



Inter-company Training Centres and Centres of Vocational Excellence

Date: 21 April 2021

Location: Brussels, León, Geleen, Vienna, London

Employment,
Social Affairs
and Inclusion



Structure of the webinar

1. Introduction: SMEs and developing excellence in apprenticeships (Joao SANTOS, EC)
2. Supporting SMEs through CoVEs (Andrew MCCOSHAN, Plexus Research & Consulting)
3. Best practice examples:
 - Chemelot Innovation and Learning Labs (Cyriel MENTINK, CHILL)
 - CoVE certification scheme in the Castilla y León region of Spain (Agustín F. SIGÜENZA, Education Department, *Castilla y León* Regional Government)
4. Inter-company Training Centres (ITCs) (Jörg MARKOWITSCH, 3s)
5. Future (funding) plans for ITCs and CoVEs at EU level, (Joao SANTOS, EC)
6. Q&A

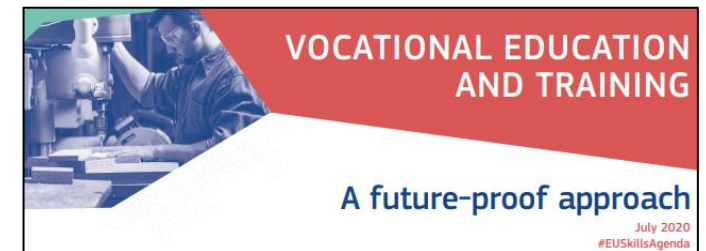
Introduction

#EUVocationalSkills
#EUVocationalExcellence

Skills

The policy context (2020)

- Commission Communication: European [Skills Agenda](#) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience
- Council Recommendation: On [vocational education and training](#) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness, and resilience
- Commission Communication: On [the European Education Area](#)





“

Vocational education and training is more important than ever. Providing people with the skills they need, and that help them find a quality job, is one of our central responses to the recovery, and key for the green and digital transitions. Our initiatives on vocational excellence will continue to be based on innovation, transnational collaboration and social fairness.

”

