



# D3.6 – SUPER-HEERO REWARD STRATEGIES

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.1.1.1	TABLE EXAMPLE .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1	Purpose of the document .....	5
2.2	Structure of the document .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>REWARD STRATEGIES IN THE PILOT SITES .....</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1	Reward strategies implemented in the Italian Pilot – NaturaSì .....	6
3.1.1	The crowdfunding model .....	6
3.1.2	Monetary reward – Additional interest rate.....	7
3.1.3	In-kind reward .....	8
3.1.4	Other linked initiatives.....	8
3.2	Other viable strategies under evaluation .....	11
3.2.1	Bonus reward points on the loyalty card .....	12
3.2.2	Vouchers/coupons to be used in the store.....	13
<b>4</b>	<b>SUSTAINABILITY AND REPLICABILITY OF THE REWARD SCHEMES.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>17</b>

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the document

This document explains the reward mechanisms that were implemented in the two pilot sites in Italy within the Super-Heero project.

Both pilot sites feature the installation of photovoltaic plants on the roof of two NaturaSi supermarkets, one located in Ponte San Niccolò (Padova) and one in Pordenone. Both investments were done by an ESCo and financed through a crowdfunding campaign on the Super-Heero web platform. Both campaigns were structured with the objective of attracting and involving the customers of the supermarket, both existing and new ones. Activities on site and surrounding the crowdlending campaigns included in-store visits / in-store aperitivo, posters, roll ups, campaign cards at the cashier, posts on store social media accounts, campaign information in the store newsletter, posting on the Comune di Padova newsfeed, cross promotion by Ener2Crowd, cross promotion by the project and cross promotion by the involved partners.

The rewards program was done primarily via a premium interest rate given to investors residing in the area of the supermarket and an additional premium interest rate given to investors holding the membership card of the supermarket. Then, additional side rewards (free tickets to community events / planting of trees surrounding the campaign) were offered to the investors related either to in-store programs or community initiatives.

This document describes in detail the features of the rewards mechanisms that were put in place in the two pilot sites and other ones that could be implemented in the future, as well as their direct and indirect costs and benefits, both for the investors and for the supermarket.

Then, according to the results achieved in the pilot sites, assesses the sustainability and replicability of the Super-Heero scheme, also considering potential upgrades and variants of the model, including different types of reward for the customers.

## 2 Reward strategies in the pilot sites

As explained in detail in Deliverable D3.2, there are several reward mechanisms that supermarkets can put in place with the aim of engaging customers. The choice to select the most suitable ones depends on the overall corporate marketing strategy and how the supermarket wants to establish and maintain a relationship with the customers.

### 2.1 Reward strategies implemented in the First Italian Pilot – NaturaSì in Ponte San Nicolò (PD)



In April 2022, the Italian Pilot NaturaSì launched the crowdfunding campaign to finance part of the installation of the new PV system in a store located in Ponte San Nicolò (Padova). Being a first pilot project and given the innovativeness of the financial solution, the management of the company focused more on the technical and financial aspects of the investment itself rather than on rewards to the customers. This first pilot also had the presence of split interests between a franchise owner and a brand. An in-store coupon is a good example of split interests. Would it be good only at the individual store location? All stores? Who would pay for such an initiative? Would it need to be tracked? For the first pilot, these questions were bypassed to see first how the model worked.

However, dialogues have been undergoing and the supermarket managers, as well as the marketing department, acknowledge that linking a reward program to the crowdfunding campaign could really have a significant impact on engaging customers and increase trust. Since NaturaSì is interested in replicating this model in other stores, once the results of the first pilot investment are achieved then they could setup a new standard reward mechanism to put in place. This will require further analysis from the financial point of view, as a budget is needed for the reward of the customers, and the study of a specific communication campaign.

