



ELVETE - Employer-Led Vocational Education and Training in Europe

Project number: 539154-LLP-1-2013-1-UK-LEONARDO-LNW
LEONARDO DA VINCI multilateral network
VERBALE Experts Meeting Data 3 Febbraio 2014



Tknika - Spain

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Case study title and focus: Collaboration with companies – TKgune Programme in the Basque Country Region

2) Research and Contextualisation

a) Introduction. Historical approach and state of play

Region: Economic context

The Basque Autonomous Community ranks first in Spain in terms of per capita income, with gross domestic product (GDP) per capita being 40% higher than that of the European Union and 33.8% higher than Spain's average in 2010, at €31,314. Industrial activities were traditionally centred on steel and shipbuilding, mainly due to the rich iron ore resources found during the 19th century around Bilbao. The Estuary of Bilbao was the centre of the Basque Country's industrial revolution during the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. These activities decayed during the economic crisis of the 1970s and 1980s, giving ground for the development of the services sector and new technologies.

Social context

The Basque Country is an autonomous community of northern Spain. It includes the Basque provinces of Álava, Biscay and Gipuzkoa, also called Historical Territories.

The Basque Country or Basque Autonomous Community was granted the status of nationality within Spain, attributed by the Spanish Constitution of 1978. The autonomous community is based on the Statute of Autonomy of the Basque Country, a foundational legal document providing the framework for the development of the Basque people on Spanish soil. There is no official capital, but the city that holds the Basque Parliament and the headquarters of the Basque Government is Vitoria-Gasteiz located in the province of Álava. Bilbao is the largest city, located in the province of Biscay.

The legal jurisdiction of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country should not be confused with the cultural larger Basque Country, the name given to the home of the Basque people, of which it is a component part.

Almost half of the 2,155,546 inhabitants of the Basque Autonomous Community live in Greater Bilbao, Bilbao's metropolitan area.

At 28.2% of the Basque population born outside this region, immigration is crucial to Basque demographics. Over the 20th century most of this immigration came from other parts of Spain, typically from Galicia or Castile and León. Currently, immigration to the Basque country originates abroad, chiefly from South America.

Many societies, including the Basque society, are undergoing considerable changes. The factors involved in this transformation are many: economic, cultural, technological, political, generational and demographic.

Economic factors: In two hundred years Basque society has gone from being a poor rural country to an increasingly urbanised society typical of a capitalist country, with the characteristic clashes between social classes.

Cultural factors: The transformation is very visible in terms of cultural practices and how people enjoy their leisure time both outdoors and in the home (radio, television, DVD, music, Internet...). The differences between rural and city life have lessened, as have class differences.

Technological factors: Technology and technology-based products have made a huge impact on lifestyle

Political factors: The following ideological tendencies are prevalent today: historical Basque nationalism (more or less centre or centre-left leaning), radical left nationalism, Basque-Spanish socialism, conservatism

(adherents are also Spanish patriots) and, lastly, other left-leaning parties which do not consider themselves part of any of these categories.

Generational factors: With greater life expectancy, coupled with social and economic changes, parents are having fewer children and putting more time and energy into their offspring; in addition, children are older when they leave the home.

Social participation

There is a particular tendency in Basque society to take part in organisations and interact with other people. This is palpable in all aspects of Basque society, from business cooperatives to *txokos* (places where people get together to chat, cook, eat, etc.) to the *cuadrillas* (groups of friends who spend their free time together on a regular basis). Despite the fact that Euskadi is a small country, there are a lot of organisations.

Economic tissue and types of industries

Today, the strongest industrial sectors of the Basque Country's economy are machine tool, present in the valleys of Biscay and Gipuzkoa; aeronautics in Vitoria-Gasteiz; and energy, in Bilbao.

The main companies in the Basque Country are: BBVA bank, Iberdrola energy company, Mondragón Cooperative Corporation—MCC, the largest cooperative in the world—Gamesa wind turbine producer and CAF rolling stock producer.

