



**Grow international: Supporting the development of skills for SME internationalisation**

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**Best practices a lessons learned**

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- FUNDITEC - Fundación para el Desarrollo y la Innovación Tecnológica, Spain
- IASP - International Association of Science Parks and Areas of Innovation, Spain
- Hanse-Parlament e.V., Germany
- t2i - Technology Transfer and Innovation; Italy
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

GROW International aims to provide a training course, with both classroom and e-learning sessions that supports the development of new skills in innovative SMEs and new technology-based firms (NTBFs), for managers, employees and unemployed people, in order to promote, launch and support internationalisation processes among these firms.

From the project activities will result the following products/resources:

- GROW International Learning Guide – Guidebook with the learning modules developed under the project, exercises, case studies and examples;
- Package of Learning Objects: set of resources for the support to the training course, such as PPT presentations, audio and/or video files, graphics and others;
- Learning platform: online learning platform, with contents related with the internationalization process, where registered participants can find and share information and knowledge;
- Best Practices Guide: Collection of case studies, resulting from the piloting phase implemented by each partner, with description of blended training methodology applied, resources involved, results achieved and “do’s” and “don’ts” of each pilot.

The present document is the compilation of the best practices and lessons learned resulting from the piloting phase implemented by each partner and it is divided in 3 different chapters:

The first one is the overview on the different methodologies applied in each pilot, analysed from various items: training model, module(s) tested, type and number of participants, communications activities carried out during the pilot process, human resources involved, link process with external business environment, evaluation process, use of learning resources or facilities and equipment requirements. The second one is an overview on the pilot test results by country. And, finally, the third one is a list of “do’s” and “don’ts” resulted from the pilots

## 2. DIFFERENT METHODOLOGIES APPLAIED

### a. *Parkurbis - Parque de Ciência e Tecnologia da Covilhã, SA and UBI - Universidade da Beira Interior, Portugal*

<b>Training model</b>	Blended solution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online study</li> <li>• 53h in Classroom sessions</li> <li>• 25h in support to internationalization plan</li> </ul>
<b>Module tested</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All</li> </ul>
<b>Type &amp; number of participants</b>	Total number of participants <b>(NA)</b>
<b>Communication activities</b>	The dissemination actions were designed to reach the defined target groups by promotional presentations at the university (students), presentation during a professional course for unemployed (unemployed), dissemination of the course by email (students, university employees, local stakeholders, enterprises), posters and personal contact with potentially interested participants, companies and institutions.
<b>Human resources</b>	Trainer with expertise in International Marketing and the special participation of expert in IPR
<b>Link with external business environment</b>	Involvement of 10 companies for the Internationalization Plan
<b>Evaluation Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final examination – 50% final grade</li> <li>• Internationalization Plan – 50% final grade</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PPT presentations</li> <li>• Online platform with learning contents</li> <li>• Case studies</li> <li>• Additional case studies prepared by trainer</li> <li>• Paper note pad</li> <li>• Pen</li> <li>• USB pen drives</li> </ul>
<b>Facilities &amp; Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Auditorium/training room</li> <li>• Data show equipment</li> <li>• Computer with access to Internet</li> </ul>

<b>Training model</b>	E-learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optional participation in classroom, for particular modules</li> <li>• Learning process at anytime, anywhere</li> </ul>
<b>Module tested</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility to access all the Modules</li> </ul>
<b>Type &amp; number of participants</b>	Total number of participants <b>(NA)</b> Short profile of the participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition of the importance and impact of the training course and contents on the suport to the development of the business activity;</li> <li>• Interest in some modules of the contents of the training course;</li> <li>• Lack of time to attend the total amount of classroom sessions required;</li> <li>• The certification process loses value when facing the lack of time of entrepreneurs and employees;</li> <li>• Flexibility to access learning contents, any time anywhere, was recognized as key in nowadays life rythms;</li> <li>• For one particular participant, the fact of working in a different Region with no possibility to attend the classroom sessions, the access to the online platform and contents was a suitable solution.</li> </ul>
<b>Communication activities</b>	<u>Involvement of participants:</u>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact through dissemination events;</li> <li>• Social media information;</li> <li>• E-mail to companies;</li> <li>• Personal contact</li> </ul> <p><u>Registration for participation</u> For free learning, participants followed the same registration process as the ones participating in the Certified Training Course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expression of interest with one of the two organizing partners;</li> <li>• Delivery of the registration form, duly signed, with identification of modules of interest</li> <li>• Reception of username and password for access to registration platform</li> </ul> <p>Learning process: After the registration, each participant was free to access the modules of interest and learn on its own personal rhythm.</p>
<b>Human resources</b>	No trainer available
<b>Link with external business environment</b>	Not mandatory the preparation of an Internationalization Plan
<b>Evaluation Process</b>	Learning process not certified (at the end of each modules, participants had tests and quizzes available to test knowledge acquired)
<b>Learning Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Platform</li> <li>• Learning materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Modules chapters</li> <li>✓ PPT presentations</li> <li>✓ Additional resources list</li> <li>✓ Exercises, tests and quizzes</li> <li>✓ Country Case studies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Facilities &amp; Equipment</b>	Participants own computer and space