#### 2.1.1 The crowdfunding model / financing plan

A blended financing plan was used for the project. The total project had a cost of 40.000 euro. The brand put forward 5.000 euro, the franchise owner 5.000 and 30.000 euro was to be raised from the crowd. The co-investment of equal amounts by the brand and franchise owner was a deliberate

choice. The crowdfunding model for the first pilot project in the NaturaSi store has been structured as to encourage the participation of the holders of the “Community Card”, with a priority to the ones holding the card of the store where the PV plant was going to be installed.

### 2.1.2 Monetary reward – Additional interest rate

The main form of reward for the customers of NaturaSi is the provision of an additional interest rate for the holders of the “Community Card”. The following rewards have been set up:

- Local area cardholders (7%): Additional 2% interest rate for cardholders of the NaturaSi shop in Ponte San Nicolò, where the PV installation is made;
- Cardholders (6%): Additional 1% interest rate for cardholders of other NaturaSi shops.
- General Public (5%): Baseline interest rate available to all participants

Moreover, in order to encourage the involvement of local investors and to make them become members of the store, the campaign was restricted for the first 2 weeks to the residents of the Padova province, then extended for one week to the residents in the Veneto Region and finally open to all Italy (keeping the same interest rate premium for cardholders).



From a financial point of view, the additional interest rate doesn't affect in a severe way the business plan of the project (1% out of a total of 40,000 €, in one year, would be 400 €, under the assumption that all the balance is financed by cardholders) and could be considered as a useful investment with a twofold objective:

- To reward customers which are already holders of the “Community Card”, strengthening the relationship with them;
- To engage new customers, giving them an incentive to become members of the supermarket and to start shopping in the store.





### 2.1.3 In-kind reward

Thanks to the cooperation with the Municipality of Padova, people who invested in the campaign were eligible to get free tickets to the “Anime verdi” festival (<http://www.animeverdi.it/>). The initiative allows the participants to explore and visit more than 40 private gardens in the city centre, which are normally closed to the public. Each ticket had a cost of 10 euro.

### 2.1.4 Other linked initiatives (community programs)

As an additional incentive for the success of the crowdfunding campaign, the Municipality of Padova invited the campaign to participate in the planting of trees as part of the “Alberiamo Padova” initiative (<https://www.padovanet.it/informazione/progetto-alberiamo-padova>). It was decided to donate four trees to this campaign as part of the Parini Project. For this first pilot, it was costed by the ESCO promoting the project. In future campaigns, it can be a joint decision and costed into the eventual business plan in total or in part.

The community tree planting initiative aims at supporting the maintenance and development of the “urban forest” in Padova, as trees are fundamental to contribute to biodiversity and to fight climate changes. Everybody can participate to the initiative by donating trees to the community, which will then be planted and maintained by the “Green, parks and urban agriculture” sector of the Municipality of Padova. The donation to plant a tree is fixed in 100 €, as partial contribution for all the activities related to the management of the lifecycle of the plant.

### 2.1.5 Campaign result highlights

35 investors participated in the Via Parini crowdlending campaign.

#### Tempistica della campagna:

Opening:	5 April	Province of Padova
Opening:	19 Aprile	Regional level
Opening:	26 Aprile	National level
Closing:	26 Aprile	(after 2 hours)



**Investor Characteristics:**

- 1 cardholder of the shop Via Parini (€4.500 euro)
- 13 investors from the region for a total of €20.313
- 22 investors from the national level for a total of €19.742
- 5 new investors (new registrations on the Super Heero platform)
- 2 investors opened the Naturasì card resultant of the campaign
- 16 investors in the campaign were Naturasì cardholders
- 19 investors in the campaign were not Naturasì cardholders

**Tickets offered to Anime verdi:** 4 Tickets

*Remark: "Greetings. I have already responded to the survey last Friday but wanted to take the opportunity to say thank you for the tickets to Anime Verdi, gardens of my city that I have never visited. They were very interesting!  
With warm regards"*

