

1 ABOUT SME-TRAINET

Promoting and supporting entrepreneurship and SMEs is a political priority in all European member states. However, the training and support European entrepreneurs usually get is mainly focused on initial aid during their first steps into entrepreneurship. Despite the initial support founders of new businesses get at the beginning, many of them do not survive their third year of business operations. This is due to the fact that no structured and holistic support is provided to still young but already established SMEs whose businesses develop successfully and would have the potential of growth, but whose owners are not sufficiently capable of managing this sudden growth and the problems and challenges it brings about. This is especially the case for enterprises in the crafts as well as in the services sector.

SME-TraiNet is a stakeholder network that tackles this problem by fostering the dialogue between European young businesses/ SMEs operating in the crafts and services sector, and European guidance and training providers in order to improve the current training and support structures to the target group of young businesses and SMEs.

2 OUR WORK

The activities carried out by SME-TraiNet are research, national workshops (including working groups) and international conferences at European level.

1. Research on current training and support structures for young businesses in the participating countries in order to determine good practice in training and support as well as current trends and needs of SMEs/ young businesses operating in the crafts and services sector
2. Two workshops (based on the results of the research) per participating partner country, with the purpose to discuss identified good practice examples with national experts and to develop strategies how these could be spread around the country. Furthermore, identified current and emerging needs will be discussed in especially established working groups and solutions will be developed to cope with these.
3. Two international conferences in which all network partners as well as other relevant stakeholders will participate. The conferences will represent a platform to raise awareness at the political level and to discuss and exchange the results of the national workshops and working groups at European level

3 EXPECTED IMPACT

- Improvement of transparency and comparability of the available training and support structures for SMEs/ young businesses at national and at European level.
- Transfer of good practice at national and at European level.
- Encouragement of VET and guidance providers to adapt their offer according to the real sector-specific needs of SMEs.
- SMEs get suitable training and support tailored to their needs.
- Raising awareness at political level (national and European) level for the specific needs of SMEs.
- Acceleration of the identification of and adaptation to new training and support requirements of European SMEs by improved cooperation between stakeholders of SMEs and VET and guidance providers.

- Support the sustainable growth and development of SMEs/ young businesses and strengthen their economic position on the European and global market.

4 NETWORK PROJECT PARTNERS

The project promoter and coordinator is the Institute for Economic Promotion at the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, in short WIFI Austria. WIFI Austria, which is the umbrella organisation of all regional Institutes of Economic Promotion in Austria and responsible to provide guidance and training for Austrian enterprises.

Furthermore, the project partnership consists of VET and guidance providers for SMEs, such as vocational training institutions, chambers of commerce and crafts and universities, on the one hand, and of SME associations and trade unions on the other hand. Furthermore, the partnership involves 12 European countries, representing Northern, Eastern, Western and Southern Europe.

These partners are participating in the project:



[Consortium Employment and Environment](#) (Italy)



[International Centre for Promotion of Enterprises](#) (Slovenia)



[Edupoli](#) (Finland)



[European Management Centre](#) (Bulgary)



[The Centre for Development Programs EMI-ECO](#) (Estonia)



[Hamburg Chamber of Skilled Crafts](#) (Germany)



[Polish Craft Association](#) (Poland)



[Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#) (Slovak Republic)



[Izmir EU Business Centre Training and Consultancy Corp.](#)
(Turkey)



[Lahti University of Applied Sciences](#) (Finland)



[Ami-Foundation, Amiedu](#) (Finland)



[Trade Union of Adult Educators in Finland](#)