# Chapter 3 Development Process

This chapter describes how we will come to know the users who will use the P.A.C.E (Personal Accounting Climate Economics) platform. The research stage involved sample identification, interviews and focus group discussions, the collection of meaningful insights and the application of these in the development of two distinct personas. These observations formed the basis of user-focused design, which determines the organization and functionality of the platform.

## 3.1 Selecting a Sample Group

Maynooth University was selected as the sample group for this project because it is actively involved in sustainability efforts. Maynooth is a great place to do research on sustainability platforms because of its Green Campus programs and the school's commitment to environmentally friendly practices. The university's students come from a wide range of academic and cultural backgrounds, which makes it easier to understand different points of view on sustainability.

Even though these programs are available, many Maynooth students don't know how to use the platforms that let them actively support sustainability goals. This project was started to fill this need: there was no central, engaging, and easy-to-use platform where people and groups could take actions that are measurable, visible, and long-lasting.

## **3.2 Interview with the Head of Green Campus**

An in-person **semi-structured interview** was conducted with the **head of the Green Campus Initiative** at Maynooth University on **Wednesday, 20th November at 11:00 AM** in the **History Department, Rhetoric Building, 2nd floor.** The session lasted approximately **45 minutes**.

#### Interview Questions Asked:

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| 1 | What challenges do organizations face in implementing sustainability goals? |
| 2 | What strategies can be adopted to overcome these challenges and improve sustainability efforts? |
| 3 | What strategies can be adopted to overcome these challenges and improve sustainability efforts? |
| 4 | What services can be offered to enhance sustainability? If such services already exist, what are their weaknesses? |
| 5 | Should organizations be rewarded for sustainability efforts, and if so, how can these rewards be structured? |

During this 45-minute conversation, it became clear that many companies want to help the environment, but they don't always have the right tools to measure, track, and show off their efforts. Leader of Green campus said that the platforms that are already out there are often too complicated or don't give useful, actionable feedback, which makes people less likely to use them regularly. One big problem that was found was that there wasn't a single system that could help both individuals and groups work towards sustainability goals. Moreover, the interviewee stressed how important recognition and rewards are, saying that systems based on incentives are very good at getting people to keep participating. Another important point was the need for data-driven dashboards that let organization’s keep track of their progress, measure their impact, and show off their successes in a clear and organized way. These answers were very important in deciding what features to include for businesses on the P.A.C.E. platform.

## **3.3 Focus Group Research**

A focus group was conducted on **17th December 2024 at 3:30 PM** in the **Eolas Building Conference Room** at Maynooth University. The group consisted of **17 participants** (8 males and 9 females), aged between **19 and 46**, representing both **students and members of the general public**.

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| 1 | If given an opportunity, would you be willing to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? |
| 2 | Would you want to see the impact of your contribution? If so, how? |
| 3 | Would you prefer to receive a reward or recognition for your sustainable behavior? |
| 4 | What barriers are preventing you from acting more sustainably? |
| 5 | Have you tried adopting sustainable habits before? What worked or didn’t work? |
| 6 | Which areas of your life would you like to make more sustainable? |
| 7 | What would attract you to use a digital service for sustainability action? |

Focus Group Questions Asked:

It gave an important information that helped to shape the user-facing side of the platform. When asked if they wanted to help with sustainability goals, most said they did, but they didn't know where or how to start because there wasn't a clear, easy-to-use platform. None of the participants expected to get anything in return, but they said that badges, ranks, or public recognition would be a good way to motivate them. Simplicity was a common theme. Many people said they didn't like complicated website navigation and preferred a clean, simple design with one button for each main action. Another important finding was that people need a clear way to see how they are doing and how their work compares to that of others, such as through leaderboards. The group was very interested in the idea of combining usability, visual feedback, and the ability to make a positive social impact. These results directly influenced the creation of the platform's user dashboard, rewards system, and leaderboard feature.

## 3.4 Key Insights and Need for Two Distinct Personas

The interview and the focus group both showed that people want to do things that are good for the environment, but they don't always know how to do it or where to go. People need simple, easy-to-use interfaces that let them see how they're doing, get feedback, and feel like their small actions are making a difference. On the other hand, businesses need more than just user interfaces. They need strong tools to keep track of their overall impact, manage users, and make data-driven ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) reports. Because of this difference, the platform's functions were split into two parts: one for users and one for organizations. The user side is meant to make it as easy as possible for people to help the environment, and the organization side is meant to keep track of progress, analytics, and reporting. All of these ideas helped shape the design phase and the next step, which was making user personas and design routes.