

Title and acronym: Workouts for innovation leaders [WINN]

Project type: Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships for adult education

Ref. no.: 2020-1-RO01-KA204-079799

Promoter /Coordinator: Asociatia de Dezvoltare Economico-Sociala, Romania

Duration: 01/10/2020 to 30/09/2022

Total project grant: 209.430 Euro

Total expenditure (grant) for the University of Pitești: 24.586 Euro

Local coordinator for the University of Pitești: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Georgeta CHIRLESAN

Summary:

Nowadays, firms' competitiveness is highly dependent from innovation capacity. Especially SMEs in non-technological industries struggle in establishing innovation capacity and fostering innovation culture. Practice shows that even firms with extensive resources to establish systems

and programs, struggle with establishing effective inclusive innovation culture (Sweeney & Imaretska 2018). Often investing in explaining relevance of innovation to employees, building systems for engagement, employing specialists to implement complex innovation programs, doesn't translate to expected increase in innovativeness. It's because organic innovation, crucial for SMEs and even more for no/low tech SMEs, starts with everyday behaviours. How people interact? What they do when someone comes up with new ideas? How they react to mistakes, failures or successes of their own or others? Do behaviours change when leaders are around? The behavioural and cognitive aspects are at heart of WINN project. In SMEs internal processes and culture are in general highly dependent on behaviours and beliefs of entrepreneur or small executive team (Zucchella & Siano 2014, Coyle 2017). It's leader role to cultivate environment encouraging and supporting engagement in innovation. To this end, SMEs leaders need to understand relevance of inclusive innovation and the need for ability to establish pro-innovative environment within their SME, but also adapt to new leader roles - enabling the team to solve problems rather than micromanage, ensure there is no double standards depending on hierarchy, sex, department etc., encourage collaboration, activate knowledge resources of all workers etc. For that purpose, WINN project focuses on development of specific capacitation program that will prepare SMEs executives to behave innovatively and spread innovation culture across their organisations. It specifically aims at ensuring that SMEs leaders in no/low tech industries are prepared to lead for innovation, by developing proper mindset and adapting their behaviours and beliefs to allow authentic leadership for innovation.

Objectives:

The project aims to:

- Facilitate a cognitive and behavioural change within the target group;
- Increase interest of SMEs in innovation possibilities;
- Provide common mobile access to the program of high relevance for SMEs innovativeness;
- Create a more inclusive working environment and broader engagement of employees across different departments and positions in SMEs innovation;
- Increase ability of organizations supporting SMEs to realise their mission by providing access to new resources increasing the probability of SMEs engagement in innovation;
- Increase supply of learning opportunities for lacking skills and qualifications to manage change in SMEs managers;
- Foster innovativeness of EU enterprises, thus increased competitiveness, sustainability

and productivity of SMEs and economies on local, regional, national and EU level;

- Boost competences and knowledge of engaged organisations;
- Create a new international network of partners and engaged stakeholders of the project collaborating on the SMEs support and innovation in a long term;
- Establish a network of contacts between engaged SMEs and stakeholders across EU.

Outcomes:

IO1 - WINN customization methodology will focus on diagnosing users weak areas and individual barriers in scope of their innovation capacity and underline specific aspects requiring improvements.

IO2 - WINN Workouts Methodology will provide users daily workouts adopted to personalized needs for behavioural and cognitive change regarding individual mindset, behaviours and biases to maximize pro-innovative behaviours and beliefs.

IO3 - WINN Workouts Toolkit will support practice-based learning will include pool of exercises, cases, motivational stories and short readings to support implementation of the workouts, icono-graphics, videos etc. for increasing interactivity and impact of the program.

IO4 - WINN Mobile App - a tool for integrated delivery of WINN Program to final users. The APP will provide direct access to interactive learning process responding to SMEs needs and will ensure easy delivery to any participant across EU. It will ensure effective self-development but also the ability to provide users (in non-time-consuming way) daily updates and learning tools along their development path.

IO5 - WINN lesson learnt report will gather partners and stakeholders experience and knowledge, results of WINN piloting phase and lessons learned to produce a comprehensive guide how to effectively support building innovation mindset and behavioural change to foster inclusive innovation culture in SMEs.

Partnership:

1. Asociatia de Dezvoltare Economico-Sociala – Romania (Coordinator)
2. E&D Knowledge Consulting, LDA – Portugal
3. Instalofi Levante SL - Spain
4. Danmar Computers SP ZOO - Poland
5. Universitatea din Pitesti - Romania
6. HANSE-Parlament EV – Germany

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