

**Innovation Ecosystems for
Vocational Education and Training**

Peer Review 3



Prepared by UPIT

This Report refers to months 15 to 21 of the project implementation - 1st of January 2017 to 31st of July 2017

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1. Summary of all MSKPs' activities (number of meetings and main achievements)

Between six and eight MSKP meetings have been held in each partner country by the time of this report.

The main achievements are rendered below:

Cyprus	<p>6 meetings held.</p> <p>Following the 3rd meeting in October 2016, the MSKP decided to transform into a knowledge transfer skunk works (KTSW).</p> <p>The MSKP/KTSW followed closely the developments in the project implementation process and provided feedback and recommendation in aspects such as the content of the intrapreneurship curriculum developed by the InEcVET consortium, the planned implementation of the curriculum following a blended-learning approach (i.e. online and face-to-face training), the accreditation process, as well as the website functionality, general communication strategy and dissemination efforts.</p>
Ireland	<p>8 meetings held (3 MSKP meetings and 5 Skunkworks team meetings that involves members of the MSKP).</p> <p>The initial role of the Multi-stakeholder Knowledge Partnership was to engage with Louth Meath Education and Training Board and Meath Partnership to discuss how as education providers we could best meet the present and future needs of companies and stake holders in the local area. Towards the end of 2016 we held our 3rd Multi-stakeholder Knowledge Partnership meeting. Stakeholders were satisfied at this stage that three areas of challenges had been identified in bringing the world of work and the world of education and training closer together. It was decided at this stage that some members of the MSKP would form part of the skunkworks team. In February 2017 the skunkworks team was established and was made up of members of the MSKP and VET professionals.</p>
Portugal	<p>6 meetings held.</p> <p>In depth discussions and debates on the following issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Skill gaps amongst VET trainers that prevent them from becoming intrapreneurs; (2) Required skills for intrapreneurship – what skills are needed to empower trainers to solve problems within VET; (3) 3 core priority skills that should be addressed through the curriculum; (4) Additional content areas to be included and/or removed in the curriculum; (5) How should we promote and encourage intrapreneurship within VET; (6) Conditions needed to promote and support intrapreneurship within VET in Portugal.
Romania	<p>All 8 meetings held.</p> <p>After the meeting of creation, specific issues such as known skill gaps amongst VET trainers that prevent them from becoming intrapreneurs and conditions needed to promote and support intrapreneurship within VET in Romania have been debated more in depth. Other meetings focused on how to introduce efficiently the intrapreneurship curriculum in Romania and how can we introduce a skunk works environment in Vocational Education and Training, identification of 3 major issues that affect the way the Romanian labor market and the world of education interact and appropriate solutions for them and implementation of the Intrapreneurship Curriculum, the Level 5 Certificate in Leadership and Management, potential challenges faced by the participants and the professional impact they . From the 5th meeting onwards, the activities of the MSKP and SW intertwined.</p>

2. Progress to date and achievements of the Skunkworks (strong points and challenges)

The SW teams in partner countries followed a similar yet different somehow pathway, due to the type and variety of identified problems and developed activities and solutions. The main aspects are rendered below.

