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Task 3.2

Assessment report on the experimentation of the EEIG

Test activity - Interpersonal Skills and
Sustainability Workshop

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* PU = Public; PP = Restricted to other programme (including the Commission Services); RE = Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services); CO = Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Agency Services)

Abstract

This document describes the creation and realisation of the “test activity” - Interpersonal Skills and Sustainability Workshop - within the EGAI Project, *Unita as a model for institutionalized university cooperation: from the European grouping of economic interest to the European grouping of academic interest*, entrusted to the University of Beira Interior (UBI) as part of the implementation of Work Package 3 (WP3).

The Workshop aimed at employees of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and sought to facilitate lifelong learning. The workshop's scientific content, focusing on interpersonal skills and sustainability, was meticulously selected to address universal topics such as Team Organization and Management, Leadership, and Environmental and Social Sustainability. Themes which hold paramount significance given the contemporary landscape and legislative changes affecting SMEs. It was conducted online in English from November 20th to 24th 2023, featuring esteemed speakers such as Mr. Paolo Bertolero, Ms. Anna de Stefano, and the members of the association GRACE, who provided valuable insights into the chosen topics. The organizational process, though challenging, aimed at fostering a dynamic and engaging environment, requiring extensive communication to secure the commitment of these distinguished speakers. To facilitate the coordination of the workshop, UBI availed itself of the services engaged the services of the European Economic Interest Group (EEIG). Subsequently, the EEIG undertook the formalization of essential contracts with the speakers. Post-workshop activities included the issuance of participation certificates and also the payment of the speakers.

This final report aiming to present the workshop's implementation, outcomes, and participant feedback was prepared by UBI, concluding this comprehensive account of the project's execution and outcomes.

Final Report

Within the framework of the European project "Unita as a model for institutionalized university cooperation: from the European grouping of economic interest to the European grouping of academic interest," the University of Beira Interior (UBI) assumed responsibility for WP3 of the project. Specifically, UBI undertook the organization of a workshop aimed at employees of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to facilitate their lifelong training. This task encompassed the meticulous selection of scientific content and the judicious choice of presentation modalities. UBI also took charge of laying down the necessary contracts for the realization of the workshop and, following its execution, the drafting of a comprehensive final report detailing the conducted activity.

Regarding the scientific content of the workshop, UBI, after a long process of research, decided that it would converge upon two key themes: "Interpersonal Skills and Sustainability." The trainer would delve into topics pertaining to Team Organization and Management as well as Leadership, which are universally applicable to all SMEs and indispensable for the effective functioning and efficiency of any enterprise, regardless of its dimensions, purpose, or geographical location. These are issues that necessitate continuous study and contemporary insights. As for the latter theme, the expounded topics would focus on issues pertaining to Environmental and Social Sustainability, and Good Governance, matters of paramount relevance given the necessity for SMEs to adapt and comply to new European legislation. This legislation mandates the submission of annual reports on these matters commencing from the year 2025.

As to the workshop organization, it was collectively agreed that the sessions would be conducted online, in English, during post-working hours, specifically between 6:30 PM and 8:30 PM CET. The duration of the workshop was fixed at one week, slated for the period from November 20th to 24th 2023. The program was accurately crafted in accordance with the directives of the educators, encompassing Team Organization and Management on the first day, Leadership on the ensuing two days, and Sustainability on the subsequent two days.

During the ideation process one of the main concerns attained to the workshop aptness to foster a dynamic and engaging environment. As a result, we looked for trainers that could achieve this goal and who would be available during that week. This part proved more challenging than initially anticipated, requiring extensive communication via telephone, email and videocalls with a diverse array of potential speakers. During this process, we reached out to Mr. Paolo Bertolero, who accepted our invitation to discuss the topics of Teamwork and Team Management. He is a London School of Economics graduate in Economics and Philosophy; founder of hi-tech companies in the fields of edtech, fintech, e-mobility; entrepreneurship tutor of the 2030 Academy - University of Turin; startup mentor for Google NEXT, Imperial College London, Startupbootcamp, Trentino Sviluppo, EIT Labs. To talk about Leadership, we choose Anna de Stefano - angel investor member of the most important Italian business angels associations (IAG, Club degli investitori, IBAN); mentor and advisor to startups for many Italian and International programs, helping startups to structure their companies while focusing on growth and funding strategy, that was also available and willing to undertake the challenge. For the topic of Sustainability, we have invited GRACE - a business association reference, in Portugal, that integrates the European networks EVPA and CSR Europe, a leader in sustainability and corporate responsibility, supporting industry sectors and companies globally, in the transformation and search for practical solutions for sustainable growth - to contribute with insights and facilitate discussions on this crucial subject.

For the orchestration of this event, UBI employed the services of the EEIG UNITA Universitas Montium, through a Direct Adjustment, with a financial commitment amounting to €1120. The referenced sum corresponded to the remuneration terms mutually agreed-upon with each speaker. Specifically, it was stipulated that Mr. Paolo Bertolero and Ms. Anna de Stefano would be compensated at a rate of 120 euros per hour, while GRACE's remuneration would amount to 100 euros per hour.

