

APPRENTICESHIP

HUBs

IN AGRO-FOOD SECTOR



IO1 Activity 4 Development of Apprenticeship Hubs Operational Manual

INASO-PASEGES

15/01/2020

13/05/2020



Erasmus+

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein

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Executive summary

Apprenticeship Hubs can be an important tool at the local level for overcoming perceived disadvantages and negative characteristics in socio-economic terms within rural areas. These Hubs can do this by offering direct contact and services & expertise to interested stakeholders within physical spaces for networking, and a range of business and community support services. Apprenticeship Hubs can benefit the vocational education and training institutions, individuals and businesses that use their services. More significantly, they can strongly enhance the ability of a local area to realise its latent potential by enabling it to take advantage of modern opportunities. However, to be successful, Apprenticeship Hubs must be carefully planned and appropriately scaled to the local situation and needs. The role of project consortium should also not be underestimated in turning Hubs from a physical space providing business opportunities into a human space, which facilitates collaboration between individuals and organisations at all levels.

Apprenticeship Hubs → Key priorities:

- Facilitation of vocational education and training on developing agricultural skills ensuring that the rural population is able to take advantage of new technologies and tools;
- Creating and safeguarding jobs and start-ups;
- Building business capacity and skills, e.g. through support networks or forums, business incubators and mentoring;
- Facilitating and supporting farm diversification;

Introduction

This document is the Operational Manual of the Apprenticeship Hub Model that has been developed in the previous stage. In other words it is the document that serves as a guideline for the staff of the four (4) Apprenticeship Hubs that will operate within the framework of the project in Croatia, Greece, Hungary and Italy, hence it facilitates:

- introducing potential “apprentice counsellors” (Hubs staff) to the activities they will undertake within their workplace;
- increasing of employee competencies to successfully perform the “advisor” job;
- insight to the procedures for engaging companies in the implementation of work-based learning;
- defining the role of the Apprenticeship Hubs in the VET system;
- insight to the services provided by Apprenticeship Hubs staff in the field of vocational education in line with existing regulations; etc.

It is a knowledge base for the organisation, and should be available for reference whenever needed. Appropriate employment of the principles set out in the guideline should in the long-term result in a consolidation of financial and human resources of the regional and local government and organizations with the scope to include actively all the stakeholders in the apprenticeship schemes. It consequently develops sustainable economic activities in the rural areas, and helps raise awareness of the benefits apprenticeships can have in the aggro-food sector. The Operational Manual is a document that will be periodically reviewed and updated whenever appropriate to ensure that it remains current.

However, activities that preceded the process of developing the Apprenticeship Hubs Operational Manual highlighted a number of significant and critical issues in previous apprenticeship delivery, including:

- low recruitment into apprenticeship of young unemployed people;
- low interest of young people in VET education, to apply for apprenticeships in small farms
- limited availability of impartial information, advice and guidance for young people that was restricting demand among learners;
- SMEs were not fully engaged in the skills system, which they often perceived as complex and disjointed.

Therefore, the Operational Manual aims to provide assistance to the staff of each Apprenticeship Hub in order to overcome mentioned obstacles and reliably and efficiently carry out their tasks with consistent results.

Objectives of VET system – quality management

Vocational education is part of a formal education system that enables students and adults to acquire knowledge, develop skills and competences and generic competences to pursue vocational occupations in various activities and forms of business organization (crafts, businesses, institutions, etc.). Vocational education plays an indispensable role in providing the necessary workforce to support the economic growth of a society. Students completing vocational education should be trained to assume responsibility and independence in work and learning situations. Furthermore, vocational training should contribute to the competitiveness of enterprises. Particular attention should be paid to the quality of the profiles of particular vocational professions and their relevance to the labour market.

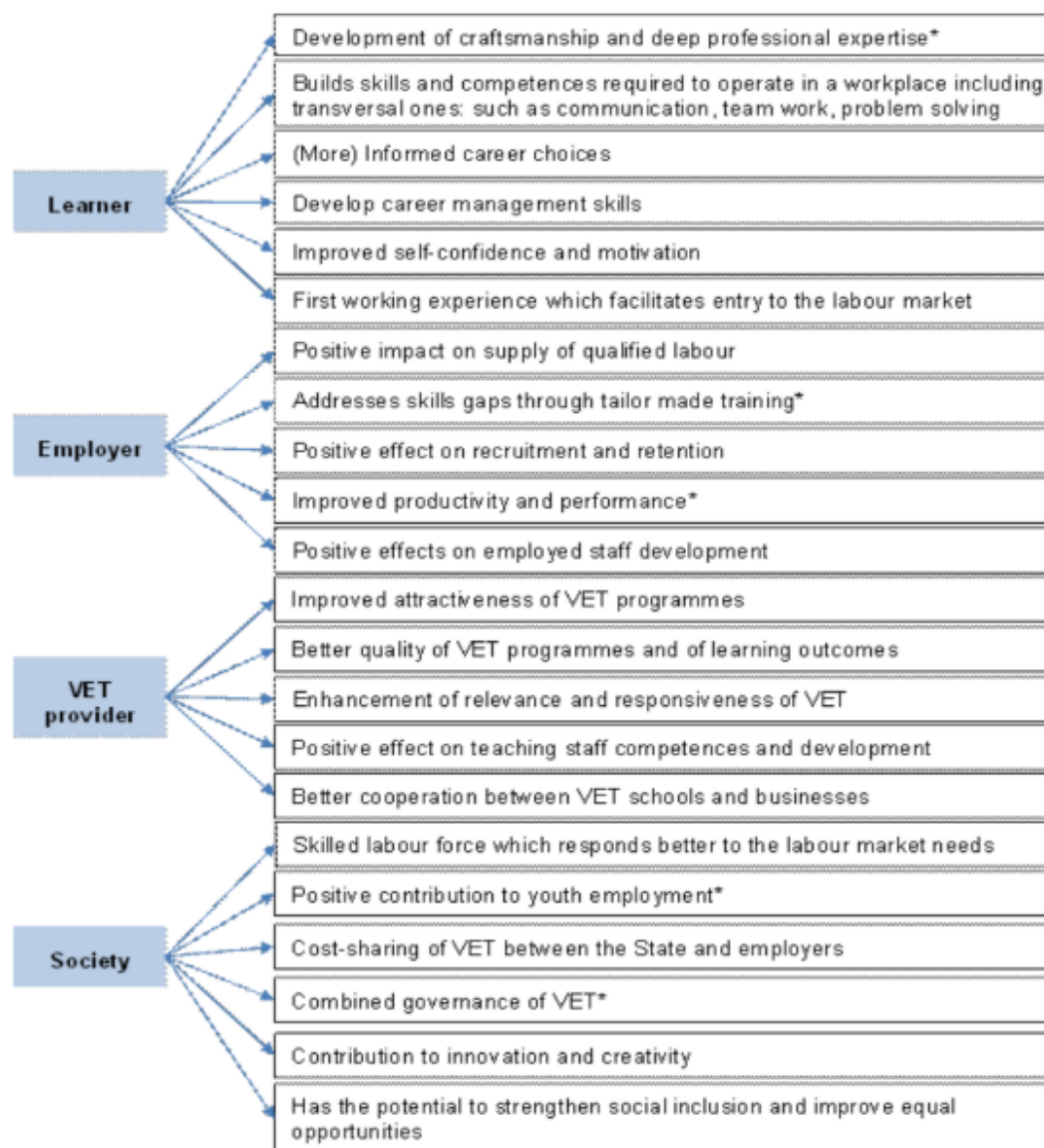
The position, supply and perception of vocational education and training (VET) have undergone significant changes over time, especially with changes in the economy and expansion of the supply and opportunities of tertiary education. Vocational education plays a key role in the integration of education and employment, as it enables the acquisition of professional knowledge, the development of skills and abilities, and involvement in the work process, by reviewing the technological and work processes. At the same time, many European countries face the problem of a negative perception of vocational education among pupils and parents. Vocational occupations are considered unpromising and are usually the last choice of students and parents or are a more likely option for students with lower academic achievement.

