

# **MANUAL OF A VET-INDUSTRY COOPERATION BASED COOPERATION**

Based on the experiences of INSIGHT project

Insight Project

2015



Közreműködő partnerek – core partners:

„Városlódi Villa” Oktatás-fejlesztési-, Üdültetési- és Étkeztetési Nonprofit Kft. – koordinátor partner applicant co-ordinator

Institut pro trénink pohostinnosti – core partner

Peter Sereinigg Management Consultancy – core partner

Séf Vendéglátóipari, Kereskedelmi és Idegenforgalmi Szakképző Iskola – core partner



A projektet az Európai Unió támogatja.

A kiadványban megjelentek nem szükségszerűen tükrözik az Európai Bizottság nézeteit.  
Támogatási szerződés száma: 2013-1-HU1-LEO05-09611



Co-funded by the Lifelong Learning programme of the European Union.

*The contents of the publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Contract number: 2013-1-HU1-LEO05-09611*

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## **PREFACE**

The Manual of a VET-Industry based cooperation provides a structured approach to managing a work-based learning and other projects based on cooperation between the world of work and the educational field. It provides an overview of the essential components of project management and identify the key elements of a successful cooperation between an educational institute and industry partners.

The manual serves as a guideline and provides a starting point to establish the project context and finding the most appropriate way to cooperate with industry partners which results in gaining advantages for all beneficiaries. It describes a methodological framework of the elaborated teacher industry placement model within the INSIGHT project. The methodology is built on the collective knowledge and project experiences.

The manual also reflect key learnings from the INSIGHT project.

At the first chapter we give a brief introduction and the overview of the necessity of the INSIGHT project how it relates to the VET-Industry cooperations.

In the second chapter we introduce the various forms of work-based learning, than followed by the introduction of the concept of Teacher Industry Placement. In the fourth chapter we describe the process of successful industry cooperations, as a step-by-step guide which could be applied for other VET-Industry cooperation projects, regardless the area and complexity of cooperations.

# 1

## GETTING STARTED: THE CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

### THE PROJECT IDEA

The quality of human resources is considered to be a key factor of competitiveness in all areas. The INSIGHT project has been initiated at a period, when European economy has been in a recovery phase after years of economic crisis. One of the key issues addressed long before the crisis hit Europe is competitiveness, especially as compared to the American and the Asian economic areas. The Lisbon Strategy set three interdependent objectives:

- the increase of investment into Research and Development to three per cent of GDP
- reduction of red tape to promote entrepreneurship
- achieving an employment rate of 70 per cent (60 per cent for women)

Researches and initiatives also show the growing importance of linking the educational programmes and the industry practices. This is promoted as a modernization and professionalization of the educational system.

Among other aspects, the link between vocational education and industry is crucial to the training of highly skilled professionals. In frame of an ever faster changing global economy, vocational education has to be flexible. VET needs to be able to immediately follow market trends and industry innovations and to ensure a direct and on-going coverage of such up-to-date practices in teaching. As Bergami and Schuller (2008) pointed out,

“Current trends in teaching in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) area favour an approach that aims to produce industry ready graduates who possess the requisite latest information, so they can ‘hit the ground running’ upon entering the workforce.”

This is very much in line with the actual changes in the Hungarian VET sector. One of the key requirements is the transformation of vocational education to become more practice-oriented and to meet the requirements of the industry.

This requires VET teachers to be familiar with market relations and also with industry-specific management schemes. Such knowledge is however impossible to acquire without prior and actual industry work experience. The promoter carried out a research in 2012 June, based on an on-line questionnaire among Hungarian VET tourism teachers. The result showed that tourism teachers have lack of insight into the real tourism market, two-third of them had no tourism work experience at all, only few of them had up-dated tourism practice.

Although this necessity to adapt wider economic and social changes is a general feature of VET, in frame of this application we plan to develop a solution for the tourism VET field. The reasons for selecting tourism education as a showcase for the new scheme are manifold. Tourism is not only a leading global industry, but it is also an important sector in Hungary, providing 10% of the GDP (WTTC, 2012). It is a complex and dynamic industry that challenges teachers and students. Tourism is also a labour intensive sector. These factors lead to a high share of tourism programs within VET. In 2010/11 19.270 (10.6%) children learned in 'Hotel and catering' (subject area: 811) and 8.143 (4.5%) children in 'Travel, tourism and leisure' (subject area: 812) secondary vocational school programs (KSH, 2012).

# 2

## **PROJECT IDENTIFICATION**

### **ANALYSING THE PROBLEM**

The needs analysis outlined that most of the tourism teachers at VET lack up-dated, professional work experience in the tourism industry, therefore the project aim is to provide sufficient tourism industry and tourism market knowledge and match the needs of the VET teachers and tourism programmes with the real tourism market challenges. Consequently, the educational programme could be related to the world of work which is key element of successful VET.

The INSIGHT project aspired to address an existing problem of VET education not only a national, but also at European level as it was described in the needs analysis. An innovative, complex methodology was elaborated which enabled the practical adaptation of the Teachers Industry Placement Methodology and the Intercultural Communication Method.

The teacher industry placement provided the VET tourism teachers the lack of up-dated professional competences which could be implemented into their VET tourism teaching. The gained practical knowledge by the VET teachers provided students a practice-oriented real life knowledge of the tourism industry. With the help of the used case studies and real business examples, VET students able to understand the business operations and tourism market challenges, and they have real expectations of the working conditions in the tourism industry.