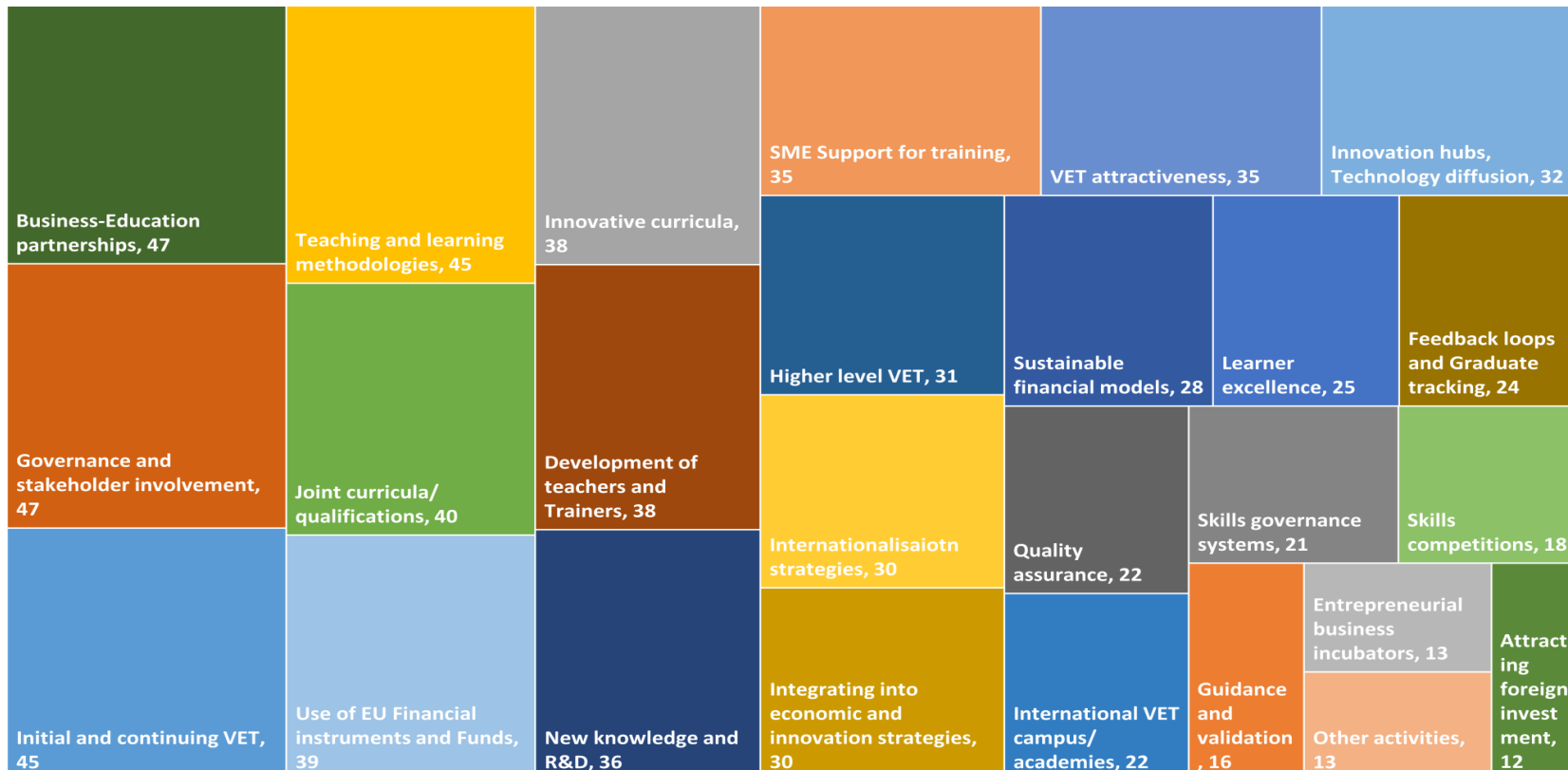
Nicolas Schmit

Commissioner | Jobs and Social Rights

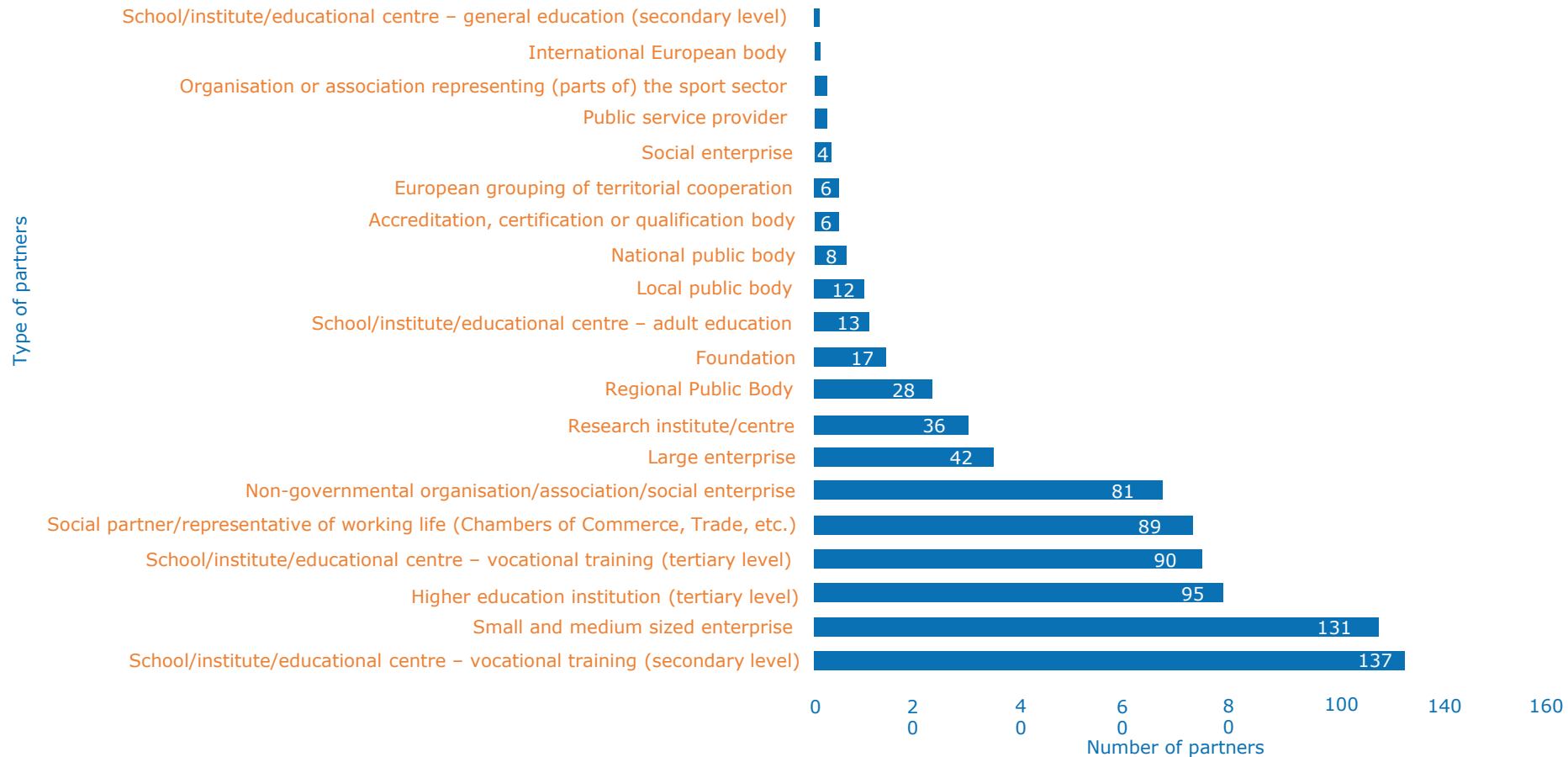
Centres of Vocational Excellence in a nutshell

The goal	VET Excellence <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Empowering young adults and adults with skills for fulfilling careers that meet the needs of an innovative, competitive, and sustainable economy
How to get there	International collaborative platforms of CoVE <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 'Skills ecosystems' for innovation, regional development, and social inclusion▪ CoVEs operating in a given local context, closely embedded in innovation ecosystems, working with CoVEs in other countries through international collaborative platforms
EU funding	Erasmus 2021–2027 driving the initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Also supported through other EU funds: RRF, ESF+, ERDF, InvestEU, Horizon Europe
The partners	VET institutions, universities of applied science, research centres, companies, chambers, professional or sector associations, trade unions, policymakers, employment services/agencies, regional development agencies, municipalities, etc.

Erasmus+ 2020 call for Centres' of Vocational Excellence main activities developed by projects



Type of full partners in all project applications





Supporting SMEs through CoVEs

Types of Centres of Vocational Excellence

'Purpose built' or designated entities as part of national/regional arrangements for vocational excellence.

Some CoVEs are 'additions' to the main VET system, bringing partners together to form 'new' VET providers.

- In the **Netherlands**, the **Katapult network** is a community of 160 'action-oriented partnerships'.
- In **France**, there are **95 Campus des métiers et des qualifications** covering 'dynamic and job-creating' sectors.

Individual VET providers, functioning as CoVEs for a region, sub-region, or sector.

