



Guide for Training in SMEs

50 Cases of Good Practise

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Lille/Hamburg, May 2009

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AT01: Flexibility Coaching for companies (AMS Flexibilitätsberatung)

Basic data	
Country, region	Austria
Profile	With flexibility management, companies may efficiently react to sudden fluctuation in demand, upcoming redundancies, seasonal redundancies, costs for extra working hours, or even reduce and avoid these problems. Companies are supported in their internal management structures to achieve a balance between flexibility and stability for the specific needs of both actors, the company and the employees.
Training challenges addressed / links to analytical grid	<p>1.1 Organisational problems and barriers <i>Companies may better anticipate changes through effective flexibility management</i></p> <p>1.3 HR and skills development policy / plans / anticipation <i>Individual HR plans are developed as preparation tools for companies to manage upcoming problems.</i></p>
Duration and status	Started in 2005, ongoing until 2013
Financial sources	Employment Centre Austria ("Arbeitsmarktservice"), ESF
Type of SMEs addressed	Generally, all Austrian companies with more than 50 employees. In practise the majority of companies were SMEs.
Target group(s)	Generally all employees; additional focus on instruments for elder employees and the advancement of women and equal opportunities for women. Precondition for 9 th day of consulting in the 3 rd phase.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Austrian employment Centre (AMS); ÖSB Consulting GmbH in cooperation with Deloitte Human Capital offers consulting service and coordination; Consultation with works councils is mentioned as a priority and advantage for the successful development of flexibility approaches.

Description	
Background and objectives	<p><i>"Flexibility coaching started with European research of early intervention methods, a pilot program in 2001 and a consulting project for one single company (Infineon Technologies Austria). It has then transformed into a nation-wide job market instrument of Austria."</i></p> <p>Challenges of globalisation, EU-enlargement and demographic changes are relatively new for Austrian companies. Many companies face increasing competition, financial pressure or sudden fluctuation in demand. This has often lead to seasonal redundancies or high costs for extra working hours and a mismatch of qualifications within companies. Better controlling and planning ahead quantities and qualities of workforce for the entire year or a preventive warning systems for upcoming challenges are proposed instruments of the programme.</p> <p>The main objectives of the flexibility coaching programme are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to effectively support the flexibility of companies with regard to their HR management structures and procedures ▪ to establish professional flexibility management at companies ▪ to strengthen adaptability of companies to manage upcoming problems by themselves ▪ programme includes maximum of 15 consulting days.

<p>Methods and tools applied</p>	<p>Preventive employment policy instrument, company-based on a three staged procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Company is contacted by consultants after being nominated by AMS for initial information talk and decision if consultancy (1 day) ▪ Flex-Check: analysis of circumstances, identification of main problems and tasks; presentation of an initial strategy (up to 5 day) ▪ Flex-Consulting: after AMS agrees on funding, development of an individual flexibility strategy, solutions and implementation steps (up to 9 days) ▪ Service (maximum of 15 consulting days) is free of charge, costs are covered by the Employment Centre Austria (AMS and ESF funding). <p>The flexibility team offers know-how in 7 HR-related fields: 1) diversity management, 2) productive ageing 3) mobility, 4) working hours, 5) flexible workforce 6) further qualification and training, 7) organisation</p> <p>Examples of specific tools: annual working time model, early warning system for fluctuation in demand; advise on new job perspectives for women; measures for women after maternal leave and parental part-time work regulation</p>
<p>Factors of success and success indicators</p>	<p>Major factors of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individual HR plans are developed as preparation tools for companies to manage upcoming problems. ▪ Companies may better anticipate changes through effective flexibility management. <p>Major success indicators:</p> <p>In 18-month pilot phase, 75 % of all participating companies were SME. According to the last survey of January 2009, 67 % of all participating companies were SMEs. The evaluation at the end of the pilot phase was very positive, almost all companies were satisfied with the work of the consultants.</p> <p>Close cooperation and exchange of information between AMS and companies was established. Several companies became new clients for the AMS. Clear benefit for both - and consequently the Austrian job market; regional cooperation between companies was established.</p> <p>Although the project is not specifically designed for SMEs, the majority of clients are companies with 50 to 250 employees.</p> <p>Participation of companies in 2008:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Step 1: 347 companies, 70 % SME ▪ Flex-Check: 150 companies, 65 % SME ▪ Flex-Consulting: 55 companies, 67 % SME

Further contacts and information

<p>Available information</p>	<p>Brochure of project</p>
<p>Web</p>	<p>http://www.oesb.at</p>
<p>Contact</p>	<p>Susannah Kuncic Human Resources Development ÖSB Consulting GmbH Meldemannstraße 12-14 A-1200 Wien Tel.: (0043 1) 33 168 3510 Email: susannah.kuncic@oesb.at</p>



AT02: WAGE – Winning Age, Getting Future

Basic data	
Country, region	Austria
Profile	WAGE (Winning age, Getting Future) is a network of different stakeholders (companies and other institutions) focussing on successful management of demographic change. As a platform of exchange for business, politics, research, it serves as a driving force for innovation and offers workshops, knowledge sharing and information, participation and involvement in pilot projects. Another focus is to actively support respectfulness and appreciation between generations and to raise the awareness for the challenges of demographic change.
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	3.1 Demographic change and greying of the workforce <i>Various tools: creation of networks for the dissemination of information and awareness raising; age management consulting and workshops</i>
Duration and status	The programme started in 2007, ongoing
Financial sources	EFRE, financial funds of Upper Austria
Type of SMEs addressed	Generally all SMEs, specific tools for small enterprises
Target group(s)	Generally all employees and entrepreneurs interested in demographic change.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Various stakeholders: Chamber of Labour Upper Austria is coordinating the project in cooperation with Chamber of Commerce Upper Austria, the regional Government Upper Austria and Actors in the field of Labour-Market-Policy, Science and Society.
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>Demographic change has lead to a rapidly growing percentage of older employees (aged over 55) on the job market. In mainly all EU countries, this development has effectively raised the discussion on giving new perspectives to this group on the job market. Many measures and programmes, also within companies, focus on how to benefit from the knowledge of older employees and how to support lifelong learning time. Main objectives of the programme are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The transfer and dissemination of knowledge on how to improve the environment and perspectives of older employees at work. ▪ Related key questions/themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What do companies need to do now in order to remain competitive and innovative, although they are passing through demographic change? ▪ How do companies preserve the know-how and experiences of their ageing employees? ▪ The working environment and conditions need to be changed to meet needs of older employees.

Methods and tools applied	<p>WAGE is a platform of exchange for business, politics, research and serves as a driving force for innovation. Another task of the network is to bundle competences for the successful management between generations.</p> <p>The network also coordinates a network of enterprises, specifically designed for the needs of companies with an increasing number of older employees.</p> <p>A wide range of tools (workshops and consulting programmes) are offered by WAGE and its partners, which do not exclusively focus on SME. Here, a selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consulting and support for the creation of a network (synergies) among SMEs ▪ Consulting programme for qualification and lifelong learning, for small companies (max. 50 employees) ▪ Age management consulting for SMEs in Upper Austria ▪ Health Check at work for SMEs ▪ Self-check: companies can use the online “quick-check” to analyse whether an age-friendly working environment is given. ▪ Special Workshops for members of network on various topics: Burn out, Well being at work etc. <p>Fees vary and are partially funded by the EFRE and governmental funds of Upper Austria.</p> <p>Good practise cases are listed on the website.</p>
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Factors of success and success indicators	<p>Major factors of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Various tools of WAGE address demographic change, greying of the workforce and offer advise on how to improve perspectives of older employees ▪ Consulting programmes focus on demographic change in small companies ▪ Successful partnership of social partners within the network <p>Major success indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 30 companies in enterprise network, 20 institutions in strategic network on demographic change ▪ Transfer of Know-how, successful use of synergies ▪ Per year: 8 meetings of the strategic network, 8 workshops, 6 press conferences
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Further contacts and information

Available information	See website
Web	www.wage.at
Contact	<p>Dr. Edith Konrad Chamber of Labour Upper Austria Volksgartenstraße 40 AT-4020 Linz Phone: +43 732 6906-2449 Email: konrad.e@akooe.at</p>



AT03: KCCS: Fostering employability

Basic data	
Country, region	Austria
Profile	<p>The chemical company KCCS (71 employees) has created an apprenticeship programme for chemical technicians. The training programme consists of theory training, required personal study time, on-the-job training, regular exams and a final exam. Employees who have successfully completed the programme, receive a pay rise for skilled workers (around EUR 370 a month). This joint programme is equivalent to a regular apprenticeship.</p> <p>For employees, the programme is a convenient opportunity to complete an officially recognised apprenticeship, in the profession they have previously worked in without formal training.</p>
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	<p>1.5. Resource pooling and SME cooperation in training and competence development <i>Joint apprenticeship programme of 3 chemical companies</i></p> <p>2.3. Validation of informal skills and qualification <i>Officially certified apprenticeship programme for employees working at chemical companies without formal training</i></p>
Duration and status	Programme started in 2003, ongoing
Financial sources	Own resources
Type of SMEs addressed	KCCS is an Austrian small-sized chemical production company with 71 employees.
Target group(s)	<p>Employees from cooperating companies. Generally, the programme is open to all interested employees, who are identified in yearly appraisals and selected in a joint meeting of the managing director, works council and the head of production.</p> <p>Also employees with an apprenticeship in a different profession may apply for this joint apprenticeship programme on the job.</p>
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	<p>For the apprenticeship initiative, KCCS cooperates with two other chemical companies (Dynea Krems and Kemira), which are located in the business park.</p> <p>The KCCS works council has initiated the programme with full backing from its managing director and in close cooperation with the other companies and trainers.</p>
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>The chemical production company KCCS has passed restructuring. Although there is a demand for qualified staff and apprentices for the job of a chemical technician, the company did not have the resources to offer this apprenticeship programme. For this matter, KCCS started cooperating with two other chemical companies in a joint apprenticeship programme.</p> <p>The works council is in charge of qualification plans and initiated this programme for chemical technicians. The three companies have already been cooperating in the training of 'regular' apprentices (testing, trial apprenticeships, selection of apprentices) and have shared costs and training places. Main objective of the programme is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to qualify and train employees, irrespective of their age and former

	<p>educational background.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To provide validation of informal skills and qualifications through this programme
Methods and tools applied	<p>Apprenticeship course, duration 18-24 months, Course starts every 2 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Theory training (2.5 hours a week), in-house, during working hours ▪ On-the-job training ▪ Additional study time at home (5 to 8 hours per week) ▪ Exam every six months ▪ Evaluation and attendance check of every participant by the trainer and the works council every six months ▪ Costs for trainer, books and material are covered ▪ Preparation week before final exam at a large chemical production in Linz (Chemie Linz) or Gänserndorf (OMV) <p>Employees are even paid during the time for the exams and preparation week.</p> <p>Management, works council and head of production are involved to ensure support and understanding, when participants attend training lessons instead of working their shift.</p>
Factors of success and success indicators	<p>Major factors of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Successful cooperation of SMEs for this apprenticeship programme ▪ Validation of informal skills for employees, who have previously worked in the profession without formal training. <p>Major success indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Constant monitoring of the training progress and support by management and work council. ▪ High quality of training due to practical relevance of lessons and highly qualified trainers. ▪ In 2003, the first apprenticeship course had 14 participants and in 2005 18 participants. In 2007, 26 participants started the course. Finally 19 employees are now preparing for the final exam.

Further contacts and information

Available information	See case study at Eurofound Website
Web	http://www.kccs.at/
Contact	<p>Mr. Gebhard Auer Krems Chemie Chemical Services AG Hafenstraße 77 AT-3500 Krems Email: gebhard.auer@kccs.at Tel.: + 43 (0)2732 / 815 00 - 0</p>



AT04: FIT – Women in crafts and technology (Frauen in Handwerk und Technik)

Basic data	
Country, region	Austria, region of Tyrol
Profile	The project FIT – <i>Women in crafts and technology</i> addresses the challenge of weak representation of women in crafts and technology occupations. Hereby the project also is aiming at improving the labour shortage in particular with regard to qualified workers in SMEs in crafts and mechanical professions
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	<p>3.2 Recruitment/attracting younger and qualified employees <i>Interested young women are assisted and practically trained in technical professions.</i></p> <p>3.4 Improving and addressing gender equality and opportunities for women <i>Programme was developed to address the gender issue in technical and mechanical professions.</i></p>
Duration and status	The programme was launched in 2008; ongoing
Financial sources	Austrian government, labour market policy funds
Type of SMEs addressed	All types of SMEs but those in with manual, artisan and mechanical occupations in particular
Target group(s)	Female students and employees, including unemployed persons
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	The programme is coordinated by the public employment service Austria (AMS), region of Tyrol and implemented by a private training institution. Since the AMS is organised on a tripartite basis, the Austrian social partners are directly involved in the programme
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>The “FIT – Women in crafts and technology” Programme is reacting to the weak representation of women in manual and technical professions. The objective of the programme is to support a stronger female participation in initial training and entering “non-female” professions, for example in metalworking.</p> <p>Women still are working overwhelmingly in “typical female jobs” which often are rather low-paid and part-time. In Austria, around half of all young women still enter an occupation in retail, clerk or hairdressing and there is a concentration of women in only a few occupations.</p> <p>On the other hand, research has shown that those women who decide to take up a job in crafts and manual/technical occupations are achieving excellent exams and are highly motivated skilled persons.</p> <p>At the same time, employers initially often have prejudices about female employees in “male occupations”.</p>

Methods and tools applied	<p>The programme is structured in three stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Orientation Phase:</i> The programme starts with an preparatory seminar where young women receive information on selected artisan and mechanical occupations. They learn more about occupational profiles, labour market chances and receive a basic qualification in IT and social competences. This phase lasts around 10 weeks, includes a practical training course and ends with an individual training and career plan ▪ <i>Vocational preparation phase:</i> if women are interested in taking up a technical occupation (e.g. production technician, electronics technician or hearing device technician) they receive a special technical preparation and a basic qualification for the chosen occupation. This phase lasts 12 weeks and also includes a practical training. ▪ <i>Vocational training:</i> Women are able to complete a vocational training in the chosen occupation with financial support of the AMS which will end with a certified vocational qualification and/or school graduation <p>The occupations cover a wide variety of professions such as dental technicians, carpenter, car mechanic, hearing device technician, IT technicians, mechanical engineering technician or design draftsman (sic!)</p> <p>Each year, two programmes are starting, one in spring and another in autumn</p>
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The programme is quite uniquely addressing the gender issue in technical and mechanical occupations ▪ A main factor of success is the integrated and three-staged process of the programme as well as the strong orientation towards certification and quality as well as the strong link to the Austrian labour market service AMS (this surely improves the trust in the programme by companies as well as employees) <p><i>Indicators of success:</i></p> <p>The most important indicator of success is the participation rate of the programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ After 480 women have been invited to an information seminar in 2007, around 230 showed real interest in the programme. ▪ Of these, 90 women finally decided to take part in the vocational education programme.
Further information and contacts	
Available information	Further information (in German language) available on the website of the Austrian Labour Market Service AMS in Tyrol
Web	http://www.ams.at/tirol/ueber_ams/14169_17521.html
Contact	<p>Arbeitsmarktservice Tirol LANDESGESCHÄFTSSTELLE Andreas Hofer Str. 44 AT-6010 Innsbruck Tel.: 0043-512/584664 Fax: 0043-512/584664 – 190</p>



BE01: Training Vouchers (*Chèques Formation*)

Basic data	
Country, region	Belgium, Wallonia Region
Profile	Training vouchers are dedicated to SMEs in the Wallonia Region. They aim at giving incentives to managers, entrepreneurs and employees to get trained. The cost of one training hour is subsidised at a rate of 50 %. The company can choose different certified training centres and pay them directly with the voucher.
Training challenges addressed / links to analytical grid	1.2. Financial means and resources for training <i>The voucher system reduces the cost by a half and facilitate the access to training for SMEs</i>
Duration and status	Since May 2004. Ongoing.
Financial sources	Wallonia Region (9 million euros).
Type of SMEs addressed	All types of SMEs
Target group(s)	Workers in SMEs
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Coordinated by FOREM ("Wallonian public organisation for employment and training").
Description	
Background and objectives	Main objective of the programme is to give incentives to SMEs in Wallonia and consequently to develop training. "Training vouchers" were launched in 2004. The voucher permits to pay the training hours realised by a worker (employee or independent). It is open to temporary workers and to the independent worker's spouse.
Methods and tools applied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Value of the voucher is 30 € ▪ Price is only 15 € for the employer or independent worker. There is a maximal amount of vouchers that a company can buy during one year; this amount depends on the size of the company. ▪ Training can be implemented by certified operators only. Implementation has to follow an audit process and should be carried out within a maximum of three years after the audit. The costs of the audit are between 880 € and 2,640 €. The certified trainings lead to recognised general and transferable qualifications. This obligation is punctually verified by a joint committee during the three years. ▪ The mean amount of training hours used by companies is 74h in 2007 and 26h per training session. ▪ Certification committees appreciate whether the training offered corresponds to these requirements.
Factors of success and success indicators	<p>Success indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By 2007, almost 8,000 companies had used the voucher. ▪ In 2007, more than 20,000 workers received training in the context of the scheme – this is a significant increase against 2006 (around 15,000 workers). ▪ Companies with less than 20 workers represent 87% of the companies and 70% of the vouchers ▪ companies with less than 50 workers represent 96,5% of the companies and 87% of the vouchers.

- 73% of beneficiaries are men, hence there is a need to improve gender equality.
- In terms of employment status, 35% of beneficiaries are employees, 34% blue-collar workers and 24% independent workers.

Factors of success:

- Assessments show that the participation of blue-collar workers to training has been raised due to the voucher
- The voucher has a big visibility and has been used to develop other schemes (Language vouchers for instance)

Further contacts and information

Available information

Wallonian Ministry of Employment
http://emploi.wallonie.be/THEMES/FORM_PROF/Cheques_formation.htm
 Evaluation from the Wallonian Economic and social committee :
<http://www.cesrw.be/pics/2009115152744TFW.pdf> (in French)

Web

http://emploi.wallonie.be/THEMES/FORM_PROF/Cheques_formation.htm

Contact

Service Public de Wallonie
 Direction générale de Economie, Emploi et Recherche - DGO6
 Direction de la Formation professionnelle
 Place de la Wallonie, 1 - bâtiment II
 5100 Jambes – Namur
Cheqformat.defp.dgee@spw.wallonie.be



BE02: SMEs Entrepreneurship training (*Formations chef d'entreprise*)

Basic data	
Country, region	Belgium, Wallonia Region
Profile	Specific training programme, lasting up to 3 years, for people (workers or unemployed) wishing to start a business as independent worker: it couples courses on management and entrepreneurship with vocational courses (in the sector chosen by the trainee). Proposed by the Training institute for SMEs and crafts of the Wallonia Region.
Training challenges addressed / links to analytical grid	<p>2.2 Training and competence development for managerial staff and entrepreneurs <i>Becoming an independent workers implies specific skills, in addition to the vocational one already possessed: this scheme offers a tailored training in order to be able to launch his/her own company</i></p> <p>3.2 Recruitment/attracting younger and qualified employees <i>The initiative is in particular targeting sectors which have recruitment problems</i></p>
Duration and status	Ongoing.
Financial sources	Wallonia Region, ESF. Sectors can also finance specific actions.
Type of SMEs addressed	Micro-companies (in particular those with 5 – 15 workers) and some sectors experiencing recruitment difficulties: construction, automotive, personal care, catering professions.
Target group(s)	Employees and unemployed persons.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Coordinated by IFAPME. Social partners and professional groups in the economic sectors involved in the initiative and in the public employment service (ONEM, FOREM).
Description of the case	
Background and objectives	A specific training is offered to train future entrepreneurs to the bases of management, possibly through a "accelerated" option. An "à la carte", i.e. tailor-made scheme is also available.
Methods and tools applied	<p>The entrepreneur training is dedicated to people over 18, who wish to work in the management of a SME, become an independent worker, create his/her own company or take over a company. More than 100 professions have been identified.</p> <p>The mean duration is 2 years, but it can last from 1 to 3 years, depending on the situation. It consists in theoretical lessons which are given 8 hours a week in a centre. The courses concern management skills (company creation, fiscal and financial aspects, commercial skills, etc.) and professional skills (marketing, company localisation, technologies, etc.). The module on how to create a company intervenes at the end of the period.</p> <p>In some cases, a preparatory year is necessary: more often for the young people who have the general skills for accessing the entrepreneur training to fill the gap in the basic vocational skills.</p> <p>In all the professions where a entrepreneur training is organised, it is possible to complete a training course in a company (3 or 4 days a week). It is particularly well adapted for the young people who do not have a long professional experience or who wish to put in practice their knowledge</p>

	<p>obtained during their initial vocational training.</p> <p>During the entrepreneur training, the trainees receive an allowance ranging from 380 € to 760 €. In some cases, it is possible to supplement this allowance with unemployment benefits.</p> <p>IFAPME is present in the Wallonia Region with 9 centres. So called "Take over counsellors" offer special advice and support for workers wishing to take over "their" company.</p>
Factors of success and success indicators	<p>Success indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ According to a study carried out by the University of Liege, more than 80% of the entrepreneurs who have followed a training session at IFAPME have found a job in less than 6 months. ▪ More than 25% of them have created their own company in the three years. ▪ 100 professions were identified ▪ For unemployed people, this training offers new opportunities and information on professions in which a self-employment is advisable (like antique dealer, pet washer, take-away food preparator, etc.). <p>Further factors of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training schemes going "straight to the point". This initial training can be completed by LLL measures if needed. ▪ Training provided by professionals: "it is a butcher who will train a future butcher". ▪ Work-based training schemes: chosen by 40% of the trainees, these are a good way to enter a profession before deciding to launch a business.