Another benefit is the developing partnership between the VET educational institutions and the participating tourism enterprises. The teacher placement program helps to create a

bridge between the VET education and the world of work in Tourism. It also helps to gain information about each actors and understand the necessity of major stakeholders. These may open up new cooperation schemes, partnership possibilities on a long term for both the industry and the VET education.

The different approaches of the adapted materials provided an excellent basis. The Czech methodology followed a processual approach, addressing the key phases of the teacher industry placement process and elaborating the tasks of the actors involved. The Austrian methodology provides an understanding of the socio-psychological relations and the communication processes which characterise a social setting of cooperation among partners with highly different experiences and cultures (as in the case of educational and business partners). It also support the possibility of partnership building by applying innovative ICT-based, intercultural communication method.

The adapted and experienced methods can be a good basis or a model for other countries and sectors. The transferred products will be produced in English and Hungarian and will be available on the project web site so the implementation is possible for other countries and sectors, as well.

### **ANALYSING THE OBJECTIVES**

In order to fulfil this mission the consortium members identified four interlocking project objectives:

- 1) to enable secondary VET teachers to gain insight into the management and operations of a tourism enterprise;
- 2) to empower participating VET teachers to develop and share attractive and up-to-date learning materials based on their practical industry placement experience ,
- 3) to ensure the adapted scheme is based on acceptable requirements and thus it is sustainable;
- 4) to ensure the new scheme fits into the changing Hungarian VET policy framework and thus its valorization is made possible.

# 3

## **SELECTING THE OPTIMAL LEARNING METHODS**

### **WORK-BASED LEARNING**

The nature of learning is changing. As the on-going rapid change of the socio-economic environment requires constant adaptation to new competitors, stakeholder requirements and regulations, traditional educational models which envisage the lifelong use of knowledge gained at the beginning of the career are not suitable anymore. Rather, learning becomes integral throughout the life course. Employers are looking for applicants with a complex set of skill and competences beyond theoretical knowledge of the field beyond theoretical knowledge of the field.

Learning is thus not limited to the school system and is not finished at the end of the school years. People more and more acknowledge the need to constantly develop their professional knowledge and working methods in order to perform well on the labour market. The concept of life-long learning is one of the solutions to this problem: beside on-going learning full re-training programs enable sharp career changes – if necessary even several times during the active life.

However formal training in the classroom does not address all issues related to the changing work environment. Working in teams and projects, the resulting need for flexibility raise the importance of soft skills. i.e. organizational skill, self-management, effective time management, as well, as managing intercultural situations and conflicts. These are also of high importance in everyday work settings, however when first time entering or – after maternity leave or unemployment – re-entering the world of work, these become crucial.

With these groups employers are extremely conscious of lower work effectiveness due to the lack of the above soft-skills.

When looking for a solution to the latter challenges, education seems to provide an age-old answer. Work-based learning (WBL) seems to become a widely acknowledged concept across all levels of vocational education and training. It recalls a traditional way of informal learning in „natural” work settings (as opposed to the abstract setting of the classroom), where the more experienced train and support the novice. In fact, work-based learning is the oldest form of learning – long before the emergence of formal, structured education, children and young fellows were involved in actual work processes. These happened in frame of the family, the tribe or the community. From a very early age children observed their parents and fellow adults during work and got smaller duties. More and more jobs have been assigned to them – until the next generation seamlessly took over the entire business from the ageing parents. Thus it was natural to flowingly grow into a vocation – without formal training and often also without major milestones, such as exams. Even today, this learning model works well in traditional communities, such as the Amish in the USA, where farming and handicrafts are inherited from father to son.

Modernity developed the idea of detached life-spheres. Education developed as a field largely separated from the world of work – both in terms of space, time, norms, rules, social standing and also of personal relationships. Individual life-courses were structured along milestones separating education and the world of work (including forms of final examination). Education started to develop along its own logic rooted more in academic research than in everyday world of work. Nowadays however this approach started to show its weaknesses. Even at lower stages of the vocational and higher education system students were trained more to become weak scientists than strong professionals. This has led to the development of an increasing gap between the skills and competences of young VET absolvents and the requirements of the industries that would employ them. Among others, this resulted in very high rates of youth unemployment.

Especially the latter let decision makers seeking a solution out of the box. If applied in a coherent and all-encompassing way, work-based learning may be such a solution. Fostering work-based learning involves changing the rules of the game. It is an approach that

nowadays brings old logic and practices back into education. Many hope that it may provide a powerful solution the skills and competence mismatch problem.

Work-based learning is not a clear theoretical construct yet. It is defined in a multitude of ways. According to CEDEFOP:

*„[Work-based learning is] acquisition of knowledge and skills through carrying out – and reflecting on – tasks in a vocational context, either at the workplace (such as alterance training) or in a VET institution.“ (Cedefop, 2011)*

This definition well expresses two key aspects of Work-based learning. First, the knowledge transfer is based on practical activities as part of real workflows rather theoretical explanation. Second, learning takes place outside of the classroom: either in a real workplace or in a simulated work environment (such as a training workshop).