**b. FUNDITEC - Fundación para el Desarrollo y la Innovación Tecnológica, Spain**

<b>Training model</b>	E-learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning process at anytime, anywhere</li> </ul>
<b>Module tested</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility to access all the Modules</li> </ul>
<b>Type &amp; number of participants</b>	Total number of participants <b>(20)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managers from entities that promotes de internationalization of national companies and the integration of international companies in the city of Barcelona and others related to technology transfer.</li> <li>• Employees of these entities (included HR managers).</li> <li>• Students (internships in these entities.)</li> </ul>
<b>Communication activities</b>	Each of the candidates realized in different sessions the following activities always with the support of a trainer from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General explanation from the trainer about the nature, meaning and objectives of the Grow International project.</li> <li>• General explanation about the use, functionality and content of the platform. The objective of this activity was to give to the participants a first contact with the platform and to show them the main content that it covers.</li> <li>• Online meetings with the participants from Madrid and Vigo.</li> <li>• General navigation through the platform. During the session, participants acceded to the platform and discovered the structure and the content of the different modules. These sessions were interactive, where the trainer answered all the doubts of the participants.</li> <li>• Conducting the registration of the participants, explaining how they will receive their users and passwords for the platform and</li> </ul>

	<p>the policy privacy for treatment of their personal data. Once the participants completed the registration sheet and signed the privacy policy, the trainer sent to the partner all the documents with the aim to start the registration process of the participants. In a few hours, the trainer received a list with the users name and the passwords and he sent it to all of the participants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During these dissemination and informative sessions, the participants got a general overview of all the modules. The main objective was to give to them the necessary information to select at least three of the modules.</li> </ul>
<b>Human resources</b>	Trainer
<b>Link with external business environment</b>	Not mandatory the preparation of an Internationalization Plan
<b>Evaluation Process</b>	Learning process not certified (at the end of each modules, participants had tests and quizzes available to test knowledge acquired)
<b>Learning Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Platform</li> <li>• Learning materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Modules chapters</li> <li>✓ PPT presentations</li> <li>✓ Additional resources list</li> <li>✓ Exercises, tests and quizzes</li> <li>✓ Country Case studies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Facilities &amp; Equipment</b>	Participants own computer and space

**c. IASP - International Association of Science Parks and Areas of Innovation, Spain**

<b>Training model</b>	E-learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning process at anytime, anywhere</li> </ul>
<b>Module tested</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility to access all the Modules</li> </ul>
<b>Type &amp; number of participants</b>	Total number of participants <b>(24)</b> from Spain, in employment and interested in becoming more international or gaining more knowledge on the topic
<b>Communication activities</b>	<p>Once the official process had been discussed amongst all partners and confirmed at the consortium meeting in Treviso in early November, IASP contacted a series of groups of people to see whether they would be interested in taking part in this pilot phase of the internationalization training course as developed by GROW.</p> <p>Mailings were also sent to national networks of Spanish STPs (APTE – Spanish Association of Technology Parks; XPCAT – Network of Science Parks of Catalunya) in December 2014, who also sent reminders in the new year; mailings sent to contacts of smaller networks (such as to the the technology parks of the Castilla and León region).</p> <p>All queries following these mailings were given personalised responses, and were sent additional information about WIDER, attaching the WIDER brochure, providing the link to the website, and in some cases also sharing the online course structure.</p> <p>At the beginning of February, all those who had shown interest in the course were contacted individually, asking participants to sign the participant registration form, and later on in the month following up the contact by requesting them to sign a privacy statement ensuring that their participation and data provided met with the legal requisites of the necessary data protection act.</p> <p>More visibility was provided to GROW International and the online course in the IASP newsletter following the meeting of the GROW consortium in Lyon, France, in February, where the project and the online course were mentioned, providing the website for further details.</p> <p>At the beginning of March, all participants who had provided the relevant</p>