- In **Estonia**, the **Tartu Vocational Educational Centre** is a municipal school with strong links to local businesses and sector bodies providing links to SMEs.
- In **Slovenia**, the **Šolski center Nova Gorica** offers a wide choice of educational programmes and training in various fields.

AND

In some countries, CoVE-type activities are an integral part of the system, such as in countries with dual systems (e.g. Austria and Germany), and in Finland (where CoVE-type activities are included in quality requirements).

Partnerships are crucial

EITHER

Partnerships are set up separately, as an addition to the main VET system.

- This is common in CoVE networks.

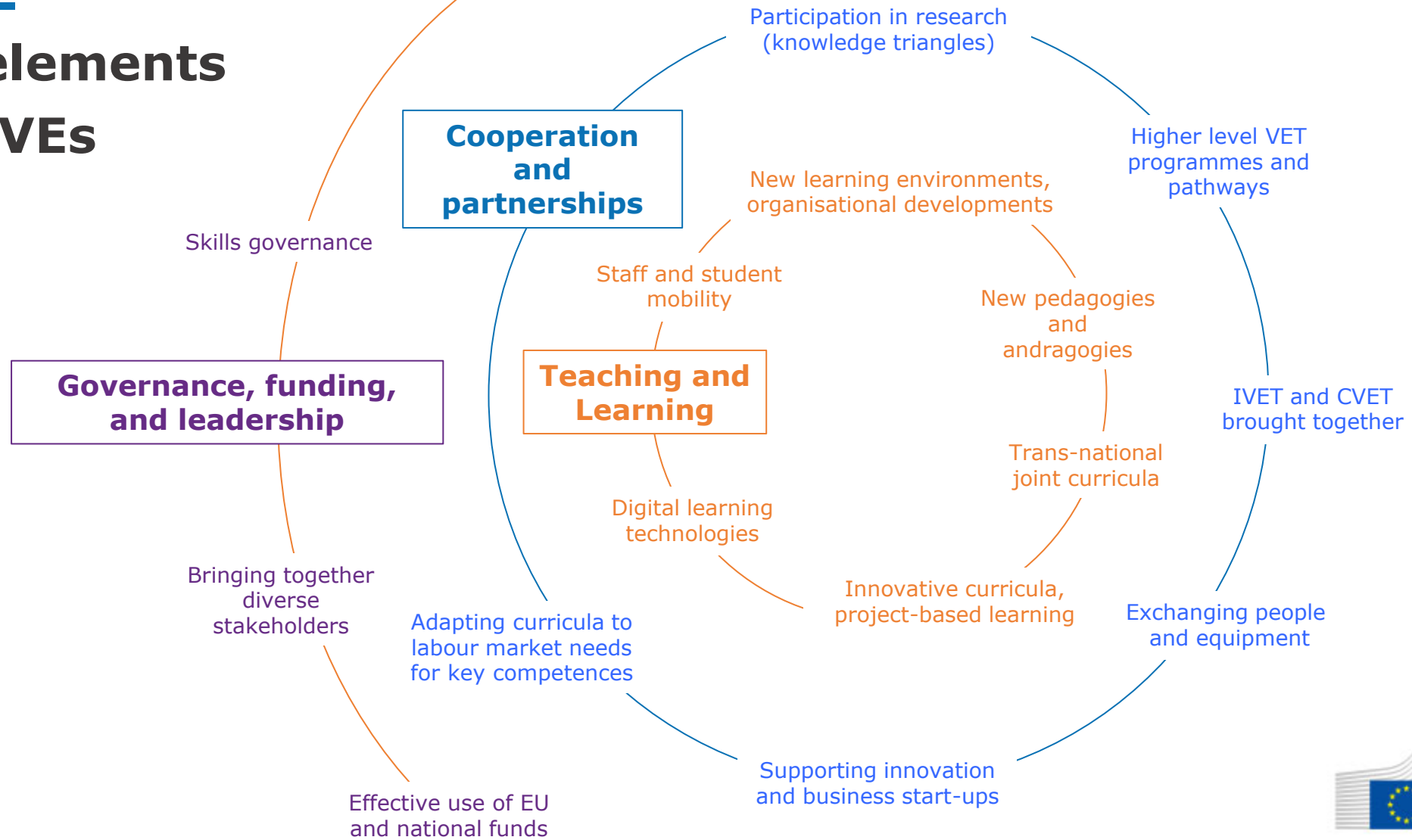
e.g. In Italy, the Higher Technical Institutes (*Istituti tecnici superiori* – ITS) are mixed public-private foundations comprising local authorities, schools, training institutions, relevant enterprises, universities, and research bodies.

OR

Single providers act as lead organisations with a variety of partnerships to deal with specific sectors or issues.

- Most common where there are not established national or regional CoVE systems.
- Single providers act as 'hubs' or 'umbrellas' for a package of activities, which may cover a variety of sectors.
- Time-limited projects/funds are often changed.
- Regional authorities may lead activities, e.g. Tknika in the Basque Country in Spain, and the Västra Götaland region in Sweden.

Key elements of CoVEs



Teaching and learning

DRIVERS

Tuning VET to better meet demand for skills in the labour market

Lifelong learning principles

Engaging with wider social, economic, and sustainability strategies at local and regional levels

Delivering 'better' VET to learners and businesses

ACTIVITIES

Innovating in teaching and training methodologies, including project-based learning and use of digital technologies

Embedding transversal competences in curricula
– especially entrepreneurship

Removing the distinction between initial and continuing VET

Lifelong learning centres

Cooperation and partnerships

- CoVEs **go beyond the 'normal'** level and type of engagement of stakeholders, e.g. in governing boards, further cooperation and partnership with businesses and with a much wider pool of stakeholders.
- Flows of resources and expertise go beyond just one-way sharing, and **two-way and multi-way** exchanges are commonplace.
- Exchanges become **systematically** built-in to activities.
- **SMEs** are commonly a target group for CoVEs.