One of the definitions we found rather useful is provided by the Government of Queensland in a methodological paper:

*„[Work-based learning involves] short, voluntary periods of approved professional learning, closely observing and interacting with experienced others as they undertake their usual work roles“ (QG, 2010)*

The crucial component is learning by the less experienced. On the one hand, work-based learning is a less structured than classroom-based instruction. Only a broad plan of what will be learnt can be made, the actual situation to learn from will be defined by the workflow, that is, up to a great extent by customers' wishes and request. On the other hand, Work-based learning offers the opportunity for multidimensional learning. Not only knowledge, but also norms, behaviour, body language, etc. can be observed and learnt from. All sense will serve to gain a long lasting, complex and emotionally loaded experience of the workflow observed.

Levy, et al. (1989) defined work-based learning as *“linking learning to the work role”*. This is a very compact but powerful definition that tackles the very essence of work-based learning: the fact that Work-based learning places young learners at a very sensitive age into a real workplace. There they can meet real professionals, consider them as role models, socialize into the culture of work and develop a motivation that would otherwise not have been

developed. Involved into work-based learning young vocational students learn into the work role and not (or not only) the student role.

All, in all, Work-based learning is not a single concept. Rather, it is an umbrella term including the following forms:

- apprenticeship,
- internship,
- traineeship,
- job shadowing,
- workshops and labs,
- simulations.

The big question is how this fundamental change can be achieved. As Gallacher and Reeve point out, the outcome will only change if the fundamentals of education are change as well:

*“Work based learning is not just the transplanting of existing programmes into the location of the workplace, but a more radical change in the focus and process of learning.”* (cited in Holmes).

Based on how far this goes, we can distinguish between two approaches. On the first level, it brings practical training as an equally important *component* back into education. As such, it provides VET students with the opportunities of

- applying theoretical knowledge to practical tasks and problems,
- experiencing how single tasks are interconnected into a complex workflow,
- experiencing conditions of the world of work,
- learning to manage timeframes and deadlines,
- facing real responsibilities including that of working with expensive tools and machinery,
- making contacts in the world of work, starting to develop a professional network, and
- developing a professional motivation and identity.

There is, however a more profound approach that considers the very idea of Work-based learning not being merely putting two distinct educational practices into one program but also changing the *logic* of education. Departing from a rigid, academically influenced structure of VET education with a Work-based learning component and logic should be directly influenced by requirements of the world.

# 4

## PROJECT FORMULATION

### SETTING THE APPLIED METHODOLOGY: CONCEPT OF TEACHER INDUSTRY PLACEMENT

Teacher industry placement involves gaining professional experiences during a few weeks period at a real workplace and the processing of these experiences into effective learning materials and practices.

The teacher industry placement follows the idea of learning through productive work experience. The teacher industry placement is a period of time spent by the participating teachers in a professional working environment, at a hosting company which provides the opportunity to understand the organisational structures and processes and also offers the opportunity for professional development. It is envisaged that participating teachers will gain first-hand work experiences through work-based learning during the placement period, with special emphasis on the following:

- to get acquainted with the tourism work organisation/hosting company's structure;
- to acquire the know-how of tourism operations;
- to better understand market needs;
- to get known and understand innovative new technologies;
- to update the professional terminology;
- to support the professional self-development by assessing for skills, competences and professional knowledge.

The teacher industry placement serves to bring new ideas, impulses and updated professional knowledge of new markets and processes. The teacher industry placement scheme also develops the worldview and self-evaluation of the participating teachers with highlighting the importance of the culture of autonomy, openness, efficiency, responsibility, mobility, too. It supports the team work as develops the behaviour skills and the communication flow.

The teacher industry placement also aims to improve the cooperation between the educational field and world of work, therefore enhancing the VET-tourism industry partnership. During the industry placement the theoretic concepts can be applied to practice. Both parties, actors are beneficiaries of the teacher industry placement (see later in details). Teacher industry placement is the best opportunity to increase the teacher's experiences of professional working life, to experience work relations, to learn about professional values.

The industry placement cannot be successful unless the learning outcome is broad enough to reflect various working experiences and the participating teacher has appropriate opportunity to gain professional experiences and knowledge during the industry placement.

The industry placement follows relevant principles in order to be efficient, such as it should be connected to the up-to-date challenges of the labour market, assure to provide an insight into everyday operational tasks and management practices. This two aspects – everyday routine and the application of innovative new schemes – does not go hand-in-hand. Selecting the placement partners is therefore of key importance to the success of the scheme.

This way it will be able to ensure the link between the theory and the practice, between the taught tourism subjects and the operational and management tasks. In order to achieve the most outcomes and benefits, a variety of learning opportunities, methods and practices could be used such as observing the workflow, enquiring, collecting forms and documents, logging activities as well as on-going consultation with the mentor.

As it is described above, the teacher industry placement can serve various outcomes at the same time therefore it is an effective tool for self-development and professionalization of VET teachers. The described outcomes are the followings:

- deepen the existing theoretical knowledge;

- integrate the theory with practice;
- update the professional knowledge;
- experience a different working/organizational culture;
- develop new competences and skills;
- contribute to the practice-oriented teaching and
- provide real life work examples.

We can summarize that the teacher industry placement is:

- a learning experience which enables the participating teachers to develop their knowledge and skills;
- a working experience in which the participant act for a limited time as employees in order to achieve certain competences and knowledge;
- a combination of work, experience and observation in a real work setting, in a workplace outside the educational field .

## **IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS**

The teacher industry placement intends to bridge the gap the between VET education and actual industry practice. In this process various stakeholders are involved. We have identified first the stakeholders, then analysed the possible gained benefits.