Cyprus	<p>The Skunkworks team developed a mechanism that will allow broad stakeholders to participate in and provide feedback to proposed curricula and to currently taught programmes, taking into account the need for innovation and the need to make the VET more responsive to the requirements of the business labour market.</p> <p>Among the strong points of the SW team is, first of all, the willingness of two main government stakeholders (Ministry of Education, Human Resources Development Authority) and representatives of academia, business world and civil society to actively participate in the team as well as their engagement in providing a new innovative solution to an existing problem in the VET sector; secondly, the informality and discussion under Chatham house rules of the SW allows for honest exchange of opinions that are not always possible in formal settings; and thirdly, the creation of a common voice of stakeholders, under the umbrella of EUC and CARDET, allows for the creation of collective memory that monitors the innovation progress. However, among the future challenges, there have been identified the possibility that the active participation in the informal body created by the SW will wane over time; and the possibility of career change of stakeholders which could reduce the sustainability of the created body.</p>
Ireland	<p>In February 2017 the SW team was established and was made up of members of the MSKP and VET professionals. During February to June 2017 the skunkworks team met five times.</p> <p>The first task of the skunkworks team was to decide which one of the three challenges identified by the MSKP we could find a solution to during the lifetime of the project. After some research we decided to go with improving the standing of Further Education and Training in Ireland. A communications and PR strategy was developed and many of the actions of the strategy are in the process of being piloted. Examples of some of the actions are: using the local radio to inform the general public of the services we offer, developing a directory of services to be printed and placed on our website, having promotional days in local shopping centres and producing a suite of videos which will help explain what we do to potential students and their parents, current students, internal staff and employers.</p> <p>One of the challenges was trying to maintain the same members on the skunkworks team coming up to the summer. This is an increasingly busy time in education especially in VET. During this time some of the groups took staff holidays which can be for the duration of 6 weeks. This put pressure on us to complete as much as we could in the timeframe March to May while still planning a programme of events for the summer period.</p> <p>Another challenge was one of our key members left the skunkworks team due to changes in employment and undertaking a different role but however they are fortunately still on hand to help us with any IT issues and social media issues that we may have.</p>

Portugal	<p>The participants of the Skunkworks identified what issues need to be addressed to bring the worlds of work and education closer together:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of innovation by some VET professionals in certain specific areas; • Disassociation of VET policies in Portugal with the policies of the European Union; • Significant mismatch between training supply and labour market demand; <p>and then worked on the third one to find a solution.</p>
Romania	<p>After creation and selection of a problem to work on it (<i>"The negative perception of young people and parents on VET education and training for certain specific qualifications"</i>), at its 2nd meeting the Romanian SW elaborated the following Action Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Designing a set of information and awareness training materials 2. Developing a small toolkit of good practices for VET teachers. 3. Developing a small toolkit for parents and young pupils. 4. Developing a small toolkit for labor mediation and mentoring. 5. Elaborating a questionnaire for pupils and one for parents to identify their perception of certain qualifications. 6. Performing a desk research on the negative perception of young people and parents on VET education and training for certain specific qualifications. 7. Meetings with parents and young pupils (at least 4 meetings in 4 different schools); 8. Rendering an Open Letter to education and training authorities. <p>Up to the end of July, results 1 to 5 have been achieved (several drafts), presented and discussed by SW members, following to be finalized in the beginning of September.</p> <p>The SW's strengths consist in the commitment and wide expertise of its members. The main challenges were the members' availability for meetings, the necessary resources to implement the Action Plan and the fact that the foreseen activities rely on the openness and wish of collaboration of the other involved local VET actors (schools and school leaders, parents, teachers, trainers).</p>

3. Inputs from MSKPs and Skunkworks teams on how the Intrapreneurship Curriculum was/will be used and valorized

The most relevant ideas on how the Intrapreneurship Curriculum was/should be valorized are emphasized below:

