



Virtual Training Centre for Shoe Design

Progress Report

Public Part

Project information

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Executive Summary

The main **reason** for the VTC-Shoe project proposal comes up to the changing needs in training in terms of both quantity and quality. In order to foster use of information and communications technologies in their national footwear industry, the VTC-Shoe partners engage a common challenge to support quality improvements in vocational education and training systems, by focusing on the development of innovation and good practice. The **aim** of the project is to implement shoe design training content into a virtually designed and served training centre which is accessible over internet, and thus, e-learning can be realised as an innovation in this field.

The **objectives** of the project are: 1) Setting up a functional training centre in a virtual space in order both to develop training services for lifelong learning and to share good practice in shoe design; 2) Adapting the collected materials so as to enhance the new curriculum (up to intermediate level) satisfying the requirements in a modern and innovative e-learning content; 3) Helping to improve and upgrade competences and skills of the VET colleges and schools training staff and exchange experiences over the virtual training centre; 4) Enabling the participating partners to extend the common educational qualifications of shoe design technologies, the accreditation of the skills and knowledge of shoe design techniques acquired within the network created between partner institutions.

Virtual Training Centre for Shoe Design is on the internet to supply training for shoe design. The equipment, methods, curriculum and techniques currently used in shoe design training by partners have been observed, collected and evaluated. The selected materials have been used to create a new and efficient curriculum at basic and intermediate level. This curriculum is the core of target virtual training activity.

According to this curriculum, an interactive teaching program is to be developed and put into a website to form a virtual training centre. Users can have access to the training website and see the newsletter, a bulletin board, online surveys and survey reports, information on VET networks, an electronic library with references, a bookshop with downloadable publications and a number of databases.

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1. Project Objectives

The overall and specific aims of the projects have been set up under the rationale increasing the Footwear sector competitively by orientating the needs for training in shoe design to an e-learning content development, providing lifelong learning and continuing education opportunities. ICT-related skills in the shoe design are also vital for the competitiveness of the footwear sector from and for increased job opportunities and employment.

The specific objectives are as follows:

1. The project aims to contribute to the development of quality lifelong learning and to promote high performance, innovation and a European dimension in system and practice in the field: VTC-Shoe project intends to improve vocational and educational training curricula on shoe design in Romania, Turkey and Greece by focusing on the development of innovation and good practice. The results of partners' common developments are to be transposed into a virtual centre, making it available on European level. By accessing the new created shoe design training course, trainers and teachers, shoe designers, adult learners, as well as trainees and apprentice can keep up to date with skills and knowledge necessary for high performance and innovation, both in training and shoe design. Based on availability into virtual common space of the innovative e-learning materials and training methodologies training materials, the project can make its contribution to development of single European information space.
2. To help promote creativity, competitiveness, employability and the growth of an entrepreneurial spirit: In a world increasingly based on knowledge and information, education and training are put at the core of the European footwear industry agenda. The footwear companies need to make learning a lifelong endeavour deal with their **employees** of all ages continuously developing their skills. By creating a new e-learning content and functional web service the Virtual Training Centre for Shoe Design will help both workers and footwear companies transforming the way they learn, interact and work in order to meet the footwear sector needs for competitiveness, employability and the growth of an entrepreneurial spirit.
3. To support the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice for lifelong learning: ICT-related skills in the shoe design are also vital for the competitiveness of the footwear sector from and for increased job opportunities and employment. The concrete aim of the project is to **develop a modern virtual training centre in shoe design** for: 1) training the trainers, trainees at the college and technicians and apprentices for shoe design, 2) preparing shoe design technicians as intermediates having common measurable qualities the industry is seeking. VTC-Shoe project will create a common ICT-based content and will help for upgrading competences and skills of teaching staff and exchange experiences over the virtual training centre.
4. To support improvements in quality and innovation in vocational education and training system, institution and practices: This can be achieved through improving the qualifications and competences of the trainees in this field and it is directly related to the well-designed and programmed curriculum to be carried out on shoe design. In addition, considering that education is a dynamic process, it will be possible through this project, through its dynamic and continuous characteristics, to improve the quality of vocational and technical education, and accession to vocational training will be carried out.

2. Project Approach

Through the educational programme and new teaching methods to be developed by implementing shoe design training content into a virtually designed and served training centre which is accessible over internet, e-learning are realised as an innovation in this field. The project is to promote and reinforce the contribution of vocational training to the process of innovation through the virtual training centre to be formed in this field and its application as a new and good example for virtual learning in national vocational training systems. Appropriate training/learning materials, including for less qualified workers, to improve skills can create and new e-learning tools for training.