### *VET educational institute*

The VET educational institution or a vocational training centre is the coordinating institute who employs the participating teacher either in part-time or full-time. The sending school can also gain benefits which are the followings:

- Their teaching staff will be able to gain recent industry work experience.
- Their staff will be able to understand the skills, competences and attitudes required by the industry.
- It can integrate new issues, topics and methodologies to adapt its curriculum on the labour market needs.

- It can develop labour market partnerships which can bring funding and new technologies into the education.
- A VET educational institution with well-trained VET teachers and with active industry cooperation is more attractive for the applicants.

### *Participating teacher*

A person employed in a VET educational institution, teaches tourism-related subjects and who takes part in the industry placement by accepting the conditions of teacher industry placement programme. The participating teachers can also gain benefits which are the followings:

- The participating teacher learns about the structure and the functioning of the hosting tourism company.
- The placement provides a learning experience to develop their professional knowledge and skills.
- The placement provides a working experience to achieve certain competences.
- The placement serves as a way of personal development, widens the participating teacher's personal interests and aspirations.
- The acquired skills and knowledge are transferable into the educational context.
- The participating teacher will be able to identify the link between theory and practice, find the correlation among different disciplines.
- As a result of the teacher industry placement, on-going network will be developed with the industry/tourism enterprises.
- The participating teacher develops a deeper understanding of the tourism enterprises and their organisational structures, their working practices, their on-going operation and policies, the applied technology and management processes, the culture and ethos of workplaces etc.
- The participating teacher develops his/her professional behaviour.
- The placement increases the self-confidence of participating teacher.

### *Placement coordinator*

The placement coordinator is directly involved (is responsible for implementation of the placement), but indirectly benefit from the teacher industry placement. The placement coordinator either is an employee of the VET educational institution or an outside expert with extensive labour partnerships. He/she promotes the local/regional enterprises, companies to provide industry placement for the participating teacher. He/she provides information and assistance in finding the optimal enterprise and matches it with the need (the gap of competences) of the participating teacher. The placement coordinator is directly involved in the teacher industry placement:

- He/she continuously maintains the professional network and has updated business relations.
- The placement coordinator gains knowledge and experience on dealing with participating teachers and business actors.

#### *VET student*

Although the VET students are not the main target of the teacher industry placement but via the educational program they are also beneficiaries indirectly. The VET student is an active student of VET education, attending a vocational training or educational course in tourism.

The VET students are indirectly involved but impacted by the teacher industry placement:

- The placement helps to increase the quality of education.
- The placement results in smoother learning process.
- The students can easier and better understand the professional businesses and their operations.

#### *Industry partner /hosting company*

The industry partner is the hosting company, a tourism enterprise who operates in the field of tourism, providing the placement for the participating teacher. The profile of the tourism enterprise can be various, from the travel agency field through the event management company till the hospitality industry. The tourism industry can also gain benefits by offering teacher industry placements which are the followings:

- As a result of the placement, the tourism enterprises get an insight into the VET educational processes and curriculum.

- The participating teacher can also bring new ideas and impulses to the company that foster development.
- The placement helps in developing an on-going partnership with the VET educational institutions which might be useful in joint projects in the future.
- The industry/enterprise can provide the basis for a “best practice” or a study example.
- The participating teacher can promote positive image and improve the attractiveness of the industry/tourism enterprise.

### *Mentor*

The mentor is a person, an employee in the hosting workplace who is responsible for helping and assisting the participating teacher during the industry placement. The mentor has a key role in the placement process and also gains benefits:

- The mentor gets more expertise and experience in supervising the participating teachers.
- He/she can have a better insight into the VET educational activities.
- He/she has a first-hand feedback on the competences of VET tourism teachers.
- He/she learns how to solve conflicts and difficulties, how to integrate participating teachers into a team work.

### *Tourists*

The tourists are indirectly impacted through the purchasing tourism services. Better qualified VET service providers (former VET students) enrich the tourist’s experiences and result in higher tourist’s satisfaction.

### *State*

The state is indirectly impacted but is highly interested in supporting the industry placement. The state refers to all kind of state and/or semi-state organizations which are involved in managing, supporting, legislating tourism and tourism-related education. The state provides legal procedures and framework for VET education and monitors the educational process through state offices.

# 5

## **PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

### **PLANNING PROCESS OF A SUCCESSFUL COOPERATION BETWEEN VET-INDUSTRY PARTNERS**

In order to manage a successful teacher industry placement and optimize benefits, the following tasks should be elaborated.

- 1) Involving all actors
- 2) Application
- 3) Selection
- 4) Clarifying tasks
- 5) Understanding teachers' needs
- 6) Reviewing placement options
- 7) Coordinating placement with everyday life duties
- 8) Selecting placement option and fine-tuning
- 9) Contracting (including placement plan)
- 10) Introduction to the placement location and team
- 11) Implementing placement
- 12) Feedback and evaluation

The responsibilities of VET and the industry will be examined separately by the tasks.