EXAMPLE

In **Switzerland**, there are dense and well-established local/regional clusters of VET stakeholders. In the city of **Baden**, there is a significant concentration of VET providers and VET schools, other renowned education institutions, large international companies, specialised **SMEs**, innovation centres, and research centres. These stakeholders cooperate with each other through formalised cooperation agreements, the **apprenticeship** system, or through non-formalised cooperation to support knowledge and technology transfer.

Innovation and knowledge creation and sharing

Innovation in **teaching and learning** can range from **one-off changes in practice**, e.g. in response to skills needs in particular sectors, through to **ongoing and large-scale change programmes**.

Product innovations and start-ups are created through **innovation centres and business incubation hubs**, and through **virtual environments** and **counselling and support**.

CoVEs collaborate with **businesses and universities** to develop new business processes and products, and new teaching and learning methods.

EU funding, notably Erasmus+, plays an important role knowledge creation and innovation.

EXAMPLES

Some CoVEs have 'in-house' capacity for knowledge creation. In the **Basque Country, Spain**, **Tknika** places applied research in VET at the heart of its activities.

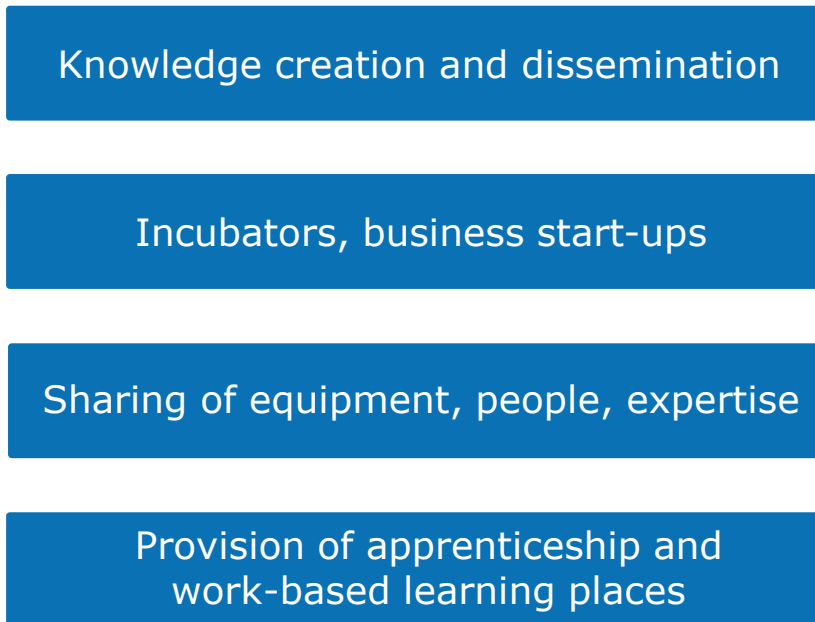
In CoVEs that are higher VET institutions or universities of applied science, knowledge creation is often intrinsic. Such capacity can also come from partners within a CoVE. **VIA**, in **Denmark**, carries out applied research on cooperation with public and private partners nationally and internationally.

From apprenticeships to knowledge creation... and back

More engagement with economic development agendas

More resources and commitment

More multi-way exchanges



SMEs are often a special target for CoVEs

In **Belgium-Flanders**, the **Regional Technological Centres** work together with local SMEs in order to create local partnerships between SMEs and schools, and create innovative products (e.g. windmills to supply clean energy for e-bikes).

In the **Basque Country** in **Spain**, Tknika's Tkgune network covers manufacturing, automation, automotive, energy and creative industries, through which SMEs have access both to services (expertise) and to infrastructure.

Austrian Economic Chambers (*Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, WKÖ*) provide counselling services for SMEs to support their engagement in research and development (R&D) activities, and financial support is available based on specific project needs (KMU-Paket FGG).

The School of Engineering of **Jönköping University, Sweden** focuses on developing and spreading new technology and knowledge that reinforces the international competitiveness of SMEs, as well as developing specific business processes aimed at SMEs.

Being a CoVE means going beyond what's 'normal'

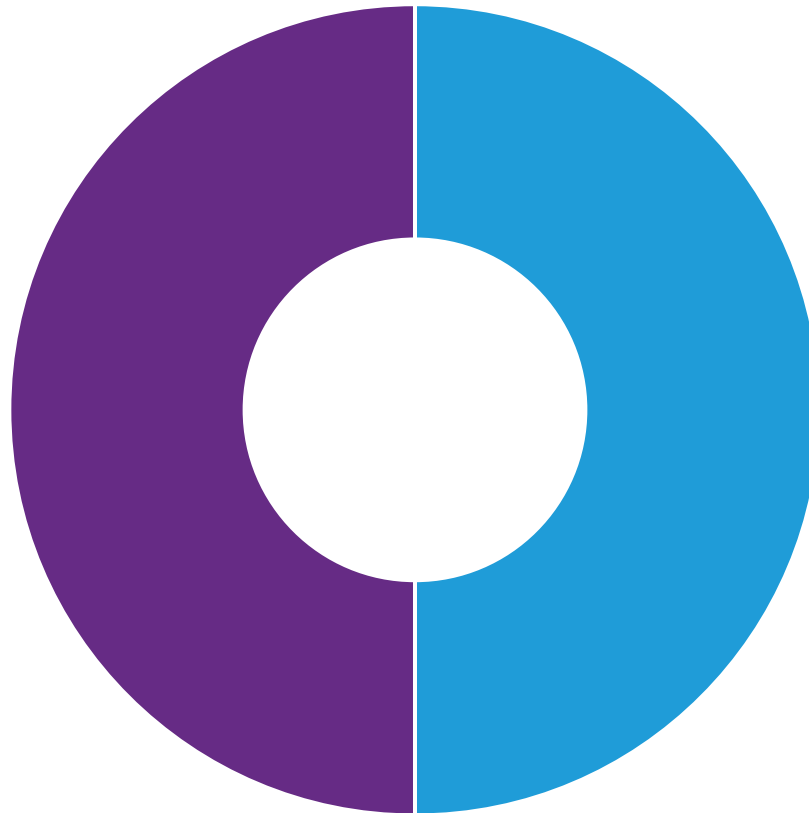
- Two-way **reciprocal exchanges** with stakeholders, based on partnerships
- **Integration** of activities
- **Feedback loops** between research, and teaching and learning
- Continual learning, adjustment, and **innovation** in provision
- Systematic approaches to **internationalisation**
- **Sustainable funding models** involving strong and reliable stakeholder contributions
- Being a **proactive player**
- Systematically engaging with **local and regional agendas** for sustainability, and social and economic development



