

Consolidated feedback of experts

Name of the organisation: Verkmenntaskólinn á Akureyri

Title of the proposal: Work-mentoring within a quality management system.

Structure for cooperation between school and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Reference No: 2014-1-IS01-KA202-000180

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Language: EN

I. Assessment Conclusion

Score: 84

II. Assessment

Relevance of the project

Score: 26

The proposal is directly linked to the policy objectives, as it aims at building a framework that would implement, give value and add quality to the provision of VET, connecting education and workplaces. It also aims to add comparability of VET between European countries. Therefore it also aims at formalising the relationship between vocational institutions and the job market.

The proposal provides a solid analysis of the state of the art, based on previous projects. Adequate needs analysis has been made and the proposal has a strong link to the Policy Handbook on Work-based learning with a concrete aim of integrating European tools (ECVET, EQF) into the normal work of colleges and workplaces. The objectives are clear and precise and feasible based on the partner's experience. The outcomes of the project are likely to be relevant for other fields.

The outputs are not particularly innovative for the field, but rather respond to the needs of the target group by providing a framework and a handbook for streamlining work placements.

The proposal is a continuation of the Workmentor project and other projects and contains most of the partners from those former projects. It adds value to this project in the way that the proposal plans to develop methods not specific to a field but applicable to work placements in general. Perhaps the project would have increased the added value by including stakeholders in the partnership.

The transnational dimension is crucial for a project like this because it aims to make the work processes related to international work placements.

Perhaps it would have been preferable to include a partner closer to decision-making bodies and stakeholders, in order to increase the possibilities of successful implementation.

Quality of the project design and implementation

Score: 18

The work programme is very thorough, with all the phases of the project planned and organised. The timetable is realistic with concrete activities over 24 months which ensures value- for- money. That adds to the likelihood of the project achieving its objectives. All the phases of the project are well explained and logical.

The proposed activities are well suited to address the needs of the target group, and to reach the objectives.

The methodology takes into consideration the various cultures of work-places and the importance of feed-back of the proposed material. It is realistic and likely to produce the expected results, the phases are well designed and the outputs well thought out. The target groups are addressed and involved in the project.

Project management is suitable and budget controls are in place from the start of the project. The project foresees that the partners will report every six months. Quality control is sufficient, as the project will have internal milestones that will be evaluated, as well as an external evaluator that will follow the project from the beginning. A part of the evaluation mechanism is feedback from the target group. The internal quality management system of the participating institutions could have been better described; particularly it is to be responsible for reviewing the procedures.

The training activities are an important aspect of the project meetings and contribute to the objectives of the project. The training activities are very cost-effective as these take place at the same time as the project meetings. They bring a clear added value as the proposal does not ask for subsistence during the workshops for participants.

Overall this proposal provides value for money. The grant request is reasonable and should ensure quality implementation of the project.

Quality of the project team and the cooperation arrangements

Score: 17

The project partners are experienced and have complementary skills, despite focusing on different fields. They have participated together in EU projects before, and should have the means to effectively implement the work programme. The proposal lists the key personnel and their skills and they are highly relevant to the project proposal. Most of the partners have worked together before, which should minimize risk factors while only the Norwegian partner is a new-comer and the impact is likely to be high for that partner, particularly because the other partners are very experienced.

The partners are from different fields, some general vocational colleges and others working in a particular field, in this case agriculture. There are also partners from working life in the consortium, which is vital to the achievement of the results, but more could have been included. However, such diversity is likely to bring added value to the project.

The distribution of tasks is balanced and the methods for communication are clear and simple and the purpose of meetings is obvious and forms the backbone of the work.

Impact and dissemination:

Score: 23

The evaluation methods for assessing whether the project is achieving its results are a bit vague. Asking teachers to review the work of the project is fine, but should be described better. An inspector for quality management system will review the procedures, but only at the end. Also the external evaluation methods could have been better explained.

The expected impact is well explained, and reasonable for a project of this size. The project is likely to have a positive impact on the target groups involved: staff of VET institutions, employers and employees (work-mentors) at work placements and students in VET. The project should streamline their work and make it comparable across different countries. The proposal identifies relevant stakeholders, both locally and at an EU level. However, the proposal could have elaborated further upon how those stakeholders could be reached out to in order to have real impact. Perhaps having a partner from a regional level, or governmental level would have increased the potential impact.

The partners are in a good position to use their network contacts in dissemination activities. There is an ambitious aim to involve national education authorities in order for them to incorporate the end product in their national guidelines. The plan is focused on the roles of each partner but could perhaps also focus a bit more on project oriented activities. There is also a question whether the framework, the main output of the project, should be translated into the partner languages.

Considering the proposed output of the project, it is likely to have a sustained impact if used by the participants, and if successful it could have a considerable multiplier effect and reach much further than the project participants.

Overall comments to the applicant:

Overall this is a strong application. The relevance of the project to EU objectives as well as the objectives of the action are clear. It builds on previous projects, using the experience gained, and finding new needs that should be addressed. It is therefore built on a thorough needs analysis, and aims to fulfil those needs. The project is not particularly innovative, but rather aims to fill a void, which is important. Perhaps to better ensure uptake of the results, the project could have included a partner from the policy-making field, or a governmental agency, even as a silent partner. The involvement of SME:s or other companies with work placements would have added more working

life input. The work programme is excellent, and each phase is well thought out and explained, and necessary for the project to achieve its results. The project team is put together in a way that is likely to achieve the results of the project, and is built on experience, with one new participant. The only weak aspects of the project are its evaluation methods and the impact section. The project could have included a clearer description of external evaluation plans. There is a clear argument for the necessity of internal evaluation from those that work with the outputs, and there is mention of an external evaluation plan, but it should be better elaborated. The proposal could also have included a clearer plan to reach out to stakeholders from the policy-making field, because the output of the project, if implemented successfully, should have a considerable impact beyond the participants.

Maximum score for assessment of each criteria

Criteria	Maximum score
Relevance of the project	30
Quality of the project design and implementation	20
Quality of the project team and cooperation arrangements	20
Impact and dissemination	30