborative online tools.
- **Wrap-up and feedback:** Participants summarize key points and answer questions.

## Post-FGI:

- **Data analysis and report writing:** Each partner institution uses the pre-defined templates to prepare a FGI report summarizing discussions, findings, and insights.
- **Dissemination**
- Share FGI reports internally and externally through project website, publications.

# EXPECTED FGI OUTCOMES

## **Process-Oriented Outcomes:**

Focus on the workshop experience itself and how it facilitates interaction and learning:

- Facilitating the dynamics of discussions within groups
- Creating a safe space for open communication
- Highlighting successful initiatives and approaches already implemented by different stakeholders
- Revealing barriers to university local actor collaborations and students' engagement within the scope of SGD.

## **Results-Oriented Outcomes:**

Focus on the tangible outputs and impacts of the workshop:

- Generating 3 detailed FGI reports containing data analysis, key findings, and actionable recommendations for university and local actors collaborations in each partner country
- Fostering ongoing communication and exchange of best practices between stakeholder groups through networking platforms or joint projects
- Influencing local policies or university regulations to incorporate collaborations
- Encouraging broader community participation in sustainable green development efforts
- Contributing to the literature to provide scientific data and inspire further research.



# WORKSHOP QUESTIONS

## Discussion threads with Local Actors (Including NGOs, municipalities, city councils, business communities)

1. What is your organisation's experience to date in working with universities?
  - *Do you cooperate with the university?*
  - *Since when has there been cooperation? Who initiated it?*
  - *What are the thematic areas of cooperation? Did it concern climate and environmental policy?*
  - *What were the forms of this cooperation?*
  - *Is cooperation formalised?*
2. Identified benefits and added value from this collaboration:
  - *Does such cooperation produce results / is it effective?*
  - *What are the key benefits of such cooperation?*
  - *Could these benefits be greater? How do you assess this?*
  - *What are the biggest costs (problems) of the cooperation undertaken?*
3. Barriers identified:
  - *What are the most important barriers to cooperation? What are these barriers (legal, organisational, administrative, mental)?*
  - *How do you manage to overcome these barriers?*
  - *Do the barriers motivate you to improve it, or to stop cooperation?*
  - *How do you avoid these barriers? Can you share your experiences in this regard?*
4. Desired future directions:
  - *If your cooperation with the university has not taken place so far, what are your expectations regarding the scope and forms of cooperation?*
  - *Which of the following areas of cooperation will be most important in the future (ask participants to rank and justify their prioritisation):*
    - o *smart cities*
    - o *sustainable finance*
    - o *green economy*
    - o *green agriculture*
    - o *healthy cities*
    - o *other*
5. Closing the discussion – *ask two questions to wrap up the discussion:*
  - *Are universities still needed for environmental protection? To what extent and in what area?*
  - *What knowledge and competences can modern universities teach?*

# DATA ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

## FGI Process and the Data Collected

### FGI with Local Actors

FGI Date: 31.03.2025 (Date of completion of focus group discussions with NGO)

Venue: Online

Online/Face to Face/Hybrid: Online (with e-mail)

Number of Participants: 20

Type of Organisation: Environmental Association (11) City Council (2) Municipality ( ) Local Public Administrations (7) Chamber of commerce and industry Other ( )

### Findings:

#### Summary Table

Participants (NGOs)	Focus Points	Prominent Themes
<b>Çanakkale Kent Şurası Derneği</b>	Collaboration with universities and public institutions; capacity building	Willingness for collaboration, bureaucratic barriers, need for student volunteers
<b>Çanakkale Kültür Tarih Çevre ve Doğa Derneği</b>	Academic support for environmental initiatives	Desire for academic knowledge, minimal current collaboration
<b>Çanakkale Morpati Derneği</b>	Volunteer support, academic expertise from agriculture/veterinary faculties	Lack of current collaboration, interest in academic support
<b>Çanakkale Üniversiteliler ve Kent İşbirliği Şurası Derneği</b>	Formalized university collaboration via protocols	Existing protocols, academic knowledge sharing, bureaucratic challenges
<b>Gelibolu Tarih ve Çevre Koruma Derneği</b>	Student and academic involvement in local projects	Strong willingness, past student involvement, need for better communication