In regards to GDP performance, 2013 was a negative year for the Basque Autonomous Community. It underwent a decline rate in GDP of -1.9%, somewhat lower than the Spanish percentage, -1.2%. In the last term of 2013, the public debt of the Basque Autonomous Community stood at 13.00% of its GDP, totalling 3,753 € per capita, as compared to Spain's overall 93.90%, totalling 20,383 € per capita.

Basque Government's high-ranking officials, as well as Basque-based party leaders and personalities, have protested and voiced their concern for the detrimental effects austerity measures passed by the Spanish Government as of 2011, overruling Basque taxation powers, may be having on industry and trade, especially export.

Employment rates

Euskadi – as the Basque call their region – has also been hit by the crisis. Unemployment along with debt has risen. Nevertheless, comparing numbers, those of the Basque country are far from the average Spanish figures. The Basque unemployment rate reaches 14,5%, whereas the average unemployment in Spain is almost double.

Activity rate (3rd quart. 2014)	57,0%
Unemployment (3rd quart. 2014)	14,5%

b) VET systems, relevant national and local policy or policies

Actors involved in education and training

Vocational Training is a sphere of great importance in the educational system of the Basque Country, its mission being to relate formal and continuous training with the needs of regional industry. Accordingly, it fulfils a key function of furnishing the business fabric with skilled workers.

Initial Vocational Education and Training

In the **Basque Country**, education depends on the Department of Education, Linguistic Policy and Culture. There are 5 Deputy-Ministries under this department. One of them is the Deputy-Ministry for Vocational Education and Training, which has a Directorate for Training and Learning

There are functions which are shared between the Ministry of Education of Spain and the different autonomous education authorities: decisions on educational policies that affect the system as a whole and educational

planning in general.

The advisory body in charge of providing for coordination among the various education authorities is the Sectoral Committee for Education, currently made up of those responsible for education in the different Autonomous Communities and chaired by the Minister of Education.

The General Council on Vocational Education and Training is the consultative coordination body for institutional participation by the public Administrations and the social partners regarding VET policy.

Continuous Vocational Education and Training

The system is regulated by the Royal Decree 395/2007 and managed as a tripartite body by the social partners and the competent administrative departments.

In the Basque Country, there is **Langai**, the Basque Employment Service.

In the case of actions intended primarily for employed workers in the Basque Country there is **Hobetuz**, the Basque Foundation for Continuing Vocational Training.

At the **regional level**, the Autonomous Community has the powers to: a) programme, organize, manage, administer and inspect training for employment in their geographical area; b) authorize and validate the courses organized by partner centres; c) select students in accordance with the established priorities; d) register the partner centres; and e) issue professional certificates.

Actors involved in employment

Employment depends on the Department of Employment and Social Affairs with 3 different Deputy-Ministries. One of them is the Deputy-Ministry for Employment, which has 3 directorates: Directorate for Planning and Innovation in Employment, Directorate for Work and Social Security, Directorate for Social Economy.

Relevant policies about VET

- The VET Strategic Agenda 2015
- The IV Basque VET Plan has recently been approved by the government and passes to be discussed in parliament.

Relevant policies about labour

- Employment Plan 2014-2016
The Plans for Employment are strategic programs of active employment policies implemented by the Department of Employment and Social Affairs of the Basque Government aimed at promoting employment, increase levels of employability and enhance the stability and quality of employment.
- Basque Plan of Active Inclusion
The Basque Insertion Plan is an instrument that collects the lines and guidelines for intervention and action that should guide the activities of the competent authorities to achieve the integration of persons in situations of exclusion.

c) Outline of strategies, projects, programmes etc..