Further contacts and information

Available information	IFAPME, Institut wallon de Formation en Alternance et des PME
Web	<p>http://www.ifapme.be/?id=33</p> <p>on-line brochure (in French):</p> <p>http://issuu.com/ifapme/docs/ifapmechefentreprise</p>
Contact	<p>Mr. Charles Hittélet Pedagogic counsellor IFAPME 31 Place Albert 1er 6000 Charleroi Téléphone : 071/ 23 22 22 Fax : 071/ 23 22 23 E-mail : ifapme@ifapme.be charles.hittélet@ifapme.be</p>



CY01: Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA) in Cyprus

Basic data	
Country, region	Cyprus
Profile	The main tasks of the organisation Human resource Development Authority (HRDA) are to make training easily accessible for employees in particular by subsidising training institutions and the courses provided and financial support and resources for training.
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	1.2 Financial means and resources for training <i>Budget for further training is in a sense automatically allocated by all enterprises in Cyprus. SMEs have accessible and affordable circumstances for training and education through HRDA.</i>
Duration and status	Started in the 1980s, Ongoing
Financial sources	By law of the state of Cyprus: The HRDA is a semi-state organisation (public equivalent organisation) and is entitled to receive 0,5 % of the payroll of each enterprise in Cyprus. The "HRDA levy" applies to all enterprises, exclusive of the public sector.
Type of SME addressed	Through the mandatory HRDA levy, all enterprises in Cyprus contribute to the HRDA. Therefore businesses share a common interest in the training opportunities.
Target group(s)	Generally all employees from enterprises in Cyprus, exclusive of public sector employees.
Coordination and stakeholders involvement	Due to its status as a semi-state organisation, the board of directors includes representatives from the government, employers and trade unions. Majority voting: both social partners carry a majority in votes. Even if the government disapproves a certain issue, the approval of both of the social partners is sufficient to pass the decision.
Description	
Background and objectives	In Cyprus, the system of vocational qualifications has been either very limited or non-existent. In many trades of this small country, no formal training was required and was sometimes substituted by the word-of-mouth on the competencies of employees. This resulted in a rather average level of competencies, not always reflecting on new techniques and developments. Cyprus has experienced strong economic growth throughout recent years and changing needs of the labour market. More specifically, the demand for labour has been very strong. Employees from non-EU countries had to be recruited and were often criticised as too heterogeneous and in need of supervision. Also, there was the focus to reorient Cyprus' economy to high value added products and services. In this context, a system of vocational qualifications was regarded as beneficial and of help for related recruitment issues. The EU has encouraged Cyprus to enhance its system of vocational qualifications. With ESF funds, work is underway by the HRDA to create vocational standards.
Methods and tools applied	The main activity of HRDA is to provide subsidies for training courses, but also assistance in the development/creation of training

	<p>infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training organisations offering courses (in total, there are approximately 200 in Cyprus) may submit their applications every semester for HRDA subsidies. ▪ After approval, the subsidy is set by the authority. ▪ If the course fee for example accounts for 200 € per person and the HRDA subsidy is 150 €, only 50 € of the total cost is left for each participant. This "over and above" fee is of course paid by the participant's enterprise. ▪ Only after each participant has successfully completed the course and earns a certificate, the subsidies will be paid. ▪ According to experiences of the Chamber of commerce, 95 % of their proposals are approved by the HRDA. ▪ Subsidies vary according to the level of the course, the strategic importance of the course and the size of the enterprise.
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Factors of success and success indicators	<p>Major factors of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Programme offers financial means and resources for training ▪ Budget for further training is in a sense automatically allocated by all enterprises in Cyprus and affordable circumstances for training and education are created. ▪ All companies in Cyprus are aware of the importance of training, because of the mandatory levy imposed by law. ▪ Promotion of training in SMEs. <p>Major success indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Successful cooperation of social partners: the extra-ordinary composition of the board of directors, representing trade unions, employers and government and the specific majority held by the both social partners (employers and trade unions).
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Further contacts and information

Available information	See website www.hrdauth.org.cy
Contact	<p>Leonidas Paschalides Director Dept. of Education and Development Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry P.O.Box 21455 1509 Nicosia CYPRUS Tel.: +357-22889840 Fax: +357-22668630 e-mail: leonidap@ccci.org.cy</p>



DE01: Pew@re – Programme for systematic human resource development in SMEs

Basic data	
Country, region	Germany, Baden-Württemberg
Profile	The focus of the programme was to support SMEs in elaborating strategic human resource development concepts which are suitable for the specific situation of SMEs. Hereby, the programme took into account SME specific barriers and problems such as lack of financial resources, personnel capacities and time. Through the cooperation in so-called "learning networks", common strategies for HR development applicable for company were developed.
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addresses	<p>1.2 Financial means and resources for training <i>Costs for training and workshops were subsidised.</i></p> <p>1.3 HR and skills development policy / plans / anticipation <i>Strategic HR development concepts for the needs of SMEs</i></p> <p>1.5 Resource pooling and SME cooperation in training and competence development <i>Through "learning networks" and workshops</i></p>
Duration and status	Programme was established in 2002, completed. Afterwards, there was an attempt to maintain the network with own financial resources, through membership fees. This was only possible for one year.
Financial sources	ESF, funds of the federal state Baden-Württemberg and an annual membership fee of 1000 € per company. For training sessions and workshop: Individual fees for participating companies applied according to duration and content of workshop.
Type of SME addressed	SMEs of all sizes and economic sectors in the federal state of Baden-Württemberg
Target group(s)	Generally all employees were addressed. Some tools were primarily designed for management personnel responsible for training.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	BBQ Bildungsverbund Berufliche Qualifikation and Bildungswerk Baden-Württemberg.
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>Until now, training and HR development is mainly common in large companies. However, SME have to comply to current developments and need to invest in their employees for better achievements and productivity. Pew@re was a training institution (project) for Human Resource Development in SME located in the German state Baden-Württemberg. Pew@re's central objective is the sustainable establishment of human resource development in SMEs of the region, irrespective of their industrial branch.</p> <p>The Pew@re team was coordinating and managing the network, organising workshops and the regional meetings and booking external consultants/experts. Through on-going consultation and exchange of information and experiences, HR strategies were altered according to need and changes in the companies. Also, regional knowledge on SMEs was gathered.</p>
Methods and tools applied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional project meetings: Pew@re gathered regional knowledge and coordinated interests of participating companies in order to facilitate the

	<p>qualification and training process among SME by bundling resources. Pew@re outlined which company was already interested or even involved in a comparable training session. Through this cooperation, contacts were provided and a so-called "learning network" were established.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creation of a network among SME: For this objective the programme developed or updated the company's website, organised all public affairs such as presentations at fairs or expert conferences and coordinated publications in the media. ▪ Annual consultation in the company: Pew@re analysed the specific status and needs of the individual company and then outlined potential cooperation possibilities with other companies for training sessions or workshops. Pew@re successfully introduced regular discussions between employees and employers ("Mitarbeitergespräche"). ▪ Workshops for many companies or matching individual requests and an annual conference of all Pew@re members were organised. ▪ Workshops (for many companies or matching individual requests) ▪ Addressing new members (other SMEs in the region) in order to enlarge the network, Annual conference of all Pew@re members.
<p>Factors of success and success indicators</p>	<p><i>Major factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Costs for training were subsidised ▪ Strategic human resource development concepts were developed for the needs of SMEs. ▪ In "learning networks" and workshops of Pew@re, successful resource pooling and SME cooperation <p><i>Major success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In 3,5 years of Pew@re: A total number of 88 SMEs were involved. The majority of companies had 50-250 employees, only three companies with more than 250 employees and one company with only 5 employees. ▪ 60 regional meetings and 28 company-wide workshops.

Further contacts and information

<p>Contact</p>	<p>BBQ Berufliche Bildung Bernd Foltin Hopfenstr. 22 D-73430 Aalen e-mail: bfoltin@bbq-online.de Tel.: + 49 (0) 73 61 - 52 67 12</p>
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DE02: "SiGePool" - Centre for competence development

Basic data	
Country, region	Germany, District Heinsberg
Profile	The focus of the programme is to support and sustain the competitiveness of SMEs in the district of Heinsberg through individually designed consultancy and training/education offers as well as to establishing a network of SMEs and a common platform for information and action.
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	<p>1.2 Financial means and resources for training <i>Wide range of training courses are subsidised</i></p> <p>1.5 Resource pooling and SME cooperation in training and competence development <i>Networks and cooperation for exchange of information</i></p> <p>3.1 Demographic change and greying of the workforce <i>"Network healthy construction work" addresses health issues and demographic change</i></p>
Duration and status	The programme was initiated by the works council of a company (Frauenrath Bauunternehmung, Heinsberg) in 2003, Ongoing
Financial sources	Federal Ministry of Economists and Technology and the Hans-Boeckler Foundation in cooperation with trade unions and employers organisations, health insurances, Federal Agency for Labour Security and Medication
Type of SMEs addressed	SMEs of the building industry and secondly other crafts enterprises, mainly from the region.
Target group(s)	Generally all employees Specific programme for entrepreneurs and employees Primarily, employees in the construction industry of the district of Heinsberg and employees in crafts enterprises are addressed.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	The programme is implemented by the Working Group and Network Health and Qualification, in close cooperation with the construction trade union and employees association.

Description	
Background and objectives	<p>Particularly in the construction sector, employees face dangers such as the highest accident rate at workplace, comparably low rates of further education and enter retirement very early. Aside from training and education, a significant factor for the success of SiGePool are security and health issues.</p> <p>As a general problem of SMEs, specific barriers and problems like the lack of financial resources, personnel capacities and the low availability of free time are taken into account.</p> <p>SiGePool is a project offering training and education workshops especially designed for SME.</p> <p><i>"Formula for success: security + health + training guarantee quality"</i></p> <p><i>"Objective of the project is to sustainably improve the competitiveness of SMEs through individually designed consultancy and training offers"</i> (Quotation from website of the project).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This shall be achieved by resource pooling. ▪ The network of SMEs shall serve as a common platform for information

	<p>and action. Costs for training measures shall be reduced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aside from training and education, a significant factor for the success of SiGePool are security and health issues. <p>SiGePool is part of the Working Group and Network Health and Qualification, the so-called "Network Healthy Construction work" ("Netzwerk Gesunde-Bauarbeit"). The project has a clearly indicated regional focus.</p> <p>Established with support of the federal Ministry of Labour, another initiative is "INQA" ("Initiative for new quality in the construction sector") with a clearly defined national focus.</p>
Methods and tools applied	<p>Wide range of workshops are offered for entrepreneurs and employees. Topics are diverse and also cover workplace health promotion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project team offers legal advice and makes sure that companies comply to security norms. SiGePool offers guidance on how to implement security management as easy and fast as possible with the help of experienced employees. ▪ Creation of a network among SMEs, resource pooling for cost reduction ▪ Workshops: for many companies or matching individual requests; on week-ends and accessible for employees of the region ▪ Legal assistance for entrepreneurs
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Major factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wide range of training courses is subsidised by funds of the project ▪ Resource pooling and SME cooperation for workshops and exchange of information ▪ "Network healthy construction work" addresses health issues in the construction sector and demographic change. <p><i>Major success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The network has significantly improved the perception of training needs. ▪ Importance of competence development disseminated among small and medium sized construction companies in the region.

Further contacts and information

Available information	http://www.gesunde-bauarbeit.de/
Contact	<p>Mr. Rudi Clemens Tannenstraße 22 D-52538 Gangelt Email: clemens@gesunde-bauarbeit.de Tel.: +49 (0) 2454 93 92 56</p>



DE03: WeGebAU –

Training of low-skilled workers and older employees in companies

Basic data	
Country, region	Germany
Profile	The focus of WeGebAU is to support SMEs in training and further qualification of their employees. Generally, the importance of lifelong learning and continuous training shall be highlighted in order to achieve stable employment. Aside from training of low-skilled workers, the programme tries to improve and update skills of older employees corresponding to the changing needs of the job market.
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	<p>1.2. Financial means and resources for training <i>Financial means for training</i></p> <p>3.1. Demographic change and greying of the workforce <i>Older employees of SMEs were encouraged to participate in training measures</i></p>
Duration and status	Programme was established in 2006, Ongoing
Financial sources	Funds of the Federal Employment Office, funds according to the German Social Security Code (SGB III) and ESF
Type of SMEs addressed	Generally, all SMEs with employees over 45 years and low-skilled workers in their workforce are addressed.
Target group(s)	Low-skilled workers and older employees
Coordination and stakeholders involvement	Various training institutions are entitled by the Federal Employment Office. In the Federal State of North-Rhine Westphalia, the programme is managed by the training institution of the Confederation of German Trade Unions in the Federal State of North-Rhine Westphalia ("DGB-Bildungswerk NRW e.V.")
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>WeGebAU is a preventive programme to reduce the risk of unemployment for older employees and low-skilled workers.</p> <p>Demographic change has led to a growing percentage of employees aged 55 to 64 years on the job market, who continuously need to be trained and qualified.</p> <p>Currently, many companies lack specifically qualified workers. Through financial assistance offered through WeGebAU, employees may easily get access to training programmes in order to gather specific qualifications. Also, WeGebAU reimburses SMEs for social insurance costs and absence of the low-skilled employees participating in training.</p> <p>In order to support the lifelong learning approach and the education of low-skilled workers, the Federal Employment Office has started WeGebAU in 2006 after a preceding pilot project in 2002.</p> <p>The programme has two different target groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low-skilled workers to gain a job qualification certificate. Here, training fees are covered by the Federal Employment Office and the employer is reimbursed for social insurance costs and absence of the employee. ▪ Older employees (+ 45 years) from SMEs. Here, training programme is offered to improve and update skills of older employees corresponding to the changing needs of the job market. Training fees are covered by the

	Federal Employment Office.
Methods and tools applied	Training methods vary according to needs and economic branch.
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Major factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SME specific problems and barriers for training were addressed. ▪ High number of low-skilled workers successfully applied for WeGebAU. ▪ WeGebAU has successfully encouraged older employees of SMEs to participate in training and has thus addressed structural challenges of demographic change. <p><i>Major success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Already in the first half of 2008 (as of June 2008), a total number of 19.500 (4.200 were older employees) were successfully approved financial means from WeGebAU in 2008. ▪ Partnership with social partners: In NRW, the programme is coordinated by the Training institution of the Confederation of German Trade Unions. In each federal state, the Federal Employment Office has entitled an external training institution or consulting office to assist and coordinate the programme. ▪ According to the Institute for Employment Research, preventive training and qualification programmes are rather unknown or seldom used by German companies. Throughout recent years, WeGebAU has become known among SMEs.
Further contacts and information	
Available information	Brochure (German language): http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/Dienststellen/RD-BB/Potsdam/AA/A04-Vermittlung/Publikation/pdf/Wegebau-Flyer.pdf
Web	www.arbeitsagentur.de
Contact	DGB-Bildungswerk NRW e.V. Team WeGebAU Nikolaus Bley Tel.: +49 (0) 2361 90638-11 E-Mail: NBley@DGB-Bildungswerk-NRW.de



DE04: MIC – MICRO-INNO-CHANGE

Basic data	
Country, region	Germany, North Rhine-Westphalia
Profile	<p>MIC (Innovative Approaches to the Management of Change in Small and Micro Enterprises) was a project to develop and test concepts for better management, tools for anticipation, concepts and models for successful company restructuring.</p> <p>Through MIC, small companies were able to shape their future themselves and to implement anticipations tools in their daily routine as a basis for successful business management.</p>
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	<p>1.1. Organisational problems and barriers <i>Tools like the "help for self-help" toolbox address SME barriers for training</i></p> <p>2.1. Training methods addressing specific needs of SMEs <i>Approaches are specifically designed for the needs of micro-sized enterprises and correspond to finding suitable methods of training.</i></p> <p>3.3. Competence development in the context of internationalisation <i>Through international partners in other EU countries the MIC project has also supported international exchange and networking</i></p>
Duration and status	2005 - 2007, completed
Financial sources	ESF Art. 6
Type of SMEs addressed	Generally all Small (10-49 employees) and Micro-sized enterprises (1-9 employees) (SMEs) from mechanical engineering, metal and wood industries
Target group(s)	Entrepreneurs of SMEs
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	MIC was coordinated by LGH – Organisation for the Economic Development of Skilled Trades SMEs in North Rhine-Westphalia. International partners in the Netherlands, Spain and Italy.
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>Existing management models and consulting plans mainly focus on larger companies and do not correspond to the specific needs of SMEs. This is clearly contradictory to the large number of SMEs in the EU, where SMEs represent up to 98% of all companies. In many cases, these companies lack systematic human resource and business strategies and primarily focus on their day-to-day business. SME company owners often classify management tools as too abstract or too bureaucratic.</p> <p>MIC had the objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to assist small companies to understand the need and the prospects of systematic anticipation and managing change. ▪ to develop concepts for a better management of restructuring specifically for Small and Micro sized companies (SmicEs) and compile examples of good practise. <p>MIC had the clear aim to support SmicEs in their anticipation and management of change.</p> <p>MIC has developed four different approaches of anticipation and management of change in following countries and industries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Germany - automotive suppliers ▪ Netherlands - machinery manufacturers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spain - metalworking industry ▪ Italy - carpentries / wood processing <p>All tools and instruments made up for a complementary system and fit the specific needs of SmicEs. Future-oriented strategies for the daily management could be implemented in the companies.</p>
Methods and tools applied	<p>At the end of the project all tools were available as a "do-it-yourself-aid-kits for company owners".</p> <p>MIC was put into practise in 3 steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing and testing tools for anticipation ▪ Developing and testing concepts and models of good management ▪ Developing and testing concepts and models for successful company restructuring <p>As a result from the four countries and sectors, there were four approaches, each for a different target group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approach for advisors and consultants of SMEs (NL). The Dutch approach created a strategy toolbox, analysing several management tools in order to find the matching one for SMEs. Through this aid-kit all tools were adjusted and made easily understandable. ▪ Approach for owners and executive staff of SMEs (Germany). The German approach offered a self-applicable toolbox, which could easily be used by company owners to analyse their business, market and environment situation. It served as a "help for self-help" toolbox. ▪ Approach for multiplier organisation: chambers and associations (ES). The Spanish approach aimed at raising awareness in as many companies of the sector as possible and defined a tool box for multipliers. ▪ Mixed approach for advisors, multipliers and owners of SMEs (Italy).
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Major factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The approaches were specifically designed for the needs of micro-sized enterprises and corresponded to finding suitable methods of training. ▪ Through MIC (e.g. "help for self-help" toolbox) barriers for training within SMEs were successfully reduced. ▪ Structural challenges an competence development in the context of internationalisation <p><i>Major success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All approaches have been successfully put into practise in companies, which now serve as examples of good practise. ▪ MIC has been able to make SMEs aware of the importance about knowledge of change.

Further contacts and information

Available information	Report and brochure on MIC on website
Web	http://www.lgh.de/ http://www.mic-project.org/
Contact	<p>Mr. Roland Smigerski LGH</p> <p>Auf ´m Tetelberg 7 D-40221 Dsseldorf Tel: +49 211 30 108 -310 Email: smigerski@lgh.de</p>



DE05: Training Cheque North-Rhine Westphalia (Bildungsscheck NRW)

Basic data	
Country, region	Germany, North Rhine-Westphalia
Profile	The Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs in NRW initiated the project in 2006. The Training Cheque ("Bildungsscheck NRW") offers financial support for individual applicants interested or in need of qualification and training courses. Through this, it strongly encourages employees of SMEs to consider lifelong learning as an important part of their working life. The training cheque is not bound to any specific course and may be used for numerous qualification measures.
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	1.2. Financial means and resources for training <i>Financial means for training are offered to employees</i>
Duration and status	Initiative started 2006, ongoing
Financial sources	ESF, funds of the Ministry of Labour North Rhine-Westphalia
Type of SMEs addressed	All SMEs in the federal state of NRW, irrespective of industrial sector
Target group(s)	Generally, all employees of SME who have not participated in training measures within the last 2 years. Another target group are women after maternal leave, who may use the training cheque for further qualification or refreshing skills in order to facilitate the reintegration into working life.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Ministry of Labour Health and Social Affairs NRW, in cooperation with 220 entitled training institutions.
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>The region of NRW is clearly dominated by a very strong presence of micro enterprises with only 9 or less employees. According to the official statistic of the Federal employment office, over 80 per cent of companies in NRW may be classified as micro companies (< 9), 15 per cent as small companies (< 49) and just 4 per cent as medium sized companies (< 250).</p> <p>In order to ensure the ongoing competitiveness of the industrial sector, the Minister of Labour Health and Social Affairs NRW has implemented the training cheque. Mainly micro and small companies have made use of this financial support so far in NRW.</p> <p>In regard to micro and small-sized companies, the Training Cheque has the main objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to support qualification and further training of employees of SMEs ▪ to increase the employability of workers and consequently the competitiveness of SMEs
Methods and tools applied	<p>Before the training cheque is approved, a consulting session at one of the 220 training institutions (e.g. chamber of commerce or Volkshochschule) is compulsory.</p> <p>Each participant is entitled to a 50 per cent subsidy of 500 € maximum of the costs for training (subsidy of 750 € per person at the beginning of the</p>

	<p>project in 2006). The other half of costs have to be covered by the participant or his/her company.</p> <p>Two application procedures: individual application, employee chooses training course or application through company.</p> <p>Each employee in NRW may attain one training cheques over the individual application procedure, and the SMEs may attain 10 training cheques over the company procedure per year.</p>
Factors of success and success indicators	<p>Major factors of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Due to the successful awareness campaign by the Ministry of Labour Health and Social Affairs in NRW, the issue of lifelong learning and upgrading of skills among employees of SME has gained public attention. ▪ Financial means for training were given to a large number of employees <p>Major success indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ From 2006 to 2008, more then 130.000 consulting sessions took place in companies ▪ 300.000 training cheques were distributed to employees. ▪ In a survey, 86% of all participants gave a positive feedback on the benefit of new skills gained through the training cheque. ▪ Similar programmes have also been implemented in other German federal states, e.g. Hesse
Further contacts and information	
Available information	Monitoring report from GIB, Website of Ministry of Labour NRW
Web	www.bildungsscheck.nrw.de http://www.mags.nrw.de
Contact	<p>Gesellschaft für innovative Beschäftigungsförderung mbH Claudia Thierfelder Im Blankenfeld 4 D-46238 Bottrop Tel.: +49 (0)2041 767-271 E-Mail: c.thierfelder@gib.nrw.de</p>



DK01: SAW—Seniors and Workplace

Basic data	
Country	Denmark
Profile	<p>SAW was a project involving partner organisations in 5 European countries. SAW offered an analysis in all partner countries on current practise at the labour market and served as a platform of exchange of information and experiences between the partners. SAW promoted an awareness campaign at local and European level for a sensitive approach to problems and opportunities for seniors.</p> <p>A key innovative element of SAW was the definition of a curriculum for Senior Advisors at Work (SAWs) or so-called Good Will Ambassadors: they delivered, proposed and presented good practices identified in the project to local actors and companies.</p>
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	<p>3.1 Demographic change and greying of the workforce <i>Awareness campaign and Good Will Ambassadors as regional multiplier</i> <i>Particular strategies for age management</i></p>
Duration and status	2004 - 2006, completed.
Financial sources	ESF Art. 6
Type of SMEs addressed	Generally, all SME in Italy, Ireland, Spain and Poland
Target group(s)	Trade unions, consultancy companies, education and training institutions. Managers of SMEs are main target group among companies.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	<i>Fagligt Internationalt Centre</i> (FIC) in Denmark with international partners in Italy (EXA Team), Ireland (trade union federation SIPTU), Spain (FOREM) and Poland (OPZZ).
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>Although the intensity and timing of demographic change may vary in different countries of the EU, the outcome is the same. By 2050, the elderly will constitute 33 per cent of the population compared to only 19 per cent today. The people’s average age will increase by nine years. In the EU employment strategy elder employees are regarded as one of the key elements in the future capacity of work.</p> <p>Skill trends in the labour market indicate that the demand for skilled employees will continue to increase while that of low-skilled people will decrease. Here, a life long learning strategy and a continuous way to update skills are very important for senior employees in order to remain in the job market as long as possible.</p> <p>Based on the analyses of the international project partners of SAW, one observation was that particularly low-skilled senior workers run risk of being excluded from the labour market. Particular attention was paid to low skilled older women, composing another vulnerable group in the labour market.</p> <p>The main objectives of SAW were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to raise awareness of the potential of older workers in the labour market ▪ to develop strategies for age management in the labour market ▪ to give special attention to required human resource and investment initiatives to achieve this objective.

