RESEARCH ANALYSIS ABOUT IN-COMPANY APPRENTICESHIPS

Preparation Stage- Joint Analysis report

APPRENTICE TRACK

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Glossary

Term/Acronym	Meaning
SAT	SMART ELECTRONIC SYSTEM FOR TRACKING APPRENTICESHIPS
HEI	Higher Education Institution
PHE	Professional Higher Education
f2f	Face to face
CZ	Czech Republic
SLO	Republic of Slovenia
HR	Republic of Croatia

1 Project Context

1.1 Project Description

Apprenticeships at Professional Higher Education (PHE) level provide opportunities to build up new skills and knowledge both on and off the job. When they are of high quality, apprenticeships promote a smoother transition from school/PHE institution to work for young people, giving them a good start to their working careers. They do so by providing a good mix of basic competences and job-specific skills as well as valuable work experience. In addition, the participants in such apprenticeships, internships, are usually able to earn a wage, even if small, while studying. Quality apprenticeships can also provide an attractive learning pathway for youth at risk of dropping out early from initial education. Employers also benefit as they get support to identify and train workers while adding to their productive capacity and can still form their future employees.

SMART ELECTRONIC SYSTEM FOR TRACKING APPRENTICESHIPS (SAT) as ICT innovation is enhancing digital competences in all target groups, giving them a management and measurement tool for ensuring quality of apprenticeship. On systemic level SAT provides transparent and comparative data among different countries to support further development of apprenticeship and relation between PHE Institutions and world of work.

The SAT project aims for:

- Strengthening cooperation between students /HEI / institutions and companies receiving apprentices (SME, large, medium enterprises) during the apprenticeships
- Quick, easy and efficient way to track the progress of students
- A good overview of the role of the student in the apprenticeships for mentors
- Quick and easy ongoing evaluation of student progress at apprenticeships for mentors
- Possibility of a quick and effective response of organizers to lack of students' progression
- Directly involving the students into quality assessment of the apprenticeship
- Keeping the process of apprenticeship progression transparent, comparative and paperless

1.2 Preparation for the Course on Apprenticeship-Management (IO3)

This document presents the results of the task Analysis of training needs as part of preparation for the project's stage 5 - Development and Implementation of a Course on Apprenticeship-Management. The goal of this task was to conduct an analysis of the knowledge level about apprenticeship management in the receiving institutions (i.e. SMEs, private, public organizations, medium and large enterprises), trying to identify which are the learning gaps, detecting the added value for those institutions attending a specific training on the apprenticeship management and consequently designing the learning objectives of such training.

The successful management of Apprenticeships isn't only about the effectiveness of tools used to support the process but is also about the right development of competences of all its stakeholders. The SAT project aims at providing a complete toolset for the management of apprenticeships and will design a custom-course for receiving institutions covering the following topics: key features of apprenticeships, integrating placements into strategic workforce planning, gaining the support of colleagues and senior managers, finding the right provider, drawing up an apprenticeship agreement and employment contract, managing, mentoring and supporting your apprentice, assessing performance, integrating apprentices into their workforce.

As part of the preparation for the course design, the consortium designed and implemented a questionnaire that was made available online for all companies and mentors involved in the project during a week in January 2020. Such questionnaire has been designed to gather information about their expectations and preparedness. The Annex 1 presents the initial questionnaire in English, there are 3 versions of such document which include its translations to Croatian, Slovenian and Czech and they had been included in the different country reports used to generate this joint analysis.

This document presents the overall analysis of the self-assessment questionnaires completed by the mentors associated to the different higher education organizations which are partners of the SAT project. The document is structured as follows:

Section Analysis presents an overview of the results obtained in the different countries and provides information which will serve as reference for the design of the courses for each country and the selection of the topics to be covered in those courses

Section Recommendations includes a set of requirements for the course design and its implementation presented as recommendations for the design team.

Annex 1 includes the Questionnaire prepared by the consortium which was translated to the different languages (i.e. Croatian, Slovenian and Czech) to facilitate the mentors' self-assessment in their native languages. It also includes the reference to the different local reports

used as inputs for the joint analysis presented in this document. **Annex 2** includes all data gathered and used for the analysis.

2 Analysis

The consortium considers that apprenticeships are successfully managed if mentors in the receiving organization are perceived as the most important link between school and companies, who provide the apprenticeships. Therefore, the survey was designed to provide a self-assessment test of the mentors' skills in companies and gather information that allow us to determine which are main requirements for the course content design considering the key knowledge strengths and weakness as main topics needed to cover during the training course for Apprenticeship management. As well as other important information for the course design like preferred type of course delivery and more appropriated times to attend the course.