Basque VET Strategic Agenda 2015 - Objectives

1. Development of a new legislative framework
2. Tightening of relations between Professional Training centres and enterprise
3. The strategic core. Professional Training centres. Strategic intelligence and knowledge units.
4. Increasing the capacity for change

5. Establishing the learning models
6. Evolving and strengthening training in alternation
7. Progressing towards the culture of applied innovation in Professional Training
8. Creation of businesses at Professional Training centres
9. Establishing new improvement systems
10. Working with new fields of guidance
11. Supporting and extending the field of internationalisation in Professional Training

d) Evaluation, feedback, reports on success. Advantages and disadvantages

The Basque vocational education and training system has developed a fully co-ordinated and holistic system to ensure high quality, relevant demand-led education and training. Leading the VET developments in Spain, the Basque VET system has a strong focus on demand-led education provision in collaboration between the government, employers and labour unions, monitoring the labour market developments, and the development of the VET qualifications system. There are also well developed collaborative networks that bring together the entire VET sector with both private and public institutions for shared learning and quality assurance system

One of the key elements of the Basque VET system is the dedicated innovation centre TKNIKA (Centre for Innovation for Technological and Vocational Education and Training) that rolls out demand-led innovations throughout the VET sector in both private and public institutions.

TKNIKA represents a world class example of innovation in vocational education. Its knowhow and expertise could find markets overseas, but it faces challenges for future sustainability. Tknika's funding base is fragile because it depends entirely on public funding from the Basque Government.

In order to reduce dependency and to build its capacity Tknika should be encouraged to diversify its funding streams. Possible ways of doing this would involve stronger cost-sharing with the private sector that eventually benefit from the innovations and developing Tknika's knowhow into an export article. The Basque Government could also make efforts to ensure joint learning among the university and the vocational education sector to ensure that the innovative approaches developed by Tknika and other agencies involved in the VET sector would benefit the university system.

Key elements of the Basque VET system

- System co-ordination by a Deputy Ministry for VET.
- Most positions in the ministry are filled by VET professionals, either teachers or college principals.
- The Basque Foundation for Continuing Vocational Training (Hobetuz) that designs strategies to support demand-led vocational education on the basis of collaboration among the employer associations, trade unions and the Basque government.
- The Basque Observatory of Vocational Training that supports the Basque government in the planning of initial, occupational and continuing vocational training; develops and maintains indicators for vocational education; monitors, analyses and evaluates the labour market developments, working conditions as well as the supply and demand of skills.
- Basque Institute of Professional Qualifications and Vocational Training (KEI-VAC) that defines professional modules and modules for transversal skills (communication, ICT, numerical and spatial expression), maintains a modular catalogue of training based on the Basque Country qualifications systems, and proposes new skills and competences to meet the new labour market needs.
- Integral Vocational Education Network that covers all types (initial, occupational and continuous) and institutions of vocational education (state colleges, private colleges with agreements with the government and private colleges) which engage in joint projects and collaboration for example in ICT, entrepreneurship and international mobility.

Basque Agency for the Assessment of Vocational Training Quality and Skills.

3) Case study

3.1 Description of the project/programme:

Tkgune is a Network of VET Centres for the Innovation, Technology Transfer and Competitive Development of Companies. It aims at implementing and improving their technologies. Tkgune has designed a specialized offer which includes advanced training and value-added technical services in the field of RDI, Tkgune wants to develop innovation dynamics and to improve the key processes and products of SMEs, helping them to access emerging and high value-added markets.

3.2 Outline of guideline model

Tkgune is a Network of Vocational Training Centres which offers all its facilities and advanced knowledge to the companies.

Type of actions:

Tkgune is divided into four Strategic Areas, covering the following technology fields:

- Rail Transport
- Energy
- Automotive
- Manufacturing (ASMAOLA +)

Type of services:

- Technical services for innovation and improvement
- Advanced training
- Innovation plans
- Grant management
- Creativity

Establishments involved:

- Public and subsidized VET centres of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, in collaboration with the Basque Government, are the ones involved in Tkgune.

3.3 Preconditions for success: advantages and disadvantages.

Taking part in this programme brings **several advantages**:

- VET institutions have a close knowledge of the needs and problems of SMEs
- You may increase your competitiveness.
- You can get technical support
- You can access new methodologies
- You receive training and support
- Your innovation processes and the ability to generate products and services will be increased

3.4 Evaluation and impact. Define indicators

- Number of participating companies
- Number of projects.