	A secondary objective was the development of good practice models, which could be easily used by strategic actors.
Methods and tools applied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SAW offered a set of tools for key labour market actors, who were responsible for producing change within the labour market ▪ Survey in each country on conditions/reasons for seniors to prolong their working time ▪ A key innovative element of this project was the definition of a curriculum for Senior Advisors at Work (SAWs) or so-called Good Will Ambassadors: they shall deliver, propose and present good practices identified in the project to local actors and companies. ▪ Each partner organisation designed a curriculum corresponding to each country and created a pilot training programme for seniors. ▪ Networking and involvement of local partners as a key element for the project's implementation ▪ National network of SMEs in each country across sectors ▪ Guideline of questions for a discussion with SMEs
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Major success factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Awareness campaign ▪ "Good Will Ambassadors" as regional multiplier <p><i>Major success indicators:</i></p> <p>Project contributed to the elaboration and publication of a national strategy. In Ireland, a new national agreement – "Towards 2016" was negotiated and accepted by trade union partners, employers, the Irish government and the representatives of the Seniors Citizens Parliament. Future pension problems, the protection of Labour standards, a national skills strategy for lower skilled workers and numerous other senior-relevant topics are addressed in "Towards 2016".</p>

Further contacts and information

Available information	Brochures and reports on website
Web	http://www.saw.fic.dk/
Contact	<p>Fagligt Internationalt Centre Mrs. Camilla Torp Olsen Nyrnberggade 31, 2. sal DK-2300 København S Tel.: +45 20 90 15 41 E-mail: camilla.t.olsen@fic.dk</p>



EU01: EuroSkills

Basic data	
Country, region	Europe (19 European countries involved as national members)
Profile	EuroSkills is a platform for jointly improving the quality, the results and the attractiveness of vocational education and vocational skills in Europe, in particular in craft professions. EuroSkills organises a series of skills competition on a local, regional, national and international level, giving young candidates the opportunity to compete at an early stage.
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addresses	<p>3.2 Recruitment and attracting younger and qualified employees <i>EuroSkills is a competition for young professionals.</i></p> <p>3.3 Competence development in the context of internationalisation <i>EuroSkills is an international event with representatives from industry and education</i></p>
Duration and status	Ongoing
Financial sources	Mixed public/private funding. In 2008 EuroSkills was financially supported by the European Commission, DG Education and Culture/Lifelong Learning Programme, CEDEFOP, Leonardo da Vinci Programme and the Dutch Government
Type of SMEs addressed	All types of enterprises, particular focus on crafts.
Target group(s)	Employers, employees. Participants in the competition are trainees and students.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	<p>There is a general administration board but the EuroSkills competitions are organised by national member organisations, i.e. the 2008 EuroSkills was organised by the Dutch Government.</p> <p>Trade union organisations and employers organisations are actively involved in the implementation of EuroSkills competitions.</p>
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>Vocational education varies in the EU members states and has not yet reached a common recognition. Since the 1950s, the international competition <i>WorldSkills</i> has performed regular events, providing unique means of exchange and comparison of world-class competency standards in the industrial trades and service sectors of the global economy.</p> <p>Therefore, EuroSkills has set its focus on raising the status of vocational education in the EU. Most of the participating professions are from the crafts industry, which is traditionally dominated by SMEs.</p> <p>EuroSkills has the following main objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To use skills competitions to help the EU and its member states to raise skills standards and to promote excellence in vocational skills throughout the EU ▪ To raise awareness of the importance of skills and vocational education/training for the EU economies and societies ▪ To develop a range of European vocational skills competitions for EU member states ▪ To ensure that vocational skills competitions organised by EuroSkills, reflect the varied and changing skills requirements of the member states and of the EU as a whole. ▪ To encourage member states to participate in EuroSkills and to expand

	<p>and develop the range and structure of its own vocational skills competitions</p> <p>The EU Commission supports EuroSkills as an European version of WorldSkills.</p>
Methods and tools applied	<p>EuroSkills 2008 was organised as an event in the Netherlands and is supposed to place every two years in another EU country. The next EuroSkills event is scheduled for 2010 in Portugal. EuroSkills serves as a platform on which European organisations, ministries of education and international industry organisations can exchange knowledge and experience about innovation, training methods and opportunities for collaboration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is a showcase of modern craftsmanship and related educational pathways in conjunction with WorldSkills. ▪ Skills competition at EuroSkills event: to give an important role to skills competitions as inspirational factor for young people ▪ At the event: demonstrations and conference; representatives from crafts industry, ▪ EuroSkills village: discussion platform and workshops ▪ Fostering the development of partnership between education and industry
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Major factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ International networking between experts from VET and industry on European level ▪ Broad variety of stakeholders involved <p><i>Major success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participant from all European countries (EU and non-EU) ▪ Series of skills competition for young people regularly takes place on local, national and international level ▪ At showcase in 2008, 30-40 professions from 9 trade sectors were present

Further information and contacts

Available information	<p>Further information on website</p> <p>The 2010 EuroSkills event will be organised in Portugal with the IEFP being the major coordinator: http://www.iefp.pt/</p>
Web	<p>http://www.euroskills.info/</p>
Contact	<p>EuroSkills Thom ter Stege Frankrijklaan 8a 2391 PX Hazerswoude-dorp The Netherlands Phone: +31 (0) 172 211 571 Fax: +31 (0) 172 216 371 Email: info@euroskills2008.nl</p>



EE01: INNOMET

Basic data	
Country, region	Estonia
Profile	The project aims at improving the competences of SMEs to assess their human resource potentials and improve their innovation capacities through a web-based network of educational institutions.
Training challenges addressed / links to analytical grid	<p>1.3 HR and skills development policy/plans/anticipation <i>An assessment of HR resources and skills available in the company is the basis of the process</i></p> <p>1.4. Perception of training needs (by entrepreneurs and employees) <i>Skills assessment is made possible through the INNOMET web-site. The outcome of the learning process can also be assessed with this tool.</i></p> <p>2.4. Mismatch of formal training and skill needs on the job <i>Through this web-site, which is used both by companies and training institutions, a better matching between needs of the companies and the training supply is made possible.</i></p>
Duration and status	Since 2003, started as the Estonian part in an international project and carried out since 2005 on the basis of two strands: a national one in Estonian mechanical engineering industry, and the other one with an international team that tested the INNOMET system. Since 2007 carried out in Estonia independently.
Financial sources	EU Leonardo da Vinci Programme, ESF funds.
Type of SMEs addressed	Mainly small and medium sized companies. The system was developed firstly for the Estonian mechanical engineering industry and then expanded to 6 sectors: mechanical engineering, electronics, construction and production of construction materials, IT, wood and furniture industry, car servicing. It can be extended easily to other countries and other fields of activities.
Target group(s)	Employees, employers, training providers, and educational institutions
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	<p>The coordinators and managers of the project are two Estonian organisations: an umbrella organisation, representing metal, engineering and electronics industries and a university.</p> <p>A "Foundation Innomet" has been created to operate, manage and improve the web-based INNOMET system and attribute licenses to companies and educational institutions.</p> <p>The other partners are Estonian, Hungarian, Italian, Latvian, Portuguese and Swedish organisations: national and regional authorities in education, universities, vocational trainers, training bodies, umbrella organisations, enterprises and employees.</p>
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>The INNOMET project aims at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing an integrated web-based system for assessing human resources capabilities of companies and improving their innovative capacity through educational institutions network. ▪ Developing a unified basis for comparable workforce performance evaluation.

	<p>General objectives of the development of web-based INNOMET system are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ developing and improving the life-long learning system; ▪ improving training programs of educational institutions, in particular by way of improving the cooperation between the VET system and the private sector; ▪ developing life-long learning opportunities in companies. <p>Assessment of HR needs and performance has come first: Here the following questions were addressed: For companies - Does our staff quality meet our strategic targets? Where can we find the most adequate vocational education? Has our staff improved after vocational training? For educational institutions - What kind of specialists does the industry need? How many specialists does the industry need? What kind of vocational education is needed? Which are the main competences to develop?</p> <p>On this basis, comparison, benchmarking and transfer of competencies among countries, regions and also among sectors in the longer term were made possible.</p>
Methods and tools applied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ INNOMET I: relationship building and networking between companies and educational institutions; development of a web-based system. ▪ "INNOMET II": developed and tested the system, at national (Estonia) and international levels (in all partners' areas). ▪ "INNOMET-EST": developed a properly functioning web-based system for six sectors in Estonia. <p>Role and use of the web-based tool:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skills assessment of employees ▪ Information, orientation and guidance about training opportunities ▪ Common language (competence categories) used by companies and training providers, so as to facilitate the matching <p>In Estonia, the use of the web-based INNOMET system is free for educational institutions, companies have to pay a fee.</p>
Factors of success and success indicators	<p>Today, about 15 educational institutions are using the system and negotiations are in progress to add links between the INNOMET system and vocational certification process.</p> <p>Major factors of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The project has contributed to the improvement of the quality of education programmes; ▪ The efficiency and transparency of education and training needs in the economic sectors addressed have been increased; ▪ Better cooperation between education institutions and private sector companies; ▪ Better access to re-training and life-long learning. ▪ For training institutions, a better knowledge about training needs and therefore the possibility to adapt more rapidly the training supply.

Further contacts and information

Available information	INNOMET website
Web	http://www.innomet.ee/innomet/
Contact	<p>Tauno Otto Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Tallinn University of Technology Tel. +372 620 3269 Email: tauno.otto@ttu.ee</p> <p>Kaia Lõun Foundation Innomet Tel: +372 5645 8870 Email: kaia.loun@mail.ee</p>



ES01: Relanz@

Basic data	
Country, region	Spain, Cuenca province
Profile	The project Relanz@ created three “Communal Centres of Resources” for participating companies of the managerial net in the region of the Cuenca province offering training for several companies or single companies for the introduction of new technologies. The Communal Centres of Resources were set up in order to bundle capacities under cost-sufficient conditions and to provide training for SMEs in remote areas. The project has developed two advisors supporting the concept of lifelong training, the enterprise tutor and the socio-corporate mediator. Relanz@ had the focus to improve the competitiveness and modernisation processes of companies belonging to the managerial net of the region by installing a new culture among companies.
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	<p>1.1 Organisational problems and barriers <i>Training measures and support particularly designed for the needs of SMEs</i></p> <p>1.2 Financial means and resources for training <i>Development of “shared resource centres”</i></p> <p>2.1. Training methods addressing specific needs of SMEs <i>On-the-job training measures, e-learning, coaching, an enterprise tutor and socio-corporate mediator</i></p>
Duration and status	Completed, 2007
Financial sources	EQUAL
Type of SMEs addressed	Generally all companies in the province of Cuenca, predominantly family-owned micro companies
Target group(s)	All entrepreneurs of the region
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Coordinating organisation was the local town council AYTO. De el Provencio, in cooperation with other organisations: for example employer’s organisations, chamber of commerce, public employment services, companies, an NGO for disadvantaged groups and local authorities from neighbouring towns.
Description	
Background and objectives	35 municipalities belong to of the Cuenca region in Spain. Generally, this area is characterised as rural and remote, but has commercial activities in retail, wholesale, the textile industry and the construction sector. In order to remain competitive and to contribute to a future, Relanz@ provided support for the modernisation and training of the managers’ network. Through this, the companies were prepared for upcoming challenged and structural problems. Also, the project tried to raise the awareness for the importance for lifelong training in companies. In a long-term perspective, the project tried to establish a new managerial culture which then contributed to an improved regional development and a better quality of life for the people in the province. Particularly, Relanz@ had the objective:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to foster new management and organisational formula for enterprises ▪ to assist SMEs in remote and rural areas in accessing information and resources ▪ to provide support specifically tailored for the needs of SMEs ▪ to develop lifelong training plans for businesses ▪ to strengthen the creation of employer's associations ▪ to assist in cooperation between managers, sub-sectoral cooperation ▪ To develop action plans for women
Methods and tools applied	<p>The 3 Communal Centres of Resources provided technical equipment and rooms for training, particularly for micro companies in remote areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In-company training and specific on-the-job training measures ▪ E-learning ▪ Visits to enterprises serving as examples of good practise ▪ Tutorship at the workplace and coaching ▪ Guidance and assistance in developing a strategic plan for companies ▪ Support for appliance for grants and subsidies <p>In addition, a mediator and tutor served as advisors and enable the successful implementation of the entire project:</p> <p>The enterprise tutor was in charge of evaluating the enterprise and to deliver a diagnosis. He identified deficiencies and designed an improvement plan for the company.</p> <p>The socio-corporate mediator was in charge of social responsibilities within companies and fulfilled the function of a mediator in labour conflicts.</p>
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Major factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The 3 Communal Centres of Resources made training easily accessible for SMEs in remote areas. ▪ The project provided SME-specific training tools. ▪ The socio-corporate mediator and enterprise tutor gave an extra impetus according to their function within the company. <p><i>Major success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wide range of courses from 10 to 100 hours (English, marketing, IT, Specific courses on safety and handling of machinery) were offered designed for 15 to 30 trainees
Further contacts and information	
Available information	See Website of Equal; Presentation on project
Web	On EU EQUAL website https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/equal/
Contact	Jose Carlos Jiménez Ruiz Grupo Eq-5 Entornos de Calidad/Quality Enviroment SL C/ La Villa, 2 ES - 16670 - El Provencio (Cuenca) Tel. : +34 661072466 Email: grupoeq5@gmail.com



ES02: CKS – Competences in the Knowledge Society

(Competencias en la sociedad del conocimiento)

Basic data	
Country, region	Spain
Profile	The project addressed barriers and problems of SMEs with regard to implementing lifelong learning and developing competences that are needed in the knowledge society.
Training challenges addressed / links to analytical grid	<p>1.3 HR and skills development policy / plans / anticipation. <i>The tools helped managers to define HR strategy and workers to develop their competences</i></p> <p>1.4 Perceptions of training needs (by entrepreneurs/managers and employees). <i>The tools developed help SMEs managers to assess the competence needs of the company, and the SMEs workers their own training needs</i></p> <p>2.2 Training and competence development for managerial staff / entrepreneurs. <i>The tools give guidance to managerial staff to change their management approaches or strategies by incorporating the management of intellectual capital</i></p>
Duration and status	2004 - 2006.
Financial sources	Leonardo Da Vinci
Type of SMEs addressed	SMEs in the metal sector
Target group(s)	Managers, owners and human resources & training personnel of SMEs in the metal sector.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	<p><i>Promoter:</i> FVEM- Federación Vizcaina Empresas del Metal (federation of Biscayan metal companies - Spain)</p> <p><i>Coordinator:</i> FFE – FONDO FORMACIÓN EUSKADI, S.L.L. (Basque training fund - Spain)</p> <p><i>Partners:</i> organisations in vocational training from Spain, Austria, France, Netherlands, Romania.</p>
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>The general objective of this project was to promote access to lifelong learning, in order to gain the necessary competencies for the knowledge society. The aim was twofold: First to provide SMEs (human resources managers, people in charge of training, and workers in general) with tools to identify, define and classify key skills in their companies. Secondly, to propose strategies for change to improve the management of intellectual capital.</p> <p>Background:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The knowledge society requires a series of competences (transversal competences), and it is urgent to develop them on SMEs ▪ SMEs are lacking specific tools in this field, especially to help them to assess the needs <p>Against this, the following concrete objectives were defined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To identify and classify relevant transversal skills for SMEs in the sector, and to define them in order to make them understandable and

	<p>accessible for companies and employees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To develop a series of tools to allow the identification and classification of key skills within SMEs ▪ To propose strategies for change to improve management of intellectual capital.
Methods and tools applied	<p>The project has developed a "Knowledge Society Competences Guidance" for the industrial enterprise, with the creation of several tools that make the companies and their employees able to evaluate their own competencies and their training needs. The guidance contained the following tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A first tool for the workers: a self-diagnosis tool, which allows them to evaluate their competences regardless the way they have acquired them (formal / informal learning methods). The worker first identifies what the company expects from him/her and then proceeds to the self-evaluation of his competences with regard to these attempts. This tool then gives him/her guidelines or strategies to develop his/her competences. ▪ An assessment tool for the company itself: it allows the company to define its needs (competences, dimensions, levels...) and to make evaluations of the workers' competences, in a simple and fast way. ▪ A Guide that allows the company to establish directions to develop these competences and to change management approaches or strategies to better incorporate the management of intellectual capital. The guidelines are related to different fields of human resources policy: knowledge management (practice analysis, experience data bases, discussion forums...), organisation (job rotation...), training (accompaniment junior-senior, simulation...), internal mobility, remuneration, etc.
Factors of success and success indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of the relevant transversal competences by SMEs ▪ Guides and tools elaborated in constant relation with the SMEs participating in the project ▪ A simple, adaptable and accessible definition of competences ▪ Some practical, simple, useful tools, tailor-made for industrial SMEs: they are flexible (they can be used following an itinerary or not) and adaptable (to the worker / to the company). <p>At the end of the project, a wide diffusion was made among the companies associated to FVEM (more than 1000 companies) and the product was distributed among the numerous companies in the partner countries. These tools are freely available.</p>

Further contacts and information

Available information	Various information available on the website
Web	<p>http://www.fvem.es/</p> <p>http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Projects_Networks/SocialP/project_details.asp?id=1004</p> <p>http://www.fvem.es/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=56:cks-competencias-en-la-sociedad-del-conocimiento&catid=12:proyectos-europeos&Itemid=28 (in Spanish)</p>
Contact	<p>Mr. Jaime Fernandez</p> <p>FVEM - FEDERACION VIZCAINA DE EMPRESAS DEL METAL Gran Via, 50 5º, 48011, BILBAO, SPAIN Tel. : +34 94 4396464 / +34 94 4396469 E-mail : metal@fvem.es</p> <p>Mr. Joseba Sainz De Baranda Email: joseba@fvem.es</p>



FI01: The Four way model "4T"

Basic data	
Country, region	Finland
Profile	The main focus of the "Four way model 4T" was to support Finnish SMEs in their anticipation and adjustment to structural change and to provide holistic business support for SMEs. "4 T" refer to the four Finnish words of future, knowledge, technology and health, which serve as the key themes of the project and the main challenges addressed.
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	<p>1.3. HR and skills development policy / plans / anticipation <i>SMEs may better adjust to changes with new work patterns and new knowledge</i></p> <p>2.1. Training methods addressing specific needs of SMEs <i>"Virtual Future Clinic" serves as an online platform with action plans for change</i> <i>Assistance for selection and use of new technologies</i></p>
Duration and status	2002 - 2005
Financial sources	ESF, EQUAL
Type of SMEs addressed	SME, regional focus on Pirkanmaa district and Western Finland
Target group(s)	<p>Generally all employees from SMEs.</p> <p>Focus on employees with obsolete skills and competences, with problems carrying out their work appropriately, whose work ability has decreased due to handicap.</p>
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	The four way model "4T" was coordinated by the Institute for Extension Studies, Tampere University. Other project partners are Finn-Medi research Ltd. and Tampere Technology Centre Ltd.
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>SME often have problems in keeping pace with technological change, new and changing demands and future market trends. Traditionally, SME rely on only few employees to manage a lot of tasks. Sending employees on training and qualification measures and at the same time promoting a healthy working environment may be very difficult, or even impossible for SMEs.</p> <p>The 4T consortium partners offered a range of training and support services for SME. The project had a regional focus on the Pirkanmaa district and Western Finland, both regions with a lot of metal, machine construction, automation, electronics, textile and footwear industry. These industrial fields are the backbone of the economy of Western Finland. Therefore, the project aimed at the development and maintenance of the professional competence of companies and their workforce in these sectors.</p> <p>After the project was completed, there was a follow-up project coordinated by the same consortium of organisations. "Making a change a chance" was also funded by the ESF and was completed at the end of 2007. This follow-up project was divided into the three sub-projects "Learn, Adapt and Renew", "Work Capability" and "Contact". Again, they focused on SMEs facing structural change and provided an overall service to meet the challenges.</p>

Methods and tools applied	<p>A wide range of services and specific training measures were offered by the project. Here a selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coping with change is one of the 4 key themes. Here, the "Virtual Future Clinic" served as an online platform with appropriate action plans. SMEs may search for tools helping them to understand and respond to change. ▪ Building knowledge: knowledge management was integrated into business activities, training was offered for better communication, data processing, new technologies and to change work patterns. ▪ New technologies: companies were assisted in their selection, adoption and use of new technologies. ▪ Health and improvement of the workplace environment <p>In order to be prepared for future developments, participating companies are analysed according to their needs, skills, technology and occupational health (reduction of health risks, improvement of workplace environment)</p>
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Major success factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SMEs were better prepared for upcoming changes ▪ The "Virtual Future Clinic" served as an innovative tool to provide information and actions plans for SMEs ▪ The project contributed to the future, innovativeness and modernisation of the main industries in this area (Pirkanmaa district and Western Finland) <p><i>Major success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 100 SME and 800 employees have benefited from the programme

Further contacts and information

Web	http://www.finnmediresearch.com/
Contact	<p>Mikko Nieminen Institute for Extension Studies, Tampere University Kalevantie 4 FI-33014 Tampere Phone: +358 3 215 7784 Email: mikko.j.nieminen@uta.fi</p>



FI02: REINO – Renewal and innovation to business transfers of micro companies

Basic data	
Country, region	Finland
Profile	REINO is a proactive stance to business transfers and has been developed through field work in Finland, Denmark, Greece and Italy. The project presents a completely new methodology through its results - probably one of the first analytical approaches in the EU - for examining and coordinating transfer situations. During the 2-year-project duration support services in different stages of business transfer have been developed and tested.
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	<p>1.1 Organisational problems and barriers <i>"Tool box", anticipation system or the "Business renewal Centre" as approaches to overcome barriers.</i></p> <p>2.2 Training and competence development for managerial staff <i>Assistance for entrepreneurs (target group) facing ownership transfer.</i></p> <p>3.1 Demographic change and greying of the workforce <i>Project developed new strategy for successful generational business transfer in micro companies.</i></p>
Duration and status	2006 - 2008
Financial sources	ESF Art. 6
Type of SMEs addressed	Micro companies with 1 to 9 employees
Target group(s)	Entrepreneur over 50 years of age, owners or managers of micro companies
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Kosek (KOKKOLANSEUDUN KEHITYS Ltd.) in cooperation with several partner organisations in DK, IT and GR.
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>In many cases, micro companies are traditionally family-run and owned by an older entrepreneur. According to the REINO website, approximately 610 000 SMEs affecting about 4 million jobs, face a generation transition each year within the next ten years in the EU. This transition may often lead to a sale of the business or ceasing of operations, since micro companies have particular limitations in their preparation for this.</p> <p>Success in generational and ownership transfers is a crucial political, economic, and industrial policy issue that affects the continuation of entrepreneurial activities and preservation of jobs. Especially micro companies lack the knowledge, financial means and time to adequately prepare for such a transfer. Also, transfer processes are very delicate issues and require emotional intelligence. The issue of withdrawing from the business and passing it on to another person can cause high anxieties and stress for the entrepreneur.</p> <p>REINO presents an analytical approach for examining and coordinating transfer situations of micro companies and has the overall objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to improve the conditions for implementing business transfer due to generational and ownership transfers in micro companies ▪ to provide a support structure that may assist entrepreneurs in carrying out this procedure effectively.

Methods and tools applied	<p>Project was divided into 5 steps, each of it lasting between 2-9 months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Baseline analysis: 120 companies were interviewed; in Denmark companies from manufacturing and knowledge based business services, in Italy artisan companies, in Greece and Finland mainly companies from manufacturing and services. ▪ Anticipation system: micro companies with impact on regional economy were identified and encouraged to start the preparation for business transfer well in advance. ▪ Ideal scenario: study on the successful way to carry out the process of business transfer. ▪ Tool box: different tools were used in practical work in order to check on their suitability. ▪ Business renewal Centre: task was to continuously carry out business transfers in the region of each partner organisation. Previously, partner organisations formed a sound vision of the tools, methods and operation models suitable for carrying out the transfer processes.
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Major factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ REINO offered a new analytical approach for an improved and effective business transfer, particularly designed for micro enterprises. ▪ The outcome of the project is the new analytical approach, based on field work in four EU countries and therefore transferable to other companies. <p><i>Major success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 120 companies were analysed during field work in four countries. ▪ REINO improved the attitudes of micro business owners towards the transfer situation, who might see an opportunity for renewal in this change.