Chemelot Innovation and Learning labs (CHILL)

Combining innovation and education

Public-private partnership





Ambition

CHILL connects the education of students with R&D questions from business

How? – Innovative surroundings

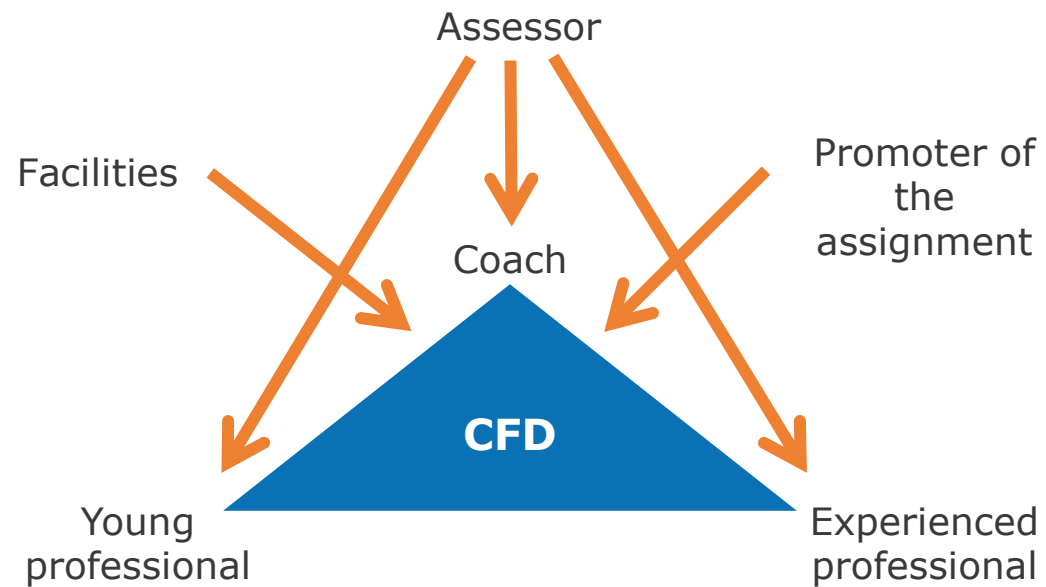
Innovative learning, work, and research environment

- Brightlands Chemelot Campus
- State-of-the-art facilities
- Part of a large ecosystem



Corporates	
Start-ups	
SMEs	
Education Partners	
Scientific Centers	

How? – Community for Development (CfD)



How? – BOOST



CoVE certification scheme in the *Castilla y León* region of Spain

In October 2019, the European Commission published a 'MAPPING' of the Centres distinguished by Excellence in Europe. In this document, two types of Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) are identified:

1. CoVEs expressly created to promote excellence in VET (e.g. Tknika in the Basque country).
2. Individual VET providers that function as CoVEs in a region, sub-region, or productive sector. In Spain, 150 VET schools across the country form a network of Integrated Training Centres.

Castilla y León has 31 Integrated Training Centres, making up 21% of the Spanish network.



Our Challenges

1

To create a cluster of Centres of Vocational Excellence in *Castilla y León* based on the CoVE European model, in order to enhance the collaboration of the centres with companies at local level.

2

To create a support and coordination centre for the *Castilla y León* CoVE cluster in the areas of teacher training, digitisation, the 'doing-using-interacting mode' (DUI) of innovation, relations with companies, and entrepreneurship.

3

To develop innovation projects in the CoVE cluster based on the DUI model with the SMEs located in the area, which complement innovation based on the 'science, technology and innovation' (STI) model of universities and technology centres, within the framework of the new 'Innovation strategies for smart specialisation' (RIS3).

To verify whether our centres met sufficient criteria to be considered centres of professional excellence, we prepared a self-evaluation questionnaire with the criteria established in the call for European projects.

In addition, we regulated the external evaluation and certification procedure to verify compliance (or non-compliance) with the criteria established in each of the clusters.

We also established three levels of compliance with criteria, the lowest being the one required by the European calls.

31 CENTRES HAVE OBTAINED CERTIFICATION FROM THE REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

- **12 CENTRES HAVE REACHED HIGH LEVEL**
(seven activities from cluster I, six from cluster II, and three from cluster III)
- **15 CENTRES HAVE REACHED THE ADVANCED LEVEL**
(five activities from cluster I, four from cluster II, and two from cluster III)
- **4 CENTRES HAVE REACHED AN INITIAL LEVEL**
(three activities from cluster I, three from cluster II, and two from cluster III)

CEX PROGRAMME (new)

Regional programme to develop a cluster of CoVEs in CyL (CoVE-CyL).