## Project formulation

- Involving all actors
- Application
- Selection
- Clarifying tasks

## Planning process

- Understanding teacher's needs
- Reviewing placement options
- Coordinating placement with everyday life duties
- Selecting placement option and fine-tuning

## Implementation and evaluation

- Contracting
- Introduction to the placement location and team
- Implementing placement
- Feedback and evaluation

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF COOPERATING PARTNERS**

### **Task1. Involving all actors**

#### *Responsibilities of VET*

In the project formulation, all possible actors should be considered. The initiatives come from the VET educational institute who identifies the teachers who can participate in the Teacher Industry Practice Program. The VET educational institute should identify the need of the industry placement by analysing the teachers' competences regularly. For those who had no tourism experiences or had only long time ago, should provide the opportunity to participate in the teacher industry placement. All tourism-related VET teachers (full-time and part-time teachers, except unpaid or long service leave teachers) are eligible to participate in it. There is no age and gender and race limitation for participating in the teacher industry placement.

The VET Educational institute is responsible for informing the VET teachers on the possibility of the program. They have to know the circumstances, the requirements before the application process will be launched.

At the same time with the needs analysis of the VET teachers, the industry partners of the VET institute should be contacted for possible cooperations and placement possibilities. The assessment of the hosting industry partners, the available companies involve the identification of the company's characteristics and its professional activities. The VET analysis the hosting company by its profile. The company profile include the following information:

- the name of the company;
- geographical location, the address;
- contact details;
- official web site;
- the company's profile and main activities, products.

#### *Responsibilities of the tourism industry*

The VET educational institute make effort to establish a partnership with a hosting tourism industry partner who can provide the placement. If there is a long history of cooperation, the

industry partners knows the advantages of participating in the Teacher Industry Placement. Otherwise there is a need to explain the process of Teacher Industry Placement and the advantages of cooperation. In this case there is a possibility to build on a trustful partnership.

The industry partner/ the enterprise should understand the advantages of the placement and not consider it as a waste of time, or unnecessary time investment into something that cannot provide any profit for the enterprise. The enterprise delivers the know-how, the operational processes and makes the operational management processes transparent for the participating teacher. The enterprise should be aware of the benefits of teacher industry placements in the medium and long-term (eg. providing consumer awareness and PR of the enterprise, being a good practice, a case study, influencing the educational activities by highlighting the practical issues).

## **Task2. Application**

### *Responsibilities of VET*

If the VET teacher is eligible and fulfils all the selection criteria, she/he can start the application process. The application process is in fact the first step in a long preparation process leading to the individual placement design. The process starts with the providing the VET teachers the application form.

In case of electronic completion, the VET institute should send a confirmation E-mail to the teacher which contains a copy of the application form. The application form should include the participating teacher's profile:

- educational background: the highest level of education (including the degree received)
- further relevant former studies, certificates in tourism;
- language skills and level (listening, speaking reading, writing);
- the educational activity: taught tourism subjects;
- work experience in tourism
- other practical professional experiences;
- social skills;
- demonstrating the ability of problem solving;

- self-evaluation of competences to be acquired during the placement
- any other relevant information to share.

#### *Responsibilities of the tourism industry*

The hosting company should provide the necessary information to the VET school for possible placement areas. The company ensures the VET school to provide the conditions for the Teacher industry placement. The hosting company placement includes the following information:

- adequate workplace to offer placement and description of the professional working environment;
- the seasonality of work tasks;
- opening hours;
- the provided and recommended work tasks and activities;
- any conditions and benefits provided by the company (in case it is needed eg. accommodation, meals etc.);
- working conditions and work place (are there enough room for an additional employer?)
- any confidential issue;
- human background
  - employees experiences
  - mentoring ability
  - in general the open-minded and friendliness of employees.

The partners should also agree on financing the placement.

### **Task3. Selection**

#### *Responsibilities of VET*

In some cases due to the limited placement options, some selection criteria must be applied.

The VET teachers should fulfil the following selection criteria:

- must be employed (either full-time or part-time) in a VET educational institute or vocational training centre;

- has proper theoretical background in order to be able to systematically process empirical experience;
- has proper methodological background in order to be able to analyse and present the empirical experience;
- is engaged in teaching tourism-related courses;
- has lack of updated tourism work experience;
- the placement should be relevant to his/her area of VET teaching;
- has motivation for challenges and committed to professional training;
- has the ability to adapt to the working environment and new situations that comes up and follow orders and work in groups (team work ability);
- has strong communication skill;
- has positive attitude.

#### *Responsibilities of the tourism industry*

The application and selection is mainly the responsibility of the VET sending institute. The Hosting partner select the mentor and prepare the conditions for the placement.

#### **Task4. Clarifying tasks**

##### *Responsibilities of VET and tourism industry*

Generally the following work conditions should be negotiated and accepted between the VET and industry partner:

- Working hours (work duration, daily-weekly work hours etc.): not the length of working hours but the timing of relevant tasks is crucial here. It is important to choose a time or period when the required skills and competences can be acquired.
- Place of the Industry Placement: it is important to agree a host company that is located at a place the teacher is able to reach. If the placement does not take place at the settlement where the teacher is working, managing and financing commuting is crucial. As an alternative, accommodation for the participating teachers can be offered.

- Safety requirements and other conditions (generally the hosting industry partner provides the necessary equipment if they are needed and they specify the requirements).

## **Task5. Understanding teachers' needs**

### *Responsibilities of VET*

The motivation letter serves as a tool to understand the teacher's need. The application process and form may require the attachment of a motivation letter. This is the responsibility of the sending institute. The motivational letter includes the followings:

- presenting the educational activities – courses thought, skills and competences discussed,
- presenting the professional working experiences with duration and tasks description;
- self-evaluation of missing knowledge skills and competences in one or more of those courses;
- presenting the objectives of teacher industry placement and the motivation to participate in the industry placement;
- presenting the participating teacher's personal and /or professional expectation of the placement program.