Vocational education is carried out in cooperation with VET institutions and economic entities. In order to ensure the effectiveness of VET outcomes, it is necessary to ensure the prerequisites for ensuring the quality of the practice and apprenticeship, mentoring in economic entities and the prerequisites for stronger involvement of economic operators in the VET system.

Key EU strategic documents indicate the promotion of work-based learning (WBL) in all its forms as a key priority, which must become an integral part of the system of gaining practical knowledge and skills at secondary school level.

WBL focuses on learning outcomes for greater employability and increased speed of adaptation to duties assigned at workplace. Employers recognize the advantages and benefits of apprenticeships, but in the process of acquiring apprentices, they face a number of obstacles such as complex and time-consuming administration, lack of information and organizational capacity (time, money, human resources/employees) and support. It is therefore necessary to develop supportive measures that will facilitate access to the education system for SMEs and promote apprenticeships. Current economic prospects and the state of the labour market limit the capacity of economic operators to participate more actively in the VET system. Systematic support and incentives are needed to further develop all forms of WBL. Apprentices training and monitoring require time and people with work experience who, in addition to their work, can devote themselves to scientists in order to integrate them into the work environment as associates in work equal to all employees.

The aim of in the introduction mentioned Apprenticeship Hubs is to promote work-based learning of students of agro-food VET schools by working as apprentices in small and medium sized agro-food farms, cooperatives and industries. In order for the staff to support this objective and perform their functions correctly and reasonably efficiently, this guideline proposes the approved standard procedures that have been imprinted in the Apprenticeship Hubs Model. The benefits of focusing on apprenticeships are numerous and their impact is felt at many levels, as the following figure shows¹:



* These benefits are in particular attributed to work-based learning approaches where the period of time spent on the workplace is substantial, such as apprenticeships.

* Source: own representation

¹ European Commission (2013) *Work-based Learning in Europe: Practices and Policy Pointers*, Bruges (available on URL: https://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=WCMSTEST4_057845)

Process of national Apprenticeship Hub Model creation

The Operational Manual provides a detailed description of the processes and the procedures that each Apprenticeship Hub will follow in order to operate them. When planning on developing Apprenticeship Hubs, it would be advisable to take into account a generally accepted model of business development that consists of 6 steps:

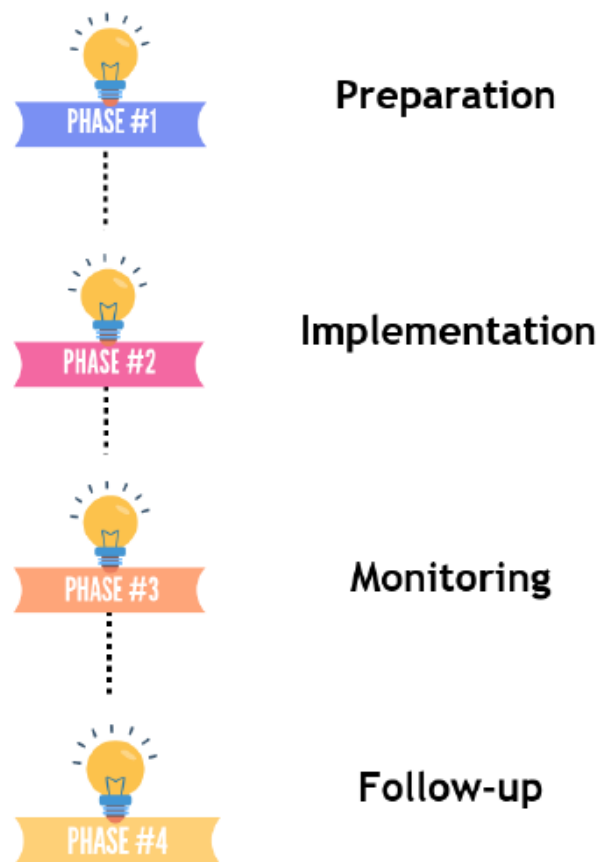
Six steps of **business development**:

1. **Identifying opportunities and challenges** – business ideas should be based on the effective identification of needs and opportunities.
2. **Generating ideas** – business support can usefully inspire people to help generate ideas.
3. **Developing ideas** – an initial idea typically needs to go through a process of refinement to improve and to respond to constructive criticisms and challenges.
4. **Writing business plans** – once developed, an idea needs to be transformed into a fully developed, detailed and practical business plan.
5. **Small-scale testing** – before investing too heavily, it is useful to test an idea on a small scale to see if it works in practice and to test the market.
6. **Successful scale-up** – once the business case is proved at a small-scale, a business can more confidently invest (and attract investment) in scaling up the idea.



Furthermore, based on the above mentioned model of business development and taking into account the results and the findings of the identification of good practices of intermediary bodies in apprenticeships and the assessment of the existing situation in the involved countries, the process of the national Apprenticeship Hub Model could be slightly modified and thus its creation could consist of four (4) phases. The first one is the preparation, the second one is the implementation, the third one is the monitoring and the final is the follow-up. All these phases are depicted in the following scheme:

Process of national apprenticeship hub model creation



Preparation

AGRRA, INASO - PASEGES, Tuscany Region and HPPC will make preparatory actions for the establishment of the Apprenticeship Hubs within their own organization as a distinct service. Preparatory actions include, among others, the allocation of office space and equipment, update of the organization website, changes in the organizational chart, etc. For instance, a poster should also be placed in the offices because it gives the clear appearance of the Apprenticeship Hub that operates. In addition, Hubs staff should record all the means of equipment that they use (e.g. computers, printers, telephones, etc). Generally, the main steps of establishing some kind of advisory hub (in this case it is the Apprenticeship Hub) could be categorized as following:

1. Securing the necessary **conditions** (broadband, building etc.)
2. A committed **initiator** and engaging the local community
3. Ensuring the necessary **financial, technical and human** resources.

It's foreseen that the Apprenticeship Hubs will be established within the existing infrastructural framework of the responsible partners, i.e. in already constructed and functional buildings in which staff of AGRRA, INASO - PASEGES, Tuscany Region and HPPC are located. This avoids possible complications related to administrative work and the constraints encountered when constructing new and purpose-built buildings. Also, the fact that the Hubs will be located within the already operational centres of the partner institutions implies that the basic three requirements related to ensuring the necessary conditions (point 1) are met. That is, in addition to a suitable building where the Hubs will be physically located, it is necessary to ensure a good broadband connection. Furthermore, the use of existing premises implies that some of the relevant equipment and appliances essential for day-to-day operation of the Apprenticeship Hub are already provided - including meeting room facilities (e.g. for web-meetings), desks, Ethernet ports, Wi-Fi-connection, firewall and security systems, backup battery and (in some cases) repeater systems (for mobile phone reception), servers, printers, computers/laptops, etc. Finally, attractiveness of the location and good geographical position & good local services (education, health, etc.) are important and beneficial, and all of the above mentioned is already ensured within the partner institutions.

Conditions that are necessary or beneficial for setting up Apprenticeship Hub:

1. Good broadband connection is necessary
2. Appropriate building is necessary
3. Attractiveness of the location and good geographical position & good local services (education, health, etc.) are beneficial.

As for the point number 2 within the main steps of establishing the Apprenticeship Hub, it is necessary to answer the question which reads following - Who should be involved in setting up the Hub?