### 2.1.6 Campaign result assessment with respect to rewards

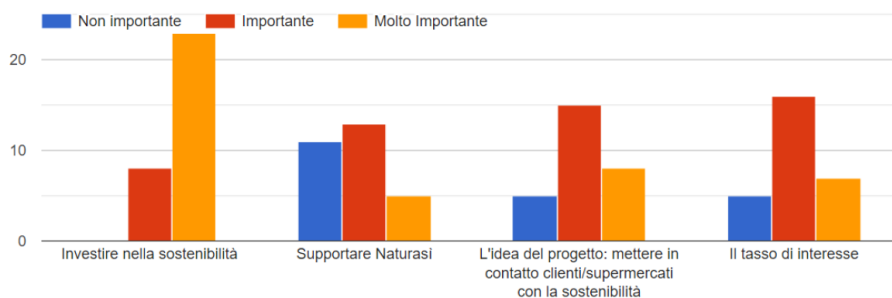
The campaign was subscribed primarily by existing Ener2Crowd investors. It is a community of over 10.000 investors who are already advocates of the approach. E2C investors and Super Heero investors are part of the same ecosystem (Super Heero is a white label of E2C). Using the E2C platform and user base, it was possible to send directed emails to the province, region and again at the national level targeting those locations and by default capturing the interest of cardholders on that territory. Nevertheless, a first nascent Super Heero investing community has been created which moving forward will be curated and grown.

The in-kind reward initiatives provided high marketing value at low cost. The Anime Verdi tickets had a total cost of 40 euro and although not available to investors investing from far away, people likely appreciate the approach. With respect to the planting of trees, for the campaign proper, it is likely not something that makes a large impact. What it is likely to do however is to help raise awareness within the community and to curate investors over time by having a story to tell (tree now planted, tree after one year, certificate from the Comune di Padova, etc).

The following figures were obtained from an exit survey from which 29 of the 35 investors participated via an online anonymous google forms survey. They show the most powerful driver for the investment was the opportunity to invest in sustainability, that the campaign resulted in a more positive impression of the involved supermarket and that the investors were more likely to shop at Naturasì as a result of the initiative.

Quanto sono stati importanti i seguenti fattori nella sua decisione di investire?

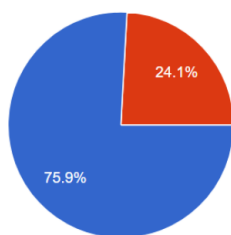
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Quale affermazione è più appropriata?

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29 responses

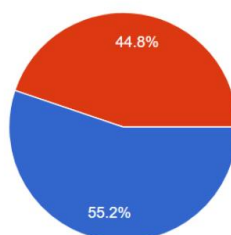


- Questo progetto mi dà un'impressione più positiva di Natusi
- La mia opinione su Natusi non è influenzata da questo progetto.

Quale affermazione è più appropriata?

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29 responses



- Ora sono più propenso a fare acquisti da Natusi
- Le mie abitudini di acquisto rimarranno invariate

## 2.2 Reward strategies implemented in the Second Italian Pilot – NaturaSi in Pordenone

The second pilot has been developed in the March-May 2023 timeframe. The store location is relatively new and an 83 kWp photovoltaic system has been designed. The shop location is brand-owned and features a SiRicarica EV charging point. R2M will act as project proponent bringing the Super Heero approach to this pilot location. The crowdlending campaign will launch on 31 May and conclude after the formal closure of the Super Heero project.



### 2.2.1 The crowdfunding model / financing plan

The financing plan for this particular project is:

NaturaSi	20.000 euro
R2M Solution	16.000 euro
Super-Heero Crowdvectors	60.000 euro

### 2.2.2 Brand Reward Strategies

For the second pilot, it was possible to also develop brand reward strategies for the customers. These are at the cost of the involved supermarket (part of their marketing strategy and investment into the project) and include:

- A store coupon valid in the two Pordenone shop locations for 5 Euro on 30 euro of purchases;
- A 25 kW charge at any SiRicarica charging point (at Pordenone or other NaturaSi store location with an SiRicarica EV point);

SiRicarica is a joint venture between NaturaSi, DRIWE and Garage Italia that was crowdfunded via equity crowdfunding and which is in the process of installing EV charging points on NaturaSi store locations. The opportunity to involve SiRicarica as a reward strategy opens the possibility for cross posting on the networks of the members of the joint venture and opportunity also to directly contact the investors that participate in SiRicarica and to invite them to participate in this Super Heero pilot.