First, the assessment of the participating teacher's actual teaching duties are examined in details. Course contents should be reviewed and professional competence areas unfolded. Second, the analysis of professional experiences, both in teaching and in tourism service should be analysed. The aim is to find out, which experiences the teacher already possesses. Third, these experiences should be compared to the required knowledge and competences (as identified in the first step). Matching these two sets of competences will identify the lacking knowledge, competences and skills and enables the planning team to highlight the set of professional experiences that would best deliver these.

### *Responsibilities of the tourism industry*

After the sending institute analysed the teacher's need and its profile, the hosting industry partner should be involved in reviewing the gaps, those competences where there is only academic knowledge but no work experience. By ranking the competences there will be more important than the others which can be addressed when preparing the individual work plan. This ranking should be matched with the actual offer work processes of the industry partners.

### **Task6. Reviewing placement options**

#### *Responsibilities of VET*

Reviewing the placement options is based on the previous assessment of the hosting, industry partners, the available companies involve the identification of the company's characteristics and its professional activities. Understanding industry partners' offer is the other side of the equation. It is their know-how that the teachers experience and learn. Enabling teachers to gain insight into their work processes makes Teacher Industry Placement possible. We have to understand the details of the competences they offer and also when and how they are able to receive placement teachers (in a way that does not disturb everyday work processes).

#### *Responsibilities of the tourism industry*

The availability of the placement scheme should be finalized with the industry partner as a final approval of providing the placement.

### **Task 7. Coordinating placement with everyday life duties**

#### *Responsibilities of VET*

Placement emerges as an additional task. In everyday life there is a certain relation between work and private life. In the optimal case there is balance between the two life-spheres. The individual is able to master challenges and there is no impracticable time/duty tension between the two spheres. Even so, any additional task beyond the normal workflow will place an additional stress on the participant. Even worst, if there is imbalance in normal everyday life. Thus, the placement scheme can only be successful, if the individual receives support to manage everyday and additional challenges. The VET should accept and help the

teachers in the implementation with less or no additional tasks from the school during the placement.

#### *Responsibilities of the tourism industry*

The participating hosting enterprise should be aware of the additional tasks of the VET teacher and help them in successful completion of the Placement. The hosting company should inform their colleagues that a VET teacher will be part of the team members for a certain period. The mentor should help the teacher to integrate and gain as much as he/she can during the placement. The hosting company with the help of the mentor inform the VET teachers about the tasks and requirements.

### **Task 8. Selecting placement option and fine-tuning**

#### *Responsibilities of VET*

In this section, the VET tries to find the optimal industry partner by considering the followings:

- identifying the participating teacher's need and gaps of competences and skills
- assessing the hosting companies and identifying the enterprises profiles and the available placements and finding the optimal enterprise to realize the outcomes for each participating teacher
- selection of the participating teacher to be matched with the optimal enterprise according to the need of the teacher and the profile of the company
- analysing the conflicts stemming from placement in order to avoid possible work-life imbalances
- listing the activities and tasks and the possible outcomes for each participating teacher in order to reach the optimal and tailor-made placement program.

#### *Responsibilities of the tourism industry*

As soon as the hosting company was selected according to the participating teacher's missing competences and professional practices, a mentor will be appointed by the company to coordinate the teacher placement and guide the participating teacher during the placement period. The mentor of the hosting company will be involved into the elaboration of the

individual placement work plan in collaboration with the teacher and the placement coordinator. In this work plan the mentor may propose tasks related to the profile of the company and the seasonality of the operational work processes.

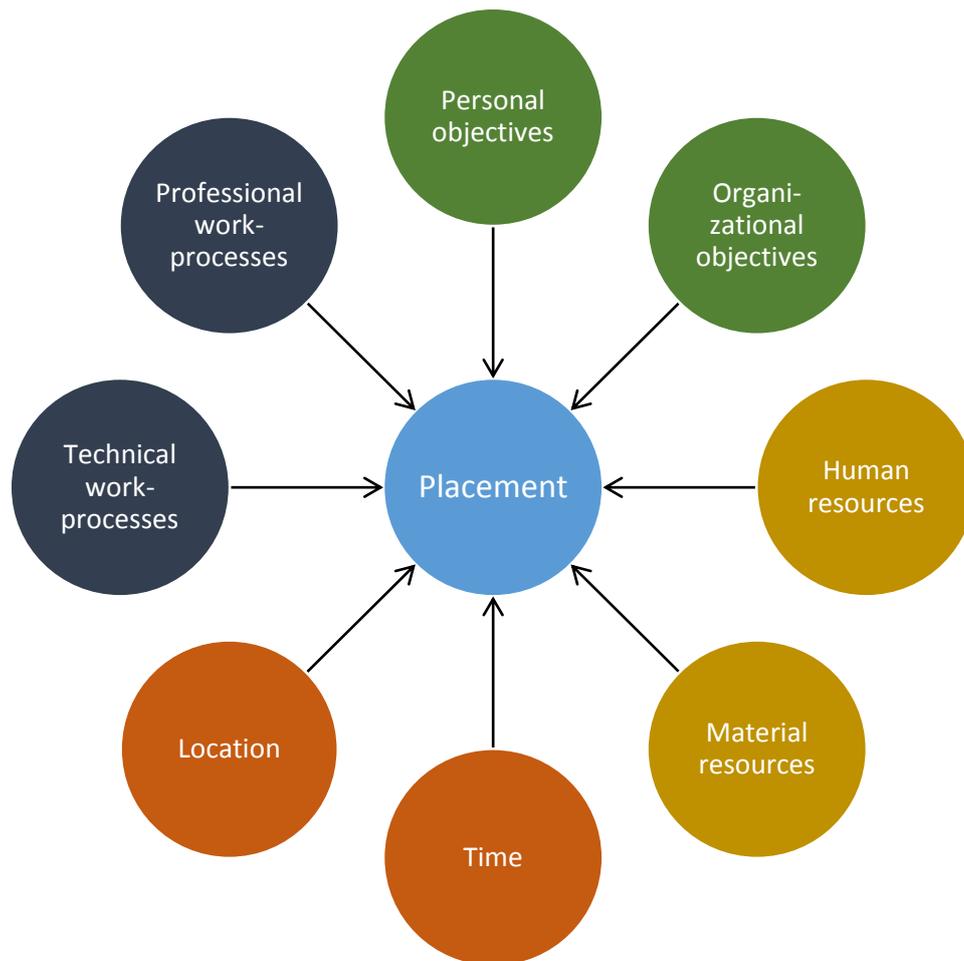
This tailor-made individual work plan should be elaborated with clearly stated learning practical outcomes for the individual needs. This individually elaborated work plan should be accepted by the participating teacher, the educational institutions and the hosting company. This work plan can be attached to the placement agreement.