Setting up Apprenticeship Hub requires strong commitment (and considerable investment) from the project partners responsible for this activity. Although it should be emphasized that success of the everyday Hub's activities depends not only on the organizers and drivers of the Hub (project consortium), but also on all the stakeholders who function in the dynamic environment of the Hub. Hence, the local community has a great importance when it comes to support an emerging Hub in rural areas. This is particularly true when the Hub has a wide social scope (e.g. operates as a community centre). Without the involvement of the community from the early stages, continuous animation and engagement of the community, Apprenticeship Hub may remain just empty "ghost" building.

The main initiators and stakeholders:

1. Local public stakeholders and private stakeholders can both play an important role in initiating the Apprenticeship Hub. An important lesson is that there are always experienced and committed organisation(s) behind these initiatives
2. Community involvement from the early stages is crucial for the success of the Apprenticeship Hub, to ensure that Hubs are not just empty buildings

Finally, the last question that needs to be considered while planning establishment of the Apprenticeship Hub is the following - What resources are needed for setting up the Hub?

Financial resources required for setting up the Hub vary widely, and among others depend on the type of Hub set up (e.g. equipment needed based on planned services), the state of facilities before setting up the rural Apprenticeship Hub. In the present case, partners benefit from being situated in already well-equipped buildings. Funding sources may also vary, and can be provided through public funding (e.g. national and EU funding as in the case of observed Apprenticeship Hub) or may come from private investments and/or corporate sponsorship.

The main **resources required for setting up Apprenticeship Hub:**

1. Initial financial investment to convert the building, buy and set-up equipment (furniture, technical equipment, etc.)
2. Human resources: normally 1 to 2 full-time staff (including project management and technical skills), and advice from senior experts

As mentioned earlier, Apprenticeship Hub acts as a central coordinating and "marketing" organization that engages three main groups of stakeholders within apprenticeship schemes – VET institutions, employers and individuals (students). When discussing activities related to preparatory stage of the Apprenticeship Hub creation, it is vital to set the main goals, i.e. to

understand what kind of results are trying to be accomplished with the operation of Apprenticeship Hubs. Therefore, three major groups of objectives can be identified. A primary aim of the Apprenticeship Hub is to maximize demand for apprenticeships from employers by carrying out marketing exercises, encouraging the public sector to provide civic leadership by taking on apprentices, and building capacities amongst smaller employers to recruit and manage apprentices. At the same time, there should be an active campaign to increase the take up of apprenticeships amongst young people through investing in careers advice and guidance in schools. A third aim is to boost the capacity of local training providers to develop higher level apprenticeships in agro-food sector within the local economy.

Therefore, when projecting future directions of day-to-day operations within the Apprenticeship Hubs, responsible partners should focus on facilitating the following activities:

- **Providing information, advice and guidance to young people** - the emphasis is on the promotion of information, advice and guidance for young people that reflects broader concerns about careers advice in schools and colleges, and the extent to which vocational training and apprenticeships were being promoted.
- **Building capacity amongst training providers** – the second main area of activity should be capacity building in the training provider sector, particularly in the field of higher and advanced level apprenticeships within the agro-food sector.
- **Engaging employers** – a key priority for the partnership is to engage more SMEs. The learning so far is that this process is partly about managing expectations amongst these employers as to what makes somebody “job ready” at the age of 19.
- Concerning the penetration of the activities of the project as well as of the awareness raising activity the following figures have been set as goals and will be measured:
 - Participation of 10 farmers/SME entrepreneurs per awareness workshop in each country, in total 40 persons;
 - Participation of a minimum of 10 persons of VET staff per workshop in each country, in total 40 persons;
 - 1000 recipients (mainly companies) per country for the awareness raising and dissemination campaign, in total 4000;
 - 200 VET centres to be reached and informed about the results of the project in each participating country, in total 800;
 - 300 persons reached by the social network;
 - 180 persons participating in the multiplier events (60 by AGRRA, 40 by TREBAG, 40 by INASO PASEGES and 40 by Tuscany Region).

Maximize employers take up of apprenticeships in GM's key sectors by:	Improve information, advice and guidance (IAG) services for young people by:	Develop the capacity of providers, ensuring that supply is matched to demand, by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering region-wide collaborative activities to stimulate demand for apprenticeships and increase the number of vacancies and traineeship work placements. Delivering targeted marketing and communication activities. Supporting the public sector to provide civic leadership on apprenticeship recruitment in rural areas of regions involved in project. Build and support the capacity of employers to recruit and employ apprentices including those progressing from traineeships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the proportion of 14-18-year olds that participate in learning through apprenticeships and traineeships with a focus on delivering better IAG. Increasing the number of NEET and unemployed young people starting apprenticeships and traineeships. Tackling wider barriers to take-up of apprenticeships and traineeships in a rural area of regions participating in project with a specific focus on agro-food sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing market intelligence to influence provider activity. Improving the quality of apprenticeship provision across rural areas of regions participating in project. Building the capacity of the provider base to present an integrated offer to employers and young people across rural areas of regions participating in project, e.g. workforce, development, employer engagement and progressing young people into apprenticeships.

Apprenticeship Hubs Staff

The staff of the 4 Apprenticeship Hubs will be selected among the already existing personnel of AGRRA, INASO - PASEGES, Tuscany Region and HPPC.

Each Apprenticeship Hub will have 3 members of staff employed, thus 12 in total, which will participate in the capacity building learning activity for Hubs' staff (in Florence). In addition to the 12 members of future Apprenticeship Hubs (3 from each pilot hub), 3 experts (one from each partner not running an Apprenticeship Hub) will also participate in the activity as they were involved in the development of the Model of Apprenticeship Hub. During the capacity building activity, experts will present to the rest of participants the results up to that point of Intellectual Output 1 "Model of apprenticeship hub" and Output 2 "Apprenticeship hubs web platform", as well as the tools developed to facilitate their job such as check lists, templates and forms, questionnaires, etc.

The objective of the capacity building activity is to train staff of Apprenticeship Hubs, so that they will be able to offer their services to VET providers and companies. On completion of the training course, participants are expected to:

- be able to organise awareness raising campaigns, recruit companies and motivate them to offer apprenticeship positions;
- form VET–company partnerships for apprenticeships;
- provide support for local apprenticeships in practical issues ;
- support VET providers to organise transnational apprenticeships and prepare grant application.

Topics covered will be the different steps of an apprenticeship, starting from networking with the VET centre, selecting candidates, preparing for apprenticeship, support and monitor, provide in-service training, apprenticeship assessment and evaluation.

Participants will have the time to participate in discussions, capacity building activities, energizers and they will be able to comment–suggest changes in the content of the manual and enrich it. They will also contribute with their experiences and case study examples. Capacity building activities will be learning tasks in small groups of threes or fours, who afterwards will come to the plenary session explaining their approach and findings (method of action learning and simulation of situations, where they will have to make decisions and act). In fact it will be a transnational peer learning activity.

Upon successful completion of the capacity building activity in Florence, it's expected that the future Apprenticeship Hubs staff possess the following characteristics:

- they have to be communicative and eager to provide services;
- they have to be able to take initiatives and make decisions;
- they have to be educated to converse with VET educations/schools, entrepreneurs, farmers and be able to support them;
- they have to be able to implement the Apprenticeship Hub model developed within the project as well as the quality assurance procedures previewed;
- they have to know English in order to participate in the training activity.

Finally, the staff of the 4 Apprenticeship Hubs should be familiarized with the web platform and they have to know all of its functions.

Implementation

After all the preparatory work has been completed and all the initial preconditions for creating a functional Hub have been fulfilled, the staff responsible for running it can devote themselves to daily tasks.