DuaIME PROGRAMME

Regional work-based learning programme to improve employability and skill adjustment with dualVET projects.

EUROFOP PROGRAMME

Regional programme for mobility of students and teachers within the framework of the ERASMUS+ program.

CLASSROOM-COMPANY PROGRAMME

Regional programme of collaboration between vocational training centres and companies.

INES PROGRAMME (new)

Regional programme of specialisation applied to smart specialisation.

DIGITAL VET PROGRAMME (new)

Regional digital innovation programme in VET.

In response to this challenge, within our 2021–2025 Professional Training Strategic Plan, we will develop new operational programs. Some programmes were already being developed in the previous plan, while others are new.

So far, we have carried out more than 1,000 collaboration projects between VET centres and companies, financed by the FSE Group in the context of the CLASSROOM–COMPANY programme.

More than 400 mobility places granted for the 2020–2021 academic year in the context of the EUROFOP programme.

Within the framework of the **INES programme**, the necessary steps are being taken to create a **REGIONAL SUPPORT CENTRE** for the cluster of CoVEs, with similar characteristics to Tknika (in the Basque Country), in one of the **most important Technological Parks**.

CADDIE- FP CyL

Center to support *teaching, digitalisation, innovation, and entrepreneurship* in CoVE-CYL



Bio-business incubator

**Vodafone I+D
Telefónica I+D**

CADDIE

**Technological Park of
Boecillo Valladolid
(Spain)**



To enhance the culture of excellence in VET and the actions of the regional CoVE cluster, we are trying to connect it with other CoVEs at national and international level.

In this sense, we are already working with the ETF network for excellence.





Inter-company Training Centres (ITCs)

What is an Inter-company Vocational Training Centre (ITC)?




Cooperation of individual companies by complementing each other's capacity and resources in providing VET training content.

Image source: <https://www.baustoffwissen.de/kategorie-ausbildung/azubi-ratgeber/hintergrundwissen/verbundausbildungen-leitbetrieb-mit-partnerbetrieb-auftragsausbildung-konsortium-ausbildungsverein>

Comparing ITCs and CoVEs

Features	ITCs	CoVEs
Raising VET quality	Yes	Yes
Networking/cooperation/partnership	Yes	Yes
Knowledge transfer	Yes	Yes
Supporting SMEs	Yes	Yes
Developing new knowledge and products	Possible, not essential	Yes, essential
Link to national/regional skills strategy	Possible, not essential	Yes, essential
International dimension	Possible, not essential	Yes, essential
Focus on apprenticeships	Yes	Possible, not essential
Scope and composition of the network	Smaller and less diverse	Bigger and more diverse

Inter-company training in the DACH region

	Alliances	Centres	
 Austria	Training alliances (<i>Ausbildungsverbände</i>)	Inter-company apprenticeships (<i>Überbetriebliche Lehrausbildung – ÜBA</i>)	For apprentices that cannot find work placements
 Germany	Collaborative training (<i>Verbundausbildung</i>)	Inter-company training centres (<i>Überbetriebliche Berufsbildungsstätten – ÜBS</i>)	
 Switzerland	Training networks (<i>Lehrbetriebsverbände</i>)	Inter-company training courses (<i>Überbetriebliche Kurse</i>)	Obligatory preparatory courses

Is there an Inter-company Vocational Training Centre (ITC) in your region?

Yes / No

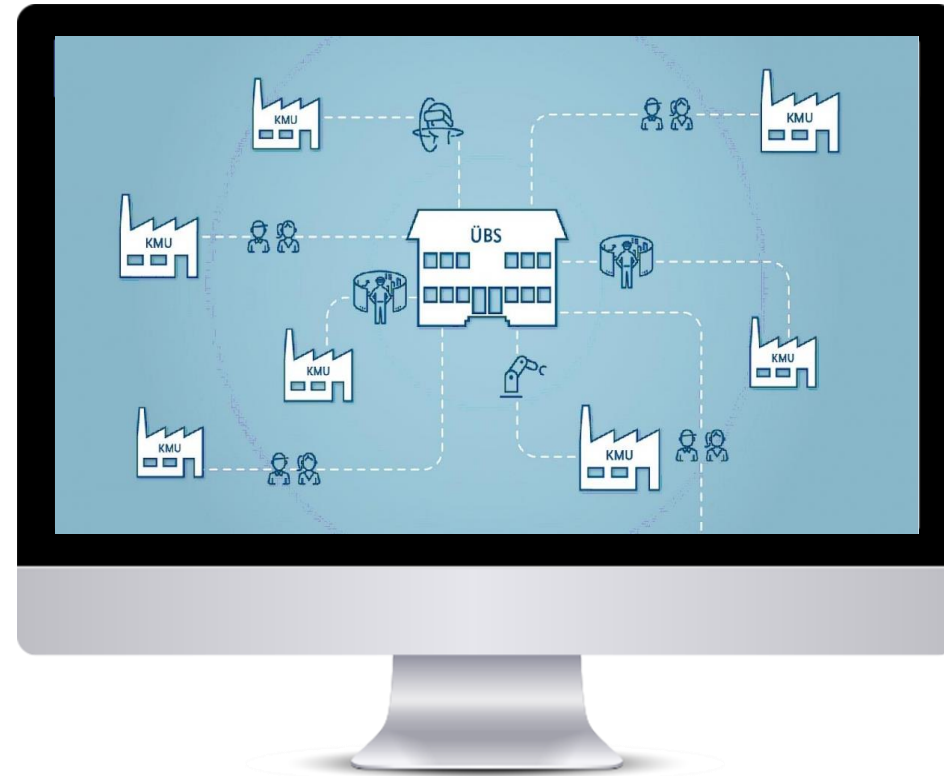
Are you personally engaged with an Inter-company Vocational Training Centre (ITC)?