	<p>documents (registration form + privacy statement) received a personalized email from IASP with their username and password to access the Moodle platform, as well as a user guide that was created especially for them in Spanish.</p> <p>On 24th March a news article was posted on the IASP website informing readers of the launch and inviting them to see the GROW website for more information if they were interested</p> <p>Participants were given until the end of May to complete the course (or the selected modules) which was the stipulated time agreed upon by the GROW International partners.</p> <p>In the time soon after the opening of the Pilot period, IASP followed-up with those who had not yet replied with the necessary documents to see whether they needed any assistance and asking whether they were still interested in the course.</p> <p>Over the course of this period, IASP supported the participants by responding to individual queries and also sent a number of reminders to participants to access to the course and to make the most of the opportunity that was open to them. Periodically the Moodle platform and forum were checked to ensure that there were no incidences with the IASP pilot participants.</p> <p>On the 8th of April an official reminder message was sent and on the 26th of May a final warning message was sent to all participants, notifying them of the end of the course coming up and urging them to complete their modules.</p>
<b>Human resources</b>	No trainer available
<b>Link with external business environment</b>	Not mandatory the preparation of an Internationalization Plan
<b>Evaluation Process</b>	Learning process not certified (at the end of each modules, participants had tests and quizzes available to test knowledge acquired)
<b>Learning Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Platform</li> <li>• Learning materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Modules chapters</li> <li>✓ PPT presentations</li> <li>✓ Additional resources list</li> <li>✓ Exercises, tests and quizzes</li> <li>✓ Country Case studies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Facilities &amp; Equipment</b>	Participants own computer and space

**d. t2i - Technology Transfer and Innovation; Italy**

<b>Training model</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-learning</li> </ul>
<b>Module tested</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility to access all the Modules</li> </ul>
<b>Type &amp; number of participants</b>	<p>Total number of participants <b>(21)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Entrepreneurs</b> from diverse sectors, as opportunity to collect concrete hints to expand their business abroad</li> <li>• <b>Unemployed people</b>, as opportunity to deepen possibilities to start a new business targeting a foreign market</li> <li>• <b>Students</b>, as an interesting theme to deepen, usually not included in a common training path at university or other training institutions</li> <li>• <b>Employees</b>, as a way to enrich their work skills and competences</li> </ul>
<b>Communication activities</b>	<p>The Course was promoted by diverse ways, mainly using the web and online channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information about the GROW International Project and Course on T2I website</li> <li>• specific press releases on local economic magazine called</li> </ul>

	<p>“Economia della Marca Trevigiana” (economic in the Treviso Province)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dedicated posts in our periodic company’s Newsletter (this action has been delivered two times, reaching approx.. 5000 users per time)</li> <li>dedicated posts on an economic website managed by T2I <a href="http://www.trevisosystem.com">www.trevisosystem.com</a> (approx. 5000 registered users)</li> </ul> <p>The registration at the Course and communication with Users took place mostly by email.</p>
<b>Human resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A dedicated Operator in T2I was in charge to maintain direct contact with participants, to support them in specific requests and inform them about new resources and/or materials available on Moodle.</li> </ul>
<b>Link with external business environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not mandatory the preparation of an Internationalization Plan</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning process not certified</li> <li>At the end of each modules, participants had tests and quizzes available to test knowledge acquired</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online Platform</li> <li>Learning materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Modules chapters</li> <li>✓ PPT presentations</li> <li>✓ Additional resources list</li> <li>✓ Exercises, tests and quizzes</li> <li>✓ Country Case studies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Facilities &amp; Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants own computer and space</li> </ul>

