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Central Baltic Programme

Project idea form

Central Baltic programme 2021-2027

Provide a short and concise description on the indicated aspects of the project idea. Avoid repeating same things under different questions. To get more information on the Programme content, please find a draft of the Programme Document from our website at www.centralbaltic.eu/for-applicants/key-documents/

Indicative name of the project	"STEMPathways for Employment": Creation of a start-up ecosystem and development and adaptation of work environment-based STEM micro-qualification programs.

Targeted Programme Objective

- ☐ **PO 1: More exports by SMEs**
- ☐ **PO 2: More new scaled-up growth companies**
- ☐ **PO 3: Joint circular economy solutions**
- ☐ **PO 4: Improved coastal and marine environment**
- ☐ **PO 5: Decreased CO2 emissions**
- ☒ **PO 6: Improved employment opportunities**
- ☐ **PO 7: Improved public services**

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What are the main results your project will achieve?	The main results of the project will be a development of start-up ecosystem and implementation of work environment-based STEM micro-qualification programs in cooperation with employers to promote the employment of persons at risk of unemployment, through these outcomes: 1. Conducting Surveys: 500 respondents per country (employers, employees, stakeholders etc.) 2. Micro-qualification Courses Development: At least 10 micro-qualification courses in total. 3. Conducting Micro-qualification Courses: At least 100 people per country. 4. Developing SMEs: At least 2 per country 5. Ecosystem creation: 1 start-up hub per country. 6. Developing and Implementing Methodology: 1 methodology. 7. Developing action Plan for next 2 years after project completion: 1 action plan

What is the common cross-border challenge that the project will address?	The proposal for the development and implementation of work environment-based STEM micro-qualification programs in cooperation with employers addresses several critical issues: **Skills Gap:** It addresses the mismatch between the skills possessed by individuals, particularly those at risk of unemployment, and the skills demanded by the labour market. By focusing on STEM areas, the program targets sectors known for their potential for growth and innovation, ensuring that participants gain relevant, in-demand skills. **Unemployment:** Specifically targets individuals at risk of unemployment, such as those with outdated skills, those returning to the workforce after a break, or those from sectors that are declining. By providing them with targeted training and qualifications, it directly enhances their employability. **Rapid Technological Change:** As industries evolve with technological advancements, many workers find their skills becoming obsolete. This proposal ensures that the workforce remains adaptable and can keep pace with changes, particularly in STEM fields where innovation is constant. **Employer Needs:** By involving employers in the development and implementation of these programs, the proposal ensures that the training is closely aligned with actual industry needs. This increases the likelihood that graduates of the program will be directly employable, satisfying employer demand for skilled workers. **Economic Competitiveness:** Enhancing the skills of the workforce, especially in high-demand STEM fields, contributes to the overall competitiveness of the economy. Skilled workers are more productive and can drive innovation, leading to economic growth and development. **Long-term Career Development:** Micro-qualifications can be stepping stones for individuals to further education and career advancement, offering a flexible and accessible means for career development. This not only benefits the individuals but also contributes to a more dynamic and skilled workforce. This proposal aims to bridge the gap between the current workforce's skills and the needs of the modern economy, particularly in the STEM sectors, thereby addressing both individual and societal needs for sustainable employment and economic development, by giving a chance to become an employer and create a start-up as well.

Why is cross-border cooperation needed for addressing the challenge, and what added value will it bring?	Cross-border cooperation is crucial for addressing the challenge of developing and implementing work environment-based STEM micro-qualification programs, especially in the context of promoting the employment of persons at risk of unemployment, for several reasons: 1. **Sharing Best Practices:** Different countries and regions often have unique approaches to education, training, and employment. Cross-border cooperation allows for the sharing of best practices, innovative teaching methods, and successful employment integration strategies. This exchange will lead to the development of more effective and efficient programs that are informed by a diverse range of experiences and proven outcomes. 2. **Addressing Skills Shortages on a Larger Scale:** Many industries face skills shortages that are not confined to a single country's borders. By cooperating across borders, programs can be designed to address these shortages more effectively, aligning training with the needs of employers on a regional or global scale. This will enhance the mobility of the workforce and ensure that skilled labour is available where it is most needed. 3. **Enhancing Mobility and Recognition of Qualifications:** Cross-border cooperation will facilitate the recognition of qualifications across countries, making it easier for individuals to work in different locations. This mobility is particularly important in STEM fields, where the demand for skilled workers can vary significantly from one country to another. Recognized qualifications will help individuals take advantage of employment opportunities across borders, thereby enhancing their employment prospects. 4. **Adapting to Globalized Industries:** Many STEM fields, such as information technology, engineering, and renewable energy, are inherently globalized. Training programs that reflect this global perspective and that are developed through cross-border cooperation are better suited to preparing individuals for the realities of working in these fields. This project will provide insights into international standards, cross-cultural communication, and global industry trends. 5. **Addressing Common Challenges:** Unemployment and skills mismatches are common challenges faced by many countries. Cross-border cooperation allows for a united approach to these issues, enabling countries to learn from each other's challenges and successes. This collective effort can lead to more robust and comprehensive solutions that benefit all parties involved. In summary, cross-border cooperation adds value by enhancing the effectiveness, scalability, and innovation of STEM micro-qualification programs. It facilitates the sharing of best practices, addresses skills shortages on a larger scale, improves qualification recognition, leverages resources, and fosters innovative solutions, thereby

	significantly contributing to the promotion of employment for persons at risk of unemployment.
Describe shortly the project logic. What kind of main activities will be carried out to achieve the results?	The project idea revolves around developing and implementing work environment-based STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) micro-qualification programs. These programs are designed in cooperation with employers to enhance the employment prospects of individuals at risk of unemployment, specifically addressing the challenges presented by the skills gap, unemployment, rapid technological changes, and employer needs. The project strategically targets the objective of improved employment opportunities within the framework of the Pact of Skills initiative. The main activities planned to achieve the project's results and that collectively aim to address the cross-border challenge of skills gaps and unemployment in the STEM sector: 1. Conducting Surveys: This foundational activity involves gathering data from employers, employees, stakeholders etc. to ensure the micro-qualification courses are relevant and demand-driven. This data collection aims to understand current industry needs, trends, and the specific skill sets that are in high demand but short supply. 2. Development of Micro-Qualification Courses: Based on the insights gained from the surveys, at least 10 micro-qualification courses will be developed. These courses will focus on imparting specific, job-relevant STEM skills that are directly applicable in the work environment. 3. SME Development and Start-Up Hub (ecosystem) Creation: The project aims to foster entrepreneurship and job creation by developing at least two small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) per country and establishing a start-up hub in each country. This initiative is designed to support new businesses in STEM fields, thereby creating new employment opportunities. 4. Methodology Development and Implementation: A key outcome will be the development and implementation of a methodology that other countries facing similar challenges can adopt. This methodology will encapsulate best practices and lessons learned based on the research results. 5. Action Plan Development: Based on the project's findings and outcomes, an action plan (not exceeding two years) will be developed. This plan will guide future efforts to replicate or scale the project's approach in addressing unemployment and skills mismatches through STEM education and training.

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Potential Lead Partner organisation	
Potential partner organisations	Latvia - Ventspils University of Applied Sciences (VUAS), Ventspils High Technology Park (VHTP)
Estimated budget (€)	MAX 4 mil.
Project duration (months)	2 years
Contact information	zuad@venta.lv