Yes / No



Inter-company Vocational Training Centres (ÜBS) in Germany

- More than 1,000 ÜBS since the 1970s
- Mainly in the skilled crafts sector
- Sometimes referred to as '3rd learning venue'
- Up to 60% funded by the state and at least 15% by the region



Training Alliances in Austria

- 5,000 training firms*
- 15,000 apprentices* = more than 10% of the overall number of apprentices
- Usually local regional networks
- Course costs are refunded up to 75%

*rough estimates from 2008

Image source: <https://www.qualitaet-lehre.at/duale-berufsbildung/vielfalt-lehre/ausbildungsverbund>

Forms of Training Alliances in Austria

Obligatory

For a training company that cannot provide training to cover the whole occupational profile.

Voluntary

For a training company that can cover the occupational profile itself, but wants to impart specific skills.

Folge „ABV mein Job“ auf

➤ Facebook



➤ Instagram



Image source: <https://stmk.lfi.at/ausbildungsverbund-abv-mein-job+2500+1800204>

„ABV mein job“ – a regional International Training Centre (ITC) in Styria

- Founded in 2006
- 8 leading tech-companies
- 100 apprentices in 13 technical occupations, acquiring additional qualifications and fostering regional development

<https://www.ausbildung-erleben.at>

Image source: https://www.ausbildung-erleben.at/wp-content/uploads/G%C3%A4_Kre_St%C3%BCckler_Nasiri_K%C3%B6ppel.jpg





WIR SIND SO GUT WIE UNSER TEAM

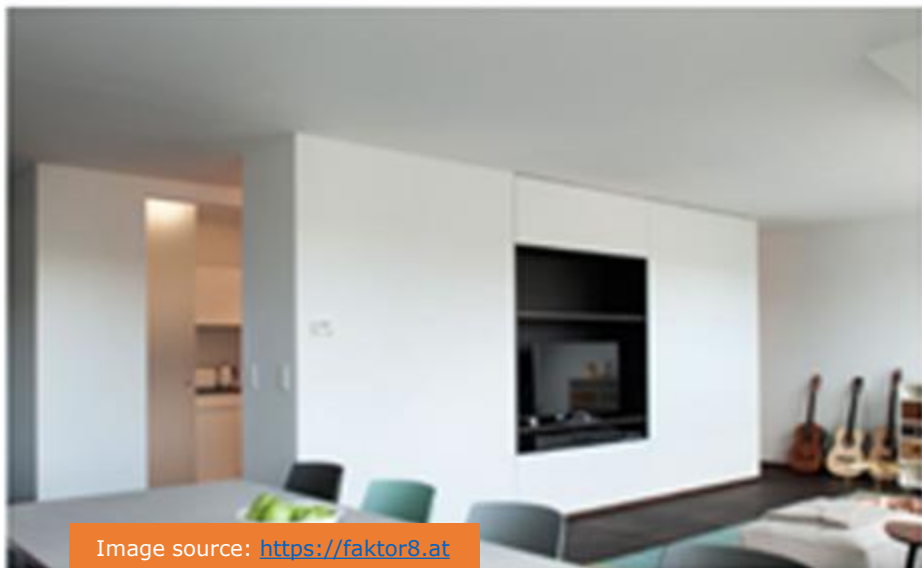
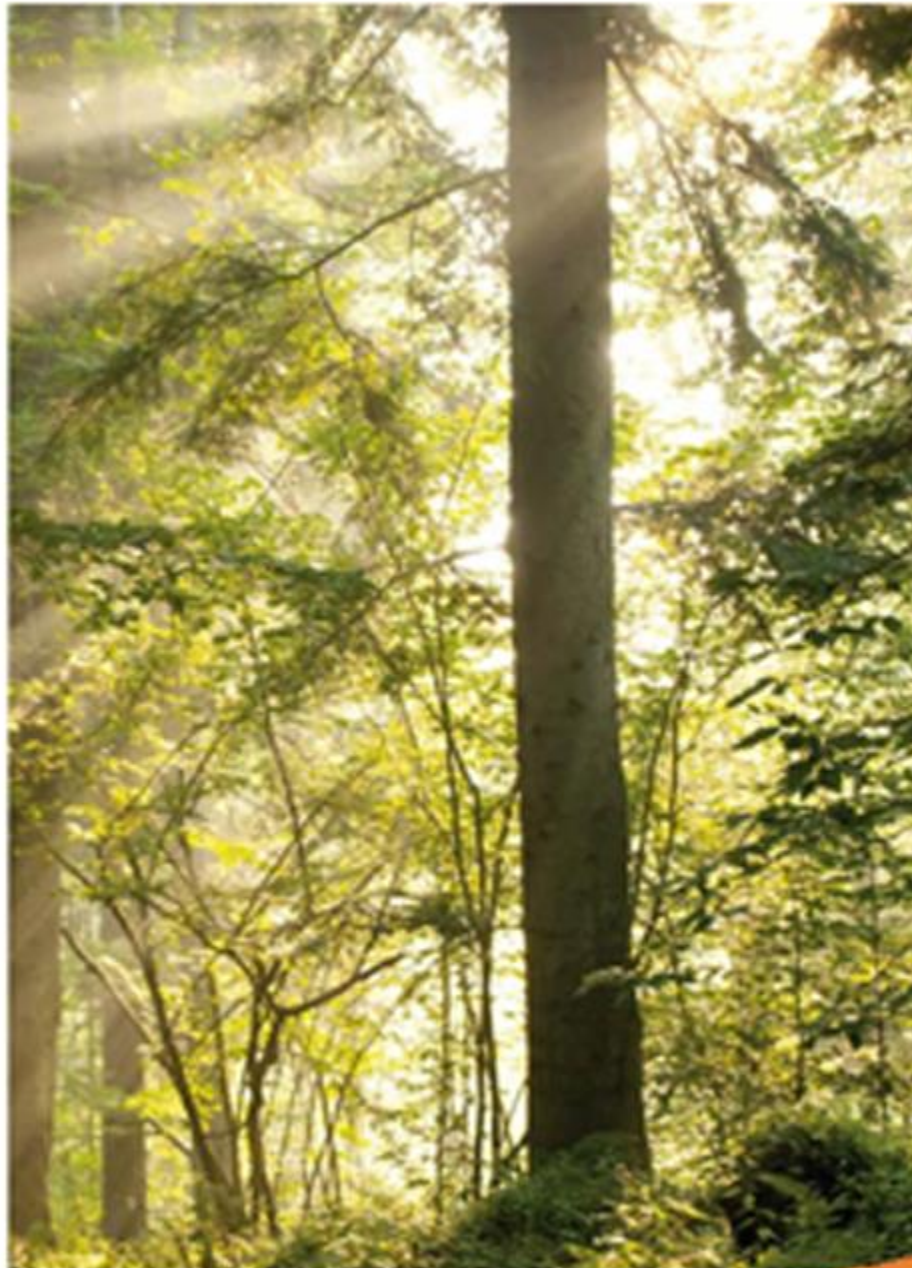