The most important aspects of running the Apprenticeship Hub:

1. Deciding on the activities and services in the light of the specific purpose of the Hub
2. Ensuring the necessary financial, technical and human resources

The indications of key activities in the day-to-day business have been partly shown when describing the necessary preliminary preparations within designing a future Hub. Therefore, at this place it will be indicated in what kind of activities the staff of the Apprenticeship Hubs will be involved:

- They will have to follow the Apprenticeship Hub model and also during the operation of the Apprenticeship Hub to report any ideas, suggestions for its improvement and update;
- They will provide their services through the Apprenticeship Hubs and through the web platform to VET providers, agro-food SMEs and VET students;
 - For instance, when preparing learners for their transition to the workplace, there are key issues to consider in relation to how learners are being prepared, particularly in terms of acquiring and developing the skills demanded by employers today. This is particularly important given that employers often complain about the level of basic skills and key competences learners have when they enter the workplace. As such, ensuring appropriate selection criteria is in place provides one such approach to ensure that learners are allocated to placements that give them the potential to grow and develop. A key issue in relation to finding suitable placements for learners is the extent to which the placement matches the expectations from the perspective of the learner and the employer. Therefore, national apprenticeship service systems in partner countries (such as *e-Naukovanje* in Croatia) should be the spotlight of all such activities because through these platforms a single contact point for employers and apprentices is provided. A key part of this service is the upgraded and updated on-line system for apprenticeship vacancy matching. The service provides a way for young people to search, apply for apprenticeships and then manage their applications. It also allows employers to advertise and manage their apprenticeship vacancies. It is intended that the service will be further developed to provide employers with a range of benefits – these include:
 - Giving employers with current apprenticeship vacancies direct access to the vacancy matching system, allowing them to view and track their apprenticeship vacancies and applications.

- The ability for apprenticeship vacancies to be displayed on other websites, with links back through to apprenticeship vacancies, enabling the wider promotion of vacancies, raising the profile of employers and attracting a wider pool of potential successful applicants.
 - Employers, training providers and partners will be able to bulk upload vacancy details directly from their systems, saving time and resources and enabling a quicker turnaround on posting vacancies.
 - Allowing employers who use their own recruitment sites to track successful individuals who apply from Apprenticeship vacancies, removing the need for manual intervention.
- They will contribute to the social media which represent a powerful tool to reach audiences and key stakeholders in order to convey the messages and topics that are in the focus of the Apprenticeship Hub. Alongside social networks, Hub staff will organize also various awareness raising campaigns and workshops.
 - The awareness raising campaign will target agricultural cooperatives, small farms and small food industries. An awareness raising strategy will define the targets in each location (for instance, at least 1.000 recipients in each country).
 - Main instruments of the campaign will be an information package including a management brochure, presenting the Apprenticeship Hub and multiple benefits of apprenticeship from farms/SMEs, local economy, employment and society as well as promotional gadgets. Methods that will be used are the organization of conferences, sending the information package to SMEs, visits to companies and publication of articles in sectorial magazines and local newspapers;
- They will develop case studies that will be used as Proof-of-Concept paradigms of the Apprenticeship Hub model
- They will recruit new companies and establish local, regional and national networks
 - When recruiting the new companies and including them in the existing value network, it's necessary that Apprenticeship Hub staff keep in mind that companies that want to offer work placements to students need to be accredited. Therefore, staff of the Hub need to cooperate closely with the various bodies that are designated for accreditation of business entities (vary from one country to another within project, so it could be Ministry of Education, Chamber of Commerce, etc.). Through an accreditation process, these bodies (in cooperation with Apprenticeship Hub staff), decide if the quality of the work placement is suitable and offers a good and safe working and learning environment with appropriate supervision. Common quality criteria should be used to determine the suitability of the company of which the most important elements are:
 - Does the company offer sufficient training opportunities, linking up with one or more senior secondary VET courses?

- Does the company have an experienced and competent in-house workplace trainer available?
 - Is the company prepared to work together with the VET school? The workplace trainer will have regular contact with the school.
 - Does the VET student have work space available?
 - All accredited work placement companies should be registered on a public website to enable learners and schools/colleges to use this database of accredited companies to look for availability of work placements for WBL learners. In coordination with the responsible authorities, staff of the Hubs therefore should assist work placement companies with the following:
 - Supporting the company in communication with the schools;
 - Help with recruiting students, for example by publishing a position on the hub;
 - Knowledge exchange between work placement companies in the agro-food sector;
 - Assistance in the use of apprenticeships agreements and industry provisions for work placement companies.
 - One of the key features of this approach is the fact that it is based on a partnership approach.
- They will be responsible to manage the content of the web platform, upload new resources, manage the members of the platform, invite new members, communicate with the members and provide services

Monitoring

There are several solutions for the monitoring of the Apprenticeship Hubs which should be intertwined and interconnected and form the basis on which a unique model of monitoring the performance of established Apprenticeship Hubs will be developed:

- keeping a log of VET providers and agro-food SMEs, inquiring or receiving services
- recipients of the newsletters and awareness raising activities, visits to local companies, meetings, distribution of brochures
- analytics of the web platform, numbers and types of users

In order to enhance monitoring and use of the above-mentioned elements, an innovative solution rooted in the use of modern digital tools should be created and implemented. It would be about, for example, an integrated, scalable cloud-based solution to manage the apprenticeship program life-cycle from initial outreach through program evaluation and reporting. Creating this unique solution would result in multiple benefits for all stakeholders involved:

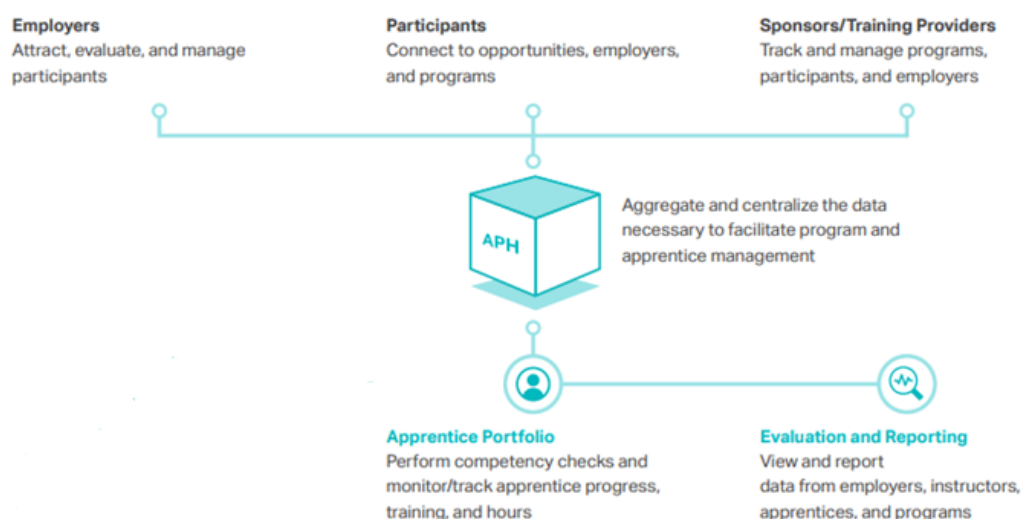
1. Employers
 - publicize their apprentice program and connect with qualified candidates;
 - manage and track apprentice progress using intuitive dashboards;
 - evaluate apprentice performance using on-the-job competency-based quick-checks and evaluations.
2. Apprentices
 - view apprenticeship career pathways, earnings potential, and job;
 - connect with employers and facilitators/mentors who guide them through the process;
 - track their progress in a personalized digital portfolio.
3. Training providers
 - review program-specific training plans, skills, competencies, and credentials;
 - optimize training delivery - by employer and program-wide;
 - create, distribute, and track participant and employer training program evaluations.
4. Project partners itself
 - manage and Track program, participant, and employer progress from initial contact through employment;
 - evaluate programs based on real-time data from participant, employer, and training provider evaluations.