e. *Entreprise Rhone-Alpes International, France*

<b>Training model</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>online</li> </ul>
<b>Module tested</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants were free to choose which modules to learn. Some choose just one or two modules, for study, others (5) choose all modules for study</li> </ul>
<b>Type &amp; number of participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 participants</li> <li>Entrepreneurs, managers</li> </ul>
<b>Communication activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation in trade show in Lyon “Classe Export” and “Pollutec”;</li> <li>Project presentation in meetings with clusters’ managers</li> <li>Communication and dissemination at ERAI blog</li> <li>Communication pieces at ERAI newsletter</li> <li>Direct contact with people interested in the project</li> </ul>
<b>Human resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal expert (answering questions on the forum, managing the project...)</li> </ul>
<b>Link with external business environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No links with external business environment were established</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Test and quizzes available at the online platform, case study (module 6)</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online Platform</li> <li>Learning materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Modules chapters</li> <li>✓ PPT presentations</li> <li>✓ Additional resources list</li> <li>✓ Exercises, tests and quizzes</li> <li>✓ Country Case studies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Facilities &amp; Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Computer</li> </ul>

- Data show

### 3. RESULTS BY COUNTRY

#### a. *France*

The two most popular modules in France have been Business International with 4 participants undertaking the module and Business English with three students coursing the module. Three modules, Business in the South-West and Mediterranean Europe, Multicultural Management and Internationalisation Planning have gathered the attention of 1 student each. Finally, no participant has undertaken the module on Intellectual Property Management & Rules in Europe.

In terms of age range, the Business International and Business English modules show a wider age range representation (including students of a minimum of two age ranges), whereas the rest of the modules were only undertaken by students of a single age range (between 18 to 30 years for the Multicultural Management and Internationalisation Planning modules and between 31 to 45 years for the module on Business in the South-West & Mediterranean Europe).

In terms of professional status, the module Business International shows the widest representation (including students, employed and unemployed individuals). Business English were undertaken by students and employed individuals. Finally, the three remaining modules were only undertaken by one professional category (students for the module on Internationalisation Planning and Multicultural Management and employed individuals for Business in the South West & Mediterranean Europe).

Regarding the typology of the training most of the modules were followed on a face-to-face methodology. Only two participants made use of the online training system (for the module on Business International).

In terms of the student's motivation to follow the course the most mentioned was to improve the knowledge. This was followed by the interests on the topic, the improvement of skills and competences, the trust in the service provider and the possibility to improve employability. Finally, and with minor importance the motivation to improve the working conditions was also stated. No participant seems to have taken part on the project because of its perceived high quality.

In terms of age range, younger participants (18-30) were motivated to undertake the course because of their trust on the service provider and the interest in the topic. Participants aged between 31 and 45 years were mainly motivated to improve their knowledge, improve their skills and competences, improve employability and prepare the internationalisation process of their company. The only participant older than 46 years chose to participate mainly to prepare the internationalisation process of his company.

Regarding the professional status of the participants, those unemployed chose the module mainly to improve their knowledge. Students had as a main motivation their interest in the topic and their trust on the service provider.

Finally, employed participants considered their principal motivation to enhance their knowledge, their interest in the topic, the possibility to enhance their skills and capacities and to prepare the internationalisation process of their company.

It is important to note that the main motivation of those participants choosing the online methodology was to prepare the internationalisation process of their company. For those opting for the face to face method the rationale behind their participation was far more varied.

The modules better valued by the participants in terms of clarity have been those of Business English and Business International, followed by those of Business in the South West & Mediterranean Europe and that on Multicultural Management.

In terms of age range younger students (18-30) have not provided reliable data to the questions. The pattern for students with age ranging from 31-45 show the same patterns than those presented in the overall population. Finally, for those participants aged between 45 to 60 years the most valued module were Business English and Business International.

Based on the training methodology those participants opting of for the online method considered Business international and Multicultural Management the most valuable modules. For those opting for the Face-to- Face option Business International and Business English were the best well-regarded.

## *b. Italy*

Among the Italian participants, only 3 of them completed all of the training modules. The most popular modules among the Italian participants were Business International and Business English. These were followed in interest by the modules on Internationalisation planning.