Further contacts and information

Available information	See Website
Web	www.reinoproject.eu
Contact	<p>Sabina Storbacka Ristirannankatu 1 FIN – 67100 Kokkola Email: sabina.storbacka@kosek.fi Phone: + 358 44 7095 980</p>



FR01: Quinq&Sens and Investing in winning solutions

Basic data	
Country, region	France – Nord Pas-de-Calais Picardie.
Profile	<p>The <i>Quinq&Sens</i> project aims at encouraging seniors for training. For this, different actions have been developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidance for employers to integrate this question in their HR policy ▪ Advice for ageing employees to help them to built a training project. <p>This project goes hand in hand with another action: a big awareness campaign towards SMEs (<i>Investing in winning solutions</i>)</p>
Training challenges addressed / links to analytical grid	<p>3.1. Demographic change and greying of the workforce. <i>Advice to employees for their own career management, advice to employers for the greying workforce management, awareness campaigns to fight negative representations.</i></p>
Duration and status	The project started in 2006. Ongoing
Financial sources	<p>"<i>Quinq & Sens</i>": FSE (Equal project), Fongecif, two Joint Collection Bodies for training (Agefos-PME and Opcalia). "<i>Investing in winning solutions</i> ": Agefos PME and public funds</p>
Type of SMEs addressed	All SMEs in Nord Pas de Calais – Picardie area.
Target group(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seniors (aged 45 or older) and entrepreneurs ▪ Public actors of employment and vocational training, training centres
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Quinq&Sens</i>: initiated by Fongecif (French joint organism that collects contributions for paid study leaves, informs and advises employees and finances training projects) and the partners were the two Joint Collection Bodies for training (Agefos-PME and Opcalia). Two European partners (Dutch and Portuguese) took part in the project. ▪ <i>Investing in winning solutions</i>: project led by 5 regional Agefos-PME agencies
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>The different partners had the same observation :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Insufficient training of seniors / construction of training plans ▪ Insufficient offer of tailor-made training courses for these employees ▪ Difficulty to increase employers and employees awareness of this issue in SMEs (they do not consider it as a problem) <p>In 2004, Agefos PME led a survey on the population pyramid of its members. The main observation was that though there were not many seniors in SMEs, they held strategic posts (company managers, managerial staff, etc.). This first action facilitated the ones that followed.</p> <p>Against this, the following two major objectives were defined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase employers, employees, training centres and public actors' awareness of the interest of training for seniors. ▪ Provide advice to employees and employers in this issue.
Methods and tools applied	<p><i>Investing in winning solutions</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In order to address the issue of ageing at work several Agefos-PME agencies, among the one for the Nord-Picardie regions, have organised a awareness campaign in order to increase public awareness of seniors'

	<p>access to training, inform companies of public financial aids, encourage companies to implement an anticipated management of jobs and competencies and to recruit and train seniors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specific tools: information meetings with testimonials of company managers who have led training actions for seniors and with speeches of public actors; free delivery of a CD-Rom to all the member companies, messages on the radio, mini-website and others <p><i>Quinq&Sens:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diagnostic of the situation of seniors' training. ▪ Actions towards seniors: Pilot'Age is a new service for employees aged 45 or more who want to begin a training process. It is a tailor-made advice to employees for the management of their own second-part career, linked with the company's project. The employee is followed in the whole training course, at the beginning (to define precisely the professional plan), during the training, at the end and after the end. A tool was created: a "dashboard", which facilitates the monitoring of the progress. ▪ Actions towards training centres: Meetings with training and advice centres to encourage them to develop services tailor-made for seniors. ▪ Actions towards Agefos-PME counsellors: Training for Agefos-PME counsellors: they do now integrate the question of age management in their daily actions
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Factors of success and success indicators	<p>Success indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Investing in winning solutions": 26 000 enterprises and partners touched, 25 local meetings (with testimonials, experience transfer, experts, theatrical representations), 19 000 CD ROM distributed to companies (a tool for using training systems). ▪ Agefos observed an increase in training of workers aged 45 and older. ▪ "Quinq&Sens": more than 100 employees have been followed in their training. <p>Factors of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General approach to address companies: In order to address SMEs' managers and employees, it proved to be more efficient to apply a general approach with regard to HR development and training instead of directly addressing the specific issue of age. ▪ A long-term perspective: Since Agefos-PME counsellors are aware and trained to the issues of age management. They can mobilise this knowledge in their regular visits in SMEs, by integrating this issue in the general training policy of the company (and not dealing with it separately). ▪ Multipliers: SME managers who have successfully implemented specific actions of training towards seniors are important multipliers.
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Further contacts and information

Available information	AGEFOS-PME Website	
Web	www.agefos-pme-nordpicardie.com	
Contacts :	<p><i>Quinq&Sens:</i> Sylvie DELAHAYE AGEFOS PME Nord Picardie Directrice Service E&D Tel. 03.20.53.01.39 Mail: sdelahaye@agefos-pme.com</p> <p><i>Investing in Winning Solutions:</i> Virginie RIGOLLE AGEFOS PME Nord Picardie Tel: 03.22.35.42.41 Mail: VRIGOLLE@agefos-pme.com</p>	<p>Philippe VERRAES FONGECIF Nord-Pas-de-Calais Tel: 03.20.06.79.30 Mail: pverraes@fongecif-npdc.fr</p>



FR02: HR Platform (*Plateforme RH*)

Basic data	
Country, region	France, Nord (Lille area)
Profile	Created by the Chamber of commerce and industry (CCI) of the Lille area with employment operators (like National employment agency), the "HR Platform" aims at helping SMEs to define their training needs, to find access to public financing, or even help employees make transitions from restructuring SMEs to other companies searching for competencies.
Training challenges addressed / links to analytical grid	<p>1.3 HR and skills development policy / plans / anticipation <i>The HR platform helps SMEs to define HR policy targets, integrated in the general economic strategy of the company</i></p> <p>1.5. Resource pooling and cooperation of SMEs <i>In the framework of the platform, the CCI can be an intermediary between SMEs to organise r some projects together (like transferring workers from a restructuring company to a company with recruitment needs)</i></p>
Duration and status	Launched 2008 in the Lille area after having already existed since 2006 in a nearby chamber of commerce which in 2008 merged with the Lille chamber.
Financial sources	Own financing, from the contributions of companies to the Chamber of Commerce. Counsellors of the platform are employees of the public employment service agencies.
Type of SMEs addressed	All SMEs in the area, with a focus on those without any HR service.
Target group(s)	Employers and management representatives responsible for HR.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Managed by Lille area Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Partners: "Pôle Emploi" and "Maison de l'emploi" (Public employment services), local authorities, decentralised employment and training services (DDTEFP).
Description of the case	
Background and objectives	Background of the initiative were the under representation of SMEs in public schemes financed by the public employment service. One goal was to make these schemes more accessible for SMEs. Another background was the lack of HR culture in SMEs. The platform offers a free advice about the needs of the company and orientates it towards adapted solutions.
Methods and tools applied	<p><i>Start:</i> Counsellors of the Platform contact the SMEs of the area and propose to meet them. Each counsellor is specialised in one or more sectors or professions (engineers, sales, etc.). In the context of a first meeting, the consultation is focussing on the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skills assessment and skills needs ▪ How to develop skills: internal development, external development ▪ Work organisation ▪ How to choose the good training centre regarding the needs, how to find the financings, etc. <p>If the employer wishes so, four half-days can be provided by the Platform counsellors, still free of charge, in order to define an action plan and to implement, when possible, the recommendations. If necessary, i.e. if the company needs more comprehensive action, this will be provided in</p>

	<p>cooperation with consultancies (at their expenses).</p> <p>An important aspect of the platform is the involvement of various local actors (actors of employment, joint collection bodies for training, regional council, etc.). In the framework of regular meeting, the counsellors of HR platform and the local actors discuss the information on enterprises met by the counsellors and evaluate the situation of those who have specific problems to try to find solutions.</p>
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proximity: The meetings take place in the company. Counsellors try to find concrete, tailor-made HR solutions for the company. ▪ <i>Systemic approach:</i> during the meeting with the employer, the counsellor analyses the context of the business, its products, its development, challenges, etc. On this basis, concrete objectives and measures of HR development are defined. ▪ Pedagogical competences of the counsellors. ▪ Long-term orientation: Working on daily processes and problems to improve them step-by-step, follow-up activities. <p><i>Indicators of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 800 enterprises have been approached in 2008 with 300 addressed by further activities. ▪ There are many individual examples of companies finding tailor-made solutions to barriers of suitable training activities and structures, e.g. establishing an in-house training centre in a medium-sized company in the electrical industry. ▪ The HR platform is regarded as very successful and will be duplicated in other regions in France.

Further contacts and information

Available information	Further information available on the web-site.
Web	http://www.grand-lille.cci.fr/
Contact	<p>Ms Frédérique Seels CCI Grand Lille Place du Théâtre – BP 359 – 59020 Lille cedex Tél : 03 20 63 77 77 E-mail : formation@grand-lille.cci.fr</p>



FR03: Open and distant learning in four sawmills

Basic data	
Country, region	France
Profile	Considering that open and distant learning can be a good solution for organisational problems in small and medium sized companies, the aim of this action was to organise such training courses for employees in four small sawmills, for whom it is difficult to leave the company for training. This experience was both a response to specific problems and needs of these sawmills, and a way to test an innovation that could be used afterwards with some other employees and for other competencies.
Training challenges addressed / Links to analytical grid	<p>1.1 Organisational barriers and obstacles <i>Distant learning as a solution for giving access to training to workers in small companies in a rural area</i></p> <p>2.1 Training methods addressing specific needs of SMEs, such as on-the-job-training, job rotation, etc. <i>Tailor-made programme organised jointly by the training centre and the company</i></p> <p>2.4 Mismatch of formal training and qualification needs on the job <i>Training corresponding to a specific skills demand and giving access to a recognised certification</i></p>
Duration and status	2005 – 2006. Completed.
Financial sources	AGEFOS-PME Lorraine (AGEFOS-PME is the Joint Collection Body for SMEs in France), national funds and ESF
Type of SMEs addressed	Four sawmills in the Lorraine area: the smallest employed 13 workers and the biggest 108.
Target group(s)	Employees of the companies involved in the project
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	The project was managed by AGEFOS-PME Lorraine. It worked closely with the four employers. The courses were designed and organised by a training centre.
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>The objective was to improve skills and competences in small sawmills in the Lorraine area. These companies were facing specific difficulties such as the remoteness from urban areas, restricted mobility of workers and a lack of specialised training facilities accessible to the companies. The sawmills also had difficulties in recruiting qualified workers. Therefore they had to recruit people with no education in this profession, who have to be trained.</p> <p><i>A first initiative that failed:</i> A first action of e-learning was experienced in 2003, but failed for several reasons, in particular because the training content was too theoretical and not concrete enough. Also, there was a lack of inter-action and communication (no trainer able to help the trainees)</p> <p>The new programme therefore concentrated on concrete contents, and an “individual training agreement” was signed by the employee, the employer and the training centre. This agreement specified the modalities of the training, and the commitments of each party.</p>

Methods and tools applied	<p>Organisation of open and distant learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training courses directly at the worksite, in a specific room of the company (for each of the 4 companies at the same time) ▪ Regular courses after the workday ▪ Seven modules from 20 to 40 hours, 232 hours altogether ▪ training centre provides hardware (computers, headphones and webcams) to the companies <p><i>Methodology:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Web-based application ▪ Videoconference - live courses with trainers situated in another town
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Factors of success</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training methods and contents designed on the specific requirements of the target group ▪ "Physical" presence of the trainers ▪ Involvement and commitment of the employers ▪ Motivation of the employees ▪ Formalisation of the training schedule ▪ Training leading to a recognised qualification ("Xylopass" certification - European training passport) ▪ Quality of the technical equipment <p><i>Success indicators</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All employees completed the training course ▪ Satisfaction of all partners involved ▪ Improved relationships and exchanges between the different sawmills

Further contacts and information

Available information	Agefos-pme website
Web	<p>http://www.agefos-pme-lorraine.com/</p> <p>http://www.inffolor.org/Communication/Objectif_mag/39/pdf/perspective.pdf</p> <p>http://foad.inffolor.org/content/view/499/112/</p>
Contacts	<p>Brigitte Navier AGEFOS PME 3 rue de Berlange 57140 WOIPPY Tel.: 03 87 32 06 51 Email: lorraine@agefos-pme.com</p> <p>Joseph Ribaud GRETA des Hautes-Vosges 26 Route d'Epinal 88200 REMIREMONT Cedex Tel. : 03 29 62 84 33 Email: greta.des.hautes.vosges@wanadoo.fr</p>



FR04: “Competence cells” of the French Textile and Clothing Institute

Basic data	
Country, region	France. Cholet area
Profile	Develop training in a territory principally constituted of restructuring SMEs in the clothing sector, anticipate change and develop human resources.
Training challenges addressed / Links to analytical grid	<p>2.1. Training methods addressing specific needs of SMEs <i>Tailored training aiming at upgrading employee’s skills</i></p> <p>3.3. Competence development in the context of globalisation <i>Competences were developed in order to face the new challenges but also opportunities provided by globalisation</i></p> <p>3.4 Improving and addressing gender equality and opportunities for women <i>The initiative was particularly addressing female employees in the textile and clothing sector</i></p>
Duration and status	2005-2007. Completed
Financial sources	ESF, Art. 6 and co-financing by IFTH
Type of SMEs addressed	SMEs of the Western and East-Centre regions of France. The companies are mainly sub-contractors in the textile and clothing industry.
Target group(s)	Women, working as technicians in design offices
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	<p>French Textile and Clothing Institute (IFTH) in partnership with the Regional Clothing Federation.</p> <p>The initiative was carried out as the French part of the ESF Art. 6 project “Pro Crisis”, coordinated by the Hellenic Fashion Industry Association (SEPEE) with further partners in Greece, Portugal, Bulgaria and Romania.</p>
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>The textile and clothing sector experiences a strong competition from other countries – mainly a competition on costs. The “Pro-Crisis” project addressed these challenges by developing mechanisms for crisis prevention and solutions in the context of the ongoing restructuring in the industry, the promotion of innovative activities for SMEs of the clothing industry, aiming to smooth adjustments for economic restructuring, and the continuing development of industry training system.</p> <p>Specific objectives of the French project were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Upgrading skills and competences of employees (factory workers and technicians) in the clothing industry. ▪ Implementing continuous training in order to increase SMEs performance and quality, through workers’ skills, enrichment of jobs and tasks, and an improved adaptability in the face of the new opportunities provided by globalisation.
Methods and tools applied	<p>The project included case studies on skills and competence needs in the companies involved and the implementation of group training in small teams and application works for trainees.</p> <p>An important part of the training concerned new cloths and materials. Another part aimed at developing skills related to design and innovation,</p>

	with a goal to “enrich the service”. Rather than following a lean-production model, the goal was to increase the quality of the upward service (design, innovation, relation with the clients, etc.). Raising workers’ polyvalence was conceived as a key to increase the overall quality of the service and the SMEs competitiveness.
Factors of success and success indicators	<p>Factors of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Personalised, in situ training ▪ Training based on the products of the company: direct link to the everyday work and the challenges faced by SMEs ▪ Work in small groups <p>Success indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 133 trainees in 10 companies and 2 universities (professional certificate) ▪ Improved competitiveness of the participating SMEs, mainly through an upgrade in competencies and skills in design offices

Further contacts and information

Available information	Project report and further information available of the “Pro-Crisis” web-site
Web	http://www.pro-crisis.org/default.asp?pid=45&la=2 http://www.ifth.org/institut-textile/home.html
Contact	<p>Patrick Robinet IFTH 1 rue de la Louisiane F-49300 Cholet Tel: +33 2 41 49 52 70 probinet@ifth.org</p> <p>Coordinators of the “Pro-Crisis” project: Hellenic Fashion Industry Association – SEPEE Ermou 18a, 54624 Thessaloniki Greece Tel: +30 2310 257075 info@pro-crisis.org</p>



FR05: Training Pass (*Pass'Formation*)

Basic data	
Country, region	France, Nord-Pas-de-Calais
Profile	Considering the difficulties SMEs face to train their employees, Agefos-PME (a body collecting the funds for vocational training of SMEs) proposes cheap, short and ready-to-use training modules with training centres approved.
Training challenges addressed / Links to analytical grid	<p>1.1. Organisational problems and barriers <i>Short, ready-to-use, training modules conceived for SMEs</i></p> <p>1.2 Financial means and resources for training <i>Providing training on a financially attractive basis</i></p> <p>1.5 Resource pooling and SME cooperation in training and competence development <i>Agefos-PME collects the funds for vocational training of enterprises. It manages and finances training actions. It informs and advises employers on training, it pools resources for training and mobilises European, national and regional financings for training in SMEs.</i></p>
Duration and status	2007-2009. Ongoing.
Financial sources	Agefos-PME Nord Pas de Calais, state funds and ESF (in 2008)
Type of SMEs addressed	SMEs employing more than 10 workers.
Target group(s)	All SME employees in companies being a member of Agefos-PME in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region can be get involved in the initiative. However, a special target group are employees facing specific difficulties, e.g. women, employees aged 45 or older, and with low qualification.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Agefos-PME Nord-Pas-de-Calais in cooperation with certified training centres.
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>The initiative was developed against the growing need of horizontal inter-professional actions of training which is easy to access by SMEs and implemented in the context of short training modules.</p> <p><i>Concrete objectives :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Simplified access to training for SME employees and in particular for the disadvantaged groups ▪ professional courses and implementation ▪ Increase the diversity of employees' competences.
Methods and tools applied	<p><i>Methods and instruments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training catalogue – a collection of all the available training modules is disseminated amongst Agefos-PME members. ▪ "Anti-crisis plan": Face to the crisis, an additional budget has been allocated, notably for specific and urgent training actions in SMEs. Indeed, the current tough period can be an opportunity for companies to send some employees to training. This strategy would allow them being particularly dynamic after the crisis. Nevertheless, that is quite hard because enterprises find it difficult to launch themselves into the future. ▪ Training centres involved are selected by Agefos-PME on the basis of

	<p>an invitation for tenders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Turn-key", with training centres chosen by Agefos, enterprises do not have to spend time and resources on selecting training providers. ▪ <i>Short-termed modules</i>: a maximum of 5 days of training is foreseen in order to address the organisational problem of SMEs that they are not able to send employees to training for longer periods of time. ▪ <i>Contents corresponding to a real needs of enterprises</i>: basic knowledge, management/HR management, commercial, languages, information and communication technologies, and hygiene/quality/safety/environment. ▪ <i>Affordable</i>: in order to overcome the financial barriers to training for small enterprises: 50€ per day per person. Moreover, Agefos-PME covers 100 % of wages during the training and 100% of additional costs (travel, accommodation, meals).
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Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Success indicators :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In 2008, this action accounted for 1,200 hours of training for about 60 employees from 17 different companies. ▪ Since its inauguration, the number of employees having received a certification has increased significantly <p><i>Factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Simplicity and an easy way of implementation ▪ Affordable prices ▪ Coverage of trainees' wages by Agefos-PME ▪ Proximity of Agefos-PME counsellors and training centres ▪ Selection criteria of training centres: experience with SME employees, knowledge of SMEs population, pedagogical coherency, training of trainers, quality/price ratio, places to host trainees, etc. It also tries to choose at least one training centre per department, in order to have centres close to enterprises.
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Further contacts and information

Available information	AGEFOS-PME Website of the Nord-Picardie regional agency
Web	www.agefos-pme-nordpicardie.com
Contact	<p>Joëlle Dehaynin AGEFOS Nord-Picardie Chargée de mission, Service Etudes & Développement 12 rue de Douai – BP371 – 59020 LILLE Cedex Tel : 03.20.53.00.44 Email : JDEHAYNIN@agefos-pme.com</p>



FR06: VAE - Validation of work experience (Validation des acquis de l'expérience)

Basic data	
Country, region	France, Pas-de-Calais
Profile	The aim of this action was to make the validation of work experiences (VAE - "Validation des acquis de l'expérience", a French national programme), i.e. the recognition/certification of practical work competences acquired during the professional experience easier for French workers. The initiative was implemented jointly in five enterprises in the Lens area.
Training challenges addressed / Links to analytical grid	2.3 Validation of informal skills and qualification <i>The project accompanies employees in a VAE process that lead to the recognition of informal competences acquired by professional experience through a certification.</i>
Duration and status	2008 - Completed
Financial sources	DDTEFP of Pas-de-Calais (public service for employment and vocational training) and Agefos-PME Nord-Picardie
Type of SMEs addressed	Regional SMEs – here, a group of five enterprises in the Lens area. The VAE programme in general is not restricted to SMEs.
Target group(s)	Employees, in particular those who are threatened by redundancies.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Public authorities of Pas-de-Calais in cooperation with five enterprises, two accreditation centres and AGEFOS-PME
Description du cas	
Background and objectives	<p>The French VAE programme aims at the certification/recognition of competences acquired by professional experience. It can be an individual process for an employee, but the objective was to use this tool in a collective approach and as a chance for companies in the Lens area. The participating companies have jointly initiated the actions, they have facilitated the setting up of the project within their enterprise and have mobilised the employees, the managers, and the social partners.</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To inform employees about the VAE instrument/programme and the benefits for individual employees ▪ To support employees in obtaining a certification
Methods and tools applied	<p><i>The Lens initiative was based on the following steps:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Information</i> on VAE and the project and mobilisation of employees. HR managers have identified some employees for participating in the process. The aim was to avoid any risk of failure by choosing the persons who were almost sure to obtain the certification. ▪ <i>Collective information meetings.</i> The partners brought together the chosen employees in order to provide detailed information to them. ▪ <i>Supporting employees.</i> Employees were supported also individually in preparing the necessary documents of proof and get prepared for the exams which are part of the VAE process. ▪ <i>Validation.</i> The professional jurors validate the competences in the context of a practical work situation as well as an interview.

Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employees have been approached actively and are supported throughout the whole VAE process ▪ Collective character of the action: from the beginning of the preparation to the end of the validation, the employees are within a group and not isolated. They can help each other, reassure each other, give some advice, etc. ▪ Social dialogue: These actions are lead in collaboration with social partners, who have understood the stake for workers as well as for companies. The involvement of employee interest representations in the process also increased the trust and confidence of employees involved. ▪ Careful selection of the employees involved: Only those who seem to be able to successfully go through the VAE process were selected – thereby failures and discouragement was avoided ▪ Tailor-made solutions: The companies have developed individual schedules to prepare the candidates. <p><i>Success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A high success rate: 80 employees obtained the complete professional certification among the 90 who began this process. Those who obtained a partial validation now work with the company to continue until the complete validation. ▪ Positive feedback from enterprises and employees, who testify on a DVD elaborated by DDTEFP on this project. According to these testimonials, this action implied a real recognition, a pride, and self-confidence to employees. ▪ A snowball effect: both within (further employees are becoming interested in the VAE process) and outside the companies involved – further companies have been interested for the VAE programme
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Further contacts and information

Available information	Agefos-PME
Web	http://www.pas-de-calais.pref.gouv.fr/lettre/spip4df8.html?article98
Contact	<p>Éric Dehay Agefos-PME, Délégué départemental du Pas-de-Calais Tel : 03.21.71.20.86 Email : edehay@agefos-pme.com</p> <p>DDTEFP - Bassin d'emploi de LENS Assiba SMARA, Animatrice Territoriale Tél : 03.21.79.46.31</p>



GR01: Vocational Training Centre of the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals Craftsmen and Merchants (KEK GSEVEE)

Basic data	
Country, region	Greece
Profile	The Vocational Training Centre of GSEVEE was established in 1995 as a non-profit organisation due to the increasing need of Greek SMEs and crafts for continuing vocational training. It provides up-to-date vocational training, qualification and professional expertise for owners, directors and employees of SMEs as well as artisans and merchants.
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	<p>1.1 Organisational problems and barriers <i>Centre is designed to meet needs of SMEs, artisans and merchants</i></p> <p>1.3 HR and skills development policy / plans / anticipation Perceptions of training needs <i>Programme offers job analysis for a better evaluation of training needs.</i></p> <p>2.2 Training and competence development for managerial staff/entrepreneurs <i>Centre offers various courses for entrepreneurs.</i></p> <p>3.3 Competence development in the context of internationalisation <i>Orientation towards EU integration and networking</i></p>
Duration and status	The Vocational Training Centre of GSEVEE was established in 1995 as a non-profit organisation. The Centre is certified by the Greek National Accreditation Centre of Continuing Vocational Training – EKEPIS and is based in Athens with branches in Thessaloniki, Larisa, Patra, Ioannina and Heraklion/Crete.
Financial sources	National funds (e.g. Account for Employment and Vocational Training – LAEK), ESF and other European programmes as well as fees by the beneficiaries themselves.
Type of SMEs addressed	Generally all SMEs including craft enterprises and artisans
Target group(s)	Owners, directors and employees of SMEs as well as artisans and merchants. Another target group is also unemployed people (promotion of self-employment)
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants (GSEVEE) – the main Greek employer organisation for micro and small enterprises as well as self-employed. GSEVEE organises 80 individual federations (55 local and 25 sectoral ones). Beside employers organisations also trade unions (GSEE) are involved in the activities of KEK GSEVEE.