<b>İda Dayanışma Derneği</b>	Academic support for environmental and social issues	Importance of academic reports, societal conflicts as barriers
<b>Troya Genç Çevre Derneği</b>	Collaboration challenges with local university	Lack of communication channels, successful external university collaborations
<b>Çanakkale Çevre ve Doğa Derneği</b>	Volunteer-driven environmental initiatives	Importance of student volunteers, no current collaboration
<b>Lapseki Çevre Koruma Üretim ve Dayanışma Derneği</b>	Academic knowledge dissemination to the public	No current collaboration, closed university communication channels
<b>Bozcaada Doğayı Koruma Kültür ve Sanat Derneği</b>	Academic publications and knowledge sharing	Importance of academic support, logistical barriers (travel, time)
<b>Çan Çevre Derneği</b>	Joint projects and knowledge sharing	Willingness for collaboration, university prejudices as barriers
<b>Çanakkale Atıkhisar Barajı Çevre Koruma ve Yürüyüş Derneği</b>	Project-based collaboration	No current collaboration, bureaucracy as a minor barrier
<b>Çanakkale Çevre ve Doğa Dernekleri Federasyonu</b>	Formalized collaboration via protocols	Academic knowledge, volunteer support, academic reluctance as a barrier
<b>Çanakkale Çevre ve Sit Alanlarını Koruma Derneği</b>	Environmental impact analyses with academic support	Existing collaborations, financial challenges mitigated by sponsors
<b>Çanakkale İda Dağı Doğal Çevreyi Koruma Derneği</b>	Collaboration through federation	Volunteer and academic support, no significant barriers
<b>Kent Konseyi-1</b>	Student-focused collaboration	Need for frequent meetings, existing university representation
<b>Kent Konseyi-2</b>	Academic and student involvement in projects	Academic support, communication challenges
<b>Kale Gençlik Derneği (Hüseyin Çoban)</b>	Youth engagement, volunteer support	Strong collaboration history, bureaucratic and networking challenges
<b>You and Woman (Gülsüm Çisem Özer)</b>	Women/children's rights, environmental justice	Need for academic and volunteer support, bureaucratic hurdles
<b>BISHAK Derneği (Çiğdem Hanım)</b>	Animal welfare, environmental collaboration	Volunteer support, bureaucratic and structural challenges

#### **Prominent Themes:**

*Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.*

- **Willingness for Collaboration:** Nearly all NGOs expressed eagerness to collaborate with universities, particularly for academic support and student volunteers.
- **Limited Current Collaboration:** Many NGOs reported no or minimal existing partnerships with Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, except for a few with formalized protocols.
- **Academic and Volunteer Support:** Key benefits include academic knowledge sharing, volunteer contributions from students, and capacity building.
- **Bureaucratic and Communication Barriers:** Bureaucracy, lack of clear communication channels, and academic reluctance were frequently cited as obstacles.
- **Networking Needs:** A recurring call for a dedicated university-NGO networking platform or unit to streamline collaboration.
- **Local and Environmental Focus:** Interest in projects addressing local environmental issues (e.g., Kaz Mountains, waste management) and social challenges (e.g., women/children's rights, animal welfare).

#### Frequently Used Phrases:

- Collaboration: "iş birliği," "protokol," "ortak projeler," "network."
- Benefits: "gönüllü desteği," "akademik bilgi paylaşımı," "kapasite geliştirme."
- Barriers: "bürokrasi," "iletişim eksikliği," "önyargı," "akademisyen gönülsüzlüğü."
- Future Directions: "iletişim ağı," "ortak toplantılar," "yerel projeler."