The Apprenticeship Hub builds a digital participant portfolio that is updated throughout the program lifecycle by employers, training providers, participants, and program sponsors

(project partners). Whether competency, skill, or time-based, the system allows for tracking of data in real-time through intuitive and highly informative dashboards. Data security is paramount - all users have specific permissions that manage data access.

Helping individuals understand apprenticeship program career pathways and job opportunities creates a pipeline of candidates committed to taking the next steps. The Apprentice Hub is a comprehensive tool for candidates to explore different apprentice programs, occupations, and employers. Candidates view stackable credentials and required program competencies, as well as their future earnings potential. Through assessments, candidates evaluate their fit to a range of apprentice programs.

The Apprentice Hub centralizes and tracks data throughout the program life-cycle, enabling near real-time program evaluation and reporting. Dashboards show at-a-glance statistics and information about participant progress, program performance, and employer and training provider participation.



Follow-up

AGRRA, INASO - PASEGES, Tuscany Region and HPPC will have at their disposal an operating Apprenticeship Hub each, with trained staff, an operational manual and a sustainability study. In an ideal scenario, and if project implementation goes according to plan, this will allow AGRRA to enhance local development, using the Hub to empower and raise capacity of local agricultural SMEs, which constitute the vast majority of companies in Zadar County and hopefully decrease youth unemployment in the region. It is expected that more small farms and SMEs of agro-food sector will be willing to receive apprentices in their holdings with all beneficial effects this will have for them. It will also allow INASO - PASEGES to provide agricultural cooperatives with apprentices, which along with work-based learning will bring to them fresh ideas and methods learned at VET institutions. Tuscany Region by operating the Apprenticeship Hub will offer VET providers and companies in the region an entirely new level of services and contribute to the decrease of unemployment of youth in the agro-food sector. VET centres and schools attained by the awareness campaign will learn how they may be modernised and follow transnationally elaborated quality assurance standards for apprenticeship of their students. They may also be persuaded that apprenticeship system provides more advantages for everybody compared with in-school practice. HPPC, as the chamber responsible for the apprenticeship Hub in Hungary, will be able to assist both VET institutions and farmers/food companies to match their interests and coming closer to them, will provide them with expertise. Finally intermediary organisations, like chambers, local development agencies etc. may opt for establishing new Apprenticeship Hubs in the agro-food sector and further use project products, as invited by the project partnership to do. On the other hand, TREBAG and IDEC by providing their expertise to the project will learn different facets of the sector and enrich their profile.

Therefore, criteria and procedures for follow up of subjects following establishment of the Apprenticeship Hubs should be based and focused on enabling:

- support staff of Apprenticeship Hubs to develop their skills in apprenticeship, providing support services, organising awareness raising and capacity building events, facilitate networking and recruiting new companies to host apprenticeships;
- VET centres and schools to have the opportunity to use the services of the Apprenticeship Hubs in order to find apprenticeship placements for their students and to match the profile of students with the adequate SME of the agro-food sector. VET centres and schools, because of the project impact, will be in a position to be closer to companies and farms and train students better equipped to work in them and meet their needs.;
- agro-food SMEs and agricultural cooperatives, which will be convinced by the awareness campaign, to have the opportunity to profit from the work of apprentices and from the support of the VET centre/school to their students.

Conclusion

Rural areas are constant spaces of change, driven by social and technological modernisation, agricultural restructuring and globalisation. In the face of such change, Europe's rural regions are constantly challenged to retain services, facilities and, most importantly, population structures. Rural areas are facing both new and long-standing social and demographic challenges, among which the most important relate to the fact that these areas are characterized by ageing population and young people who are increasingly leaving rural areas. Rural areas typically face certain disadvantages as places for business development. The most important tend to be linked to geography, population, infrastructure and resources. Relative isolation from markets, insufficient local demand and a lack of facilities and services can all restrict the growth potential of the local economy in rural areas. However, modern trends are creating new opportunities for the development of rural areas and the emergence of new rural businesses. Apprenticeship Hubs that are going to be established within the project "Apprenticeship Hubs in agro-food sector" may be viewed as some kind of individual organisations or a set of organisations that are actively working to respond to economic shortfalls & demographic change and promote social inclusion issues in rural areas. However, an Apprenticeship Hub concerns much more than a simple definition can possibly capture: it involves a lot of experienced, committed and enthusiastic individuals who have worked on the integration of a rural community as a whole.

The major challenge with all the hubs, whatever their "type", is to create a business / operational model that works: a few desks, computers, printer, video-conferencing facility in an isolated, inappropriate underused facility does not produce the dynamic needed: failure rate is significant. The "Hubs" are human spaces, not four walls, needing dynamic interaction to create or contribute to local economic, social and digital eco-systems they are designed to support. Hence the understanding of the specific local needs is essential for the success of Apprenticeship Hub as a business support tool. The involvement of the members of the community from the planning phase strongly contributes to local ownership and ensures better use of new developments and tools. Therefore, involving the community in setting up Apprenticeship Hubs can improve local service provision and avoid Hubs becoming empty "ghost" buildings with fast broadband connection.

The various approaches studied within the preparatory activities of Hubs establishment were all born from the belief that rural areas are places that can provide similar or even better standard of living than their urban counterparts. The initiators of the accelerator programmes have the vision that business innovation is not an urban phenomenon but can be a trigger also for rural businesses and the rural economy. Agro-food sector and Apprenticeship Hubs are motivated by the perception that apprenticeships are important not only for urban but also for rural development, and in order to keep up with urban areas, rural areas need to offer the same (or even better) possibilities than urban areas. It's worth noticing that new market opportunities are emerging in sectors as diverse as the food economy, the green economy, the bioeconomy, the experience economy and the residential economy. Where these opportunities can lead to business development, there is significant potential for job creation and to attract people to live and work in rural areas. In

this context, some of the advantages of rural locations become more apparent, including the likelihood of cheaper land and housing, more space, cleaner air and easier access to the countryside. The key to taking advantage of these opportunities is to find smarter ways to deliver effective business support and to make targeted efforts to overcome some of the specifically rural challenges. Taking into account the increasing diversity of Europe's rural areas and the particular severity of certain challenges and/or the strength of specific opportunities in individual locations will be essential.

However, it's hard to overcome the negative perceptions of various stakeholders (policy-makers, young people, etc.) in this regard. Therefore, Apprenticeship Hub initiative have to invest a much effort (and not negligible amount of money) in the territorial marketing and "rebranding" of rural areas; raising awareness about the wide range of new opportunities that are lying within the apprenticeships in the agro-food sector. Long-term success will require a change of attitude towards the potential for rural business development and growth, and carefully targeted interventions guided by policy. This is not about "business as usual", but nor are we typically talking about high-tech research and innovation. It is about a new vision of rural business support that helps businesses to respond to opportunities and challenges based on a clear understanding of their needs.

Apprenticeship Hubs:

- operate at local level;
- are typically formed of one building/space in a rural community, which provides crucial intermediary services in the field of vocational education and training;
- can make it more realistic for people to work in rural areas, thus reducing pressure towards out-migration
- can act as a meeting point for local business people, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and skills, and creating new possibilities for business and community networking;
- can become the focal point for the delivery of a range of crucial business and community services, including targeted business and entrepreneurship support.