Cyprus	<p>Taking into account the feedback from the MSKP/KTSW members, the Intrapreneurship Curriculum Training will be implemented by a blended-learning approach: a 2-day face-to-face training (during which we will provide guidelines on technical issues, i.e. on how to sign-up and navigate to the e-platform; deliver certain key modules of the Curriculum) and online training (participants will be able to complete the remaining modules online on their own pace; technical support by project partners to be provided throughout). The training is obligatory for the MSKP/KTSW members who wish to apply for accreditation by the Irish Institute of Leadership and Management and, in general, suitable for VET trainers/tutors and post-graduate students. The circulation of the 2-day training invitation among stakeholders and the VET sector will ensure the participation of a wide range of trainees. The intrapreneurship curriculum shall be further used by the respective participants' organizations. A reference to the Intrapreneurship Curriculum can be made via the White Paper.</p>
Ireland	<p>The project team met with the FET director, Adult Education Officer and Chief Executive of LMETB to keep them informed of our progress to date and to introduce the curriculum. In February we held an open information session for VET professionals and introduced them to the concept of Intrapreneurship and skunkworks. We formed our skunkworks team and started working with the bespoke Intrapreneurship curriculum that was developed as part of the project. We also secured accreditation for the curriculum.</p> <p>We plan to promote the bespoke Intrapreneurship Curriculum at the induction of new staff in September, making it available on the LMETB website and promoting it as a course that can be delivered through our colleges of further education and training centres.</p> <p>On completion of this project it will be promoted in various publications including the ETBI newsletter. We look forward to present the project at the ETBI conference and the Youthreach Conference.</p>
Portugal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the urgency to add contents, in the school curricula, related to employability and active job search; • an increase in contents such as <i>“job search techniques”</i>, <i>“how to prepare for a job interview”</i>, <i>“personal presentation on social networks”</i> as , most learners do not know what a company is and how the labor market works; • the learning in work context, the elaboration of personal learning plans and the access to mentors during the formation in the work context are essential; • the participation of the learners in competitions that challenge them to create new projects, to use their creativity, and their entrepreneurial skills. • the need to deliver the InEcVET Intrapreneurship Curriculum to as many VET professionals as possible.
Romania	<p>For the time being, the InEcVET Intrapreneurship Curriculum was valorised through the MSKP and SW. The members of these two structures have spread it to peers and other interested parties and will continue to do so after the end of the project. One of the best solutions would be to introduce obligatory intrapreneurship courses in the training of trainers and we should start by introducing the InEcVET Intrapreneurship Curriculum. Last but not least, the Intrapreneurship Curriculum will be introduced on a large scale to stakeholders by the help of the <i>“Open Letter to education and training authorities”</i>, which will be issued and distributed by the SW team.</p>

4. Recommendations and ideas for sustainable Skunkworks

Cyprus	<p>It was decided that a mechanism to track the gaps and promote cooperation among all actors of the VET field will be created in the form of an informal (at least initially) coordinating body; the body will be run jointly by EUC / CARDET. Thus the coordinating role of the two project partners, the participation of the most engaged representatives and the commitment of all SW members to the body's mission is expected to sustain the team operational capacity in the future.</p> <p>The MSKP and SW members admit to have developed professional and personal relationships, something which is expected to work as a positive factor for the sustainability of the SW after the project's end.</p> <p>The feeling of <i>personal ownership</i> of all project outputs is another non negligible factor. All members participate equally, that they feel free to provide their feedback and that their opinions were respected and taken into consideration; they feel that the informal coordinating body created is their body, so they share the responsibility of its long-term sustainability.</p>
Ireland	<p>We believe that it is essential to maintain and further develop the skunkworks model across the ETB as it has proven to be a cost effective and sustainable method of increasing innovation using the expertise of internal staff.</p> <p>We recognize that there will be staff changes and at times it will be difficult for the same staff to be made available for a continuous skunkworks team but with effective forward planning in place we believe it can be achieved.</p>
Portugal	<p>In the SW, professionals with different knowledge, expertise and experience should be involved (i.e. VET teachers and tutors from the public and private sectors, school managers, University professors, technicians and politicians, professionals of entrepreneurial associations, business owners and professionals from employment offices). This way the world of education and the world of work are working together. It is essential to stimulate innovation and improve VET results.</p>
Romania	<p>Time is a key factor in the sense that the SW members should have enough time to work on the allocated project. Secondly, their expertise needs to be as diverse as possible (gathering members with different educational and professional background), bringing this way the potentiality of creative and innovative solutions to the approached problem. Also, the former experience in SW of at least some of the members would be a bonus for the team as a whole. A correct and detailed identification of the problem, a critical analysis and a cross check (meaning from both theoretical and practical sources) of the problem are compulsory. The necessary resources (financial, material, informational and technological) should be allocated to the SW in order to allow it to successfully achieve its mission. Another important aspect to sustain Skunkworks is the close cooperation of the SW team with the stakeholders that are connected with the problem (and also getting support from them). Opening and transparency in the implementation of the activities is 'a must' for successful Skunkworks.</p>

The national 3rd Peer Review Reports contain more details on each of the four topics above and they may be consulted by those interested.



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