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“Be Competent in Entrepreneurship”:

**Knowledge Alliances for Developing Entrepreneurship Competencies for the
Benefit of Higher Education and Business**



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1. Introduction

Broadening training programmes for SME managers by including the topic of generation shifts in business would be beneficial for future business actors and leaders. The result of this task is to create a detailed training programme relating to business transition from generation shift perspective. A new training programme would better address the demands of today's business environment and therefore would develop entrepreneurship competence (EC) among SME managers and start-ups in relation to internationalisation of businesses. The training relates to the general theme of entrepreneurship competence and internationalisation but is broadened by including the topic of generation shifts and business transition. It includes review of theoretical knowledge on business transition, as well as case studies of firms who experienced generation shift and a series of suggested teaching interventions. This report introduces the recommendations relating to the contents of the training for SMEs managers and start-ups.

Recommendations for the development of the study programme are the consequence of the careful analysis of interviews with SME managers (i.e. needs analysis) among 20 employers in different countries, which was realised as an earlier stage of the project and an additional interviews among 64 SME managers in five countries in between May and September 2021. Together with *Guidelines on innovative teaching and learning approaches for training of SME managers* and *Learning materials for students and SME managers' for internationalisation of businesses*, the below *Recommendations* constitute a ready to be implemented set of documents facilitating designing and conducting a training.

The programme can be implemented in higher education institutions (for potential entrepreneurs) in partner countries as an accompanied result being part of the project in interested universities. The main task is to provide a programme for a training workshop of SME managers. During the workshop managers will receive more practical knowledge on business transfers between generations. The recommendations are valuable to use also for the development of new study programmes for students, as the training programme adds the dimension of internationalisation to the students' study programme.

The report is based on the deliverable D5.1.

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2. The basis of the development of training programme

- Managers report a constant need to expand and update their entrepreneurial and business knowledge. This need is particularly acute and relevant in the case of small and medium-sized enterprises (also at start-up phase), which often have not yet developed organisational structures that enable regular acquisition of business knowledge and its dissemination among employees. The need for training is particularly high among managers of small and medium-sized enterprises facing the process (or aiming at) of internationalisation (also born globals), where dynamic environment and high uncertainty of operations call for continuous competence development to challenge arising issues. An updated knowledge in the field is therefore demanded. The particular need is voiced by companies facing the business transition phase and generation shift.
- At the same time SMEs managers/startupers responsible for internationalisation have limited time to broaden their knowledge in the field. Therefore, a recommended type of educational intervention is a half-day intensive and interactive workshop that combines practical challenges with theoretical knowledge in a condensed way.
- To provide both theory-driven knowledge but also practice-based reflection, it is recommended that a discussion taking place during the workshop is moderated by both academics and practitioners. This will ensure completeness of learning contents and inclusion of both perspectives. The presence of a practitioner is also likely to embolden managers to have a broader discussion. As entrepreneurship is a highly contextualised domain, the local cases and examples are recommended.
- Important outcome of the workshop is to create an arena for further sharing of experiences on internationalisation, business transition and networking. The idea of the workshop is also to enhance a need for long-life learning.

3. The influence of macro-level changes to the development of entrepreneurial competence

What has been stressed in the results of the EMPIG study is the need to be more knowledgeable in the area of the biggest developments in the business environment, as it impacts the development of entrepreneurship competence (EC). In particular, the following changes have been identified as essential to address:

- Unprecedented digitalisation and automation of business, which in turn resulted in the shifts of the profile of employees but also in new trade channels and enhanced global value chains.
- Growing role of technology in business, resulting in an increased investments in this area, globalisation, an intensification of remote work, a challenge of data processing.
- Double-edged changes in labour market – a lack of both employees with lower qualifications but also lack of specialists/experts.
- Dynamic changes in expected competences – desired competencies are changing continuously and are greatly related to coping with uncertainty and new situations.
- Progressive internationalisation of business and growing global competition.
- New logic of operation: SMEs are influenced by design thinking, lean management, kaizen etc., which so far were more typical for big business.
- Growing focus on customers and their expectations towards products or services.
- Emergence of a new profile of customers who are more experience oriented but also are more demanding.

Most of these changes relate to internationalisation directly or are indirect consequences of globalisation of business. The challenge that SMEs identify is the constant change on macro-level and the need to learn how to adapt to it. In this sense, entrepreneurship competence, which embraces knowledge and skills on how to react and enact unexpected situations become essential not only for entrepreneurs but also managers.

