

Work Package 2

Knowledge Alliance and Center of Competence “HR for SME”

Result 2.1 Founding of a Knowledge Alliance

Hamburg, July 2019

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1. Summary of the Project and Introduction

For SMEs in the Baltic Sea Region to remain competitive in the long term, it is necessary to increase their innovation capacity and reduce the gap between qualification requirements and demands. For this reason, the Knowledge Alliance "Human Resources and Organizational Development", consisting of eleven partners from four countries, relies on increased cooperation between universities and companies in order to realise education and innovation promotion. To reach as many SMEs as possible, chambers strengthen the partnership between universities and companies.

Human capital is the most important resource for strengthening innovation and productivity. Hence, the project focuses on the comprehensive promotion of Workplace Innovations. While there is great need for further development in this area in the countries south of the Baltic Sea, Workplace Innovations are already more advanced in the Scandinavian countries. Therefore, the project involves countries from both regions.

The alliance, which will be extended to 68 partners from 13 countries and permanently continued, focuses on cooperation in two areas. First, the development, testing, and implementation of SME-specific methods, instruments, and projects through R&D work at universities, that create workplace innovations in areas such as employee recruitment, motivation and digitisation, a more innovative working environment and more efficient use of human capital. Second, the strengthening of awareness and competences in this new area of innovation promotion for small and medium-sized enterprises in the Baltic Sea Region through qualifications. The project will develop and implement:

- a) three comprehensive continuing education programmes: "Digitisation & Cooperation", "Employees & Co-entrepreneurs" and "Innovation Processes".
- b) a dual bachelor's degree course: "Corporate Management 4.0"

All products and further results will be transferred to 68 actors in 13 countries for implementation.

The work on the establishment and ongoing operation of the Knowledge Alliance "Human Resources and Organizational Development" was carried out in accordance with the project proposal with all eleven partners from five countries. The content-related work of the Knowledge Alliance, the development and implementation of tools, vocational training, dual studies and R&D work with SMEs are presented in the corresponding Work Packages 3 to 5. The summary report below covers the procedures and work steps for the establishment of the alliance as well as measures and tools to promote information and cooperation, which are part of the Results 2.5 Project website and information and cooperation platform.

2. Overview: Knowledge Alliance

Establishment of a knowledge alliance "Human Resources for SME" (HR4SMEs) with the project partners from Finland, Germany, Latvia and Poland and with relevant actors, for example economic chambers, vocational education and training institutions, universities, public institutions, etc. The alliance is founded during the course of the project, expanded to include other relevant institutions, systematically built up and further developed.

Partner 1 Baltic Sea Academy develops and coordinates the alliance in cooperation with the project partners. Additionally, Baltic Sea Academy also develops and implements rules for collaboration, instruments of cooperation and the provision of information, etc. The alliance meets on a regular basis, accompanies the entire project implementation by providing advice and the individual members take part in project workshops and during international consultation and transfer conferences. Different members of the alliance are involved in certain project tasks.

The Lead Partner (LP) develops and ensures cross-border exchange of experience and information as well as cooperation. The LP also involves and informs the 65 transfer recipients and implementation partners from 13 countries who participate as associated partners in the implementation of the project.

Towards the end of the project, a Baltic Sea-wide centre of competence "Human Resources for SMEs" will be developed, into which the work of the knowledge alliance will flow and be continued. The following activities will be carried out in this respect:

- development & coordination of concept for a Centre of Competence (CoC)
- attracting universities as CoC partners
- development and coordination of organizational and working forms of the CoC with cooperation of chambers and vocational training providers
- development & coordination of a management and business plan for the CoC
- establishment & launch of operations of CoC

3. Individual Activities of the Knowledge Alliance

3.1 Establishment

A knowledge alliance "Human Resources for SMEs" is established with various actors, part of which are already involved in the project as associated partners.