Annexes: National Apprenticeship Hubs Operational Manual

Croatian Apprenticeship Hub Operational Manual



Preparation: Preparatory actions for the establishment of the Apprenticeship HUB within Zadar County Rural Development Agency – AGRRA

Conditions that are necessary or beneficial for setting up AH

- Appropriate building (the HUB will be set up in the premises of the Zadar County Rural Development Agency – AGRRA)
- Good broadband connection (available in the premises of the Zadar County Rural Development Agency – AGRRA)
- Attractiveness of the location, good geographical position & good local services are beneficial (the premises of AGRRA are situated in the center of the city on a good geographical position and easily reachable)
- Allocation of office space & equipment (will be provided by AGRRA)
- Update of the organization website, changes in the organizational chart (will be done by AGRRA)
- Skilled person in charge of the HUB (IT skills, as well as knowledge in various fields related to the HUB operations, fluency in English – at least B2)

Who should be involved in setting up the Hub?

- Project partners
- Community involvement from the early stages is crucial for the success of the Apprenticeship HUB
- Local public stakeholders and private stakeholders can both play an important role in initiating the Apprenticeship HUB
- Schools (in case of Zadar County Agriculture, food technology and veterinarian school "Stanka Ožanića", as well as Hotel and Tourism and Catering School Zadar School will be involved)
- University (in case of Zadar County University of Zadar, Department of Ecology, Agriculture & Aquaculture will be involved)
- VET providers (Zadar Open University)
- Chambers of Commerce (Zadar County Chamber of Commerce and Association of Craftsmen)
- Agricultural and Food SMEs and Family Holdings
- Agricultural associations and cooperatives

Resources needed for setting up the Hub

- Initial financial investment to convert the building, buy and set-up equipment (minimal investments as AGRRA benefits from being situated in an already well-equipped building)
- Human resources: 1 full-time staff with the following characteristics
 - project management & technical skills
 - IT skills
 - communicative and fluent in English
 - knowledge in various fields related to the HUB operations
 - full time employed
 - knowledge in legislation and procedures related to apprenticeship
 - plus: driving license
 - advice from senior experts
- Technical resources:
 - good visibility of the office (signs and instructions how to get there)
 - accessibility of the office (in particular for disabled people)
 - reception space (to be able to host at least two people at a time)
- Working resources:
 - IT equipment
 - good broadband connection
 - promotional materials set for different target groups (brochures and similar)

Objectives of the Hubs

- Providing information, advice and guidance to young people
- Engaging employers (key priority)
- Matching of students and employers (and vice versa)
- Analysis and follow-up of market needs (schools, VET providers, students...)

The AH staff, after the capacity building activity in Florence, it's expected to possess the following characteristics

- They have to be communicative and eager to provide services
- They have to be able to take initiatives and make decisions
- They have to be educated to converse with VET educations/schools, entrepreneurs, farmers and be able to support them
- They have to be able to implement the AH model developed within the project as well as the quality assurance procedures reviewed
- They have to know English in order to participate in the training activity
- They have to be familiarized with the web platform and they have to know all of its functions



Implementation

Once the Hub has been established, the staff responsible for its operation will start with daily activities. One of their main tasks will be the development and implementation of ideas and suggestions for improvement of the apprenticeship hub. Also, in their daily activities staff of the AH will use web platform to VET providers, agro-food SMEs and VET students. The platform is a useful tool in the process of preparing learners for their workplace. It will also include all the details on apprenticeship vacancies and application, which will facilitate the search for vacancies for employers, training providers and applicants.

Among daily activities and tasks of AH staff, a special emphasis should be placed on social media. In a modern world social media represent a powerful tool to reach key audience and stakeholders that are in focus of the AH. Also, AH staff will organize awareness campaigns and workshops, targeted at agri-food SMEs. With help of social media and awareness campaigns AH staff will be able to establish and expand network of companies offering apprenticeship vacancies for students on local and regional level.



Monitoring

Monitoring is one of the phases in a life-cycle of AH. It gives us an opportunity to improve and enhance our work and AH itself. The process of monitoring will be carried out through a digital participants' portfolio that is updated throughout the program life-cycle by employers, training providers, partners and project partners.



Follow-up

Once Apprenticeship Hub is established, AGRRA will have a chance to enhance local development and raise capacities of local SMEs working in the field of agriculture. Also, it will be an opportunity to reduce a number of unemployed youth coming from rural areas.

Criteria and procedures for follow up of AH should be following:

- development of the skills of staff working in AH (special emphasis should be placed on skills related to providing support services);
- facilitate the search for apprenticeship vacancies and placement for both VET centres and schools and SMEs of the agrofood sector;
- expand the network of involved SMEs from the agrifood sector by using tools such as awareness raising campaigns and social media.

Greek Apprenticeship Hub Operational Manual



Preparation

Preparation: Preparatory actions for the establishment of the Apprenticeship HUB within the Institute of Agricultural Cooperative Economy – INASO-PASEGES

Conditions that are necessary or beneficial for setting up AH

- Good broadband connection that is available at the office of INASO-PASEGES
- Appropriate building that is available at the premises of INASO-PASEGES
- Attractiveness of the location, good geographical position & good local services are beneficial (the premises of INASO-PASEGES are located in a central location in the city of Athens with bus and metro connection)
- Allocation of office space & equipment (will be provided by INASO-PASEGES)
- Update of the organization website, changes in the organizational chart (will be implemented by INASO-PASEGES)
- Placing signs inside the building indicating the location of the Hub
- Telephone line
- Reproduction of informative material such as brochures, leaflets

Who should be involved in setting up the Hub?

- Project partners
- Agricultural Cooperatives
- Agricultural companies
- Agricultural and Food SMEs and Family Holdings
- VET providers
- VET students

Resources needed for setting up the Hub

- Initial financial investment to convert the building, buy and set-up equipment but on our case INASO-PASEGES benefits from being situated in already well-equipped building
- Human resources: 3 full-time staff (project management & technical skills) that will be responsible for running the Hub and depending on the requirements and the needs they can all be involved at the same time or on a case by case basis depending on their program. Characteristics of the full-time staff:

- Project management and technical skills
- IT skills
- Communication skills
- Knowledge in legislation and procedures related to apprenticeship

Technical Resources:

- Good visibility of the office (signs and instructions how to get there)
- Reception space

Working resources:

- IT equipment (pc, printer)
- Good broadband connection
- Promotional materials set for different target groups (brochures and similar)

Objectives of the Hubs

- Providing information, advice and guidance to young people, to VET providers and to agricultural cooperatives and companies via phone, email or via the platform
- Engaging employers (key priority) via personal contact, emails, social media
- Supporting a better matching between students, schools/vet providers and employers
- Continues update of every interested part
- News feed
- Awareness raising activity

The AH staff, after the capacity building activity in Florence, it's expected to possess the following characteristics

- They have to be communicative and eager to provide services
- They have to be able to take initiatives and make decisions
- They have to be able to implement the AH model developed within the project as well as the quality assurance procedures reviewed
- They have to know English in order to participate in the training activity
- They have to be familiarized with the web platform and they have to know all of its functions



Implementation

Implementation: Daily tasks of the staff responsible for running the AHs

- They have to follow the AH model and also during the operation of the AH to report any ideas, suggestions for its improvement and update
- They have to provide their services through the AHs and through the web platform to VET providers, agro-food SMEs and VET students
- They have to contribute to social media which represent a powerful tool to reach audiences and key stakeholders in order to convey the messages and topics that are in the focus of the AH.
- They have to organize various awareness raising campaigns and workshops
- They will be responsible to manage the content of the web platform, upload new resources, manage the members of the platform, invite new members, communicate with the members and provide services.



Monitoring

Monitoring the performance of established AHs will be done with a digital participant portfolio that will be updated throughout the program lifecycle by employers, training providers, participants and project partners. In addition, this system allows tracking of data in real time through intuitive and highly informative dashboards where all users have specific permissions that manage data access.