3.5 Interviews

3.5.1 Companies involved:

Company 1

Name of company: PIXEL SISTEMAS SL

Type of activity: CAD-CAM and 3D printers

Status: public/private: Private
Size: 10
Level of education targeted: students of 4th-5th grade (17-19)
Website: <http://www.pixelsistemas.com/>
Contact person and role: Amadeo Corrius / Company manager
Email address: acorrius@pixelsistemas.com

Company 2

Name of company: AIC-Automotive Intelligence Centre
Type of activity: Research Centre for Automotion
Status: public/private: Private
Size: 400
Level of education targeted: students of 4th-5th grade (17-19)
Website: <http://aicenter.eu/ing/index.aspx>
Contact person and role: Ana de la hoz / Responsible for program development
Email address: a.delahoz@aicenter.eu

Company 3

Name of company: TRIESA COMUNICACIONES S.L.
Type of activity: Telecommunications systems
Status: public/private: Private
Size: 16
Level of education targeted: students of 4th-5th grade (17-19)
Website: <http://triesacomunicaciones.com/>
Contact person and role: Roberto Zubia/ Company manager
Email address: roberto.zubia@triesacomunicaciones.com

Company 4

Name of company: ZIGOR CORPORACION
Type of activity: Renewable energy
Status: public/private: Private
Size: ??
Level of education targeted: students of 4th-5th grade (17-19)
Website: <http://www.zigor.com/eu/>
Contact person and role: Javier Ramirez / Company manager
Email address: jramirez@zigor.com

3.5.2 Content of the interviews

Company 1

General introduction:

In this case the company is PIXEL SISTEMAS SL. Is one of the pioneers in the introduction of CAD-CAM software and the 3D printers in Basque Country.
We chose this company because it has a very close relationship with a lot of VET Schools of Basque Country.
The interview was done first by internet with a form online and finally was completed with a personal conversation.

Information on the implementation of the selected programme/project (ASL for Fòrema) in the four companies:

They say that they have collaborate with VET Schools with these actions:

- Assignment of resources (Software and 3D printers) to the VET schools.
- Assignment of resources (classrooms) from the VET schools to the company.

- Impartation of a lecture or course to the teachers of the schools.
- The joint development of project or product

Relationship company-training agency/VET provider and management of incoming students:

Joint design/planning of training path:

Implementation: relations company-VET provider during project implementation

They say that it is the VET schools who usually ask to the company to collaborate with this company because their products are usually very expensive and the VET schools try to have this products cheaper or free. Their relationship starts speaking with some of the teachers of the school but at the end they usually sign an agreement with the management of VET school.

SWOT Analysis:

They don't describe any analysis in this field.

- **Evaluate the process from 1 to 6, being one totally unsatisfied and 6 completely satisfied (we decided to use 6 marks in order to be able collocate the perceived quality in a positive or negative evaluation)**

1 2 3 4 5 **6**

Students' Skills:

The students don't take part directly in this collaboration project.

Cooperation company-VET institute/training agency on other projects/initiatives:

They collaborate too with VET schools with the internship programme.

Key messages and recommendations:

-Today is very important to have a close relationship between the VET schools and the companies. This is a WIN-WIN relationship.

Company 2

3.5.2 Content of the interviews

General introduction:

In this case the company is AIC-Automotive Intelligence Centre. This is a Research Centre for the automotive sector based on a concept of open innovation in which companies improve their competitiveness through cooperation. Using a market-oriented approach, AIC integrates knowledge, technology and industrial development under one umbrella. The Center seeks to attract multidisciplinary businesses and projects and highly qualified professionals. AIC-Automotive Intelligence Center is managed by ACICAE-Basque Country Automotive Cluster and is located in Bilbao (Amorebieta-Etxano and Ermua).

We chose this company because it has a very close relationship between Tknika and AIC-Automotive Intelligence Centre and from this relationship they have done a lot of collaborations with some VET Schools.

The interview was done first by internet with a form online and finally was completed with a personal conversation.