In order to strengthen and ensure that the project results can be used as regards the target groups, target sectors and potential users, WP 2 (Developing Database for Team Members of Target Sectors and Groups) play an important role. This interactive software for shoe design training based on new common curriculum is served on web. The log files enable us to trace which of the expected users are logging on to the site. The obtained results are classified and compared to the expected usage levels and the users can be encouraged and promoted to take part in dissemination.

The strategy of methodology and decision on the content development phases can be determined based on the common curriculum obtained in WP3. Thus, the stages to form the content of VTC (Virtual Training Centre) need to: 1) consider the identified and approved training needs /new qualification needs addressed by the common curriculum designed in WP3, 2) consider the possible future developments. The content is based on the operability and comparability of the training program. Satisfaction of the target groups is of another concern. The responsible partners for this work package can concentrate on the common curriculum produced in WP3. As well as that, the results drawn up from the conference at the end of WP3 can be also a great asset for the content development stage. As well as those, the partners can provide appropriate pedagogical experts from their organisations to conduct and conclude the pedagogical approaches to the content.

This VTC-Shoe is a kind of library that contains a collection of training material presented in many formats; documents, demonstrations, recorded lectures, and hands-on labs. The VTC contents can be searched, reviewed all content of each type, or filtered the content by a topic of interest. When one finds something that interests him or her, he/she clicks the link to access the content.

The results of the project can be used initially at the shoe design training centres of the partners. This also enables target groups, target sectors and potential users to be aware of the results. Through the organisations for which they are members, this valorisation is expected to be realised. Furthermore, some activities given in WP7 (Valorisation) ensure the project result to be used fully. It is important to set up a testing course as piloting to prepare and devise appropriate procedures that will allow testing of both trainees and trainers of the VTC (Virtual Training Centre) system including all different components, with different types and levels. In addition, to prepare computer equipment, install and test is another integral part of this stage. To instruct the end-users of new system (trainees / trainers) concerning system features and capabilities will help to disseminate the VTC (Virtual Training Centre). Actual β -tests of the VTC (Virtual Training Centre) system, tool utilization and testing will also provide valuable feedback to developers.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

Electronic or paper-based products/ output / results

The main products of the project are as follows:

A- Electronic Products:

- 1- Communication Website: <http://www.virtual-shoedesign.com>



B- Publications:

- 1- Common curriculum for shoe design training in English
- 2- Address Booklet of the shoe related firms and organisations in the partner countries
- 3- Country reports for Romania, Turkey and Greece

C- Articles Published for Valorisation:

- 1- Virtual Training centre for Shoe Design: A Sample of Virtual Training Environment. Paper published and presented at the international Conference (INTED 2008), Valencia, Spain. ISBN: 978-84-612-0190-7
- 2- Paper published and presented at The 5th International Seminar on Quality Management in Higher Education.
- 3- The Virtual training centre for Shoe Design (VTC-SHOE): A Multilateral Virtual Training Model Based on a Common Curriculum. Paper published and presented at The 3rd International Conference on Virtual Learning (ICVL 2008), Constanta, Romania. ISSN: 1842-4708.
- 4- A Multilateral Virtual Training Model: The Virtual Training Centre for Shoe Design (VTC-SHOE). Paper published and presented at the International Conference (ICERI 2008), Madrid, Spain. ISBN: 978-84-612-5091-2.

4. Partnerships

This partnership consists of one partner from Romania “Gh. Asachi” Technical University of Iasi (Footwear Technology Department and Centre for Training and Continuing Education) as P1 and applicant of the proposal, one partner from Turkey (Technical Science College of Selcuk University) as P2 and the coordinator and CAD Laboratory of the Technical University of Crete as partner P3. This partnership aims at cooperating in developing and improving the common training module in shoe design over a Virtual Training Centre

The project consortium has been set up based on the partners' national and European acknowledgment in training and research. The partnership comprises of members both from the training sectors with strong support from the Governing bodies of each country. This can produce a strong partnership with knowledge and information on the requirements for training and the industry. Thus, through the support of the Governing bodies, the partnership can achieve the successful implementation of the project together with support in the valorisation and accreditation activities. Through dissemination seminars and conferences, a number of colleges and/or SMEs either can start pilot using the methods or join the consortium as users. Through participation in national and international Conferences, training institutions and other key players can show active interest in acquiring and using this distance learning module.