A ground total of 37mentors from the 3 countries participated in the survey. This might not be a statistic significative sample but allows the project to get a better idea of which are the starting point knowledge and familiarity of the potential participants in the course with the nine phases of the Apprenticeship management.

2.1 Overview of results

Next table provides an overview of the results obtained in the different countries and will serve as reference for the design of the courses for each country and the selection of the topics to be covered in those courses.

Special attention should be paid to present and explain topics related to those included in the Weakness column. Items presented in bold fonts are topics which are common to all countries and as can be seen aspects related to “Q4. Establishing the Agreement” are the most knowledgeable topic. This means that topics related to it should be presented but more emphasis should be put in those related to Q1. Risk management, Q6. Procedure for complaints/suggestions and Q9. Evaluation.

Table 1 Analysis results per country

Country	***Number of responses***	***Strengths***	***Weaknesses***
Slovenia	16	Q8. Assessment	**Q9. Evaluation**
		Q7. Records of APP	**Q6. Procedure for complaints/suggestions**
		Q5. Integration of apprentice in the company	Q2. National legislation and training
		Q4. Establishing the Agreement	**Q1. Risk management**
Czech Republic	14	Q6. The objective of internship	**a**
		Q5. Integration of apprentice in the company	Q8. Assessment
		Q4. Establishing the Agreement	**,**
		Q3. Matching students with placements	**Q1. Risk management**
Croatia	7	Q2. Identifying mentors	**Q1. Preparation of Apprenticeship**
		Q3. Matching students with placements	Q6. Mentoring
		Q4. Establishing the Agreement	**Q8. Evaluation**
		Q5. Integration of apprentice in the company	**Q1. Preparation of Apprenticeship**

3 Recommendations

The outcomes of analysing the answers to the learning gap survey is a set of recommendations based on the general concerns and requests made by mentors which should be considered as requirements for the course design and its implementation. Next we explain each of those recomendations.

Legal framework: From the information received we can confirm that expertise in managing apprenticeships varies from country to country and each country has specific legal framework which represents another important mandatory requirement for the course design.

Course delivery: Participants in the survey stressed their preference for attending the training course during their working time. In general (80% SLO, 60%HR, 82% CZ) they prefer f2f training. Thus, the course design should combine plenary f2f sessions or training and online activities for individual work to ensure the proper acquisition of competences.

Tool support: Mentors mentioned they will need training to learn how to work with the SAT tools and stated the relevance of having a help desk to support application users (CZ)

Other important management issues: Mentors resalted the need of tools available to assess students knowledge levels and required competences for the apprenticeship as well as their concerns about the funding of mentorships since it is usually not defined or assumed to be on »voluntary basis« (SLO)

Topics to be enforced during the course for all countries:

- **Q9. Evaluation**
- **Q1. Preparation of Apprenticeship**
- **Q6. Procedure for complaints/suggestions**
- **Q1. Risk management**

Those recommendations are of paramount importance for the project in order to be in an informed position to achieve its main endevours: Assurance that learning outcomes which should be achieved through work-based training will be successfully reached. Improvement of the quality, transparency and comparability responsiveness and of apprenticeships in PHE. Improvement of the efficiency of cooperation between receiving institutions and PHE Institutions and finally ensure that needs of employers, students and PHE Institutions are met thanks to the use of ICT support tools.

4 Annex 1

The file which includes the Questionnaire used to gather information from in-company mentors is available at Questionnaire folder accompanying this report.

There are 3 versions of such document which include its translations to Croatian, Slovenian and Czech and they had been included in the different country reports used to generate this joint analysis. Those documents are available at Country Reports folder accompanying this report.

5 Annex 2

All data gathered and used for the analysis presented in this document is also available at Questionnaire/Data folder accompanying this report

About the Apprentice Track Project and this publication

Apprenticeships allow students to build up skills and knowledge, while providing companies with a reliable way to evaluate potential future hires and the benefit from fresh perspectives offered by academia. Despite their advantages, apprenticeships are challenging to manage, as the needs of students and of specific enterprises are difficult to match, particularly when organizations need to deal with massive amounts of students and, consequently, data. Structured communication channels between enterprises and students, robust management systems and clear evaluation protocols are necessary to manage such a complex system, are therefore needed to enable the launch of valuable, steady and sustainable Apprenticeship Programmes.

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