

INTERNATIONALIZATION CONSULTING (INCO)

Description

A consortium of eight international partners from seven countries was formed, working together on a pilot project in the field of internationalization consulting. This project, called INCO is co-funded by the European Commission under the Leonardo da Vinci programme. The project team has decided for a pilot project with the aim of developing new learning and teaching materials and test and disseminate the new learning and teaching methods.

The background of this project is the tendency of increasing foreign trade in the European countries. Imagining the last expansion of the European Union, new countries joined leading to the opening of new markets. Foreign trade is necessary for being a successful economic nation. Competition is constantly more severe and increasing.

The European economies to a large extent consist of small and medium sized enterprises (SME). These enterprises have to develop strategies to enter new foreign markets to remain competitive. It is imperative to be well informed about new markets, as well as to arrange their activities abroad. In this case, economic specialist e.g. management consultants with the appropriate knowledge can help.

The current situation exhibits opportunities for improvement. Consultants have to know their clients' foreign activities, have to see the chances and risks of international competitiveness and have to develop the strategies for market entry. In the context of our project a new curriculum for "Internationalization Consulting" will be developed to get this specific knowledge.



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci



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Our target groups are:

1. Management consultants and their clients (SME): These are mainly small and medium sized consulting companies with the main focus on internationalization. The combination of their experience of many years with this new additional skill will result in a high quality product. Above all older persons have the possibility to acquire additional skills and meet the new demands more easily. It is a chance to newly define their core competences or create a new job description.
2. Employees in companies (SME), who are engaged in foreign trade (division of export) and topics of internationalization. With the attendance of the new course their qualification can be increased and their position in the company improved.
3. University graduates, who are interested in a job in internationalization consulting and therefore need to improve their knowledge in this subject field. In general educational systems there are basic courses for consultants but without specialization on internationalization.

The results of Internationalization Consulting should be:

1. The development of the new curriculum for "Internationalization Consultants". The innovation will be the combination of different teaching and learning methods e.g.
 - blended learning methods
 - seminars on special topics and
 - self instruction
2. Implementation concept: First a test run (prototype/pilot) will be carried out. The new curriculum shall be implemented and disseminated in the countries of our cooperation partners and in future in all European countries. Other companies and educational institutions are sought for cooperation and carrying out the new certified curriculum.

Development of a virtual platform for networking and information transfer for the members of this project, companies involved in this subject matter and educational institutions is a striking feature of the ongoing project. In the course of this endeavour the cooperation partners form a consortium which will be responsible for the certification and the qualification standard. An internationally standardised training will help to create the same level of qualification in different countries. The consortium selects the business partners, which are allowed to offer the new training under their own name and account but will be charged a licence fee. The project team is engaged in this pilot project to promote and reinforce the contribution of vocational training of the process of innovation with the priority new forms of learning and teaching and basic skills in vocational and educational training (VET).

The project's goal implies the importance, that through the planned action particularly older persons, who already act as internal or external consultants, have the chance to acquire additional qualification which enables them to react efficient and flexible to international challenges in their occupational area. They can design their own process of development actively. Directly for persons with longer experience, this training is a chance, to qualify further and convince their clients about their competence and quality of work.

In addition to that management consultants can acquire new core competences and define a new job description. In particular in countries that joined the European Union in May 2004, an increase in the number of management consultants can be expected. Regarding the available members in existing alliances (e.g.: chamber of commerce) this occupational group is steadily growing. The proposed training will support companies, who decide to work together with management consultants in their decision-making process. An internationally standardised training will create a common level of quality in the involved countries.

Companies who use the services of internationalisation consultants will get more competitive and network over the know-how-platform with training institutions (e.g. Universities of Applied Sciences, Universities, and internationally acting companies). Using the knowledge of an Internationalization Consultant companies will be more sensible to the topic of Internationalization and competitiveness will be increased.

Graduates of Universities have an additional qualification to their basic education and increase their chance to get a better job. Graduates should be prepared to international activities in the consulting area.

The innovative training concept of "Internationalization Consulting" should be a broad modern Blended Learning concept. Methods like self-directed learning, face to face trainings, project-oriented methods, E-Learning, individual coaching and learning of experiences shall be combined. In the context of the pilot project the new training will be executed in one country (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic or in Austria). The main focus of the project is the development of a curriculum, which can be applied in different countries. For that reason the English language is used, to enable an international application. That means that all participants have to know English on the level of high school education. In the course of the project (survey, execution of the test run) the content of the training will be clarified and evaluated, to find out, if the training is equal in all countries or if any specific adaptations are necessary in the different countries.

New products in response to existing problems:

The current situation shows that companies have to revise their opinion about new markets to see them as chance and not as a risk. Due to a lack of experience and knowledge they cannot go ahead target oriented and therefore need qualified internationalization consultants to expand internal resources and know-how. These consultants support companies in their strategic reorientation and in their operational implementation of new strategies.