Upon conduction of a thorough analysis to determine the most suitable contractual arrangement to formalize the relationship between the EEIG and the speakers, the conclusion was reached to adopt a services contract with the designated trainers and officials. However, the signature of the contract was delayed due to administrative difficulties related to the recent establishment of the EEIG.

In the subsequent phase, the focus was on the formulation of the workshop announcement poster and the comprehensive program. Particular attention was devoted to acknowledging the

support provided by the European Union, by featuring the prominent display of the European flag (emblem) and funding statement. The initial draft of the poster needed modification due to lack of compliance with the prescribed layout standards of the EEIG. Thereafter, the revised version was sent to all partner States within the Alliance, facilitating effective communication and widespread dissemination of the workshop details, with particular emphasis on reaching local and regional small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Concurrently, we initiated the monetary transfer process from UBI to the EEIG, encountering some challenges in the course of its execution. The main obstacle regarded the need to create a specific bank account for the EEIG, an operation which took more than a month to reach conclusion. Due to this delay, as well as to the formal procedures associated with the monetary transfer from UBI to the EEIG, the final payment of the speakers by the EEIG is expected to occur in mid-January.

For the registration phase, the participants were requested to provide their information, encompassing details such as the name of the company, age group, nationality, and educational level. In this phase, 30 individuals conveyed their interest in the workshop, comprising 12 employees from various companies and the remaining individuals holding positions as administrative staff in universities, professors, or students. However, the actual workshop attendance was limited to 12 participants, only three of whom were employees of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The predominant demographic consisted of administrative staff from universities or students representing diverse nationalities within the University Alliance States. Notably, a substantial portion of the attendees hailed from Romanian companies and the University of Turin.

The workshop took place as scheduled during the designated week, from the 20th to the 24th of November, being held online. During the first day, Mr. Paolo Bertolero gave the participants an overview of Work and Team Management, focusing on the concept of “team”; what makes a team effective; how to create an effective work team; examples of successful work teams. For the two following days Anna de Stefano had a dynamic talk about leadership, engaging in understanding the key elements of an effective leadership; giving practical tools to define and reinforce personal leadership; how to use creativity to deal with uncertain moments and try to manage the development of AI. To finish, the second and last part of the workshop was given by GRACE. During this two last days GRACE secured two trainers, Sérgio Mascarenhas, an Assistant Professor and Certified Trainer, and Vera de Hesselde, Professor at University of Bremen, as well as two guest companies - Daniel Veloso from Luz Saúde and Catarina Gomes from J Gomes Lda. The first day was

dedicated to Sustainable Development, focusing on sustainability as a Global Imperative and the paths for sustainability in the European Union and Sustainability in Small and Medium Enterprises, whereas on the second day the trainers focused on environmental and social sustainability and governance practices, discussing the ESG framework; companies and environmental sustainability; companies and Social Sustainability; Sustainability and Governance.

After the workshop the participants were asked to share their thoughts through a feedback survey, with a view to helping us identify successful practices as well as areas where we can enhance future workshops. This allowed us to collect the opinions of all the participants, who responded to questions such as:

- How satisfied were you with the workshop?
- Is this the first time you've taken part in this type of workshop?
- How do you rate the following in relation to the Interpersonal Skills and Sustainability Workshop?
 - Concepts presented in a clear and easy-to-understand way;
 - Kept my interest throughout the duration of the talks;
 - Encouraged the participation of participants;
 - Left with a better understanding of the subject.
- Will you join us again in another events?
- Share with us your favorite topic and trainer of the workshop.
- How did you find the length of the event?
- Do you think the workshop was well organized?
- Did the event meet your expectations?

The participants provided favourable feedback, expressing commendation towards the trainers. They left the workshop with a sense of satisfaction, asserting an overall positive perspective. They believe that the concepts were elucidated in a clear and easily comprehensible manner, proving both interesting and capable of enhancing their awareness of the discussed topics. Notably, a majority of the participants, who had not previously engaged in a workshop of this nature, expressed a desire to partake in future events organised by the EEIG. The participants' inclination was observed regarding the initial segment of the workshop, which focused on interpersonal skills. As to the constructive feedback on potential enhancements for future iterations, participants recommended a reduction in the duration of the workshop. They expressed that it could be more interactive between them and the trainer, advocating for a more participatory approach. Additionally, they

articulated that the inclusion of additional exercises and related references and papers to the topic given would have been beneficial, fostering a deeper acquisition of knowledge on their part.

Preceding the beginning of the workshop, we received feedback from some employees of Portuguese Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), indicating that the scheduling of the workshop was not conducive to their participation. The extended duration of a full week was cited as a limiting factor, resulting in a subdued turnout and elucidating the observed lower attendance.

2. Is this the first time you've taken part in this type of workshop?

[Mais Detalhes](#)



5. Will you join us again in another events?

[Mais Detalhes](#)



Subsequently UBI undertook the drafting and issuance of participation certificates. The initial draft of the certificates was submitted to revision because the original layout was from UBI, and it needed to be the EEIG to assume the role of the certifying entity for the workshop. Consequently, it became imperative to prepare an appropriate template and logo representative of the EEIG, culminating in the final version. UBI assumed responsibility as well for crafting this comprehensive final report, which is herein presented.