### 2.2.3 Super Heero reward strategies

With this second pilot, we are interested in stimulating Super-Heero community growth. As such, the following reward strategies will be implemented and tested:

- 0.5% interest rate bonus for first time investors registering in the Super-Heero platform;
- 0.5% interest rate bonus for referrals granted from existing E2C or Super-Heero investors to new investors signing up into the platform (refer a friend program).

For instance, assuming 20.000 Euros out of the 60.000 Euros amount financed was able to leverage this incentive, the cost would be just 100 Euros per annum.

### 2.2.4 Communicating rewards

This second pilot will open as the Super Heero project closes. The campaign rewards will be featured on the project posters, rollup, in NaturaSi newsletters, on its social media, via DRIWE, via the Super Heero platform, Ener2Crowd, Super Heero social media feeds, the technology partner GreenTime Hub and via project partner social media feeds.

### 2.2.5 Community Sponsored Awards (in-kind)

At the time of this submission, initial contact with the municipality of Pordenone is being opened. The examples made in Padova provide a nice way to open the discussions.

## 2.3 Other viable strategies under evaluation

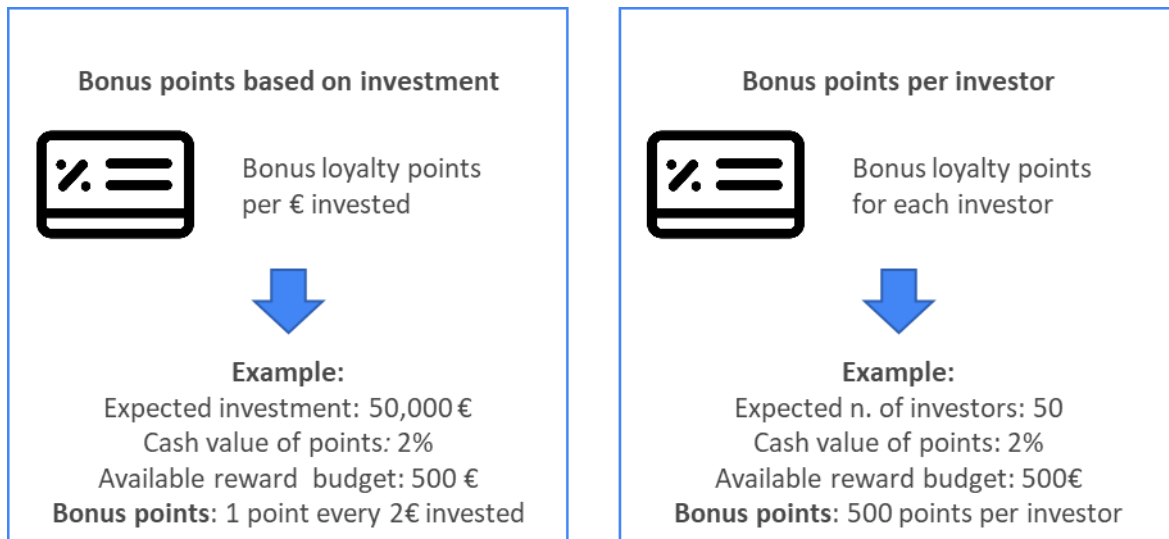
For the first pilot project, NaturaSi decided to just focus on the investment project itself, showing full availability to add reward strategies for the next upcoming projects. In fact, for the second pilot project, NaturaSi also committed to reward the customers through a coupon to use in the store and a free charge for EV in any store with SiRicarica.