Description

Background and objectives	<p>KEK GSEVEE was established in order to meet the increasing need of Greek small and medium sized enterprises for continuing vocational training. At the same time there was a lack of SME specific further training and qualification infrastructures.</p> <p>The main aim of its operation is to meet the needs for vocational training, qualification and expertise of owners, managers as well as employees in SMEs, but also artisans and merchants. The promotion of the idea of lifelong learning also is an objective of the Centre.</p> <p>Main subjects of training and qualification measures are further technical training and qualification, entrepreneurship in micro and small enterprises, information and communication technologies and health and safety issues.</p>
Methods and tools applied	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Direct provision of training of various types of SMEs taking into account the special technological and other needs (e.g. in auto mechanics, auto body repair techniques, electricians, plumbers etc.)▪ Counselling and supporting the implementation of information and communication technologies, health and safety at work▪ Design of training programmes▪ Carrying out training needs analyses▪ Job analysis and support in the preparation of job descriptions
Factors of success and success indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Centre is rooted in the Greek SME, artisan and merchants sector and based on a broad network with all relevant national as well as international organisations▪ Orientation towards European integration and networking – support for stronger international orientation of Greek SMEs▪ Social partner approach, i.e. employers organisations, professional organisations as well as trade unions and the government are actively involved▪ Broad scope of activities and integrated approach of supporting training and qualification in SMEs as well as promoting lifelong learning and entrepreneurship▪ Up-to-date and professional equipment, facilities, infrastructure▪ High-quality scientific and teaching personnel▪ Experienced and qualified administrative personnel

Further information and contacts

Available information	A profile sheet of KEK GSEVEE as well as various project reports are available on the website of the Centre
Web	www.kekgsevee.gr
Contact	Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants Vocational Training Centre - KEK GSEVEE 46 Aristotelous Str. GR 104 33 Athens Tel: +30-210-8544666 Fax: +30-210-8543636



GR02: ACTION LINC - Action for Leather Integrated Cooperation

Basic data	
Country, region	Greece
Profile	The main objective of the initiative was to assist SMEs in the Greek leather and footwear sector to deal with issues linked with ageing workforces and age management. The project encouraged older workers to remain active by upgrading their skills and improving the quality of their working life, to transfer their experience to younger workers and to implement HR management practices in the companies.
Training challenges addressed / Links to analytical grid	3.1 Demographic change and greying of the workforce <i>The objective was to facilitate the training and the maintaining of ageing workers in employment, by the implementation of the innovative age management and some awareness campaigns.</i>
Duration and status	2005 - 2007
Financial sources	ESF Art. 6, national co-financing.
Type of SMEs addressed	SMEs of the leather & footwear sectors
Target group(s)	Employers, HR managers and workers above 55 years old.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	The project was coordinated by EOMMEX (Hellenic Organisation of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises & Handicrafts) – SMEs of the Leather & Footwear Sector – with further partners from Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal.

Description	
Background and objectives	<p><i>Background:</i></p> <p>Beside demographic change a sector specific background was the trend of too many older employees retiring too early in the Greek leather and footwear sector. At the same time the sector is characterised by a high share of older employees.</p> <p>Four priorities were defined in this project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Changing employer attitudes, promoting public debate ▪ Improving employability and personnel’s development ▪ Improving working conditions and health, maintaining work ability ▪ Promoting flexibility in working life <p><i>Specific objectives:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design and implement an innovative age management strategy in Leather producing SMEs from four Mediterranean countries. ▪ Raise awareness of employers on the issues of active ageing. ▪ Upgrade skills of the target group and encourage active learning. ▪ Initiate work placements through innovative methods of training. ▪ Create a network with the active participation of the partners from each country in the sector. ▪ Develop tailor made training programmes and life-long learning methodologies. ▪ Organise short term transnational exchanges of employees between SMEs and job shadowing activities.

Methods and tools applied	<p>The major task of the project was to design and implementation age management strategies at the company level which are adapted to the situation in each of the participating countries.</p> <p>In the context of the project a practical, easily accessible tool was designed, with the aim to assist managers, employers, employees and social partners in ensuring that ageing workforce is successfully managed and that age does not become a barrier to employment. The age management strategy included several content modules such as “lifelong learning opportunities & training organisation”, “healthcare arrangements”, “promoting links between generations by mentoring”, specific tutoring methodology”.</p> <p>Furthermore the project developed tailor-made training programme modules designed to suit employees’ needs in these sectors (available on-line) which focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge (acquisition of background knowledge) ▪ Attitude (change of attitudes towards learning and training, towards changes in the working environment/life, towards new technologies) ▪ Skills (acquisition of new skills in IT, production techniques, etc.) <p>Within the context of the project the following further activities were implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short term exchanges of employees and/or employers between SMEs in order to foster the exchange of experience and know-how between professionals in different countries. ▪ Job shadowing: the employee learns about a job by walking through the work day to a competent worker. That provides an opportunity to gain experience of the workplace, to help with future career and training decisions and to create a network of professional contacts. ▪ Public awareness campaign and dissemination by seminars, a sensitisation of public authorities, a media campaign with TV and radio spots, a special phone line in each participating country.
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Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Major factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tailor-made character of the training modules ▪ Public awareness campaign ▪ Transnational cooperation ▪ Effective project management, dissemination and mainstreaming ▪ Ongoing monitoring and evaluation <p><i>Success indicators (for Greece):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By the project the majority of the companies in the leather and footwear sector were directly addressed. At least 35 companies participated in workshops and dissemination events and 5 companies implemented the age management strategy in a pilot-phase. ▪ Two seminars with a total of 40 trainees have been implemented. ▪ Short term exchanges and job shadowing: organisation of four group meetings with 28 to 36 participants.
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Further contacts and information

Available information	Website – ESF Art. 6 Brochure
Web	http://www.actionlinc.eu
Contact	<p>Syros Koskovolis Head of SME Department – EOMMEX 16, Xenias st. 11528, Athens, Greece Tel: +30 210 7491235 Email: syros@eommex.gr</p>

HU01: Hungarian Association of Craftsmen's Corporations IPOSZ (IPARTESTÜLETEK ORSZÁGOS SZÖVETSÉGE)

Basic data	
Country, region	Hungary
Profile	The Hungarian Association of Craftsmen's Corporation IPOSZ is an umbrella organisation representing 279 legally independent craftsmen's corporations. It promotes and raises awareness on the importance of training among small and micro enterprises and represents the interests of its members as employers in regard to collective sectoral agreements and towards politics, ministries and public institutions.
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	1.5 Resource pooling and SME cooperation in training and competence development <i>IPOSZ is a umbrella organisation of SMEs, particular focus on micro enterprises and their training needs</i>
Duration and status	Ongoing
Financial sources	Membership fees of companies.
Type of SMEs addressed	Generally all SMEs in Hungary, particular focus on micro enterprises and family-run businesses
Target group(s)	Entrepreneurs
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	The Hungarian Association of Craftsmen's Corporations (IPOSZ) is the largest national employer and professional organisation of Hungarian micro and small-sized enterprises and crafts. As an umbrella organisation it represents 279 legally independent craftsmen's corporations, reaching 50,000 individual entrepreneurs and 200,000 employees.
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>Micro enterprises and family-run businesses do rarely participate in training activities. As in all other European countries, their financial sources are very limited and most of the company owners are not very familiar with the possibilities of lifelong learning and the availability of support sources.</p> <p>However, technological change is of high importance for them to remain competitive. Micro enterprises can easily react to changing demands of their customers and society due to their size and flexibility, but need to be able to professionally assess their own economic assets, of their environment and to manage their enterprise.</p> <p>Aside from managerial knowledge (business plans, budgets, loan applications, taxation, safety at work, employment fund), micro enterprises in Hungary need to be familiar with the use of IT and need to have basic knowledge of another European language. In this particular case, the Hungarian language is only spoken by a small minority in the EU which leads to the need of either learning another language or an effective translation tool.</p> <p>The IPOSZ has the objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To protect and enforce the interests of micro and small-sized enterprises and crafts ▪ To provide counselling and advise ▪ To serve as an information system in order to keep members updated by

	<p>gathering reports, publications, articles (website of IPOSZ)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To coordinate training activities of affiliated organisations ▪ To establish a relationship with the other continuing training facilities in the region, making their courses known, especially the accredited ones
Methods and tools applied	<p>The IPOSZ has created a website as a database on all training-relevant information for micro enterprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Permanent presentation of the training needs of the enterprises, and their transmission towards the databases. ▪ Listing of the centres equipped with the state-of-the-art technology in the major trade groups, assessment of their territorial location ▪ Assistance in micro enterprises' application for funds to cover the costs of training ▪ Communication between micro enterprises and training institutions on actual training needs and evaluation of training units and material ▪ Co-operation with institutes engaged in apprentice training. <p>Generally, one objective of the IPOSZ is to raise the awareness of the Act on Education of Adults in Hungary.</p>
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Success factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Micro enterprises have access to a database providing information on training, funds and further assistance <p><i>Success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ International cooperation with UEAPME and UIAPME ▪ 50,000 individual entrepreneurs from the SME sector in Hungary are covered through this umbrella organisation

Further information and contacts

Available information	More information on current activities and member organisations are available on the website of IPOSZ
Web	http://www.iposz.hu/
Contact	<p>Director: Gábor SOLTI Ipartestületek Országos Szövetsége (IPOSZ) Hungarian Association of Craftsmen's Corporations H-1054 Budapest Kálmán Imre u. 20. Hungary Phone: +36 1 354 31 50 Fax: +36 1 269 29 57</p>



IE01: Skillnets Initiative

Basic data and information	
Country	Ireland
Profile	<p>Skillnets are “learning networks” created among industries irrespective of their size, location and industrial sector. Skillnets support and facilitate the development of enterprise-led learning networks with financial support from the National Training Fund. It has set its focus on preparing the Irish economy for upcoming new challenges through training and upskilling as the key elements for success. According to studies and experiences throughout the first years of Skillnets, an important and distinctively declared target group are the low-skilled employees. More than any other group, the low skilled face limitations of their options in the contemporary working world.</p>
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	<p>1.1 Organisational problems and barriers <i>“Learning networks” as easily accessible training opportunities</i></p> <p>1.3 HR and skills development policy / plans / anticipation <i>Training and upskilling as key elements for successful anticipation of change</i></p> <p>1.5 Resource pooling and SME cooperation <i>Skillnets are “learning networks” based on close cooperation among companies</i></p> <p>2.1 Training methods addressing specific needs of SMEs <i>Training methods are designed by companies, e.g. in-company training</i></p>
Duration and status	The programme started in 1999, ongoing
Financial sources	National Training Fund and funds of the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment. It is important to note that the National Training Funds derive from 0.7 per cent of the employers' wage bills (employers' social insurance contributions).
Type of SMEs addressed	Generally all SMEs as Skillnets has a cross-regional and cross-sectoral approach.
Target group(s)	All employees, focus on the low skilled.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Various stakeholders: Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC), Chambers Ireland, Construction Industry Federation (CIF), Small Firms Association (SFA), Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU).
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>Ireland has experienced a phenomenal economic growth over the past five years. This has led to falling unemployment and a tight labour market. However, new challenges and an increasing international competition will soon affect the Irish economy. Particularly SMEs and companies operating in the traditional sector will notice these negative effects sooner than others.</p> <p>In the case of Ireland, it has become clear, that rising skill requirements in the labour market demand extensive upskilling of workers.</p> <p>The National Skills Strategy serves as a vision for 2020, presented by the Irish government, has the distinctive aim to have “a well educated, highly skilled population that contributes to a competitive, knowledge-based, innovation-driven society”. In this context, Skillnets' objective is to have the Irish economy prepared for upcoming new challenges by</p>

	providing a strategic approach to ensure competitiveness of the changing Irish economy.
Methods and tools applied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Networks of companies are created in order to engage in training, capacity building. The majority of network leaders are industry associations, trade unions or chambers of commerce. ▪ Financial support up to 75% for all network activities. A network among small enterprises is more likely to receive a higher level of funding through Skillnets. ▪ Training measures may be in-company training: for example English Language Training Programme, Upskilling Programme for Technicians or employees of the Service Sector, IT skills ▪ As Skillnets has a focus on the low skilled, it distinguishes in certain training measures between low qualified, low skilled and low basic skills of employees.
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Major success factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learning networks match specific needs SMEs, offer a solution for organisational problems and barriers and assist Irish companies in their anticipation for upcoming changes. ▪ Skillnets has increased awareness and involvement of social partners in training. ▪ Strong SME participation <p><i>Major success indicators:</i></p> <p>Since 1999, Skillnets has shown following participation figures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ over 18,000 Irish enterprises ▪ over 200 networks were created ▪ over 150,000 employees benefited from training measures to upskill and meet their work related training needs. ▪ Programme reflects the synergies that result from the networks.

Further contacts and information

Available information	European Employment Observatory On Website: Skillnets Network Directory, Skillnets Summary Report, Training Network Programme, Report on Case Studies
Web	http://www.skillnets.com/
Contact	Skillnets Ltd. Tel: +353 1 2079630 5th Floor, Q House 76 Furze Road, Sandyford IRE-Dublin 18 Email: info@skillnets.com



IE02: ECASME - eCapture of SME training needs and specification

Basic data	
Country, region	Ireland
Profile	The project addressed the problem of the low participation rate of SME workers in training activities through an on-line tool-kit for training needs assessment. The project involved a panel of 20 SMEs, a model-like on-line tool-kit has been developed, evaluated and refined.
Training challenges addressed / Links to analytical grid	1.4 Perceptions of training needs (by entrepreneurs/managers and by employees) <i>Training needs assessment is made easier thanks the on-line tool-kit</i>
Duration and status	2003-2005. Completed.
Financial sources	Leonardo Da Vinci
Type of SMEs addressed	Particular focus on small rural industries, the food sector and self-employment in start-up ICT companies
Target group(s)	SMEs employees and managers.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	The project manager is AMT, an Irish university. International partners were academic institutions in Romania and Portugal, and two other organisations working in the vocational education field situated in Sweden and Latvia. Twenty SMEs were also directly involved in the project.
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>On-line or web-based training resources are rarely used by SMEs. At the same time they are becoming increasingly common in training and skills development processes in larger companies. Against this an on-line tool for training needs assessments specifically designed for SMEs was identified as a need.</p> <p>The project consisted of the following methodological steps/tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investigation of existing barriers to training needs analysis (TNA), and analysis of the way the SMEs specify or capture their training needs, through a review of training needs analysis techniques and practices used in three rather distinctive sectors - rural industries, food sector and self-employment in start-up ICT companies; ▪ Identification of "good practices": a number of possible design tools and methodologies were studied to determine the most effective tools and techniques that should be used in the development of the on-line tool. ▪ Development of a model-like on-line toolkit, involving a panel of 20 SMEs. The tool-kit has to facilitate 'just-in-time' and 'just-enough' training provision. ▪ Evaluation on the basis of the experience made in the companies involved in the project. Based on this, the model-like tool has been refined. ▪ Elaboration of the final version for the on-line TNA tool (with a re-evaluation by the SMEs, to ensure it operates correctly and meets the users' requirements and re-improvement) ▪ Translation of the tool-kit into participating partner languages and dissemination

Methods and tools applied	<p>The online tool provided a “skills gap analysis” with regard to training needs in the company. The tool-kit functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The company registers the potential users of the system. ▪ Managers or team leaders set the skill level they would like their employees to have with regard to certain tasks (sub competencies) ▪ Employees rate their level of competency with regard to these tasks. ▪ Employees can request a training plan to be sent to them. ▪ This in turn can then be forwarded onto the relevant managers or team leaders for further meetings or training to take place ▪ The result of the analysis is an individualised training plan for each employee, specifying required content for a training program.
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A focus on SME coupled with the self-operational on-line nature of the outputs. ▪ Active participation of SMEs in the creation of the tool-kit. “The feedback from SMEs who used the tool during the project progress has been very positive and was critical to the successful completion of the on-line tool”. ▪ Inclusion of various partners with a geographic spread across Europe: it permitted to create a tool satisfying the cultural and sectional requirements of the different countries and industry sectors that participated in the project. ▪ Online availability of the tool-kit <p><i>Indicators of success:</i></p> <p>The project has been successful in identifying and developing practical tools to assist SMEs to upskill. Although it has not been actively deployed by companies, the tool has demonstrated the use of TNA in SMEs and its potential.</p> <p>According to Hamburg and Cernian (See www.ariel-eu.net/), the project was successful “in providing SMEs with a mechanism to better define their training needs, including “e-Skills” and to ensure their training solutions are aligned to then business strategies, aims and objectives”. The tool developed has assisted SMEs to identify and prioritise training plans for employees: “SMEs making use of the tool can ensure that their budgets are spent only for training that is effectively required to help deliver their goals and strategy”.</p> <p>Finally, some other projects have been built on the findings of Ecasme. For instance, SIMPEL project offers guidelines to help SMEs benefit from eLearning (www.simpel-net.eu).</p>

Further contacts and information

Available information	Ecasme Website
Web	http://www.ul.ie/~emrc/ecasme/index.htm http://www.ariel-eu.net/downloads/hamburg_cernian_2006.pdf
Contact	<p>Mr Timothy Hall ULIM-EMRC EDUCATIONAL MEDIA RESEARCH Dept ECE - University of Limerick Plassey, LIMERICK Ireland Tel: +353 61 202294 Email: Timothy.hall@ul.ie</p> <p>Ms. Emma O Brien Tel: 00 353 61 213357 Email: emma.obrien@ul.ie</p>



IT01: P.O.L.A.R.I.S.

Portal for the Labour Orientation, Alternating, and Link Enterprises and Training Systems

Basic data	
Country, region	Italy
Profile	<p>POLARIS is an information platform (database) offering a great overview on all training institutions and programmes, and job market.</p> <p>POLARIS is a specialised-desk network for students, schools, universities, enterprises and Chambers' employees for the online-management of all information related to education. The portal serves as a contact point, platform for exchange and "virtual market place".</p>
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	<p>2.1. Training methods addressing specific needs of SMEs</p> <p><i>Project provides overview all country-wide training initiatives</i></p>
Duration and status	Programme was established in 2003, Ongoing
Financial sources	Fund of the Italian Chamber of Commerce (Fondo Perequativo)
Type of SMEs addressed	Generally, all types of SMEs
Target group	Entrepreneurs and workers
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Chambers of Commerce Italy
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>The Italian Chamber of Commerce offers a wide range of services ranging from information, orientation/guidance to pre-training.</p> <p>Throughout recent years, the Chambers of commerce have worked on the matching between the company's demands and the offers of training institutions at state level, regional level and from private suppliers.</p> <p>In order to organise and improve the coordination and accessibility of all training activities, the Chamber of Commerce has launched this programme.</p> <p>Polaris was initiated with the objective to offer an experimental schoolwork and to link training means and enterprises. It analyses the specific needs of enterprises for training and employees.</p> <p>The main objectives of POLARIS are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To provide an overview on all information related to education in Italy ▪ to organise and improve the coordination and accessibility of all training activities ▪ to provide a link between training and enterprises ▪ to serve as an experiment for alternating and innovative schoolwork
Methods and tools applied	<p>The portal serves as a contact point and platform for exchange. The "virtual market place" is divided into two sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overview on training initiatives and programmes in entire Italy ▪ Information on local programmes, with link to the respective chambers of commerce in charge <p>POLARIS is an information platform (database) offering a great overview</p>

	<p>on all training institutions and programmes and job market.</p> <p>There are 84 POLARIS desks out of 103 Chambers of Commerce in Italy grouped into 3 areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stages and orientation ▪ Orientation to access to the labour market ▪ Analysis of the needs of enterprises in human resources and in training
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Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Major factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As an information platform, POLARIS provides an overview on the entire range of training activities in Italy <p><i>Major success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 84 Polaris desks have been developed in Italian chambers of commerce
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Further contacts and information

Available information	Website
Web	http://www.polaris.unioncamere.it/
Contact	<p>Stefano Casagrande Piazza Sallustio 21 00187 Rom Tel.: +39 (0)6.47041 Fax: +39 (0)6.4704240 Email: stefano.casagrande@unioncamere.it</p>



IT02: LISP – Local Initiatives and social partnership: the management of change in local productive systems

Basic data	
Country, region	Italy, partner in Spain (Alicante)
Profile	LISP – Local Initiatives and Social partnership was an initiative of the chamber of commerce in Treviso and the university of Alicante to provide a new approach to prepare SMEs for upcoming restructuring. LISP aimed at promoting best practice share and problem solving among entrepreneurs. LISP served a platform for debating and discussing among the stakeholders on the hints emerging from scenarios analysis in order to ease the management of change. The so-called “district committees” and “change labs” were specific bodies in which social partners and the local government came together.
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	1.3. HR and skills development policy / plans / anticipation <i>New approaches to prepare SMEs for upcoming changes</i> 2.4. Mismatch of formal training and qualification needs on the job <i>Experimental tools for learning developed</i>
Duration and status	Start in 2004, completed
Financial sources	ESF, Art. 6
Type of SMEs addressed	SMEs of the textile, clothing, mechanics, footwear, wood and furniture, toy industry
Target group(s)	Entrepreneurs of SMEs from 5 local production systems in Italy and Spain; here specifically: the textile, clothing, mechanics, footwear, wood and furniture, toy industry.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Chamber of Commerce Treviso with several partners: trade unions, University of Alicante, Istituto Poster, and entrepreneurs associations.
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>SMEs are often one of the first groups hit by the negative effects of globalisation. As a matter of fact, some industrial sectors are more vulnerable to increasing international competition than others. The target group of LISP are SMEs from the Italian and Spanish textile, clothing, mechanics, footwear, wood and furniture industry.</p> <p>Italy and Spain have a lot of traditional industrial branches characterised by the presence of a large number of SMEs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ These companies face pressure resulting from increasing competition of low-wage countries in Eastern Europe and Asia. ▪ These companies struggle from problems such as weak or even non-existing marketing strategies, lack of HR or organisational resources and a growing pressure on modernising production processes. <p>In many cases, existing training is not matching the particular and practical needs and problems of SMEs facing restructuring, especially on the managerial and owners’ side. In this context, LISP` s main interest behind all measures was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to help LOCAL manufacturing industry to remain in the market ▪ to prevent the loss of strategic skills and competences of the local subcontractors as an effect of the international relocation processes of