By age groups, the participants aged between 18 and 30 showed a major interest in completing all the modules (with a 66% of the total undertaking all the modules). The participants between 31 and 45 years of age opted mainly for the module on Business English, followed by that on Business International. Among this group limited interest was shown for the module on Intellectual Property Rights Management and Rules. Finally, among the participants of the age group 46-60 the most followed courses were Business International and Internationalisation Planning.

Limited comparison between professional categories can be conducted in Italy since no student and only one unemployed individual took part on the course.

By training format, all the Italian participants opted for the online training system. Again, no comparison can be conducted in this regard.

In terms of the participants' motivation, their interest in the topic and the possibility to enhance their knowledge were the most cited answers. The improvement of their skills and capacities was also highly ranked in the participants' motivation list. The least cited motivations among the participants were the perceived quality of the course and the potential to improve their employability (the reason for this last statement may lie in the fact that all participants were already improved).

Again limited comparisons can be conducted based on the training methodology and the professional status of the participants due to the lack of reliable data.

Again the module that was best perceived by the participants in terms of the clarity of its aims was that of Business English, followed by that on International Planning. Multicultural Management was in this respect the least valued of the modules.

Again limited comparisons can be conducted based on the training methodology and the professional status of the participants due to the lack of reliable data.

## *c. Spain*

Although all participants were given the option of completing the entire course, they only chose 1-2 modules. This may be due to the fact that all were in full time employment and so it can be difficult to dedicate enough time to the course. The majority in the age range of 31-45.

Of the modules, the most popular module was Business English followed by Internationalization Planning. The main reasons marked for choosing these were to improve their knowledge and because they were interested in the topic.

The level of assistance received in most cases was ranked as either good or very good, which indicates that although it was an online course they felt supported enough. There was one exception to this, who marked it as 'poor' although it should be noted that in general the participant was not so pleased with the course, not having being satisfied with the training programme either. Despite this, this same participant would still recommend the course to others.

There were mixed views on whether the format of training course (in this case all online) adapted to training needs. This may also be due to the autonomy of each participant, some being more accustomed to the format than others. It was found that the quality was largely unaffected, although many then recommended that for most modules having a mixture mainly of blended/online would be most suitable for the course.

The comments on advantages and disadvantages reflected that strengths were the flexibility of the course, course duration, easy access, and content. A comment as a weakness was that more case studies would have been nice.

Over all the course contents were interesting found interesting but with mixed results ranging from neither agree to disagree to strongly agreeing. A similar distribution of answers was seen concerning access to the course with an overall positive response.

For applicability to real life the module for Business English received top marks unanimously, with the International Business very close behind.

All respondents were satisfied with the course and found the registration procedures either good or very good. A high proportion considered that the course would be extremely useful to them in their future career.

#### *d. Portugal*

Among the Portuguese participant the most followed modules were those of Business International (with almost 80% of the participants undertaking the module) and Multicultural Management, closely followed by those on Business English and Intellectual Property Management & Rules. However, as opposed to other countries involved in the project it is important to note that Portuguese participants were the most prone to complete all the training modules (or almost all of them).

Among Portuguese participants there was an even distribution of the training methodology used, with only the online system lagging behind (only 3 participants opted for this methodology).

By age groups, among those aged 18 to 30 Business International, Multicultural Management and Internationalisation Planning were the modules more followed, with Business in the South West & Mediterranean Europe the least completed. The participants between 31 and 45 years of age show a significant level of module completion (84% of

overall course completion). Only the Business English Module did not show such good results. Finally, all participants of the group of age 46-60 completed the totality of the modules.

Most of the participants in Portugal were employed individuals, followed by students and unemployed individuals. Among employed participants it is important to note that all the participants completed almost the 75% of the course programme with the modules on Business International and Internationalisation Planning followed in more than 90% of the cases. Although also higher in terms of course completion, figures show that among students the most followed modules was Business International (completed by the 90% of the participants). Only one exception must be mentioned, that of the Business in South West & Mediterranean Europe followed by only the 33% of the participant students. Finally, amongst unemployed individuals, the distribution of modules completed is rather event (with all the modules completed in the 70% of the cases, except for the Business English module that was only followed in the 33% of the cases).

All participants that opted by the online methodology completed the whole course. The participants opting for the face-to-face methodology completed in more than 90% of the cases all the modules, with the exception of Business English and International Planning.