As already mentioned above, there is no training for consultants, where the knowledge of internationalization is imparted. The planned curriculum delivers the required knowledge and makes an efficient consulting for SMEs possible. The consultants can improve their standing in the market with the new training and increase their competitiveness.

New forms of co-operation/networking between partner organisations:

It is important to mention the significance of the common development of the curriculum, the methods and tools between the University of Applied Science, Universities, consulting companies and end-users. The results will be a mixture of scientific approaches and practical experiences. Furthermore the establishment of the consortium for INCO will create the base for interaction between consultants. So far network strategies for consultants do not exist in the intended way.

The networking model combines two levels:

- networking of consultants of different countries in the context of a virtual platform
- networking of competent partner institutions for the development and maintenance of an adequate standard

The graduates of the training have the possibility to exchange their knowledge within the scope of the knowledge-platform, they can analyse actual projects and cooperate in questions of internationalization. Intensive support, during and after the training, is the key factor to success for the network. The training staffs are involved in the support service of the clients during and after the training and this is also decisive for the success of networking activities.

The project team and other interested institutions execute common activities to ensure a common standardized quality of internationalization consulting. This platform is responsible for a permanent quality evaluation (e.g. if there are political or economic changes). Therefore the training will be adapted to new challenges so the graduates profit from actual scientific and economic knowledge.

The Consortium

FH JOANNEUM

We are one of Austria's leading Universities of Applied Sciences. In order to maintain and consolidate this status, both our teaching and our applied research and development is modelled on the best colleges and universities in Europe. The varied study programmes on offer at FH JOANNEUM are geared towards the scientific, social, and economic developments of the future. Our didactic philosophy promotes teamwork, work in small groups, the use of modern media, and, most importantly, a spirit of partnership and cooperation between motivated students and teachers with hands-on experience in their field.

bit management

bit management consults and supports companies, public institutions and individuals to help them expand their Know-how and to acquire essential key qualifications, in order to strengthen their market position. We accompany our customers personally along a path customised to their individual requirements; from analysis to implementation and concluding evaluation. We offer individual and timely development concepts based on proven, internationally recognised methods and long-term experience. They are implemented together with our team of expert and committed trainers and consultants, in close cooperation with our customers, using state of the art technology. Our guiding principle is always a high regard for people and knowledge of the awesome power of learning.

IQ Consulting

The Integrated Quality Organizational Development and Consulting Kft, or IQ Consulting in the abbreviated form, was established in 1994, then to carry out primarily Organizational Development projects as well as top managers' consultation connected to these projects. We have created a flexible, internationally competent consulting company, the power of which lies in its strategic alliances both in Hungary and abroad as well as in integrating traditional and the most up-to-date methods in order to create value.

DIDAGROUP S.p.A.

Didagroup is a leading company in the Italian corporative training market, now expanding in the Spanish tongue market, which has a strong experience on the application of technology for distance learning and the design and development of LMS (learning management systems), WBT (web-based training) and collaborative tools for learn & work (e.g. virtual classrooms) according to international standards of training and quality. DIDAGROUP is based in Rome (Italy) and has 4 regional offices in Italy and 1 in Barcelona (Spain).

Dom Współpracy Polsko-Niemieckiej

The House for Polish-German Co-operation (HPGC) is a non-profit non-governmental organisation, a union of associations gathering a number of Polish and German non-profit organisations and institutions. The House derives its existence from the German Friedrich-Ebert Foundation that was active in the region of Upper Silesia since 1992 until the end of 1997. Aiming at constituting the Polish-German cooperation on partnership basis, German and Polish partners decided to found a bilateral, Polish-German organisation.

Euromed Marseille

Since 2002, Euromed Marseille has adopted a development strategy for which the rapidity and ambition are unparalleled in Europe. This, with a single objective in mind: to offer our students the best possible employment prospective in an increasingly complex and uncertain economic environment. The school has acquired the means and enrolled the personnel required in order to position itself as one of the top management schools.

Hasch & Partner

Hasch & Partner, a law firm with offices in Vienna, Linz, Graz, Prague and Ceske Budejovice has extensive experience in the establishment and operation of business and joint ventures in eastern Europe, particularly in the Czech Republic. The primary goal of Hasch & Partner is to offer its clients optimum service and to achieve the desired result while maintaining cost transparency. In particular, the legal team at Hasch & Partner has expertise in general commercial law, banking and financing, liquidation and reorganisation, international distribution law, property transactions, mergers and acquisitions, intellectual property and unfair competition.

Stockholm University

Stockholm University School of Business is one of the top Nordic business schools. Our primary function is to train the skilled managers, administrators and specialists of the future. We are constantly striving to develop the learning process, with an emphasis on creative thinking and critical reasoning. The School has been awarded the highly acclaimed EQUIS accreditation for educational quality, internationalization and co-operation with the business community.

Further Information is available at: <http://www.fh-joanneum.at/inco>