4. Recommendations of the development of training programme for SME managers: The syllabus of the workshop on Internationalisation of business

The aim of the workshop:

The workshop is aimed at incorporating an international dimension to the skills and knowledge development of SMEs managers and startups, including ones facing the generation shift and transition stage, as well as launching the discussion on internationalisation of business as one of the functional areas of entrepreneurship. The educational goal is twofold. The first goal is to enhance understanding of the role of entrepreneurship competence in the process of internationalisation of small and medium enterprises. The second goal is to expose the participants of the workshop to the most actual knowledge on internationalisation of business and enable them to review their practices in this area.

The workshop is designed and conducted jointly by academics in the area of business internationalisation and practitioners with expertise in this field. Such an organisation of the workshop allows to confront and complement knowledge in internationalisation of business deriving from the research and practice.

The audience:

SMEs managers with some experience in internationalisation and start-uppers planning to internationalise their operations (“born globals”), companies facing a transition phase thus struggling with a generation shift. The special attention is put on start-uppers as a new generation of entrepreneurs is specific in terms of needs and competences.

The length of the workshop:

3h (maybe extended when needed)

The contents of the workshop:

The workshop consists of two parts. The first part relates to the EC needed for internationalisation and their interplay with entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship competence. The second part relates to transferring the actual, research-based knowledge in internationalisation of business.

I. Internationalisation and entrepreneurial competences – 1h

1. Introduction. The challenges of internationalisation for small business in post-pandemic world
2. EC and sub-competencies essential for internationalisation - the discussion of the results of the EMPIG survey

3. Entrepreneurship and internationalisation – what common competencies could be developed and why?
4. How to develop competences as a part of self-directed learning?
5. The challenge of internationalisation from business transition and generation shift perspectives

II. The review of the most actual research in internationalisation of business – 1,5h

1. Theoretical foundations of firm internationalisation (OLI Paradigm, Uppsala Model, Network approach)
2. Forms and motives of internationalisation
3. Internationalisation strategies for SMEs
4. Foreign market entry modes and foreign market research
5. The phenomenon of born globals
6. Support to SME internationalisation in European policies (**For more detailed learning materials see D5.3**)

III. Discussion on the relevance of the presented theoretical frameworks and knowledge on internationalisation of business and their potential to be applied in practice. Case analysis of local firms.

Method:

- a lecture with activating modules for participants,
- case study analysis (cases collected locally),
- a discussion moderated by the workshop's instructors (academics and practitioners) relating theories to the local cases;

Intended learning outcomes:

- Participants of the workshop gain a systematised knowledge in the field of internationalisation of business, foreign market entry and firms' continuous internationalisation processes, as well as they understand the interdependencies between entities on the international markets.
- Participants of the workshop define, explain, and compare relevant concepts, perspectives and theories within the field of internationalisation process. They know the terminology used in international economics and understand its sources and applications at the extended level.
- Participants of the workshop possess an extended knowledge enabling assessment of economic phenomena in the international and intercultural perspective.
- Participants of the workshop can use the possessed knowledge in the field of internationalisation of business in order to formulate practical conclusions useful for decision-makers, as well as to analyse various problems in this area, critically choose methods of analysis and interpret.
- Participants understand the challenges related to business transition, generation shift and internationalisation.

Conclusion

The report presents a new approach to teaching about the internationalisation of business that may be applied in educating SMEs managers and startupper. The novel approach relates to both the entrepreneurial pedagogy applied and broadening the training programme by including the topic of generation shifts in business and born globals is beneficial for future business actors and leaders. The training programme addresses better the demands of today's business environment and therefore would develop entrepreneurship competence (EC) among SME managers in relation to internationalisation of businesses. The opinion of 55 SME managers from five partner countries was taken into account about the influence of macro-level changes to the EC of SME managers for internationalisation of their businesses.

With the above recommendations we are able to expose the participants of workshops to the most actual knowledge on internationalisation of business and enable them to review their practices in this area. The idea of the recommended workshop is that participants receive a well balanced combination of practical and theoretical knowledge on internationalisation, with a focus on business transfers between generations. We produced three interrelated documents: *recommendations of the development of a study programme for SME managers in relation to internationalisation of their businesses*, *guidelines for innovative teaching and learning approaches for training workshops*, as well as *learning materials for SME training workshops*. The essential part of this deliverable is the syllabus of the workshop on Internationalisation of business that includes the aim of the workshop, the preferable profile of its audience, substantive contents, suggested methods and intended learning outcomes.

The overall feedback after conducting the workshop following the recommendations described in this document was positive in all countries. In particular, adding to the discussion on entrepreneurial competences in internationalisation context the topic of born globals and their specifics was valued but also condensed knowledge received was appreciated as it paved a way to knowledge and skills to be pursued individually in further steps. Compiling recommendations for the development of a study programme for SME managers gave us the foundation to train 431 potential managers and managers in existing companies in all five partner countries.