#### 1. Organisations' experience in working with universities?

**Summary:** Most NGOs expressed a strong willingness to collaborate with Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, but actual experiences are limited. Some NGOs have formalized partnerships (e.g., via protocols), while others reported no current collaboration. Experiences include joint projects, academic support for environmental analyses, and student volunteer involvement, but many NGOs noted a lack of consistent engagement.

#### Analysis:

- **Willingness and Current Collaborations:** Nearly all NGOs affirmed their eagerness to work with universities. Çanakkale Üniversiteliler ve Kent İşbirliği Şurası Derneği and Çanakkale Çevre ve Doğa Dernekleri Federasyonu have formal protocols for joint publications and facility sharing. Çanakkale Çevre ve Sit Alanlarını Koruma Derneği collaborates on environmental impact analyses, stating, "We've had collaborations and continue to do so." Gelibolu Tarih ve Çevre Koruma Derneği reported a positive experience, noting, "Two years ago, three students from Gelibolu Vocational School joined our projects and made significant contributions." Kale Gençlik Derneği (Hüseyin Çoban) participated in the university's VolunFest, describing it as "a great opportunity to connect with student clubs." However, NGOs like Çanakkale Morpati, Lapseki Çevre Koruma, and Troya Genç Çevre reported no current collaborations, with the latter stating, "We want to work with the university, but it remains only verbal."
- **Types of Activities:** Desired activities include joint projects, academic support, and volunteer-driven initiatives. İda Dayanışma Derneği emphasized academic support in fields like geography, climate, and urban planning, stating, "We need academic expertise for reports and legal grounding." Çanakkale Morpati expressed interest in agricultural and veterinary faculty

support, while You and Woman (Gülsüm Çisem Özer) focused on environmental justice projects, saying, “We participate in panels to address how environmental issues affect vulnerable groups.”

- **Challenges in Engagement:** Many NGOs highlighted a gap between willingness and action. Troya Genç Çevre Derneği noted successful collaborations with other universities (e.g., Sakarya, Bilgi) but struggled locally, stating, “We face issues with contact points at our local university.” Çanakkale Çevre ve Doğa Derneği mentioned that their federation collaborates, but the association itself lacks direct university ties.

**Reporting:** NGOs in Çanakkale are highly motivated to collaborate with Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, but their experiences are varied. Some, like Çanakkale Üniversiteliler ve Kent İşbirliği Şurası and Çanakkale Çevre ve Sit Alanlarını Koruma Derneği, have formalized partnerships involving joint publications and environmental analyses. Others, such as Gelibolu Tarih ve Çevre Koruma and Kale Gençlik, have engaged in student-driven projects like VolunFest. However, many NGOs, including Çanakkale Morpati and Lapseki Çevre Koruma, report no current collaborations due to communication gaps. Desired activities include academic support, volunteer involvement, and local environmental projects. To enhance engagement, the university should establish clear communication channels and promote collaborative opportunities.

## 2. Identified benefits and added value from this collaboration

**Summary:** NGOs identified significant benefits from university collaboration, including academic knowledge sharing, volunteer support from students, capacity building, and access to university resources (e.g., facilities, publications). These collaborations enhance NGOs’ credibility, outreach, and project impact. However, financial and logistical costs, such as travel or event expenses, pose challenges.