This ensures and guarantees that all actors are aware of their roles and activities and also the requirements of the teacher industry placement.

The fine tuning involves both the VET and industry partners. The mentor and the VET, Vet teacher should work closely to define the optimal individual placement plan. The fine tuning involves

- the human resources,
- material resources,
- time,
- space,
- technical complexity,
- organizational complexity.

Tuning these factors enables the team to optimally define aims and objectives and develop the most effective and satisfying work plan



## Task 9. Contracting

### *Responsibilities of the VET and tourism industry*

The contracting process takes place after selecting the hosting company and finalizing the previously agreed conditions of the placement between all relevant actors.

The conditions of the placement such as working time, duration, starting dates, hours etc. should be set in advance and approved by both parties in a written form.

The agreement must be signed in advance before the placement starting date by the participating teacher, the hosting company and the VET educational institution. The signature process assumes that all actors are familiar with the contents, such as the timetable, the objectives of the placement, and also agree on the previously set conditions.

A specific agreement has to be written and signed by all partners in order to guarantee the successful involvement of each actor and ensure the maximum benefit from the placement.

This includes the assignments, the rights and obligations of each actor. The following items must be well defined and declared in advance:

- the objective of the placement;
- the involved activities and the results to achieve;
- the working conditions, the schedule and timing – in some cases including the list of tasks, the duration of activities, and the identification of supervisor;
- the means and conditions made available by the company to accomplish the tasks.

### **Task 10. Introduction to the placement location and team**

#### *Responsibilities of the VET*

Before the placement starts, the VET (through placement coordinator) should provide information on the hosting company based on the information received from the mentor, provide the available information resources (web page of the company, any company's materials) and get the contact person of the hosting company, the appointed mentor. In this way the participating teacher will have a chance to get an impression of the company and the working environment before the start of the placement. In this way the participating teacher receives all relevant information on the hosting company and the first days are spent mainly with the on-site familiarization of the working environment.

#### *Responsibilities of the tourism industry*

The hosting enterprise should provide all the necessary information to get familiar with the profile of the company and get an impression of the working environment before the actual work starts.

### **Task 11. Implementing placement**

#### *Responsibilities of the VET*

The lengths of teacher industry placement depends on the type of tasks to be carried out and the amount of time all partners can invest into the scheme. The placement generally takes minimum 2 weeks but will not exceed 1 month in order to best meet the outcomes of the placement. This is however not the actual placement time but the period during which the placement takes place. If the timing of actual presence is well planned, teachers are able

to observe, inquire and understand key processes in a much shorter period of time. It is important to highlight that the aim of this placement is not to build a competence in a workflow but to establish an experience of key workflows. Therefore repeated participation in the same workflow is not necessary in this case. The 2-4 weeks period of placement should be considered as a framework during which all designated workflows will occur and participating teachers will have the opportunity to observe them.

#### *Responsibilities of the tourism industry*

The first day at the hosting company is a familiarizing day with the job environment. The mentor has a key role in providing the relevant and necessary information on the hosting company, and in guiding the participating teacher.

This familiarization includes the followings:

- the mentor explains the company's background, objectives and mission statements;
- introduction to the target groups and products;
- explains the health and safety regulations;
- provides insight into the company's documents, manuals or any management-related documents which are necessary to understand the operation of the hosting company;
- the mentor provides a guided tour of the company's office and facilities;
- introduces the participating teacher to the staff and explain them the objectives of the placement;
- discusses the work plan with the participating teacher, including the timing, the detailed tasks and activities.

### **Task12. Feedback and evaluation**

#### *Responsibilities of the VET*

The VET should provide the Placement report form which the participating teacher should complete on the learning and working experience, including the completed tasks, studied documents, gained competences etc.. It consists of a complex description of the professional activities and the participating teacher's impression and observations during the placement.