Image source: <https://faktor8.at>

WOHNEN MIT KOMFORT



EINE WELT FÜR DIE WIR EINSTREBEN

***Faktor 8* – a local carpentry ITC in Vorarlberg**

- 8 carpentry businesses, one voluntary ITC
- Region with a strong tradition in wood industry
- Apprentices receive special training in surface design, assembly, etc.
- 2009: Austrian State Prize 'Fit for Future'

<https://faktor8.at>

Image source: <https://faktor8.at/ueber-uns>



Was ist eine Verbundlehre?

Image source: <https://www.schreinermacher.swiss>

Carpentry Training Alliance in Switzerland

- Carpenter makers (*Schreinermacher*)
- Non-profit ITC, founded in 2005
- 24 training companies including carpenters, window manufacturers, etc.
- Canton of Zurich

<https://www.schreinermacher.swiss>



Summary of main benefits of ITCs

Supporting SMEs' participation in apprenticeships

Supporting companies' competitiveness

Creating incentives for apprentices

Raising VET quality

Gaining insights into different corporate cultures

Resource sharing e.g. training infrastructure and equipment

Providing a variety of learning venues

Enhancing cooperation between companies

Questions

Are there any particular intercompany vocational training centres (ITCs) or Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) in your country which you would recommend as examples of good practice?



Future (funding) plans for ITCs and CoVEs at EU level



Erasmus+

#ERASMUSDAYS

Centres of Vocational Excellence

Erasmus+ 2019 pilot projects



Advanced Manufacturing 4.0
<https://examhub.eu/>



Cultural and creative industries
<http://deuscci.eu/>



Water sector
<https://povewater.eu/>



IoT in Smart manufacturing
<https://talentjourney.si/>



Digital Innovation Hub
<https://dihubcloud.eu/>

Centres of Vocational Excellence

Erasmus+ 2020 pilot projects



Urban greening
<https://www.facebook.com/European-Platform-Urban-Greening-106220718115727/>



Finfish industry
<http://www.bridges.eu/>



Innovation
in the green economy
<https://3-loe.eu/>



Furniture and wood
<https://www.allview.eu>



Inclusive excellence
<https://www.efvet.org/portfolio-items/give-governance-for-inclusive-vocational-excellence/>



Microelectronics
<https://ecovem.eu/>

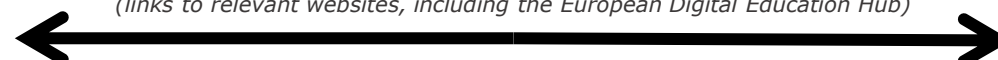


Green innovation
<http://www.greenovet.eu/>

CoVE Support Service – 3 hubs (indicative proposal)

Knowledge-sharing	Networking and collaboration	Information and support
Providing evidence, research, information, tools and methodologies	Stakeholder engagement in collaborative sharing of knowledge, know-how, and competence	Providing expert support and general guidance to VET organisations and authorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Newsletters• Scientific research• Skill intelligence• Policy briefs• Guidelines• Examples of good practices• Interactive mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expert steering group• Peer learning activities• Networking opportunities• Seminars/workshops• Other events• Internationalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technical assistance on project implementation• Use of tools and methodologies• Coaching and training• Information on sources of EU and national funding• Evaluation

One single digital platform
(links to relevant websites, including the European Digital Education Hub)



Centres of Vocational Excellence – The future...

Erasmus+ funding 2021–2027

- €400 million for 100 platforms of Centres of Vocational Excellence
- Project duration 4 years, with €4 million for each project
- Partners (with EU funding) can be from **any country in the world**, but non-programme partners must bring 'an essential added value to the project'

Next steps:

- Publication of the Erasmus+ call (on 25 March 2021), deadline for applications 7 September 2021
- Information session organised by DGEMPL and EACEA (30 April 2021)
- Development (by VET community) of a matching tool to link CoVE project partners
- Establishment of **Community of Practice** 21–22 June 2021
- CoVE Support services (to be launched in 2021)
- CoVE featuring at Online Educa Berlin (OEB), 1–3 December 2021



Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs)

More information at:

<https://europa.eu/!cu83xr>

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/vocational-excellence>

Further questions?



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**Thank you for your time
and attention!**