### **Analysis:**

- **Academic Knowledge Sharing:** NGOs value universities’ expertise. İda Dayanışma Derneği noted, “Academic reports and articles provide legal grounding for our work.” Bozcaada Doğayı Koruma Kültür ve Sanat Derneği, led by a retired academic, emphasized, “University publications are crucial for improving quality of life.” Çanakkale Kültür Tarih Çevre ve Doğa Derneği stated, “Academic support is vital for our environmental initiatives.”
- **Volunteer Support:** Student volunteers are a key asset. Çanakkale Kent Şurası Derneği highlighted, “Students are a critical volunteer source, strengthening our capacity.” Çanakkale Çevre ve Doğa Derneği added, “Students bring dynamism to our aging population.” Kale Gençlik Derneği (Hüseyin Çoban) described using psychology students for a camp, stating, “We select students from relevant departments for specific tasks.” BISHAK Derneği (Çiğdem Hanım) noted, “Students raised funds for dog food, creating a meaningful impact.”
- **Capacity Building and Resources:** Collaborations enhance NGOs’ organizational strength. Çanakkale Üniversiteliler ve Kent İşbirliği Şurası reported benefits like “publication support, facility sharing, and policy document creation.” You and Woman (Gülsüm Çisem Özer) emphasized, “Academic support helps us build capacity, while we provide field experience to

academics.” Çanakkale Çevre ve Doğa Dernekleri Federasyonu noted that collaborations amplify project impact through shared resources.

- **Costs and Challenges:** Financial and logistical costs were mentioned. İda Dayanışma covered travel and accommodation for external academics, stating, “We pay for experts’ expenses without fees.” Bozcaada Doğayı Koruma highlighted university funding constraints, noting, “Research budgets are limited, but sponsorships can help.” Çanakkale Üniversiteler ve Kent İşbirliği Şurası acknowledged, “Costs complicate processes, but local support mitigates this.”

**Reporting:** Collaboration with universities offers NGOs substantial benefits, including access to academic expertise, student volunteers, and university resources, which enhance capacity, credibility, and project impact. Academic knowledge supports legal and scientific grounding, as seen with İda Dayanışma and Bozcaada Doğayı Koruma. Student volunteers, valued by Çanakkale Kent Şurası and BISHAK, provide dynamism and manpower. Facility sharing and publication support, noted by Çanakkale Üniversiteler ve Kent İşbirliği Şurası, strengthen organizational capabilities. However, financial costs (e.g., travel, events) and logistical challenges (e.g., limited university budgets) pose hurdles, often mitigated by local support or sponsorships. Expanding volunteer programs and academic partnerships can maximize these benefits.

### 3. Barriers identified

**Summary:** Key barriers to NGO-university collaboration include bureaucratic processes, communication gaps, academic reluctance, university prejudices, and logistical challenges (e.g., travel, time constraints). Many NGOs reported difficulties accessing the university or sustaining engagement, with some citing a lack of a dedicated networking platform.

#### Analysis:

- **Bureaucratic Processes:** Bureaucracy was a common obstacle. Çanakkale Kent Şurası noted, “Bureaucratic issues arise periodically.” Kale Gençlik Derneği (Hüseyin Çoban) shared, “We were sent from one office to another; bureaucratic processes delayed our project.” Çanakkale Atıkhisar Barajı Çevre Koruma stated, “Bureaucracy is the only barrier, but it’s manageable.”
- **Communication Gaps:** Lack of clear communication channels hindered collaboration. Lapseki Çevre Koruma complained, “The university’s communication channels are closed; verbal promises don’t follow through.” Troya Genç Çevre Derneği stated, “We face contact point issues with our local university, unlike other universities.” Kent Konseyi-2 added, “We don’t know who to reach for collaboration.”
- **Academic Reluctance:** Some NGOs reported academics’ lack of engagement. Çanakkale Çevre ve Doğa Dernekleri Federasyonu noted, “The main difficulty is academics’ reluctance to volunteer.” Çanakkale Üniversiteler ve Kent İşbirliği Şurası echoed, “Academics’ limited participation disrupts processes.”
- **University Prejudices:** Perceived biases affected collaboration. Çan Çevre Derneği stated, “The university has prejudices against some NGOs, complicating communication.” İda Dayanışma noted, “Our societal advocacy creates hesitation among academics.”
- **Logistical Challenges:** Travel and time constraints were significant for remote NGOs. Bozcaada Doğayı Koruma explained, “Travel to Bozcaada is challenging for academics, and sustained support is difficult.” You and Woman (Gülsüm Çisem Özer) highlighted student club

bureaucracy, stating, “Student clubs face bureaucratic hurdles when collaborating with NGOs.”