	<p>production.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to support SMEs of local production systems in Spain and Italy with experimental tools for anticipating and managing change. ▪ to understand the evolutionary patterns of Local Productive systems (LPS) exposed to the international competitive pressure and to explore possible solutions ▪ to develop alternatives to outsourcing as a strategy to the changes affecting manufacturing.
Methods and tools applied	<p>University of Alicante and the Istituto Poster conducted research on perspectives of each of the 5 productive systems and developed strategies for each SME to react to the pressure of international competition.</p> <p>Aside from this, LISP offered an experiment with new forms of learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Innovative forms of local governance through new consultation mechanism, in order to raise awareness among social partners. The so-called district committees were set up as discussion places between the local government and social partners. ▪ "Change labs" or laboratories for change as a highly interactive working group were set up. Here, entrepreneurs, technicians and consultants discussed solutions and best practises and rethought organisational systems.
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Major factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LISP became knowledge provider in Treviso (Italy): technical discussion within change labs was taken to a political level. ▪ Strong involvement of social partners in both of the established committees. <p><i>Major success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 150 companies and 250 managers participated in the "Change labs" and could successfully develop new policies and fertilise local competitive advantages for their industrial branch. ▪ University of Alicante (Spain) established itself as District manager and served as the meta-institutional link between the Chamber of Commerce Alicante, trade unions, municipality and entrepreneurs association. ▪ Cooperation of entrepreneurs: lifelong learning is an important issue also for managers and entrepreneurs, not only employees. <p>In both regions, LISP successfully established a local governance network among various stakeholders.</p>

Further contacts and information

Available information	Website
Web	http://www.tv.camcom.it
Contact	<p>Mr. Federico Callegari Camera di Commercio Industria, Artigianato Agricoltura Piazza Borsa 3/B IT-31100 Treviso Tel.: +39 0422 595 111 Email: frederico.callegari@tv.camcom.it</p>



IT03: TAS FOR AGRIFORM

Basic data	
Country, region	Italy
Profile	The project " <i>Traceability As Strategy FOR AGRiculture FORMation</i> " aimed at improving the competitiveness of the Small Agricultural Entrepreneurs in Europe by experimenting and formalising a new training methodology designed and tailored for farmers. The aim was to enhance skill levels in areas such as organisational (business) management, marketing, the traceability of production processes and the quality of products and processes.
Training challenges addressed / Links to analytical grid	<p>1.1 Organisational problems and barriers <i>Weekly meetings organised in accordance to the specific needs of working times of seasonal farm work</i></p> <p>2.1. Training methods addressing specific needs of SMEs, such as on-the-job training, job rotation, etc. <i>New training approaches, non formal educational/training context</i></p> <p>2.2. Training and competence development for managerial staff/entrepreneurs. <i>The project targeted a very specific group of entrepreneurs</i></p> <p>3.1. Greying of the workforce <i>The project targeted farmers over 50 (or mid-career) with little-or-no basic education</i></p>
Duration and status	2005 – 2008. Completed
Financial sources	Leonardo da Vinci Programme, co-financing by project partners
Type of SMEs addressed	SMEs in the agricultural sector
Target group(s)	Agricultural Entrepreneurs, aged 50 or more years and with little or no basic education
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Coordinated by the Italian research and training institute <i>Serifo</i> , the project also included international partners from the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Poland, France, Bulgaria
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>The agricultural sector is generally considered to be characterised by significant barriers with regard to skills and competences development as well as by innovation potentials which are "blocked" to a large degree. This is also a major reason for agricultural enterprises not being able to satisfy the consumers' demands for food quality and safety. Furthermore, there are major challenges with regard to marketing and business management in general. Though many entrepreneurs are aware of these shortcomings and barriers,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ they often refuse to go to the classic training courses, because these are regarded as being too abstract and not suitable for the specific needs ▪ the timing of training is not suitable for agricultural workers and entrepreneurs ▪ agricultural entrepreneurs in general are reluctant with regard to training and education - lacking of self-confidence is a barrier <p>This project tried to overcome these obstacles. It took into account two crucial preconditions: the training has to provide a "return on investment",</p>

with concrete results, in order to be considered by the trainees as a clear added-value, and it has to be implemented without conflicting with the professional constraints in terms of working times.

Detailed objectives of the project were:

- The development of innovative approaches that specifically meet the needs of the agricultural entrepreneurs.
- The creation of a training model focused on the peculiar characteristics of men and women in the agricultural business and taking into account their social status, working conditions, skills in production techniques, quality, marketing and general business management.
- The improvement of agricultural entrepreneurs' skills.

The tools have been tested with a focus group of agricultural entrepreneurs in Italy, Spain, Poland and Bulgaria.

Methods and tools applied

Organisation of the training: Weekly meetings of two hours (for at least three months) with some agriculture entrepreneurs of a same geographical sector and a trainer consultant. The meetings took place in common or private (companies/houses) meeting areas at compatible times with seasonal work, and daily commitments.

Tools:

- A toolbox / "pedagogical briefcase": The trainer benefited from a toolbox. His/her role consisted in activating reflective pathways starting from stories presenting a professional practice problem and introducing new knowledge and management techniques. Based on an analysis of the needs of the group, the training concentrated on skills in areas such as organisational management, marketing, the traceability of production processes and the quality of products and processes.
- Comic strips showing familiar situations of professional practice, introducing a professional practice problem, using a technical language in a structurally simple narrative (introduction of new concepts or notions) allowing the opening up of possible alternative solutions.

Factors of success and success indicators

- Approach oriented to the production of concrete results and added-value
- Key role of the consultant-trainers
- The 'pedagogical briefcase' - very useful for the trainer
- Territorial approach – proximity to target group
- Respect of specific requirements and constraints of farmers' work
- Informal character of the training courses
- Use of "real world" examples and illustrations
- Active participation of the entrepreneurs and their interactions

Further contacts and information

Available information DVD with information and project materials available on the web-site
PDF documentation of project results

Web www.serifotas.it
www.tasforagriform.net

Contact

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LU01: INFPC - National Institute for the Development of Continuous Vocational Training

Basic data	
Country, region	Luxembourg
Profile	<p>The National Institute for the Development of Continuous Vocational Training (INFPC) is a state institution under the supervision of the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training. Its main mission is the promotion of continuous vocational training. It also examines applications submitted by companies for state financial aid for their training plans. The INFPC manages the website www.lifelong-learning.lu and leads a mission of development of continual vocational training concepts.</p> <p>Since 2006, the institute has put in place several measures specifically addressed to SMEs in order to advice and inform them about continual vocational training and possibilities of financial aids.</p>
Training challenges addressed / Links to analytical grid	<p>1.2. Financial means and resources for training <i>The institute supports SMEs to apply to public aids in the field of training. It leads a proactive approach in order to increase the share of SMEs in continuous training</i></p> <p>1.3. HR and skills development policy / plans / anticipation <i>The institute offers guidance and information tools about continuous training to SME managers and support them in the formalisation of a training strategy</i></p> <p>1.4. Perceptions of training needs (by entrepreneurs/managers and employees) <i>Through personalised guidance and the use of pedagogical tools, the goal is to improve the perception of training needs by SME managers</i></p> <p>2.4. Mismatch between formal training and skill needs on the job <i>A better matching is made possible through a website; companies can express specific needs or claims and will receive tailor-made programmes</i></p>
Duration and status	Since 2006, ongoing
Financial sources	State and fees for training courses paid by companies
Type of SMEs addressed	All
Target group(s)	Managers / entrepreneurs
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	INFPC
Description	
Background and objectives	Analysing the applications for financial training aids the institute received, it became clear that the participation rate of SMEs was rather weak compared to larger companies. This confirmed the observation that in large companies, continuous training is much more frequent perceived as necessary than in SMEs. The INFPC decided in 2006 to put in place several actions specifically addressed to SMEs, to advice SME managers in the field of continual vocational training and inform them about the financial aids provided by the state.
Methods and tools applied	Tools and methods used to inform and approach SME managers are the following:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Information cards</i> with practical hints ▪ <i>"Training appointments"</i>: individual appointments to inform the managers about INFPC actions and services, continuing vocational training, financial aids and the current legislation etc. ▪ <i>"Pedagogical kit"</i> with all necessary information. ▪ <i>"Information sessions"</i>: sessions organised to explain the measure of co-financing of the government put in place to help companies in their training actions. ▪ <i>"Action for competences"</i>: so-called <i>"action-training"</i> sessions put in place in 2006, are aiming at optimising human resource management in micro-enterprises and in SMEs. 4-day training sessions that can be spread over three or four months, including accompaniment, guidance and coaching directed to the manager. These sessions also aim at developing HR tools, such as occupational/workplace profiles, skills assessment or training plans. In collaboration with nearby French Lorraine region partners. ▪ <i>The www.lifelong-learning.lu portal</i>: companies and training centres can register on this website in order to be "connected". The training supply, provided by training centres, is made more visible. Companies can also post invitations to tender for training offers: they express their training needs (aims, target groups, length, etc.) and can be contacted by training centres through the portal.
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Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>"Training appointments"</i>: during the pilot phase in 2006, 20 enterprises were visited, 40 % of them applied for financial aid to training. In 2007, 58 companies were visited, mainly on the suggestion of professional chambers - 37 companies applied a financial support (64%). ▪ The sessions in the context of <i>"Action for competences"</i> are very positively evaluated by the companies. <p><i>Factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Direct and pro-active character of the information provided on training opportunities and co-financing possibilities ▪ Methods that correspond to the SME managers' needs: ▪ Concrete and practical orientated training programmes and results achieved ▪ Guide directly usable in the company - a tool useful for the manager (during the training and after), and allowing a SME compensating the absence of HR department ▪ Only four-day of absence due to training in a period of four months – this allows trainees to combine the courses with the work for their company ▪ In-house consultancy and information
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Further contacts and information

Available information	INFPC website
Web	http://www.infpc.lu/ http://www.lifelong-learning.lu/
Contact	INFPC Institut National pour le développement de la Formation Professionnelle Continue Établissement public 38, rue de l'Avenir L-1147 Luxembourg Tel.: 46 96 12-1 Email: infpc@infpc.lu



LV01: New approach to training for quality in rural tourism

Basic data	
Country, region	Latvia
Profile	In order to improve the quality of training, services and products in rural micro and small enterprises a web based training and self - evaluation tool was developed in the context of the project.
Training challenges addressed / Links to analytical grid	<p>1.4. Perceptions of training needs (by entrepreneurs/managers and by employees)</p> <p><i>Training needs, in particular regarding the development of quality criteria, were rendered more visible (self-assessment tools are used)</i></p> <p>2.1. Training methods addressing specific needs of SMEs</p> <p><i>Innovative tools, adapted to SMEs in the rural tourism sector, have been developed, such as a "quality tree" and web-based instruments, in addition to classical modules and quality inspection</i></p>
Duration and status	2002 - 2004. Completed. A follow up project started in 2008.
Financial sources	Leonardo da Vinci
Type of SMEs addressed	SMEs in rural tourism
Target group(s)	Enterprises, quality inspectors, professional organisations, training institutes and students
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Latvian Country Tourism Association "Lauku ceļotājs" International partners in Germany, Estonia, Spain and Latvia
Description	
Background and objectives	The rural tourism sector in Europe recognised the need for common language and benchmarking of quality criteria in rural tourism. Along with the orientation of providers to international markets, there was a need for transparent, internationally recognised quality standards and adequate training. The training demands in rural tourism are very specific due to the nature of establishments – mostly small, family run businesses where service providers in most cases have no education in tourism and have very limited time for training activities. Therefore the training methods have to be highly time- and cost efficient and very practical. The goal of the common quality criteria and self-assessment was to enable companies and providers to identify skill gaps and training needs of RT providers and motivate them for training.
Methods and tools applied	<p>The project produced a web based training tool, consisting of five integrated parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A quality criteria "tree" (the list of common quality criteria in RT quality systems in Europe) ▪ Inspector's manual ▪ Assessment forms ▪ Inspection results data system ▪ Virtual training module. <p>In order to benchmark rural tourism quality schemes and criteria, a review was made of seven countries with well established RT tradition and efficient quality schemes. The common criteria, present in all the quality schemes, were identified, and, based on them, the quality criteria "Tree" was made (it is a</p>

	<p>basic criteria structure with options to add country-specific criteria). Based on this, the inspection manual and tourism accommodation assessment forms were made. The virtual training module features criteria, their descriptions and pictures with positive and negative examples (provided by tourism organisations – project partners and taken during accommodation inspections), illustrating the criteria.</p> <p>The training needs of enterprises providers were identified through the following methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provider reviews ▪ Quality inspections ▪ Customer reviews, lessons from complaints ▪ Provider feedback (seminars, conferences) <p>To motivate providers in the field of rural tourism, the following methods were used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training certificates as a bonus in quality assessment ▪ Efficient marketing of quality scheme and ecolabel ▪ Demonstrate drawbacks and show opportunities
Factors of success and success indicators	<p>The quality criteria “Tree” was recognised by the European Federation of Farm and Village tourism (Eurogites) and used as a basis for the minimum standards in rural tourism. Wide publicity and involvement of more than twenty rural tourism organisations was ensured during an international quality workshop and major audience was reached through dissemination at the first European Rural Tourism congress.</p> <p>As a result, several new organisations have been able to benefit from the project experience and use the results in development of their quality schemes and provider training.</p> <p>For actors in rural tourism, the tools have looked very well adapted to the needs. The common work between providers from different countries, quality inspectors, training institutions, etc., has been a factor of success.</p> <p>An indicator of success is the present innovation transfer project with participation of organisations representing Spain, Bulgaria, Greece, Slovenia, Latvia and Eurogites.</p>

Further contacts and information

Available information	Website
Web	http://www.celotajs.lv/
Contact	<p>LATVIJAS LAUKU TURISMA ASOCIACIJA 12-21, Vilipa str LV-1083 Riga Latvia</p> <p><i>Contact person:</i> Mrs Asnate Ziemele Tel : +371 7 617600 E-mail : asnate@celotajs.lv</p>

MT01: MCAST and Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise & Industry Diploma in Manufacturing Excellence

Basic data	
Country, region	Malta
Profile	The MCAST is a course, designed by the Malta Federation of Industry (which has now merged with the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry) in conjunction with the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and certified by City & Guilds. It offers an industry diploma in manufacturing for employees without formal education in order to validate informal and non-formal learning in the manufacturing sector of Malta.
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	2.3. Validation of informal skills and qualification <i>Participants receive an officially recognised diploma certifying their skills in manufacturing</i>
Duration and status	The programme was initiated in 2008, ongoing
Financial sources	Funded by participants fees. Participants will get 100 per cent reimbursement in form of in-come tax credits; companies sponsoring their employees' fees will receive a 17.5 per cent company tax credit.
Type of SMEs addressed	Generally, all SMEs in the manufacturing sector in Malta
Target group(s)	All adult employees from manufacturing sector (employing over 22,000 full time workers), with at least 5 years of work experience and without formal qualification, interested in further skills development and training.
Coordination and stakeholders involvement	Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, the Malta Federation of Industry (which is now the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry), Malta Qualifications Council, City and Guilds.
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>Numerous factors highlight the importance of lifelong learning, training and also the need to certify (validate) informal or non-formal learning.</p> <p>Traditionally, the manufacturing sector has employees with specific trade-related knowledge and a wide range of qualifications earned on the job. In this particular economic branch, needs of the industry are of great importance and have been included into the curriculum.</p> <p>In order to create more flexible qualifications, all available knowledge, skills and competences, irrespective of where and how they have been acquired, need to be used.</p> <p>In the EU, issues of lifelong learning, knowledge-based economy and institutions validating informal and non-formal skills and qualifications have drawn attention. In this sense, the MCAST has the objective to encourage employees without formal education from the local manufacturing sector to enrol in the Diploma.</p>

Methods and tools applied	<p>The Diploma material is made up of a mixture of class works and hands-on mentored training - practical work training will be located at the participants' own place of work.</p> <p>The course is split into 40-hour study modules, each covering a different aspect of manufacturing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategy, operations, internationalisation, planning and scheduling, management, materials, quality, energy and water usage, lean manufacturing, financial management, product development and innovation, supply chain and project management. ▪ The course qualification has been designed to reach exit level 4 on the Malta Qualifications Council framework for lifelong learning, making participants ideal candidates for first-line management positions.
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Factors of success and success indicators	<p>Major factors of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Programme offers an officially recognised diploma certifying skills in manufacturing. <p>Major success indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback on course was very positive ▪ In October 2008 one course started with 15 participants. Due to strong demand, a second course started in November 2008 with 13 participants.
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Further contacts and information

Available information	On website
Web	http://www.maltachamber.org.mt/
Contact	<p>Jeanelle Catania Assistant Project Manager Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry Tel: + 356 2123 3873 Fax: + 356 2124 5223 E-mail: jeanelle.catania@maltachamber.org.mt</p>



MT02: HOTSME –

Self-Learning at the Workplace for Small and Medium-sized Hotels

Basic data	
Country, region	Malta
Profile	Initiative of training at the workplace, both for managers and employees, in small and medium-sized hotels.
Training challenges addressed / Links to analytical grid	<p>2.1. Training methods addressing specific needs of SMEs <i>The project contributed to promoting a new learning culture in SME hotels by preparing employees of different hierarchical status for self-learning</i></p> <p>2.2. Training and competence development for managerial staff and entrepreneurs <i>Managers and entrepreneurs benefited from the modules and could develop the soft skills which are decisive in the hotel and tourism industry</i></p> <p>2.4. Mismatch of formal training and qualification needs on the job <i>Self-learning at the workplace through adapted tools was promoted as an efficient way to enhance skills (soft skills) that are rarely "taught" in classrooms. A main feature of these learning services was a learner-centered approach of facilitation of learning processes in contrast to traditional top-down classroom-style training.</i></p>
Duration and status	2005-2007
Financial sources	Leonardo da Vinci
Type of SMEs addressed	SMEs in the hotel industry
Target group(s)	Employees and managers in small and medium sized hotels
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Coordinated by the Maltese Hotel and Restaurant Association. International partners in Germany, Denmark, Latvia, Poland and Spain.
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>Patterns of business and leisure tourism are changing. Smaller hotels face challenges with keeping the pace with today's more educated and more demanding customers that often have higher expectations of services. Human resources will be a critical factor in addressing these challenges. Hence the role of the HOTSME project: develop staff abilities, soft skills and employability, in order to increase competitiveness and quality.</p> <p>Since resources in small hotels are limited much of competency development has to take place onsite. Therefore training of hotel staff has to take account of the actual working situation and to prepare employees for learning in their workplace. The HOTSME modular learning concept was designed to prepare employees of SME hotels to continuously develop themselves in order to enhance their employability and personal growth.</p>
Methods and tools applied	<p>The HOTSME Module System consisted of two main parts.</p> <p><i>Continuing learning process:</i></p> <p>The first part was divided between a methodological guideline for training providers and facilitators and five or six modules, designed to initialise a continuing learning process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building rapport ▪ Dynamics of hotel/restaurant

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Each one can make a difference ▪ Using learning resources ▪ Barriers to learning ▪ Conclusive reflections <p>Each module consisted of the process of an exercise/workshop and module readings for facilitators as well as worksheets/handouts for participants.</p> <p><i>Professional development modules:</i></p> <p>The second main part of the programme consisted of four professional development modules.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Benchmarking and Self Evaluation ▪ Sales and Marketing ▪ Communication and Customer Care ▪ Cultural Diversity
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Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Success indicators</i></p> <p>Managers from 25 hotels have been sensitised for the programme in workshops and bilateral discussions.</p> <p>More than 100 employees from 23 hotels in Lithuania, Portugal, Spain, Germany and Malta took part in the learning activities and provided a very favourable feedback.</p> <p>40% were aged 40 or more and two thirds were female.</p> <p><i>Factors of success</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Input from the participants ▪ Role of facilitators (Here, Hotel & catering College teachers/tutors). Facilitators go on-site and are flexible vis a vis the needs of the participants (e.g. non homogenous groups). ▪ Interactivity (instead of top-down teaching) and new forms of employee involvement ▪ The initiative went beyond the classical contradiction between systematic curriculum style teaching vs. unsystematic informal learning by experience, providing a structure for systematic, but work-integrated learning. ▪ technical feasibility of the execution of the modules ▪ adaptation to the needs of employees ▪ focus on soft skills ▪ wide scope: promoting learning opportunities for all (cf. high attendance of employees with low literacy or low formal education), in particular for women and older workers.
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Further contacts and information

Available information	The material produced by the project is presented in a DVD that gives a comprehensive overview of the project as a whole. Final Evaluation and Best Practice Report (ISOB, 2007). DVD
Web	http://www.hotsmeleonardo.org
Contact	Mr. George Schembri Chief Executive Officer Malta Hotels & Restaurants Association Nr 2, Gallina Street, Kappara San Gwann SGN 4111- MALTA Tel: (00356) 21318133/4 Fax: (00356) 21336477 E-mail: ceo@mhra.org.mt Website: www.mhra.org.mt



NL01: PaperTrain - New multi media educational models

Basic data	
Country, region	The Netherlands
Profile	<p>Considering on the one hand the important training needs in the paper, board and corrugated board industry, and on the other hand employees' disaffection with existing training courses, this project aimed at providing more practical training courses and visual training materials.</p> <p>To that end, project partners developed new innovative ways of blended learning or guided self study at mill sites, and created new multimedia modules, based on seeing, hearing and experiencing things and very much oriented towards the practical (in contrast with theoretical courses).</p>
Training challenges addressed / Links to analytical grid	<p>2.1. Training methods addressing specific needs of SMEs <i>Though not reduced to SMEs only, this project invented innovative educational modules (blended learning and guided self study) particularly adapted to the needs of employees in SMEs and the organisation of work in a small company.</i></p> <p>3.2. Attracting and recruiting young workers <i>These modules were voluntarily non traditional and not theoretical so as to be attractive for the younger workers in the industry, who need continuous training (on quality, safety, technology, etc.)</i></p>
Duration and status	2006 – 2008. The product was put on the market during 2008.
Financial sources	Leonardo da Vinci, co-financing by industry partners
Type of SMEs addressed	Both SMEs and larger companies (up to 500 employees).
Target group(s)	Management representatives responsible for HR and training
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	<p>Project leaders were three training centres in the Netherlands, Germany and Austria who formed TDC as an educational multimedia centre for the international paper, board and corrugated board industry, set up as a result of collaboration of these three organisations.</p> <p>Further participants were European employers' organisations (CEPI, FEFCO), national employer organisation (Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, France, Spain, Hungary, Slovenia, Austria, Switzerland), and five companies (SCA, SAPPI, Storaenso, Smurfitkappa, Mondi).</p>
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>The project sprang from the following observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A changing technological environment, ▪ Parts of this industry will lose 30% of their employees in the next years, ▪ The industry has to attract young people, ▪ Importance of flexible in-company training will rise. <p>Moreover, rising demands from employees for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fewer classic training courses ▪ More practical work ▪ Visualisation of the training materials instead of reading ▪ Aims of the project: ▪ Elaboration of competence profiles

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of 40 so-called 'FOCUS' multimedia modules ▪ New innovative ways of blended learning / guided self study at mill sites ▪ Reduction of classroom training / cost reduction ▪ Enhancing life long learning.
Methods and tools applied	<p><i>"Integrating working and learning... That is the motto of the FOCUS method."</i></p> <p>The outcomes of the project were the following products, now on sale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Competence profiles for operator functions in this industry. ▪ A didactical blended learning system that combines groups sessions, training on the job, self-learning and e-learning. ▪ 40 multi media modules in four languages (German, English, French and Dutch). Each module consists of 60 to 100 video clips or animations, questions, assignments and a self test. The modules address all aspects of the work (technology, techniques, quality, safety, first-line maintenance, troubleshooting, energy-conscious and environmentally-conscious behaviour), and are based on seeing, hearing and experiencing things and very much oriented towards the praxis. The objective is to provide an efficient way for making the transfer from theory to praxis. The modules can be adapted to suit the production process or the product of a particular company.
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One indicator will be the amount of user-licenses sold in the coming years (the product has just been sold since the beginning of the year 2009). ▪ Development in foreign countries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pilots have been done with the material in Holland and Belgium with promising results. - Some countries are looking for possibilities to invest in a translation (Sweden and Spain). <p><i>Factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training modules clearly oriented towards the praxis ▪ Customisable tools to suit the production process or the product of a particular company ▪ Quality of the instruction ▪ Organisational pragmatism. Real help for companies to plan the training without changing their team-based organisation because SMEs can not or do not want to get people out of their teams (that is very problematic and expensive).