Follow-up

Follow-up: Criteria and procedures for follow-up of subjects following the establishment of the Apprenticeship Hubs

Criteria and procedures should be based and focused on enabling:

- development of the skills of staff working in AH (special emphasis should be placed on skills related to providing support services);
- facilitate the search for apprenticeship vacancies and placement for both VET centers and schools and SMEs of the agri-food sector;
- expand the network of involved SMEs from the agri-food sector by using tools such as awareness raising campaigns and social media.

Hungarian Apprenticeship Hub Operational Manual

Agricultural production in Hungary

Due to the special natural endowments of Hungary, it has been engaged in significant and world-renowned agricultural production for centuries. Accordingly, the agricultural economy is an important, strategic sector of the Hungarian national economy, a significant part of which is processed by the Hungarian food industry. Between 2010 and 2019, agriculture expanded in Hungary at the fastest pace in the European Union, with output increasing at current prices by 1.5 times, from HUF 1,686 billion to HUF 2,720 billion. Thus, Hungary managed to get closer to the Western European competitors step by step. The value of agricultural exports has also increased 1.5 times since 2010, from 5.8 billion euros to 8.7 billion euros, so the products of Hungarian farmers are becoming more and more popular in foreign markets as well. The strengthening of agriculture also had a good effect on the food industry. Every year, nearly HUF 500 billion in direct and national support contributes to stabilizing the income of sectoral players, reducing risks and improving their financing position. With the help of the Rural Development Program, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, family farms, as well as labor-intensive sectors such as animal husbandry, horticulture or the food industry will receive a total of about HUF 1,300 billion. The program serves an exceptionally high proportion of investments, higher than the EU average, more than 50 percent. Reviewing the results, it can be stated that domestic agriculture is getting stronger and more important, therefore, the *skilled workforce fundamentally determines the future of activities and competitiveness of the agri-sector.*

The Hungarian Chamber of Professionals and Doctors of Plant Protection

Activities and the role of the Chamber in establishing the national Apprenticeship Hub

In Hungary, chambers as public bodies have serious importance in organizing and managing some public functions related to several professions. There are two main economic chambers in Hungary (the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; the National Chamber of Agriculture), and there are several professional chambers.

Hungarian Chamber of Professionals and Doctors of Plant Protection is one of the professional chambers operates based on the principles of self-governing, as a public body of the plant

protection engineers and plant doctors in Hungary. This chamber organizes and manages some public functions related to plant protection engineering activities. The Chamber was founded by Act No LXXXIV (84.) of 2000 concerning the Hungarian Chamber of Professionals and Doctors of Plant Protection.

General tasks of the Chamber

The Chamber supports the professional faculty so that it can contribute to a high-quality management of agricultural production, and the development of plant health culture in Hungary. Actively participates in the preservation of food safety and plant health safety in Hungary.

Represents and protects the plant protection faculty authority, the general professional interest of the members, and bodies in plant protection engineering relating issues. Besides, it also protects unauthorized activities.

Membership of the Chamber as a key strength in working with SMEs and trainees at the local and regional level.

Professionals of higher plant protection qualifications are the members. The current number of members approximately 4300 persons.

Chamber membership is compulsory to do the following activities:

- only members of the Chamber are entitled to direct the plant protection professional management activity,
- to manage any activities using plant protection products with marketing category I (in Hungary, plant protection products are classified into 3 categories – I., II., III. marketing categories - based on their sales, purchase and use),
- to issue a prescription to purchase plant production products with category I.

The regional organizations of the Chamber are essential for its functioning. There are regional organizations in every Hungarian county (19 counties) and the capital of Hungary, Budapest, a total of 20 regional organizations (19 regional organizations in 19 counties and 1 regional

organization in Budapest). This regional layout allows the Chamber to be the closest to trainees and connecting them with potential SMEs with the greatest possible efficiency.

The professional network of the Chamber includes authorities, professional institutes, vocational training schools, and SMEs.



Preparation: Preparatory actions for the establishment of the Apprenticeship Hub within CPPH

The vision of the establishment of the Hungarian Apprenticeship Hub is to make the agricultural profession attractive to young graduates in practice with the possibility of direct practical involvement in agriculture-related activities. The Hub and its services will be focusing on young professionals and their learning outcomes for greater employability and increased speed of adaptation to duties assigned at the workplace.

Conditions that are necessary for setting up the national Hub

The Hungarian case

There are only a few vocational schools in Hungary that offer only a vocational secondary school or only a vocational high school program. Most schools offer both post-secondary vocational secondary school and post-secondary vocational training. **More than 60 of the state-run vocational training institutions are maintained by the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA).** They are the Chamber's most important partners during the future operation of the Hub (see Annex I. for the full list of schools).

The task of vocational secondary schools is to provide vocational education and training, and the task of the HUB is to create a bridge for students by putting theoretical knowledge into practice, and thus to make the agricultural profession attractive to students.

Thanks to the global transformations, the agri-sector has arrived to a watershed, whose modernization is inevitable. Students need to be open to new tasks, techniques, and approaches - they need to be prepared for that. Within the framework of the project, the Chamber formulated a priority goal that *it would serve modernization during the operation of the Hub*, and thus could ensure the professional youth education in the long run.

The Chamber has a complex network and cooperation with vocational training institutions, which is stable and enables the Hub to adapt flexibly to changes.

Conditions and infrastructure that are necessary or beneficial for setting up Apprenticeship Hub within the Chamber

- Good broadband connection for servers
- Chamber have geographical variations and regional layout/offices and contact points
- Update of the organization website, changes in the organizational chart
- Call-center for help and directing professional interested parties
- Polishing the GDPR according to the Hub's needs

Who should be involved in setting up the Hub?

- Identified VET schools maintained by the Ministry of Agriculture (See Annex I.)
- Community involvement from the early stage is crucial for the success of the Apprenticeship Hub
- Local stakeholders, such as SMEs, farms, VET schools' partners
- HQ and Technical staff, a network of professionals

Resources needed for setting up the Hub

- Human resources: 1-2 full-time staff (project manager with advanced knowledge in legislation and procedures related to apprenticeship and Hub IT professional) and extra support from the project's senior experts
- high-level support in providing resources and information on the operation of the Hub
- clear responsibilities in setting up basic services such as contact persons on regional and county level, IT support, international contact point for keeping the professional network live in the future

Objectives of the Hubs

- Providing information, advice, and guidance to young people and stakeholders
- Building capacity among training providers, plus to interested parties
- Networking among stakeholders

The Apprenticeship Hub's staff, after the capacity building activity in Florence

- They have to be communicative and eager to provide services
- They have to be able to take initiatives and make decisions
- They have to be educated to converse with VET educations/schools, entrepreneurs, farmers, and be able to support them
- They have to be able to implement the Apprenticeship Hub model developed within the project as well as the quality assurance procedures reviewed
- They have to be familiarized with the platform and they have to know all of its functions

**Implementation:**

The daily task of the staff responsible for running the Apprenticeship Hub includes:

- They have to follow the Apprenticeship Hub model and also during the operation of the Apprenticeship Hub to report ideas, suggestions for its improvement and updates
- They have to provide their services through the Apprenticeship Hub and through the web platform to VET providers, agro-food SMEs and VET students (ensure that students are allocated to placements that offers them the maximum potential of professional growth and development)
- They have to contribute to social media which represents a powerful tool to reach audiences and key stakeholders to convey the messages and topics that are in the focus of the Apprenticeship Hub.
- They have to organize various awareness-raising campaigns and workshops.
- They will be responsible to manage the content of the web platform, upload new resources, manage the members of the platform, invite new members, communicate with the members, and provide services.