Start: 01.03.2019

3.2 Additions and Expansion

In the course of the project lifetime, the alliance should be expanded, and other relevant actors added to it so that 60 – 70 institutions participate in the alliance.

Report: 31.10.2019

3.3 Cooperation and Information

Systematic development of alliance as well as development and use of information provision and cooperation tools.

Start: 01.03.2019

Report: 31.07.2019

3.4 Participation in the Project

Accompaniment of project implementation through the alliance and participation of individual members in work packages 3 - 7

3.5 International Cooperation

Under the leadership of Partner 1 Baltic Sea Academy, ensuring the cross-border exchange of information and experience as well as cooperation with 65 associated partners from 13 countries.

Start: 01.06.2019

3.6 Best Practice

Preparation of the results and experiences as best practice of Workplace Innovation as well as exchange of best practices between the actors of the alliance.

Development and implementation of new (additional) methods and tools for SMEs on Workplace Innovation.

Transfer, adaption and implement best practices and new methods and tools in SMEs.

Start: 01.04.2019

Report: 30.09.2021

4. Initial Proposals and Suggestions for Cooperation and Information

4.1 Train the Trainer programme

Realisation of a Train the Trainer programme to practice cooperation and qualification of the alliance partners for the implementation of consultations and qualifications for SMEs.

- Development of Train the Trainer programme by Partner 11 Arbeit und Zukunft
Concept & Curriculum: 31.08.2019
Completion: 31.01.2020
- Implementation and Evaluation of Train the Trainer Programme
Test with Project and Alliance Partners: 16. + 17.10.2019 in Riga
Implementation report: 31.12.2019 by Partner 11 Arbeit und Zukunft
- Evaluation report: 31.12.2019 by Partner 2 SAMK

4.2 Platform "Information and Cooperation Workplace Innovations"

Development & Operation of Platform "Information & Cooperation Workplace Innovations"

Start: 31.08.2019 by Partner 3 Baltic Institute of Finland

Operation till project end: Partner 2 Baltic Institute of Finland

Operation after project end: Partner 1 Baltic Sea Academy

The platform shall include:

The existing website www.KA4HR.eu

Dialogue and cooperation forum for Knowledge Alliance and Centre of Competence

Service pages for the various target groups (SMEs, SME employees, students, lecturers) with all target group-specific offers of the project

Service pages for third-party institutions of vocational education and training, further education and higher education with all cooperation and funding offers

Information and promotion pages of the Centre of Competence "Human Resources for SMEs"

4.3 Work Meetings

- Holding an inaugural assembly
Inaugural assembly with presentation of the project, discussion of objectives and purposes of the action alliance, ensuring participation in individual project activities, agreements on further cooperation, gathering proposals for the expansion of the alliance, objectives and purposes of international exchange, etc.

- Regular working meetings
Regular working meetings, during the project period at least every six months (a total of at least 5 - 6 working meetings).
- Bilateral cooperation
Cooperation with the individual members of the alliance will vary in intensity. The main purpose of the alliance working meetings is coordination and exchange of information. Individual tasks are handled on the initiative of the coordinating partner Baltic Sea Academy within the framework of bilateral cooperation with individual members of the alliance.

4.4 Participation in Individual Project Activities

Various members of the alliance must play an active role in individual project tasks, especially in the course of the following:

WP2 Knowledge Alliance and Centre of Competence "HR for SME"

- Development of Knowledge Alliance "Human Resources in SMEs", which is formed by vocational training institutions, economic chambers and universities from four EU countries and is progressively expanded to include further educational stakeholders.
- Expansion of the alliance to 13 countries by including 50 economic chambers as well as 18 universities.
- Transformation and continuation of the alliance into a Baltic-wide Centre of Competence "HR for SME", which promotes long-term cooperation between educational and economic actors, develops and implements qualifications and handles R&D tasks.
- The following should be achieved:
 - a) Ongoing coordination between the courses offered by educational institutions and the requirements of the labour market.
 - b) Cooperation at regional and international level as well as constant exchange of experience and best practice transfer
 - c) Joint realisation of R&D tasks.
 - d) Ensuring permanent continuation of the CoC
- Development, testing and evaluation of a Train the Trainer programme for instructors of further vocational trainings and teachers in higher education. The aim is to constantly provide a sufficient number of qualified teachers who are able to
 - a) conduct dual initial and further vocational training as well as higher education in an appropriate manner, and
 - b) apply the pedagogical approach and coaching technique of the KAIN method.