Further contacts and information

Available information	FOCUS website
Web	www.focustraining.eu www.skillsweb.eu/Portals/0/WS%204%20-%20Lokhorst%20VAPA.ppt
Contact	Peter Lokhorst VAPA Anklaarseweg 95 Apeldoorn Netherlands Tel.: +31 (0)55 5786960 Email: peterlokhorst@vapa.nl



NL02: Work and Learn Together Project

Basic data and information

Country, region	The Netherlands
Profile	To deal with the challenges faced by SMEs of tourism sector, the project created "Communities of Practice" (CoPs), in order to support the lifelong learning of employers and employees in the workplace. The active online working groups created allow SME workers, employers, managers, experts, etc., to exchange about their difficulties, their questions, their answers, their strategies and also to create collaborations. Hence, this project contributed to the professional development of employees and to the enhancement of the competitiveness of SMEs in this sector through collaborative networks and partnerships supported by Information and Communication Technologies. The main aim of the project was to develop, support and evaluate Communities of Practice in the tourism industry, and, more generally, to expand the CoPs and provide opportunities for lifelong learning.
Training challenges addressed / Links to analytical grid	<p>1.5 Resource pooling and SME cooperation in training and competence development.</p> <p><i>Communities of Practice are a mean to collaboration and information exchange in the field of training and competence development</i></p> <p>3.3. Competence development in the context of internationalisation</p> <p><i>The project helped SMEs facing the impacts of internationalisation on their activity and to benefit from the internationalisation.</i></p>
Duration and status	2005-2007
Financial sources	Leonardo da Vinci Programme
Type of SMEs addressed	SMEs in the tourism sector
Target group(s)	Employers and employees working in SMEs in the tourism sector
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	<p>Project leader and coordination: IVLOS Universiteit Utrecht</p> <p>The international partnership included twelve organisations (universities, research institutions, training organisations and associations, tourism industry organisations and associations, SMEs and specialist organisations) in seven countries (Netherlands, Austria, Estonia, Spain, Italy, Romania, and Slovenia).</p>

Description

Background and objectives	<p><i>Background:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase of the mobility of European citizens implies the need for the tourism sector to cater for an increasingly wide range of clients from different countries with different tastes and expectations. ▪ Growing use of information and communication technologies in the business. <p>Indeed, to deal with these new challenges and to compete with large tourism organisations, SMEs in this sector have to be able to develop and innovate: this project believed the best approach is to work and learn together. Indeed, according to the project initiators, research has proven that networks can be effective for tackling business issues, and development and innovation of companies.</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ supporting SMEs in creating connections between them and with experts in the field, and making it possible to collaborate and learn how
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	<p>to deal with challenges they all face.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to achieve this goal, online working groups (communities) with SMEs are created and supervised. <p>Currently, there are communities in different fields in the tourist sector, such as rural-tourism, bed & breakfast, hotels and restaurants, health and fitness centres – fitness farms, etc.</p>
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Methods and tools applied	<p><i>Method:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of several on-line forums, where SMEs managers and employees can share ideas, ask questions and propose answers or advice, with people in a similar situation. Organisation of several face to face meetings <p><i>Advantages of the tool:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> participants do not have to travel no extra costs or time regulations simple tools, do not require computer skills the project is not commercial (no advertisements) informal-learning processes within organisations; learning around problems of actual concern “just-in-time learning”: workers may schedule their training themselves <p>Furthermore, thanks to the knowledge dissemination activities, some people have learned how to set up, sustain, support, monitor and evaluate CoPs, as well as what the success factors and constraints involved are.</p>
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Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six Communities of Practice were established (the project initially aimed at establishing 21 communities of practice) Great progress in terms of the lessons learned and how applicable and transferable those lessons are for other countries and other organisations involved in education and training. Extensive dissemination of the outcomes of the study (the project has provided empirical evidence of how to develop and sustain CoPs). <p><i>Factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the importance of trust and of motivation of participants combining of face-to-face and on-line communication (face-to-face communication is important for building trust and for establishing identities). Increasing number of relevant people involved (impact of increasing members in the communities on activity of each of them)
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Further contacts and information

Available information	Project website
Web	www.worklearntogether.org
Contact	<p>Ms. Renée Filius IVLOS - Utrecht University Universiteit Utrecht, IVLOS, Centre for ICT in Education PO Box 80127, 3508 TC Utrecht, The Netherlands R.M.Filius@uu.nl</p>



PL01: Renowator – Development Partnership Renowator Centre for Small & Medium Enterprises

Basic data	
Country, region	Poland
Profile	<p>The purpose of this project was to create a training and consultation centre called RENOWATOR in order to sustaining or getting (self)employment for employees of small and medium enterprises with decreased employment possibilities (older workers or women) by acquiring new skills in Innovative Information Technology (IIT).</p> <p>Another goal was to defend a policy of equal opportunities for men and women, and suppress inequalities on the job market, inequalities resulting from age, sex, access to innovative technologies. Given that, the focus is put on ICT-related skills, a correlated goal was the development of an informational society.</p>
Training challenges addressed / Links to analytical grid	<p>2.2. Training and competence development for managerial staff / entrepreneurs. <i>The training centre helped managers to introduce innovative technology changes in their company</i></p> <p>3.1 Demographic change and greying of the workforce <i>Training for employees aged 45 or older</i></p> <p>3.4 Improving and addressing gender equality and opportunities for women <i>Training for women, especially with those having difficulties for returning on the labour market (for instance after a maternity leave)</i></p>
Duration and status	2004-2008. The "Renowator Center for SMEs" started its activity in 2005.
Financial sources	ESF and Equal funds
Type of SMEs addressed	SMEs having difficulties in adapting to structural changes in the market, especially enterprises proceeding or planning to restructure (r) and/or outplacement (o) and these having problems with introducing Innovative Information Technologies (IIT). These SMEs were called "SME-roi" in this project.
Target group(s)	Among this "SME-roi" group, the target groups were older workers (group "45+") and women with difficulties returning on the labour market, in particular after a maternity leave. Jobs targeted were rather qualified jobs requiring some knowledge in information technologies.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Initiators were two research and development centres: Institute of Mathematical Machines (IMM), the coordinator, and Institute of Computer Science PAN (IPIPAN). The partnership includes other partners in Poland: the Polish Chamber of Commerce; university partners, several companies and a NGO defending women. International partners from France, Austria, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Italy and Slovakia.
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>The project aimed at creating a training and consultation centre so as to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustain or get (self)employment for SME employees with decreased employment possibilities by acquiring new skills in Innovative Information Technology, ▪ Assist SMEs having problems such as outplacement, restructuring,

	<p>implementing IIT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help managers in introducing innovative technology changes in companies. <p>“Acquire new skills in IIT” means that they will gain knowledge with regard to ICTs, information analysis and e-learning, and obtain certification in new skills like: e-learning consultant; evaluator of e-content; data analyst; market analyst; clients needs analyst; project management specialist; feasibility Study specialist; logistic advisor, etc. Acquiring these skills will allow them to stay employed, help them find employment or start their own enterprise.</p> <p>More generally, this contributes to improvement of SME employees’ adaptability to the market transformations and growth of competitiveness in SME sector.</p>
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Methods and tools applied	<p>Activities of the Renowator Center:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ stationary (Instructor-Led Trainings – ILT) and blended trainings; if needed, these trainings are preceded by initial trainings, levelling up the computer operating skills of trainees; ▪ consultations and tele-consultations accompanying all trainings; ▪ final examinations; ▪ probations in science institutes, which enabled achieving vocational experience by the trainees, who positively finished the training; ▪ certification examinations, confirming newly acquired vocational skills; certificates were provided by Institute of Mathematical Machines and Systems Research Institute – Polish Academy of Sciences; ▪ workshops and consultations conducted by RENOWATOR Career Office , stationary and remote, on soft skills, career plan building, flexible employment forms, employers searching via Internet, organised by Academy of Human Resource Management; ▪ business advisory in Business Advisory Point for the trainees, who decide to start their own business because of losing their job or being under threat of it; ▪ promotion in the Internet, by the BCS database, of the people who have acquired certifications in scope of skills achieved in the RENOWATOR Centre.
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Factors of success and success indicators	<p>Several figures to assess the success of the project :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of students trained in the Renowator Center: 424 (226 Entrepreneurs and management of SME and 198 SME Employees); ▪ Number of students on tele-trainings and probations: 109 ▪ Number of certificates: 91 <p>Training Center RENOWATOR received two rewards for its project: a gold medal on the World Fairs of the Innovation, Research and New Technologies EUREKA 2008 in Brussels and a silver medal on the International Invention Exhibition IWIS 2007</p>
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Further contacts and information

Available information	Project website
Web	http://www.renowator.org.pl/eng/e_r_cele_p.asp http://www.cema-net.org/download-files/sr_pres_poland.pdf
Contact	<p>Grzegorz Mazurkiewicz Project manager Tel.: (+48 22) 622 95 29 Email: g.mazurkiewicz@imm.org.pl</p>



PL02: Corporate Training Fund (Zakladowe Fundusze Szkoleniowe)

Basic data	
Country, region	Poland
Profile	The Corporate Training Fund (CTF) is an HR development tool at the company-level designed for the financing or co-financing of training and lifelong learning (LLL). After creating a Corporate Training Fund (CTF) and after fulfilling certain conditions, employers may apply for a refund from the Labour Fund of Poland. According to a regulation of the Ministry of labour, companies may be partially reimbursed for training and social security fees.
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	<p>1.1 Organisational problems and barriers <i>Corporate Training Fund is created at the company level and provides a training plan</i></p> <p>1.2 Financial means and resources for training <i>Employers have to allocate a percentage of their payroll funds to the Corporate Training Fund</i></p>
Duration and status	Programme started with a new law in 2004, ongoing
Financial sources	According to Polish National Employment Plan, employers have to allocate at least 0,25% of their payrolls funds to the Corporate Training Fund at their company. Employers may apply for refund.
Type of SMEs addressed	Generally all SMEs
Target group(s)	Generally all employers in Poland
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in Poland. At the company level, employers are obliged to coordinate each training plan with trade union or employee representatives.
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>In comparison to the EU 27, in Poland the percentage of adults participating in training is relatively low.</p> <p>Typical for the SME sector, many companies only have limited access to information and do not have time and staff to consider participating in training measures. In Poland, SMEs and Micro companies lack the knowledge of the CTF and face difficulties in allocating financial resources and time for the creation of such a body.</p> <p>Since its introduction, predominantly large companies have created a CTF in order to provide training for their workers, whereas the interest of SMEs in a CTF remained rather low.</p> <p>The need for an awareness campaign on the opportunities and advantages offered by the CTF has been acknowledged. Corresponding measures to raise the awareness on LLL and to specifically inform SMEs on the CTF are planned.</p> <p>Against this background, the main objectives of the Corporate Training Fund are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To increase and facilitate employers' and employees' access to LLL ▪ To train employees at the company-level according to their specific needs ▪ To play a motivational role in the education of employees and employers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To contribute to a knowledge-based economy in Poland
Methods and tools applied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CTF may be created individually or in cooperation with other employers. ▪ Regulations for creation, functioning and liquidation of a CTF are defined in collective agreement or other document. Information on amount of fees paid by employer is given. <p>A company's training plan will be developed in coordination with trade union or employee representation body at the company.</p> <p>Training plan will define:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diagnosis of training requirements ▪ Number of people estimated to participate in training ▪ Range of training ▪ Method of monitoring effects of training ▪ Financial expenditure earmarked for training.
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Major factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All companies in Poland are aware of the importance of LLL and the CTF, because of the National Employment Plan ▪ Specific training plans were developed according to the factual needs of employees and employers ▪ Cooperation with trade union or employee representative at company-level for design of training plan <p><i>Major success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ From 2004 to 2006, 4.2 % of all employers in Poland have created a CTF

Further contacts and information

Available information	European Employment Observatory EEO Review: Spring 2008
Web	http://www.mg.gov.pl/English/
Contact	Polish Ministry of Economy pl. Trzech Krzyży 3/5 00-507 Warszawa Poland



PL03: SME.net.pl

Basic data	
Country, region	Poland
Profile	SME.net.pl promoted a higher use of the internet and improved level of e-business skills, through innovative training methods.
Training challenges addressed / Links to analytical grid	2.1. Training methods addressing specific needs of SMEs <i>Use of tailored blended learning methods to enhance ICT-related skills in SMEs</i>
Duration and status	Completed in 2009.
Financial sources	Leonardo da Vinci Programme
Type of SMEs addressed	SME from three regions in Poland facing structural difficulties
Target group(s)	Employees and managers of small and medium enterprises in the three least developed regions of Poland – the Podlaskie region, the Warmia-Mazury region and the Lubelskie region in Eastern and North-Eastern Poland. Above that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ organisations and institutions supporting SME; entrepreneurship and ICT in these and other regions of Poland ▪ SMEs in other regions of Poland (indirectly, through the 'multipliers') ▪ Secondary schools wishing to extend their curricula by ICT-related knowledge and eskills and key regional VET actors
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Coordinated by a Polish company specialised in management consulting. International partners in Spain and Finland.

Description	
Background and objectives	<p><i>Background:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reluctance to training in SMEs, because traditional classroom training is considered incompatible with their real-life problems (research shows that only 0,9% of Polish SMEs are willing to invest in training of employees). ▪ Organisational issues and opportunity costs related to devoting enough working time to classroom training ▪ Training needs should be embedded in a more tangible context. There has to be a visible and instant business benefit from learning. It cannot be learning for the sake of learning. New knowledge must be swiftly transformed into action to create improvements to the participating SMEs <p><i>Objectives:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ development of innovative blended learning content on e-business skills; ▪ set-up of a virtual learning environment, where SMEs will be able to interact with trainers and other participants in between classes; ▪ validation of the quality of the training programme through a pilot training of 72 representatives of SMEs in the three regions, in a 10-month long blended learning program; ▪ evaluation of business impacts of training (new company webpages set up, new e-commerce activities launched etc.) to show tangible benefits an intelligent use of the web can bring to a SME; ▪ dissemination of results

Methods and tools applied	<p><i>Curriculum & new training method: role of blended learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training program on "Using IT in SME" conducted by blended learning using Virtual Learning Environment and active training methods. ▪ <i>IT Tools</i> - different tools and software, allowing the full use of the Internet as an information source and channel of communication for e-business; <i>Information</i> – e-sources of information and how to search, select and share business information; <i>Website</i> - objectives and principles of the creation and application of business websites; <i>Web promotion</i> - how to reach new customers by advertising their services and products on the Internet. <p><i>New training methodology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysing of learning styles with an employee assessment and organisational development software and using of different methods for training delivery ▪ Using of active trainings methods for conducting training on ICT skills <p><i>Handbook</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Handbook on Blended Learning foreseen as a combination of a general textbook (providing relevant background information and knowledge) and guidebook for trainers and coaches (incl. exercises, cases)
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Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Success indicators</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ three groups of 24 SMEs passed a 10-month pilot training program in the three least developed regions of Poland; ▪ six trainers and two VLE administrators will be coached in new roles, skills and tools; ▪ Transferability: a tested Virtual Learning Environment, which will be transferred from Spain and later on adjusted and deployed in Poland's specific situation; ▪ an innovative, blended learning program (combination of e-learning & traditional classroom) aiming at increasing the effective use of the Internet by SMEs (elaborated based on best practices from Finland, Spain and Poland); ▪ training guides that will be prepared for future trainers willing to use the program; <p><i>Factors of success</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Target of the regions and the workers ▪ New ICT-related tools used in a blended learning approach ▪ Cooperation between different actors: SMEs, VET actors, secondary schools
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Further contacts and information

Available information	Website
Web	http://www.sme.net.pl/
Contact	<p>Ms. Katarzyna Żmijewska IDEA! Management Consulting Sp. z o.o. tel: +48 (22) 331 66 99 fax: +48 (22) 331 66 94 e-mail: katarzyna.zmijewska@idea-mc.pl</p>



PT01: Employment and Vocational Training Institute (IEFP)

Basic data	
Country, region	Portugal
Profile	The IEFP (<i>Investir nos jovens Formar activos qualificar desempregados</i>) is a training institute established by the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity to provide services of consultancy, vocational training and management support to small enterprises. In this perspective, the institute tries to assist young school-leavers and other underprivileged social groups in accessing employment.
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	<p>1.1 Organisational problems and barriers</p> <p>1.5 Resource pooling and SME cooperation in training and competence development</p> <p><i>Creation of network</i></p> <p>2.1 Training methods addressing specific needs of SMEs</p> <p><i>Tailor-made training units for SMEs, in-house training by consultant</i></p> <p>2.2 Training and competence development for managerial staff/entrepreneurs</p> <p><i>Entrepreneurs are trained according to analysis.</i></p> <p>3.3 Competence development in the context of internationalisation</p> <p><i>Cooperation with international organisations</i></p>
Duration and status	Ongoing, IEFP was established in 1979
Financial sources	Portuguese government
Type of SMEs addressed	All types of enterprises – however with a strong focus on micro, small and medium sized enterprises
Target group(s)	Employers and employees
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	(IEFP) is a public body, under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, which is responsible for executing the employment and vocational training policies defined and approved by the Government. There is an institutional involvement of the Portuguese social partners in the IEFP steering body.
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>In Portugal, small enterprise are often left out from the vocational training public offer. There is an extremely low rate of use of external services by small companies (< 50). However, more than 50% of the Portuguese working force is employed in small enterprises.</p> <p>Compared to other EU countries, the education level is characterised by very low levels of skills and qualifications as a result of an accumulated deficit of schooling and training. The IEFP has the objective to contribute to a improved employment situation in Portugal with an emphasis on SMEs. Accordingly, it offers services of consultancy, vocational training and management support to small enterprises with the objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To contribute to progressive improvement of the employment situation ▪ To promote information, training guidance, vocational rehabilitation and placement of workers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To assist young school-leavers and other underprivileged social groups in accessing employment ▪ To support initiatives leading to the creation of new jobs ▪ To coordinate technical cooperation activities with national and international organisations
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Methods and tools applied	<p>Strategy of the project is to launch a network (REDE) of Consultants, oriented to the delivery of support services to the existing small enterprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The network is based in the public Training Centres, which share its management with Entrepreneurial Associations (23) and Unions (3), and other Entrepreneurial Associations. ▪ The network ensures a permanent and organisational mobilisation of the small enterprise, which generate a continuous demand and multiplying effect. ▪ The training institute tries to increase the productivity in companies through tailor-made vocational training actions ▪ In-house training units and tailor made solutions, sometimes in collaboration with other national / foreign entities ▪ Autonomous learning units: capable of being integrated in different training paths, an individual or a group could acquire a set of skills, respecting each one's learning pace. ▪ Training is based on strategic analysis and a short-term action plan, elaborated together with the entrepreneur ▪ The entrepreneur will also be trained.
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Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Broad stakeholder involvement including social partners and government institutions <p><i>Success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation of programme among participating enterprises was very positive: almost all entrepreneurs (97%) stated that they would recommend programme to others and that they would use own funds for training in the future. ▪ 1200 small-sized enterprises (< 50) participated between 1996-2001
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Further information and contacts

Available information	Further information on ongoing projects and activities is available on the website of the institute (mainly in Portuguese)
Web	http://www.iefp.pt/
Contact	<p>Employment and Vocational Training Institute IEFPP Av. José Malhoa, 11 1099-018 Lisboa Portugal Phone: +351-21 861 41 00 Fax: +351-21 722 70 13</p>



RO01: SME COUNSELLING - Development of a Front-Line Advice-Guidance-Counselling scheme for SME's' employees

Basic data	
Country, region	Romania
Profile	As an incentive to the development of a learning culture within SMEs and to further stimulate demand for learning, the project aimed to improve access to vocational guidance and counselling by SME employees, in particular the ageing workforce. The main target was to create "front-line" counsellors in SMEs.
Training challenges addressed / Links to analytical grid	<p>1.3. HR and skills development policy / plans / anticipation <i>The role of the front-line counsellors was to anticipate skills needs and to implement adapted lifelong learning devices for workers</i></p> <p>1.4. Perception of training needs (by entrepreneurs/managers and employees) <i>A better perception of training needs was at the heart of the project. Training managers or senior workers to become front-line counsellors within the SME is decisive for changing mentalities.</i></p> <p>2.2. Training and competence development for managerial staff / entrepreneurs <i>Another impact of the project was therefore to upgrade skills (in the field of HR management mostly) of SME managers and entrepreneurs.</i></p>
Duration and status	2004 –2006
Financial sources	Leonardo da Vinci Programme
Type of SMEs addressed	All types are eligible
Target group(s)	Both managers and employees of SMEs, in particular in the following sectors: manufacturing, business activities and education. Particular categories of workers at risk of exclusion from the labour market were also given a specific attention: older employees and women.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	The project coordinator was the Eco-metallurgical Researches and Surveying Center (ECOMET), - Polytechnic University of Bucharest. 5 countries (Romania, Portugal, Italy, Netherlands, Poland) and 10 partners were involved.
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>SME employees are usually overworked, employers usually lack resources, and there are not always incentives for investment in human resources development.</p> <p>The project aimed at improving access to vocational guidance and counselling by SME employees, in particular by the ageing workforce.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create "front-line counsellors" within SMEs, which role is to offer advice to employees. ▪ Train SME managers and senior staff to this role of learning facilitator or "front-line guidance counsellor". ▪ Develop managers' "social competences", as part of an overall Training Quality Management (TQM) system.
Methods and tools applied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Background analysis: identification of European, national and local stakeholders and their current level of involvement; identification of best TOM practices applied to SMEs; SME workers needs assessment in

	<p>the field of lifelong learning; identification of best practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing a “front-line” information and counselling service scheme ▪ Developing a training scheme dedicated to these future internal “front-line” counsellors ▪ Creating a training guide including a guidance methodology and practical tools for SME managers. ▪ Developing a common international framework for applying TQM principles within SMEs and disseminating recommendations for educational institutions, in order to include social skills development at all levels of the curricula.
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Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 15 trainees from partner organisations, retrained in order to transfer the acquired know-how and to disseminate the identified national best practices in TQM approach ▪ 17 SMEs owners and/or managers included in the pilot training in Romania. ▪ A national survey identified more than 1,300 SME in Romania that are potentially interested. <p><i>Factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preliminary study with identification of workers’ needs and best practices in this field. ▪ Internal “front-line” counsellors who come from enterprises (SMEs): better proximity and confidence with a worker of the company than with an external counsellor. This person knows the specific needs of the company, its organisation, the employees, etc. ▪ Counsellors trained to assume this new role, with a practical guide. ▪ Identification of SMEs potentially interested.
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Further contacts and information

Available information	Brochure of project
Web	http://www.smeskills.com/ http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Projects_Networks/SocialP/project_details.asp?id=1335 http://www.smeprojects.ro/
Contact	<p>Ms. Carmen Marinescu Project Manager CNIPMMR - Dept. Proiecte Str. Victor Eftimiu 2, 010154 Tel: + 40 745 053 584 ; + 40 21 312 68 93 E-mail: carmen_marinescu@smeprojects.ro Web: www.cnipmmr.ro; www.smeprojects.ro</p> <p>Mr. Predescu Cristian Director of the Eco-metallurgical Researches and Surveying Centre (ECOMET) Polytechnic University of Bucharest Tel: +4021 4029592</p>