Information on the implementation of the selected programme/project (ASL for Fòrema) in the four companies:

They say that they have collaborated with VET Schools in these actions:

- Assignment of resources (classrooms) from the VET schools to the company.
- Impartation of a lecture or course to the workers of the company.
- The joint development of project or product

Relationship company-training agency/VET provider and management of incoming students:

Joint design/planning of training path:

Implementation: relations company-VET provider during project implementation

They say that sometimes it is the VET schools who ask the company to collaborate and sometimes is the opposite. Sometimes they ask to Tknika to find a VET School that is ready to collaborate depending of the field of the project. Then they usually sign an agreement with the VET school.

SWOT Analysis:

They don't describe any analysis in this field.

- **Evaluate the process from 1 to 6, being one totally unsatisfied and 6 completely satisfied (we decided to use 6 marks in order to be able collocate the perceived quality in a positive or negative evaluation)**

1 2 3 4 5 **6**

Students' Skills:

The students don't usually take part directly in this collaboration project.

Cooperation company-VET institute/training agency on other projects/initiatives:

They collaborate too with VET schools with the internship programme.

Key messages and recommendations:

- They think that these types of collaborations are very important because the VET schools can directly see the needs of this sector and integrate it in their curriculum.

Company 3

3.5.2 Content of the interviews

General introduction:

In this case the company is TRIESA COMUNICACIONES S.L.. This company is dedicated to the design, installation and maintenance of telecommunications systems. They develop projects both broadcast signal transport for the whole Spanish geography.

We chose this company because it has a very close relationship with some VET Schools of Basque Country.

The interview was done first by internet with a form online and finally was completed with a face to face conversation.

Information on the implementation of the selected programme/project (ASL for Fòrema) in the four companies:

They say that they have collaborate with VET Schools with these actions:

- Assignment of resources (technical equipment) to the VET schools.
- Assignment of resources (classrooms) from the VET schools to the company.

Relationship company-training agency/VET provider and management of incoming students:

Joint design/planning of training path:

Implementation: relations company-VET provider during project implementation

They say that it is the VET schools who usually ask to the company to collaborate with this company because their products are usually very expensive and the VET schools try to have this products cheaper or free.

SWOT Analysis:

They don't describe any analysis in this field.

- **Evaluate the process from 1 to 6, being one totally unsatisfied and 6 completely satisfied (we decided to use 6 marks in order to be able collocate the perceived quality in a positive or negative evaluation)**

1 2 3 4 5 **6**

Students' Skills:

This company describes that in its opinion the students' technical and transversal skills are well worked in the schools. However they think that the students should be more competent in foreign languages and in digital skills.

Cooperation company-VET school/training agency on other projects/initiatives:

They collaborate too with VET schools with the internship programme.

Key messages and recommendations:

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Company 4

3.5.2 Content of the interviews

General introduction:

In this case the company is ZIGOR CORPORACION. Its main activity is based on the Design, Manufacture and Marketing of Energy Conversion Systems, Customized Electronic Solutions Development and Renewable Energy.

We chose this company because it has a very close relationship with some VET Schools of Basque Country.

The interview was done first by internet with a form online and finally was completed with a face to face conversation.

Information on the implementation of the selected programme/project (ASL for Fòrema) in the four companies:

They say that they have collaborate with VET Schools with these actions:

- Assignment of resources (technical equipment) to the VET schools.
- Assignment of resources (classrooms and technical equipment) from the VET schools to the company.
- Impartation of a lecture or course to the teachers of the schools.
- The training of workers of the company in the school.

Relationship company-training agency/VET provider and management of incoming students:

Joint design/planning of training path:

Implementation: relations company-VET provider during project implementation

They say that sometimes it is the VET schools who ask the company to collaborate and sometimes is the opposite.

SWOT Analysis:

They don't describe any analysis in this field.

- **Evaluate the process from 1 to 6, being one totally unsatisfied and 6 completely satisfied (we decided to use 6 marks in order to be able collocate the perceived quality in a positive or negative evaluation)**

1 2 3 4 5 **6**

Students' Skills:

The students don't usually take part directly in this collaboration project.

Cooperation company-VET institute/training agency on other projects/initiatives:

They collaborate with VET schools regarding the internship programme too.

Key messages and recommendations:

-They think that this collaboration allows interacting with potential workers / employees for future needs.