WP3 Management Tools & New Practices

- Analyses of economic structures in the Baltic Sea Region
- Identification of SME conditions and qualification needs
- Creating Quick Check for SMEs to identify areas of improvement
- Baltic Sea-wide analysis of Workplace Innovation Best Practices
- Transfer, adaptation and implementation of Best Practices
- Development and implementation of new (additional) methods and tools for SMEs on Workplace Innovation
- Implement Best Practices and new methods and tools in SMEs
- The following should be achieved:
 - a) Creation of a uniform, sound data base for the work of the Knowledge Alliance and for the activities of the project.
 - b) Use of Best Practices of the entire Baltic Sea region in all countries/regions of the Knowledge Alliances.
 - c) Joint development of new promotion methods and tools and their use by all partners in all Knowledge Alliances.

WP4 Trainings

Development, testing, evaluation and implementation of three further vocational training courses on the topics of recruiting and binding personnel, digitisation as well as customers and business partners as innovation drivers for the target groups "Entrepreneurs, managers and specialists in SMEs" to impart skills and abilities in the area of Workplace Innovations.

The following should be achieved:

- a) Qualification of employees of SMEs to increase their capacities for Workplace Innovations.
- b) Development and implementation of Workplace Innovation projects in SMEs.
- c) More efficient use of the available human capital in SMEs.

WP5 Higher education and R&D

Development, testing, evaluation and implementation of a dual bachelor study course on the topic of Business Management and Workplace Innovations in SMEs combined with R&D tasks for SMEs.

The following should be achieved:

- a) High-quality qualification of young entrepreneurs and managers (EQF Level 6).
- b) Attraction of much needed junior staff for SMEs.
- c) Development of capacities to increase awareness for Workplace Innovations.
- d) Realisation of individual Workplace Innovation projects, which the students carry out as employees of the participating SMEs with the support of professors of the respective university in connection with the dual studies in SMEs.

WP7 Transfer and dissemination

Transfer of all education measure to 68 economic chambers and educational institutions in 13 countries and demand-oriented implementation consultations as well as realisation of a bundle of measures for further dissemination.

The following should be achieved:

- a) Broad transfer and use of project results in 13 countries.
- b) Comprehensive dissemination of project results at international level.
- c) Ensuring the maintenance and further development of results and the sustainable continuation of work through the secretariat and network of Partner 1 Baltic Sea Academy.

4.5 Written Exchange of Information

- Publication of a newsletter or electronic / written information on current project developments, interim results, developments in other project countries etc. at least every three months.
- Sending drafts of outputs (products) with a request for comments.
- Sending of all finished outputs (products).

4.6 Participation in Workshops, Conferences and Tests

- Invitation and participation in project workshops and transfer and consultation conference that take place in the respective region.
- Participation as speakers at transfer and consultation conference.
- Invitation and participation in Train the Trainer course.
- Invitation as an observer at tests of measures in the respective region.

4.7 International Exchange

- Invitation of members of the Hanse-Parlament and Baltic Sea Academy from the region to working meetings of the alliance.
- Exchange of information and experience within the framework of the international consultation and transfer conference on 08.06.2021 in Hamburg.
- Publication of at least 3 newsletters by Partner 1 Baltic Sea Academy.
- Ongoing communication of questions, wishes, needs etc. for international exchange to Partner 1 Baltic Sea Academy.