RO02: SME ACTor

Basic data	
Country, region	Romania
Profile	Supporting facilitators/mediators of SME co-operation in the acquisition of the action learning techniques for improving their competence in organising co-operation between SMEs.
Training challenges addressed / Links to analytical grid	<p>1.3. HR and skills development policy <i>Mediators or facilitators help the efficient launching of a training strategy</i></p> <p>1.5. Resource pooling and SME cooperation in training and competence development <i>Networking between local SMEs is seen as a way to develop inter-organisation non-formal learning</i></p> <p>2.1. Training methods addressing specific needs of SMEs <i>Non formal learning coupled with "Action Learning" manifold techniques, in order to meet the plurality of contexts and needs.</i></p> <p>2.4. Mismatch of formal training and qualification needs on the job <i>The action learning techniques also filled this usual mismatch</i></p>
Duration and status	2006 –2008
Financial sources	Leonardo da Vinci Programme
Type of SMEs addressed	Various, depending on local network development project: ICT and start-ups, tourism, consulting, local theme park, events organisation, etc.
Target group(s)	More than a hundred trainers and learning facilitators of non formal training contexts: consultants, professionals/managers from local development agencies, trainers of VET systems
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Project leader: Unimpresa Romania. Six European countries (RO, IT, DE, PL, SP, HU) covering different regions/areas characterised by potential and re-positioning SMEs aggregates.
Description	
Background and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to support and improve resource pooling in SME by promoting activities of inter-organisational non formal learning, networking and animation of local expert communities ▪ Promotion of knowledge and learning processes through action learning (AL) (<i>approach based on the assumption that people learn more effectively when working on real time problems occurring in their own settings</i>). ▪ Supporting facilitators/mediators of SME co-operation in the acquisition of the action learning techniques.
Methods and tools applied	<p>29 learning laboratories for identified facilitators in the selected areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training on lifelong learning awareness ▪ AL philosophy, 40 different methods and tools (all reviewed and presented in the book mentioned below), e.g. brainstorming, stakeholder analysis, customer and supply needs analysis, "contract with myself", planning and problem solving tools, SWOT analysis, visualisation techniques ▪ Facilitator curriculum <p>About 40 hours of training that can be organised in different ways</p>

	<p>according to specific training needs. Training was arranged on the basis of five modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitators/mediators: why and what for (functions and roles of the facilitator, action learning methodology, how to analyse learning processes) ▪ Communication and co-operation (tasks and competence needs in context analysis, defining and planning processes, ways to tackle problems and situations) ▪ Moderating, visualising and problem solving (the moderator's role, learning how to moderate: techniques) ▪ Project and quality management (project work: leadership without hierarchy, how to plan, start, run and finish a project, quality continuous improvement/learning) ▪ Other creative techniques
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Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Factors of success</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The active learning philosophy and pedagogy, which is plural so as to meet all the issues and contexts in SMEs from different countries ▪ Importance given to planning and decision-making processes ▪ The role of facilitators (even sometimes e-facilitators), who are empowered to start networking projects (after a context analysis), to plan and moderate learnshops. <p><i>Indicators of success</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 61 participants of SME representatives in the Laboratories or "Learnshops" ▪ A growing awareness of the importance of planned communication for successful co-operation within and across companies ▪ Co-operation building between the partners ▪ several functioning new SME networks ▪ publication of a collective book
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Further contacts and information

Available information	<p>Book: H. W. Franz, R. Sarcina, <i>Building Leadership in Project and Network Management – A Facilitator's Tool Set</i>, Berlin, Heidelberg, New York:Springer, May 2009.</p> <p>Project website</p>	
Web	<p>http://www.smeactor.eu</p>	
Contact	<p>Unimpresa Romania Str. Piața Sf. Ștefan nr. 6 Sector 2, Bucuresti Tel. 0040 31 8053185; Email: info@unimpresa-it.ro</p>	<p>Dortmund University of Technology Dr. Hans-Werner Franz Sozialforschungstelle Dortmund Evinger Platz 17 D-44339 Dortmund T +49.231.8596.236 franz@sfs-dortmund.de</p>



SE01: ENABLER Project

Basic data and information	
Country, region	Sweden
Profile	The aim of the project was to implement a new function within European SMEs called the "Enabler". The Enabler is an insider, that is an employee within SMEs who, by means of a training package, has been empowered to work as an internal care taker of competence allocation and development of the SME. The role of the Enabler is to manage what the SME really needs and to find the appropriate training tools inside or outside the workplace. The core activity of the project was the development of the Enabler training package, which was available online.
Training challenges addressed / Links to analytical grid	<p>1.3 HR and skills development policy / plans / anticipation <i>Within SMEs, the Enabler will be the coordinator of a LLL proactive strategy adapted to skills needs</i></p> <p>1.4 Perceptions of training needs (by entrepreneurs/managers and employees) <i>One of the main role of the Enabler is precisely to anticipate training needs and develop a permanent lifelong learning culture within SMEs.</i></p>
Duration and status	2007 - 2009
Financial sources	Leonardo da Vinci Programme
Type of SMEs addressed	SME engineering industry (but the tools can be used by many other types of SMEs).
Target group(s)	Employers and employees in SMEs
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	Coordinator: Halsinge Utbildning (SE). The partnership is made up of Adult Education and VET organisations, SMEs and one trade union. Partners (including several SMEs) from Germany, Italy, Romania, Sweden and the UK.
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>Promote lifelong learning in SMEs through the "empowerment" of an employee.</p> <p>To correctly assume this role, this employee has to be trained. The idea is to make the Enabler the "training organiser" or "manager" within the company, which implies, for instance, that s/he has the possibility to buy training material. The Enabler benefits from external consultants and from a specific training package (available in the different languages of the project partners) to realise these tasks.</p>
Methods and tools applied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interaction with future users and assessment of the relevance of the training tools. Elaboration of the training package through a constant dialogue with future users, made possible by the participation of 5 SMEs and one trade union in the partnership. ▪ A testing period to improve the package. ▪ A training package available on line. This package is sort of toolbox / handbook with a complementary set of digital learning objects and pictures to illustrate the key aspects. This training package is a "stand alone training package", but is completed by a on line chatroom, where new and experienced Enablers will be able to share some ideas or experiences.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An adaptable training package. The training programme will be freely available on the Internet. It will be usable for other educators/trainers wanting to adapt the programme to other sectors. ▪ Dissemination. The potential of dissemination, transfer and valorisation of this project should be very strong as the partners have strong links to regional and local organisations of many kinds.
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Factors of success and success indicators	Expected results are an increased knowledge of learning opportunities amongst employers and employees in the pilot group of SMEs.
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Further contacts and information

Available information	The prototype/pilot can be found at http://test.berida.com/xldv/Frontend/
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Web	http://www.eu-enabler.eu/inglese/index_en.htm
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Contact	<p>Coordinator: Klas Tallvid Hälsingeutbildning, CFL Söderhamns Kommun CFL, Centre for flexible learning, municipality of Soderhamn. S:a järnvägsgatan 7, 826 80 Söderhamn Sweden Email: klas.tallvid@soderhamn.se</p>
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SE02: “Guidance in the Workplace” –Innovation Transfer

Basic data	
Country, region	Sweden
Profile	This project is an innovation transfer, based on a previous project carried out under the Leonardo da Vinci Programme. The objective was to transfer innovation from partners in the previous project (Italy and Sweden) to new partners. The ‘Guidance in the Workplace’ project aims at developing lifelong learning by increasing the availability of advice and guidance within the workplace. In addition with this “micro level” action, the project aims also to transfer learning between all countries regarding developments in this area and to support the participating countries in making national plans, creating or building on existing networks.
Training challenges addressed / Links to analytical grid	<p>1.3. HR and skills development policy / plans / anticipation <i>The idea is that guidance counsellor work in close collaboration with employers in order to combine the interests of employers (their perception of the skills needs of the company) with individual learning needs of the employees.</i></p> <p>1.4. Perceptions of training needs (by entrepreneurs/managers and employees) <i>The role of the guidance counsellors is to inform and advice employees about training and lifelong learning. They help them to define and assess their training needs. They also take into account the interests of the company, which is associated to think about skills needs.</i></p>
Duration and status	2007 - 2009
Financial sources	Leonardo da Vinci Programme
Type of SMEs addressed	Not specifically addressed to SMEs but one major aim is to support employees in small enterprises.
Target group(s)	Employees and managers/employers.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	The coordinator of the project is the CFL (Centre for Flexible Learning), Municipality of Söderhamn (Sweden). Other partners are Aster Scienza Tecnologia Impresa (Italia), Fundatia Centrul Educational Soros (Romania), Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (Slovenia), PIA, Information systems and services, Velenje (Slovenia), Centre Interinstitutionnel de Bilan de Compétences Artois Ternois (France).
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>Three initial assumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidance can strongly contribute to the development of lifelong learning for employees by encouraging them to take up learning opportunities. ▪ Guidance is not always easily accessible to those in employment. ▪ It is essential that advice and guidance is not provided in isolation, but as an integrated part of the training and learning at the workplace. <p>Based on these assumptions, the project aims at encouraging guidance for those in employment and developing training for counsellors providing advice and guidance within the workplace. Indeed, the previous research showed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the guidance counsellor can have an extended role, which incorporates

	<p>traditional elements – of putting the individual employee in the centre, a professional attitude, and a high ethical morale – with new demands – in particular in approaching the employers for a close co-operation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a real need in qualified training and education of the guidance counsellors to take on these new demands and challenges.
Methods and tools applied	<p>In the continuation of the Guidance Merger project, this project is focused on training for counsellors and also aims to learn from the new countries participating in the project. It consists in three major stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research and development of networks, ▪ The offering of advice and guidance in the workplace, ▪ Further development of guidance services in the workplace. <p>Expected results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exchange of experiences in guidance in the workplace between partners ▪ Developing new approaches for guidance in the workplace that are suited to the needs and specificities of the partner countries ▪ Training opportunities in other partner countries for professionals to develop and implement new approaches to guidance in the workplace ▪ Common training materials to be used within the partner countries for training guidance counsellors and other professionals
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Success indicators:</i></p> <p>Increased level of contacts and cooperation between SMEs and guidance providers in the participating countries.</p> <p><i>Factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The employer interest in introducing a programme for lifelong learning and his involvement in the planning of guidance activities from the very beginning. ▪ The long term relationship and the collaboration with organisations in the field of workforce development that already had an ongoing co-operation with the companies. ▪ The cooperation with trade unions (even if small companies often are not represented by unions it is important that guidance counsellors cooperate fully with trade unions where it is possible). ▪ The trust of employees in the counsellor (the employee has to be convinced that counsellor acts in his best interest). ▪ The need for training and education for the guidance counsellors ▪ An effective, simple, flexible and accessible service for the firm: small firms have not much time for guidance or learning activities. ▪ The need for supporting these activities on a local, regional and national level.

Further contacts and information

Available information	Projects websites.
Web	www.guidancemerger.org www.guidanceintheworkplace.eu
Contact	<p>CFL - Centrum för flexibelt lärande Söderhamns kommun S Järnvägsgatan 7, 826 80 Söderhamn Sweden Tel.: 0270-758 00 Email: klas.tallvid@soderhamn.se</p>



UK01: *Unionlearn* – A trade union initiative to support workplace learning

Basic data	
Country, region	United Kingdom
Profile	The <i>unionlearn</i> initiative which has been established by the British trade union federation TUC today is the major British programme to spread and support lifelong learning at the workplace in British companies. Though not solely focussed on small and medium sized companies, SMEs and smaller workplaces are a crucial target group of the programme which has been established in 2006 building upon previous government and trade union initiatives. In order to reach it's mission, unionlearn has established a remarkable structure of company based trade union "learning representatives" as well as regional and local structure.
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	<p>1.2 Financial means and resources for training <i>through the Union Learning Fund financial resources are made available to training – identification of other available resources is a part of the support activities for companies and employees</i></p> <p>1.4 Perception of training needs <i>awareness raising towards lifelong learning and a learning culture at the company level is a major aim of the initiative</i></p> <p>2.4 Mismatch of formal training and qualification needs on the job <i>having identified the need to continuously update and upgrade skills and competences, overcoming the mismatch between existing skills/competences and needs is a major aspect of the unionlearn initiative</i></p>
Duration and status	<i>Unionlearn</i> was formally established in 2006 but the initiative traces back to the end of the 1990s
Financial sources	Core funding is provided by the British government (Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills, DIUS) with additional funding by regional sources and ESF for specific projects
Type of SMEs addressed	All types of SMEs
Target group(s)	Trade union members and other employees, especially among workers with low skill levels. Also entrepreneurs as partners of dialogue, consultation and negotiation ("learning agreements") are a target group.
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	British TUC has initiated the programme and is coordinating the activities. Members of board and administration functions are representatives of training institutions, research and business in the UK.
Description	
Background and objectives	The initiative of unionlearn is rooted in the history and activities of the British trade union in the context of education and training provided for working people. In the 1990s the TUC formed partnerships with the Training and Enterprise Councils and developed "TUC Learning Services" under the Labour Government focussing on areas such as lifelong learning, advice and guidance and the training of "union learning representatives" (ULRs) which support and initiate training activities at the workplace level. Today around 20,000 ULRs are working in the UK under the umbrella of <i>unionlearn</i> . A further important landmark was the setting up of the "Union Learning Fund" in 1998. In 2006, the British government finally established the <i>unionlearn</i> initiative as an umbrella for

	<p>these various activities in the field of workplace learning and training. <i>Unionlearn</i> in general aims to promote the uptake of learning and skills in the workplace in the UK. Concrete aims are to substantially expand and improve the level of training and development available for trade union officials and reps, to provide a platform for increasing the number of ULRs in the workplace and to provide access for many more workers to learning opportunities. It also has a key strategic role in co-ordinating and supporting individual trade unions to increase their ability to influence employers – either directly in the workplace or through participating actively on learning and skills bodies such as sector skills councils (SSCs) and regional skills partnerships (RSPs). The <i>unionlearn</i> organisation today has around 140 staff being dedicated to achieving this objectives. <i>Unionlearn</i> has a regional structure, with six regional managers.</p>
Methods and tools applied	<p>Main methods and instruments to improve learning and training at the workplace are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ provide quality information, advice and guidance (IAG) to learners, linked to the unionlearn ‘climbing frame’ – an online tool to stimulate progression – and the take up of learning ▪ assist unions to secure quality learning provision, including extending the use of the already successful unionlearn Quality Award ▪ establish a skills support network to help unions engage with ▪ raise awareness of the union role in lifelong learning and workforce development among unions, employers, employees and other key stakeholders ▪ provide an enhanced TUC Education Service ▪ establish a research and strategy function to identify, disseminate and mainstream good practice, and sponsor research where needed ▪ build union capacity to sustain and embed work on learning and skills so that it becomes a core activity for all trade unions
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ involvement a broad variety of stakeholders and all relevant actors in the field of training and LLL ▪ commitment of the trade unions as the most important driving force within this initiative <p><i>Success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ around 20,000 “union learning representatives” have been trained so far ▪ more than 450 Union Learning Fund projects have been run, covering over 3,000 workplaces ▪ More than 67,000 learners access courses each year ▪ The Trade Union Hub runs around 90 “Union Learning Centres”
Further contacts and information	
Available information	<p>The <i>unionlearn</i> website contains many information on the initiative as well as workplace related learning and training in the UK</p> <p>The second annual report of the <i>unionlearn</i> initiative is available online: http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/files/publications/documents/131.pdf</p> <p>In the context of the <i>unionlearn</i> initiative the monthly “WORKPLACE Learning and Skills Bulletin” is published by a private publisher. http://www.basicsskillsbulletin.co.uk/workplace</p>
Web	www.unionlearn.org.uk
Contact	<p>unionlearn Congress House Great Russell Street London WC1B 3LS Tel.: +44-20 7079 6920</p>

Email ulweb@tuc.org.uk



UK02: Train to Gain

Basic data	
Country, region	United Kingdom
Profile	<p>Train to Gain is the national skills service that offers advice on all training programmes in the UK. The project supports employers of all sizes and in all sectors to improve the skills of employees as a route to improving their business performance. Along with Investors in People and Business Link, Train to Gain is an initiative financially supported by the UK government.</p> <p>Train to Gain has a distinctive focus on small companies with less than 50 employees and offers special advantages. The companies are reimbursed for the costs of absences, if employees are participating in previously approved training measures.</p>
Links to analytical grid / Training challenges addressed	<p>1.1 Organisational problems and barriers <i>Advise on how to access training programmes of the UK</i></p> <p>1.2 Financial means and resources for training <i>Small companies are reimbursed for wage costs, if employee leaves for training</i></p> <p>2.1. Training methods addressing specific needs of SMEs <i>On-the-job training measures and individual company coaching</i></p>
Duration and status	Ongoing
Financial sources	UK government
Type of SMEs addressed	Generally, all companies irrespective of industrial sector are addressed. Specific tool for Small companies (max. 50 employees)
Target group(s)	All entrepreneurs
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	The Learning and Skills Council of the UK government
Description	
Background and objectives	<p>Competition from emerging countries has been increasing. Comparable to other European countries, the UK felt the need to highlight the importance of raising the skills levels of employees in order to remain competitive in the world economy.</p> <p>The UK government has introduced the programme to support and facilitate the access to training activities and upskilling processes in all companies. SME are not the only target group of Train to Gain, however compose an important sector in constant need of training, overall advice and support.</p> <p>Train to Gain was advertised by the UK government to promote awareness to the need of training the workforce to a higher level. The campaign was titled "Our future. It's in our hands" and addressed all employers in the UK. Through further qualification and more competences, employees and their businesses may effectively compete in the world market.</p> <p>Train to Gain has the main objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to contribute to a better business performance of companies ▪ to promote the awareness of the need for training among workers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to raise the awareness for training, qualification and the improvement of skills among workers
Methods and tools applied	<p>Skill Brokers will analyse individual situation and demands of the company and will provide advise in suitable training programmes or financial aid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual company coaching by "Skill Brokers" Skill screening Apprenticeships: employees attend a combination of on-the-job and off-site training in order to gather practical skills. On-the-job training measures Variety of courses, sector specifically designed National Skills Academy Network: Centres of excellence for employer-led skills training, creating courses of direct relevance to different business sectors. <p>Contribution to wage costs of small companies with 50 employees max:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under certain circumstances, the company is reimbursed for the costs of absences of its employees. In small-sized companies, the day-to-day finances are easily affected by dispensing employees for training. With this reimbursement, small companies may benefit first from improving skills, and secondly from the reimbursement of costs of absence. <p>See example of good practise listed on the project's website with reference to "Business Link", another programme funded by the UK government.</p>
Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Major factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project enabled workers from SMEs to easily participate in training SMEs were financially reimbursed for the absence of their staff <p><i>Major success indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General awareness among workers for the importance and need for training was raised
Further contacts and information	
Available information	Report, summary and brochures available on website
Web	http://www.traintogain.gov.uk/
Contact	Contact over website or toll-free number within the UK Tel.: 0800 015 5545



UK03: INFLOW - Informal Learning Opportunities in the Workplace

Basic data	
Country, region	United Kingdom
Profile	The aim of this project was to develop a model for the identification and recognition of informal learning within SMEs. The project thereby increased awareness of informal learning and its importance for the business. Another effect was to strengthen the confidence and motivation of workers.
Training challenges addressed / Links to analytical grid	<p>2.1. Training methods addressing specific needs of SMEs, such as on-the-job training, job rotation, etc.</p> <p><i>This project encourages the recognition of informal learning and the implementation of informal learning processes in SMEs</i></p> <p>2.3 Validation of informal skills and qualification</p> <p><i>Informal skills are validated through awards (for employees and companies) and can prepare to certifications.</i></p>
Duration and status	2004 –2007
Financial sources	Leonardo da Vinci Programme
Type of SMEs addressed	Engineering Sector and Hotel and Restaurant sector
Target group(s)	Employees of these sectors (+ employers and HR managers)
Coordination and stakeholder involvement	The project was coordinated by a private consultancy in the UK with national partners (national certification institutions, training organisations, employers, e-specialists and research organisations. 75 SMEs ranging in size from 6 to 223 in six EU-Member States (France, Germany, Spain, Latvia, Sweden and the UK) were also involved.
Description	
Background and objectives	<p><i>Background:</i> This project was conceived in response to the EU Skills and Mobility Action Plan (2002) that included an objective of “working towards greater European recognition of informal and non-formal learning”.</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyse the existing studies on informal learning, complete them with in-depth interviews with some SMEs managers and employees, and identify good practices. ▪ Develop a model for the identification and recognition of informal learning taking place within SMEs in terms of, for instance, communication/working as part of a team/other generic skills ▪ extension of this informal learning to other employees ▪ recording the evidence of this informal learning e.g. in an electronic portfolio or other records ▪ Develop methodologies for the accreditation of the informal learning achievements (for example with awards or other certifications) ▪ Test the transferability of the model between Member States by piloting the methodologies in the partner countries. <p>The project has developed a model for the recognition, validation and accreditation of informal learning in the workplace based on the research undertaken, the transnational partnership’s expertise and consultation with key stakeholders including end-users. It has been successfully piloted in six Member States and within 75 SMEs ranging in size from 6 to 223.</p>

Methods and tools applied	<p><i>Method:</i> To recognise the processes of informal learning in SMEs, there is an assessment of both informal learning position of the company and individual informal learning of employees. These assessments can lead to two EIPIIL (European Initiative for the Promotion of Informal Learning) awards: a Company Award and an Individual Award.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Company Award: Assessors visit the business and interview the management and a range of employees at varying levels within the company. They write evidence sheets. Depending on the outcome, the EIPIIL Company Award is made or support is offered to the company to develop its informal learning position and a reassessment date is fixed. ▪ Individual award: the focus is to encourage individuals to recognise their informal learning by recording it in some way, to have this learning validated by peers or by the assessor and finally to have it accredited through a formal body. Indeed, employees are encouraged to digitally record the evidence of informal learning. This evidence is stored in e-logs or e-portfolios and verified by peers, supervisors, managers. It is used in the validation process, and a decision is made regarding which level of award has been achieved. <p><i>Supporting instruments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Guide for employers that explains the processes to employers and gives them an opportunity to prepare for the assessor's visit(s). ▪ A Guide for assessors that ensures Quality Assurance of the recognition and validation processes. ▪ A Guide for employees.
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Factors of success and success indicators	<p><i>Factors of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corresponds to a real need and allows improving competences and processes at little cost. ▪ For the worker, it is quite gratifying: he can identify, name his/her competences and make them recognised. <p><i>Indicators of success:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 51 companies achieved the award (initial target was 40). More generally, the project succeeded in encouraging the recognition of the benefit of informal learning and in showing how can SMEs facilitate and reward it. ▪ Regarding the individual awards, the target was for 80 individuals to participate and some electronic evidence to be produced. In reality 100 did so. Regarding accreditation, the target of 50 individual awards to be accredited was also exceeded with 93 certifications (through ASET in UK, VAE in France, National Certification in Latvia, and REK in Sweden). The individual awards have provided valuable recognition of on-the-job learning and the capacity to undertake further vocational training. Secondary impacts have been on team-working, organisational cultures. ▪ The transferability of the model has been achieved albeit with cultural modifications and some remaining issues over national accreditation.
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Further contacts and information

Available information	<p>Inflow website The use of the model and the validation methodology is to continue post-project under the EIPIIL umbrella – www.eipil.net.</p>
Web	<p>www.inflow.eu.com</p>
Contact	<p>Margaret Simmonds - Director, The MRS Consultancy Ltd 5 Bedale Road – Well – Bedale North Yorkshire DL8 2PX Email: m.simmonds@mrsconsultancy.com</p>