Other reward strategies were considered during the discussions, as shown in the following paragraphs.

### 2.3.1 Bonus reward points on the loyalty card

An effective way to reward customers that invest in the crowdfunding campaign would be to assign them extra points on their “Community Card”. Points in the card could then be converted into discounts or other forms of reward during the timeframe of the collection campaign. This could be done in several ways, for example:

- Assigning the same amount of points you can get when shopping in the store for the same amount of expenditure;
- Assigning a fixed “bonus” amount of points to all customers, regardless the amount invested;
- Assigning proportionally more points to customers which invest more.



The decision depends on several factors which are usually up to the marketing department.

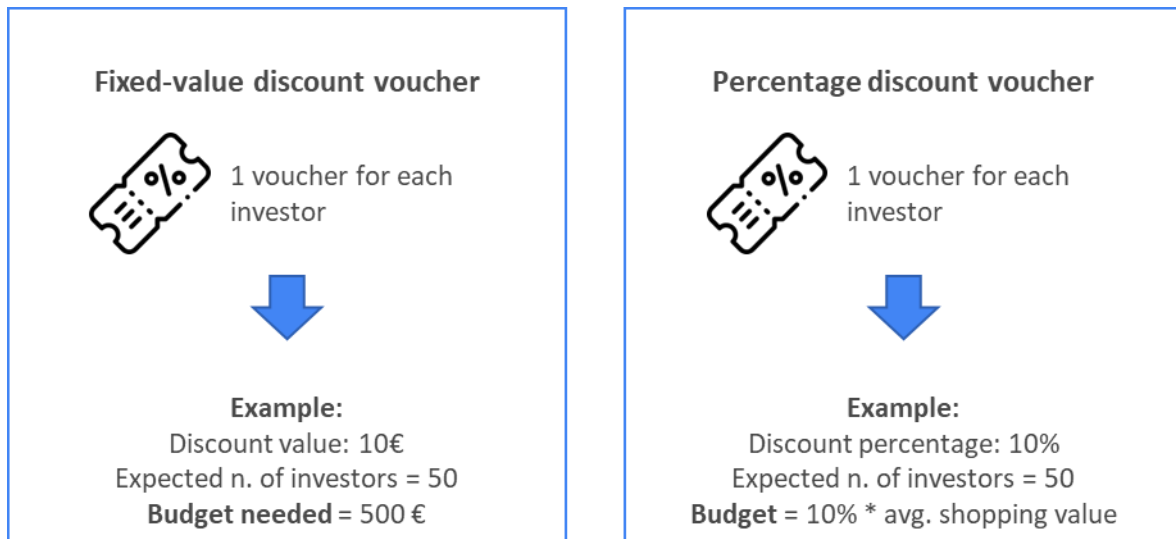
The implementation of this strategy has some technical issue, as it would be necessary to link the investment made on the crowdfunding platform with the “Community Card” of the customer. Since the two systems are not integrated and cannot be integrated, as they are managed by different subjects with different regulation, this process has to be done manually.

### 2.3.2 Vouchers/coupons to be used in the store

Another effective and concrete way to reward customers that invest in the crowdfunding campaign would be to offer them vouchers/coupons to be used in the store for their purchases. Compared to points in the loyalty card, vouchers have an immediate value for the customers, as they could be directly used for shopping without need for conversion or to wait the end of the collection campaign.

Vouchers/discounts could be organized in several ways, for example:

- As a percentage of discount on the overall shopping bill, with a minimum expenditure required (e.g. 10% with minimum bill of 50€);
- As a fixed-value discount with a minimum expenditure required (e.g. 10€ with a minimum bill of 50€, as NaturaSi in Pordenone did);
- As a special discount on a limited set of products, with no minimum expenditure required;
- A carnet of vouchers to be used within different timeframes (e.g. one in April, one in May, one in June, etc.) as to encourage the customers to come back to the shop over a longer period of time.