When analysing the motivational aspects that guided participation, it must be observed that the willingness to improve knowledge, the interest on the topic and the intention to enhance the skills and the capacities were the most referred reasons. No significant differences were neither observed amongst the groups of age nor the professional status of the participants, and similar trends were followed.

#### 4. "DO's" and "DON'ts"

- Despite assessment results indicate that training model not to have a clear impact, a blended approach it seems the best practice in order to develop a supporting course for the development of skills for SME internationalisation.

The course should combine both face to face sessions and online content due to the difficulty level of some modules. One possible solution could be to realize online trainings through the platform "GoToMeeting" which is similar to a face to face session (the trainer can realize a presentation in live and the participants can directly ask questions through a microphone or a chat). In this section it could be interesting to invite some extern experts to make an online conference, sharing their experience and successful examples to the participants.

- Providing training materials that were easily accessible, had practical approach to internationalisation and were user-friendly – flexible access and easy to understand contents

Nevertheless, the level of the modules must be adopted to specific target groups.

Some participants' feedbacks by specific modules show that:

- ✓ It's necessary to include more interactive exercises to evaluate the participants' skills on module 1, not just exercises in a pdf document (for example: sentences with gaps that the participants must fill, listening exercises etc.); these exercises should be included in the module, not as extern content.
- ✓ For an online course module 2 it can be too long to do, it would be interesting to add some interactive content as extern videos.
- ✓ Module 3 should be more structured (for example, classifying the documents by country or topic)
- ✓ Module 4 is focused on the main European countries, it could be convenient to include information about Asian and Latin American countries.
- ✓ Module 5 require a general improvement of the presentations to better explain the theory:
  - Better explanation of why IP is important for business in a few slides, using some practical examples with figures in order to have a better comprehension.
  - Insert some figures and practical examples in order to explain more visually what a mark is, and explain the difference between Trademarks, service and collective marks.
  - It would be advisable to explain better why industrial designs are important for the market and underline the meaning of "outward appearance" with figures.
  - Better definition of the concept "Patent" with concrete examples. Instead of offering a list of inventions excluded by patentability, it would be appropriate to create a list of inventions covered by patentability to avoid potential confusion.
  - It would be advisable to improve the structure of the presentation, including a previous introduction about "Intelligence Property due Diligence" and organizing the slides in line with financing issues.
  - Offer concrete examples and explain why an agreement is normally used to resolve potential disputes.

- ✓ While the other modules present a presentation accompanied by a detailed document Module 6 doesn't.
  - For an online approach it is necessary to explain more in detail the elements of an internationalization plan and its phases. It's also recommendable to add some information about international and national finance programs that promote internationalization, and also identify some support entities.
  - On the other hand, during the development of the Internationalization plan, constraints may occur between the time available of the company to spend with the trainees and the time scheduled for the development of the Internationalization Plan. More, after the conclusion of the classroom sessions, trainees had 2 weeks to develop the Internationalization Plan that need to be further extended for a period of 2 weeks more. From the experience it is recommended an earlier involvement of companies in the process, after the conclusion of Module 2, allowing not just trainees to have time enough to develop more work but also the implementation of acquired knowledge as it is being delivered.

- Different professional background and fields of expertise between participants in some situations might results unproductive as some subjects need to be explained with more detail to some groups while others might consider the subject much easier and loose interest with many explanations.

For this reason the course must be addressed to specific target groups, keeping in mind different aspects as employment situation and level of prior knowledge, in order to adopt specific approach and module levels.

For example, SME entrepreneurs give particular value to the exchange of experiences and learning through case studies, and recommend the increase of these debates in future sessions.

Another aspect that advises this approach is that a significant amount of users lacked sufficient knowledge of finance to effectively deal with the financial part of business plan. Therefore it is recommended for the future edition to provide materials connected with financial management to deal with the issue.