**Monitoring:**

Monitoring the performance of the establishment of the Apprenticeship Hub by digital participant portfolio that is updated throughout the program lifecycle by employers, training providers, participants, and project partners. Besides, the Hub system allows the tracking of

the data in real-time through intuitive and highly informative dashboards where all users have specific permissions that manage data access.

- Monthly reports for people joining and connected to the Hub's activities
- Monthly meeting for successfully joint partners and meeting for companies



Follow-up:

The basic criteria and procedures to follow-up on the activities related to the overall performance of the Hub:

- quarterly performance report, monthly e-meeting, keeping the professional cooperation live through emails and video calls
- the support of the staff of the Apprenticeship Hub to develop their skills in apprenticeships providing services, organizing awareness-raising campaigns and capacity building events, facilitate networking and recruiting new companies to host apprenticeships
- VET centers and schools to have the opportunity to use the services of the Apprenticeship Hub to find apprenticeship placements for their students and to match the profile of students with adequate SMEs of the agro-food sector.
- strengthening the effectiveness of cooperation with agro-food SMEs and agricultural cooperatives, which will be convinced by the awareness campaign, to create the opportunity to profit from the work of apprentices and the support of the VET center school to their students.

Italian Apprenticeship Hub Operational Manual



Preparation: Preparatory actions for the establishment of the Apprenticeship HUB within Regione Toscana

Conditions that are necessary or beneficial for setting up AH

- Good broadband connection
- Appropriate building: the HUB will be set up in Regione Toscana premises, Florence - Italy
- Attractiveness of the location, good geographical position & good local services are beneficial: the offices of Regione Toscana are situated in the city center on a very good geographical position and easily reachable by train and by bus. Santa Maria Novella Station, “Tramvia” Station and Bus Station are very close to Regione Toscana offices)
- Allocation of office space & equipment (will be provided by Regione Toscana)
- Update of the organization website, changes in the organizational chart
- Skilled staff operating within the HUB: Apprenticeship legal framework and Active Labour Market Policies knowledges, IT skills, HUB operations and processes knowledges and skills, fluency in English

Who should be involved in setting up the Hub?

- Project partners
- Community involvement from the early stages is crucial for the success of the Apprenticeship HUB
- Local public stakeholders and private stakeholders can both play an important role in initiating the Apprenticeship HUB
- Schools: in case of Regione Toscana, Istituto Tecnico Agrario Bettino Ricasoli in Siena will be involved – Associated Partner
- VET providers: in case of Regione Toscana, CAICT (Associated Partner) and all those providing IFP, IFTS and ITS programs within Tuscany territory
- Italian Oenologists Association – Assoenologi, which represents more than 4.000 oenologists operating in Italy (Associated partner)
- PTP Enotour Siena: PTP is a network of public local authorities, schools, vet providers, SME's and social parties aimed at promoting VET programs in the field of agribusiness sector. PTP Enotour Siena is an Associated partner
- Agricultural and Food Companies and SMEs
- Agricultural associations: in case of Regione Toscana, Coldiretti Toscana, CIA Toscana are associated partners.
- Ordini Provinciali dei Consulenti del lavoro della Toscana

- AHK – Italian German Chamber of Commerce, an association of companies that acts on behalf of the German Ministry of Economy and Energy to promote economic relations between Italian and German companies. AHK and Regione Toscana signed a specific Memorandum of understanding with the aim to promote and support the startup and the improvement of apprenticeship programs accordingly to the German dual system standards.
- National Agency for Active Labour Market Policies, belonging to the National Ministry of Labour.

Resources needed for setting up the Hub

- Initial financial investment to convert the building, buy and set-up equipment: in case of Regione Toscana no investments are needed as it located in a well-equipped building, ready to host the AH and its services.
- Human resources:
 - 2 full-time staff with project management & technical skills, IT skills, knowledge in various fields related to the HUB operations, knowledge in legislation and procedures related to apprenticeship, active labour market policies, fluent in English
- Technical resources:
 - Meeting room, office for AH services
 - IT equipment: PC, printer
 - Wi-Fi, good broadband connection
 - IT platform for webinars and web meetings
- Working resources:
 - “How to make an Apprenticeships” Toolkit targeted to different groups: employers, schools and vet providers, aimed at helping in the apprenticeship program setup
 - promotional materials set for different target groups (brochures and similar)

Objectives of the Hubs

- Providing information, advice and guidance to young people
- Engaging employers (key priority)
- Supporting a better matching between students, schools/vet providers and employers
- Provide for information on apprenticeships program setup to employers and schools/vet providers
- Supporting trainers, tutors and mentors (schools/vet providers and in-company ones)

The AH staff, after the capacity building activity in Florence, it's expected to possess the following characteristics

- They have to be communicative and eager to provide services
- They have to be able to take initiatives and make decisions
- They have to be educated to converse with VET educations/schools, entrepreneurs, farmers and be able to support them
- They have to be able to implement the AH model developed within the project as well as the quality assurance procedures reviewed

- They have to know English in order to participate in the training activity
- They have to be familiarized with the web platform and they have to know all of its functions



Implementation

Implementation: Daily tasks of the staff responsible for running the AHs

- They have to follow the AH model and also during the operation of the AH to report any ideas, suggestions for its improvement and update
- They have to provide their services through the AHs and through the web platform to VET providers, agro-food SMEs and VET students (ensure that learners are allocated to placements that give them the potential to grow and develop)
- They have to contribute to social media which represent a powerful tool to reach audiences and key stakeholders in order to convey the messages and topics that are in the focus of the AH.
- They have to organize various awareness raising campaigns and workshops targeted at agri-food SMEs using also webinars and web meeting tools. All the initiatives will be organized in cooperation with Regione Toscana Associated Partners (Assoenologi, Coldiretti, Cia Toscana, Istituto Tecnico Agrario B. Ricasoli, PTP Enotour Siena, CAICT) and with AHK Italian and the Labour Consultants Associations at regional level.
- They will be responsible to manage the content of the web platform, upload new resources, manage the members of the platform, invite new members, communicate with the members and provide services.
- Regione Toscana, together with AHK Italian, will organize webinars targeted to in-company and schools trainers in order to help them to better support apprentices to achieve the skills they need.



Monitoring

Monitoring the performance of established AHs will be done with a digital participant portfolio that will be updated throughout the program lifecycle by employers, training providers, participants and project partners. In addition, this system allows tracking of data in real time through intuitive and highly informative dashboards where all users have specific permissions that manage data access.



Follow-up

Follow-up: Criteria and procedures for follow-up of subjects following the establishment of the Apprenticeship Hubs

Criteria and procedures should be based and focused on enabling:

- Support staff of the AHs to develop their skills in apprenticeships providing support services, organizing awareness raising and capacity building events, facilitate networking and recruiting new companies to host apprenticeships.
- VET centres and schools to have the opportunity to use the services of the AHs in order to find apprenticeship placements for their students and to match the profile of students with the adequate SME of the agro-food sector. VET centers and schools, because of the project impact, will be in a position to be closer to companies and farms and train students better equipped to work in them and meet their needs.
- Agro-food SMEs and agricultural cooperatives, which will be convinced by the awareness campaign, to have the opportunity to profit from the work of apprentices and from the support of the VET centre/school to their students.

Criteria and procedures for follow up:

- Facilitating the matching among employers, schools or vet providers and apprentices;
- Supporting trainers/mentors/tutors (both in-company and schools/vet providers ones) with specific training modules in order to help them in being aware of their

strategic role for the apprenticeships program success, to better equip them with the skills they need in order to monitor and evaluate apprentices work-based learning;

- Expanding the network of involved companies and SMEs from the agrifood sector by using tools such as awareness raising campaigns, webinars, web meetings and social media.