Again, as in the previous case, the decision mainly depends on the marketing strategy of the supermarkets, as it requires a budget to be allocated and should be harmonized with the typical and ongoing programs.

From the technical point of view, the implementation of this scheme would be easier, as vouchers/coupons could be sent by emails to the investors in the crowdfunding platform. However, in order to make this strategy effective in engaging there is still need for matching email addresses of the

### 3 Sustainability and replicability of the reward schemes

The exposed reward schemes require a budget allocation from the supermarket, according to the expected value of the discount offered and the number of customers participating to the campaign. As shown in the previous paragraphs, there are several ways the supermarkets can reward the customers, depending on their own marketing strategy and according to the budget available for the action.

Anyway, it must be considered that supermarkets, in running their business as usual, offer discounts, vouchers and promotions throughout the year, allocating a specific budget for this in their balance, not necessarily linked to a specific investment project or initiative. This is usually done by the marketing department, which decides how to invest the available budget, expecting a return from the investment in terms of higher sales and revenues in the future.

In the case of the Super-Heero scheme, the budget to reward the investors could be covered by the investment itself, as the energy savings generate economic savings for the supermarkets.



Anyway, this cost is significantly low compared to the benefits it can generate for the supermarket, in terms of:

- **Attraction of new customers**, initially interested into the investment and that become new cardholders, with the opportunity to get in direct touch with them through newsletters, app and other initiatives related to the loyalty program;



- **Increased loyalty of existing customers**, which are attracted by a new and innovative opportunity provided by the supermarket and that may increase their perception of the corporate social responsibility of the supermarket itself;
- **Meeting of corporate social responsibility targets**, with a new innovative project that fully complies with the supermarket policy towards sustainability;
- **Communication to the general public**, showing that the supermarket is active in investing in energy efficiency, contributing to the reduction of emissions with real projects.

According to the expected monetary benefits that the investment can generate, Supermarkets could also decide to allocate an additional budget to additional side initiatives. By “renouncing” to a small share of the profits generated by the investment, Supermarket could take the change to leverage on the project to additionally increase and communicate their corporate social responsibility. Example of these initiatives could include:

- Donation of trees for each Euro-amount invested in the project or collected from the crowd (as was done by the Municipality of Padova in the first Italian pilot, but financed by the supermarket itself);
- Contribution to local environmental projects promoted by local Authorities or NGOs;
- Donation to local NGOs caring about environment and climate change;

Thus, the Super-Heero scheme is fully self-sustainable over time, as the (monetary) costs for the supermarkets undergoing energy renovation are offset by the direct (monetary) and indirect (non-monetary) benefits generated by the investment.

## 4 Conclusions

The innovative Super-Heero crowdfunding scheme is very flexible and can be implemented and enriched in a wide variety of ways. While, from a mere financial point of view, it consists of a crowdfunding campaign to finance an energy efficiency renovation, there are several additional actions that supermarkets can link to the initiative.

From an additional financial return to the reward via vouchers, tickets, fidelity points, supermarkets can leverage on the energy efficiency investment to improve their corporate sustainability and, at the same time, enhance their relationship with their customers.

In the first two pilots, two different reward strategies have been implemented.

In the first case, the supermarket decided to assign an additional interest rate for the cardholders while and, at the same time, thanks to the Municipality of Padova, free tickets to a sustainability event in the city has been awarded to the investors.

In the second case, the supermarket decided to reward the investors also with a discount coupon that can be used in the store, a free charge from its EV point affiliated with Naturasì and a premium interest rate for the cardholders.

Several other reward strategies may be applied to the Super-Heero scheme, according to the supermarket corporate strategy and budget availability. In any case, according to the simplified calculation shown in this document, financial cost for the supermarket is very limited compared both to the overall investment cost for the energy efficiency works and to the opportunities generated in terms of promotion, engagement and reward for the customers.

This makes the Super-Heero scheme widely replicable, also beyond the supermarket sector, and up-scalable to larger projects.