**Reporting:** NGO-university collaboration faces barriers such as bureaucratic processes, communication gaps, academic reluctance, university prejudices, and logistical challenges. Bureaucracy, as noted by Çanakkale Kent Şurası and Kale Gençlik, delays projects, while communication issues, reported by Lapseki Çevre Koruma and Troya Genç Çevre, hinder access to the university. Academic reluctance, cited by Çanakkale Çevre ve Doğa Dernekleri Federasyonu, limits engagement, and prejudices, mentioned by Çan Çevre, create mistrust. Logistical issues, particularly for remote NGOs like Bozcaada Doğayı Koruma, complicate sustained collaboration. Establishing a dedicated university-NGO liaison unit and reducing bureaucratic hurdles can address these challenges.

#### **4. Desired future directions on cooperation with University**

**Summary:** NGOs desire stronger, formalized university collaborations through dedicated communication platforms, increased academic and student involvement, and joint projects addressing local environmental and social issues. Suggestions include creating a university-NGO liaison office, frequent joint meetings, and leveraging local resources to overcome funding constraints.

##### **Analysis:**

- **Dedicated Communication Platforms:** NGOs emphasized the need for a networking unit. Kale Gençlik Derneği (Hüseyin Çoban) proposed, “A regular communication platform would connect NGOs with academics.” You and Woman (Gülsüm Çisem Özer) supported, “A network is crucial for capacity building and collaboration.” Gelibolu Tarih ve Çevre Koruma suggested, “A communication unit would speed up processes.”
- **Increased Academic and Student Involvement:** NGOs sought greater engagement. Çanakkale Morpati requested, “Support from agriculture and veterinary faculties would strengthen our projects.” Kent Konseyi-1 stated, “We want more student involvement in our initiatives.” Çanakkale Çevre ve Doğa Dernekleri Federasyonu urged, “Academics need to be more willing to volunteer.”
- **Joint Projects on Local Issues:** NGOs proposed projects addressing local challenges. İda Dayanışma highlighted, “Collaboration on climate, urban planning, and energy issues would benefit our community.” Çanakkale Çevre ve Sit Alanlarını Koruma focused on environmental impact analyses, while BISHAK Derneği (Çiğdem Hanım) emphasized animal welfare projects, noting, “Students’ fundraising for dog food was impactful.”
- **Leveraging Local Resources:** NGOs suggested local funding to overcome financial barriers. You and Woman noted, “Local resources in Biga can support joint events.” Bozcaada Doğayı Koruma added, “High-value projects can attract sponsorships to address funding issues.”
- **Reducing Bureaucracy:** A streamlined process was a common request. Çanakkale Üniversiteliler ve Kent İşbirliği Şurası proposed, “A single contact point would simplify collaboration.” Kale Gençlik suggested, “A liaison office could reduce bureaucratic delays.”

**Reporting:** NGOs envision a future with robust university collaboration through dedicated communication platforms, increased academic and student involvement, and joint projects addressing local environmental and social issues. A university-NGO liaison office, as proposed by Kale Gençlik and You and Woman, would streamline communication and reduce bureaucracy. Greater academic engagement, requested by Çanakkale Morpati and Çanakkale Çevre ve Doğa Dernekleri Federasyonu, and student participation, emphasized by Kent Konseyi-1, would enhance project impact. Local resource utilization, suggested by You and Woman, and sponsorships, noted by Bozcaada Doğayı Koruma, can address funding challenges. By implementing these directions, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University can foster impactful partnerships and advance sustainable development goals.

## **Confidential Annexes (Uploaded to the Archive Folder)**

- 1- Participant List
- 2- Presentation/s
- 3- If possible, video records
- 4- Screenshots (showing the number of participants)
- 5- Efficient practices that the participants offered
- 6- Transcription records (in English)