The placement report should include the followings:

- describe the completed tasks and activities;
- note down the used resources and information sources;
- collect the professional terminology;
- describe the competences and skills;
- document the studied documents and manuals;
- document the achieved objectives and outcomes.

This Placement Report provides a valuable source for feedbacks and also contributes to the teaching activity and improves its professional content. This Placement Report will be a tool to share the working and learning experiences with other colleagues, as well.

#### *Responsibilities of the tourism industry*

The teacher's participation in the placement provides a good opportunity to increase the tourism industry's understanding of the VET educational activity and contribute to a more practice-oriented teaching.

The hosting company's mentor has a complex role from the very beginning through accomplishing the placement till the final evaluation. Teacher industry placement is typically an event that involves relocation and the temporary restructuring of activities and social contacts. However, it is also an example of an event, where success highly depends on the ability of participants to manage their everyday relations and contacts up to a certain level beside of building new ones. This issue thus may become a critical success factor.

Furthermore placement involves setting up new contacts, building trust, learning into a new culture. In long term sustaining these new relationships would enable the participating teacher to receive information on the management of the hotel and to discuss upcoming professional issues. Consciously facing these new challenges and preparing to meet them certainly helps to achieve the desirable outcome.

# 6

## PROJECT EVALUATION

### EVALUATION AFTER THE PLACEMENT

Once the placement was fully accomplished, the participating teacher, the mentor of the hosting company, the placement coordinator and the representative of the educational institution should meet for a final evaluation of the teacher industry placement.

All aspects and all actors' perspectives of the teacher industry placement can be evaluated in order to improve the quality of the educational activity and the collaboration between the education and the labour market.

The evaluation may involve different actors and take various forms:

- the participating teacher evaluates the placement on the hosting company's assignment,
- the hosting company, the mentor evaluate the placement on the participating student's performance and the placement efficiency
- the educational institute the efficiency and applicability of the learnt and gained experiences in the VET courses and VET education (eg. in which courses are applicable).

The evaluation of the teacher industry placement's activities is recorded in the following documents:

- Final report on the Teacher Industry Placement, elaborated by the participating teacher;

All evaluations – the participating teacher evaluation report on the placement and the hosting company’s report on the participating teacher – should be documented in a written form and must be completed within 4 weeks of completion of the teacher industry placement. This written evaluation forms should be reported to the VET educational institution and also to the hosting company.

## **FINAL REPORT ON THE TEACHER INDUSTRY PLACEMENT**

The participating teacher provides the overall evaluation of the teacher industry placement, describes the professional activities performed, the working environment, the strength and weaknesses of the placement and the overall experiences of the placement.

The elaborated form includes both quantitative and qualitative perspectives in order to provide deeper information and pay more attention on the problems and difficulties related to the teacher placement and highlight the main impressions and experiences from the participating teacher’s consideration.

All in all, the qualitative form provides a deeper understanding and more-detailed interpretation of the needs and satisfactions of both actors during the teacher industry placement.

The participating teacher evaluation must include the followings:

- the participating teacher’s data;
- the hosting company’s data;
- date and duration of the placement;
- description of performed tasks and activities;
- the assessment of the work plan;
- the analysed company’s documents and manuals;
- the acquainted positions, tourism work processes and professional challenges;
- overall assessment of the placement (strength, weaknesses, overall experiences).
- the working up learnt issues and the possibility for using the learnt issues in teaching, outline the contribution to the relevant curriculum or courses in VET school;

- how to share the working and learning experience with other VET teachers in the school
- possible scheme of future collaboration.

## **QUALITY MANAGEMENT**

### *Responsibilities of the VET*

The placement should be considered as an innovative tool for improving the educational activity, to enhance the quality of VET education by providing real-life examples and updated professional information, management processes from the field of tourism. The followings should be planned for ensuring quality during the teacher placement:

- 1) *Contract*: clarify the duties and responsibilities of each actor in a form of a placement agreement.
- 2) *Appointing a placement coordinator*: As it was outlined before, the placement coordinator is responsible for matching the needs of the participating teacher with the hosting company. This coordinator may be an outside expert, or an employee of the VET educational institution. In both cases the placement coordinator has a strong professional network with an updated professional knowledge on the hosting companies' profiles and activities.
- 3) *Final report and evaluation*: Evaluating the hosting company and the benefits and weaknesses of the teacher industry placement.

All evaluations has to follow some methodological rules such as predefined guidelines (questions to be answered), the measuring criteria (the applied scales) should be clarified and understood and the way of interpreting the results.

### *Responsibilities of the tourism industry*

The placement should provide enough opportunity to reach the objectives of the placement such as to provide a professional working environment, to confront the participating teacher with the updated professional challenges, to refer to the former studies and to provide

facilities to acquire new competences and skills during the teacher industry placement. The followings should be planned for ensuring quality during the teacher placement:

- 1) *Contract*: clarify the duties and responsibilities of each actor in a form of a placement agreement.
- 2) *Appointing a mentor*: As it was outlined before, the hosting company should appoint a mentor who is suitable to help, guide and assist the participating teacher and manage his/her operational tasks and activities in order to gain maximum benefit from the placement in the given timeframe. Optimally the mentor has previous experiences dealing with teacher and has wide expertise in the field and has the knowledge to provide further professional resources if that is needed.
- 3) *Evaluation*: Evaluating the participating teacher activity, the individual work plan and overall the teacher industry placement's efficiency.
- 4) *Certificate of completion*: In case of successful completion, the hosting company provides a certificate.