- In order to ensure good participants rates and impact it is very important to contact different types of stakeholders via email, telephone, web tools, and visit in person. The partners must provide information and raise awareness for the project among those that have the ability to participate in the training course and will obtain major benefits, in terms of skills development, from it:

- ✓ New technology based firms (up to 5 years of existence) managers
- ✓ NTBF Human Resources
- ✓ Innovative SME managers and Human resources
- ✓ Unemployed people with a minimum of qualification at High school degree or professional experience (3 years)
- ✓ Trainers
- ✓ University Professors
- ✓ VET and University students

- ✓ Anyone interested in the subject and with the ability to participate in the training course and benefit from it
- Different types of support must be necessary in different stage:
- ✓ Engagement activities:
    - Identification and contact of potential users.
    - General explanation about the nature, meaning and objectives of the Grow international project.
    - General explanation about the use, functionality and content of the platform. The objective of this activity is to give to the participants a first contact with the platform and to show them the main content that it covers.
    - General navigation through the platform. During the session, participants accessed to the platform and discovered the structure and the content of the different modules. These sessions were interactive, where the trainer answered all the doubts of the participants.
    - Conducting the registration of the participants, explaining how they will receive their users and passwords for the platform and the policy privacy for treatment of their personal data.
  - ✓ Course development:
    - Specific trainers with practical market approach brought a high added value to the development of participants skills and knowledge
  - ✓ Helpdesk:
    - In charge to maintain direct contact with participants, to support them in specific requests and inform them about new resources and/or materials available on Moodle.
- As part of the training course and evaluation process, the Portuguese trainees, had to implement knowledge acquired in the preparation of an Internationalization Plan for a real company.
- For those trainees entrepreneurs or employed, the company for the Internationalization Plan could be the owned or employer company.
- For other participants, a group of companies was invited to be partner of the piloting and collaborate with trainees on the preparation of the Internationalization Plan that could, later, be used by the company.
- The process for the involvement of the companies followed the steps:
- Step 1. Identification of a group of companies and personal contact for presentation of the project, the training course and definition of working plan.
- 10 Companies were involved, with the following profile:
- ✓ 5 New technology based firms, with more than 1 year old, with orientation for the global market and without an organized Internationalization plan implemented;
  - ✓ 1 Creative company, with more than 3 years old, with orientation to the global market and without an internationalization plan implemented;
  - ✓ 3 Traditional companies established in the national market and without an internationalization plan implemented;

- ✓ 1 Traditional company with a successful internationalization process implement. This company was selected considering the opportunity to provide a very good learning for the participants.

Step 2. Creation of 2 participants groups and attribution of a company to each group, taking into account the group skills, interests and resources;

Step 3. Establishment of links between the companies and the trainees, with an e-mail identifying the trainees that would be working with each company, and the contacts of both parts;

Step 4. Signature of Non-Disclosure Agreements between the trainees and the companies, in order to protect the confidentiality of information to which trainees may had access; (optional – depending on the company requirements)

Step 5. Definition of a working plan between the trainees and the companies and development of Internationalization Plan.

From the experience, the process involved:

- ✓ First research on the company's background and current situation
- ✓ Interview with company's contact person
- ✓ Preparation of preliminary work
- ✓ Validation of additional information
- ✓ Conclusion of the Internationalization plan and delivery of work to the trainer.

Step 6. With the delivery of the Internationalization Plans, by the trainees, the coordinators of the piloting phase send an e-mail, to the cooperating companies thanking their availability, information on the stage of the work and informing on the delivery of the final work after the evaluation (early September).

Step 7. Delivery of the final Internationalization Plans to each company involved.

- For SME and NTBF, although the offer of a certificated training course, that would allow firms to accomplish the legal demands for employees training hours, in subjects that are interesting for the business activity, the amount of hours for class room sessions, and the mandatory presence in a high percentage of the classes for achieving certification, was not a feasible solution. The possibility to attend online classrooms, with the proper procedures for certification, was one element mentioned as a possible future improvement to increase this target group participation.
- Regarding the learning materials (both online platform and learning materials) it is necessary to remark that the case studies, both the developed under the project and the ones provided during training by the trainer, were a valuable additional resource to participants.

On the other hand, the practical application of knowledge in the form of internationalisation plan based on the real companies and supported by the trainer brought proved to be of a significant value to the participants

It's also necessary to regularly update the content, adding information of events and publications related to the topics. For example:

- ✓ Providing a calendar of conferences and seminars conducted in the partner regions.

- ✓ Updating a catalog of publications and interesting readings.
  
- Finally, facilities and equipment may consider the requirements of each specific approach
  - ✓ Physical approach
    - Auditorium/training room
    - Data show equipment
    - Computer with access to Internet
  - ✓ Online approach
    - Participants own computer and space