Gh. Asachi” Technical University of Iasi (P1), the promoter of the project is responsible for financial reporting to the Commission agency. All the activities will be carried out under the coordination of the Technical Science College of Selcuk University (P2) as the project coordinator, in line with the policies determined in collaboration with the other partners. Technical Science College of Selcuk University, the project coordinator, has been carrying out a number of projects at national and international levels in various fields of education.

This partnership dwells on the cooperation with the partners and the affiliated sectors in Turkey, Greece and Romania, all partners having necessary skills, knowledge, expertise and experience of the organisation in transnational cooperation. They are already involved in many transnational projects.

5. Plans for the Future

Each project partner understands the dissemination and valorisation not merely as a duty but also as a possible resource for further activities. Thus, a special emphasis is given for perfect valorisation activities in order to assist the utilisation of the project outcomes in the follow-up phase. Valorisation is considered as an integral part of the whole project as a continuous activity. It starts within the partners and extended to national and European level.

In the long term, trainers will broaden their training ability by means of communication over virtual training centre; trainees and apprentices will have better employment opportunities in their countries and especially in other partnering countries; technicians will be a subject to life long learning and e-learning as a member of modern society; shoe designers will be more creative by contributing their creative feedbacks.

As target sectors, educational institutions will need to modify their existing training methods and techniques in the light of the new curriculum, and distance learning approach will provide them with a better, cost-effective training, which would have been impossible without high cost, numerous staff and workshops. Shoe manufacturers will be able to customise their training content according to their own training requirements, which may differ from one manufacturer to another.

As potential users, the training organisations, the Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, and the universities, colleges, vocational schools, training centres will be able to increase easily the number of trainees and in this way they will contribute to the employment.

When the financial support of the European Union has been used up, works on the project will be continued depending on the budget to be allocated by partners.

The results of the project can be transferred to similar fields such as furniture, textile, air conditioning etc. The experiences and knowledge gained during the process of this project can be used in developing and improving other training programmes in particular in the area of new information technology applications in related sectors. The final form of the training programme will be publicised on the co-ordinating organisations' website. In addition, through meetings, workshops and conferences and seminars to be held with the related institutions, the results will be introduced to other sectors. As this type of learning is virtual and based on distance learning, it will be possible to have access in all geographical contexts.

6. Contribution to EU policies

As this project contributes to e-learning by providing new training tools, it will create new job opportunities for the individuals in partner countries and thus this will contribute to employment exchange in EU. These activities are inline with European strategies for vocational training. As emphasised at LEARNTEC 2005 (Karlsruher Messe- und Kongress-GmbH, Tuesday 02nd of November 2004), "E-Learning has become indispensable for corporate training, but the fascination of SMEs for web-based learning is still quite limited. Further education and training figures rarely on the priority list, and in most of the cases, a training department does not even exist."

1- The project is in accord with the Lisbon Education & Training Progress Indicators

a) Teachers and Trainers Age distribution of teachers together with upper and lower retirement age: The internet based platform within the VTC-Shoe project offers to trainers/teachers the possibility for continuing development of their skills and competences. The innovative solutions for training in shoe design as well as the innovative pedagogical methodologies will keep them up to date with the new technologies in order to have a longer active professional life.

b) Lisbon Key Competences Digital competences: The Virtual Training Centre for Shoe Design uses powerful and valuable eLearning tools. Its impact on vocational training in both academic and industrial environments will be very significant and beneficial. The project will promote and reinforce the contribution of vocational training to the process of innovation through the virtual training centre to be formed in this field and its application will set up a new and good example for virtual learning in national vocational training systems. Appropriate training/learning materials, including for less qualified workers, to improve skills will be create and new e-learning tools for training and quality management in VET will be develop.

2- The project is in accord with the LLP Horizontal policies: LLP Horizontal policies promoting equality between men and women and contributing to combating all forms of discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation contributing to combating all forms of discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation

Within the shoe industry, the majority of workers are women and account for about 40% to 50% of all employees. Our project will open new training opportunities for women. However, the e-learning shoe design course developed within the Virtual Training Centre is an equal opportunities course, combating all forms of discrimination based on sex and will be open to both man and women.

3- The project is in accord with the Complementarities with other policies in terms of Employment: One of the major problems of the footwear industry at the moment is that the overall level of skills and qualifications needs to be raised and, therefore, it is also necessary for training modules to respond to the continuous evolution in the workplace so as to confront the problem of unemployment and increased competition. VTC-Shoe project proposal comes up to the changing needs in training, in terms of both quantity and quality, designed for promoting employment on the footwear industry. Training materials offered by the VTC-Shoe internet platform will help both unemployed people to find a job in footwear companies, and worker to up to date their skill for getting a better position.

