Centres of Vocational Excellence
Skills ecosystems for innovation, regional development, and social inclusion

**"Excellence in VET
A challenge for the Future"**

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Skills - The policy context (2020)

➢ Commission Communication on **the European Education Area**

➢ Commission Communication: "**European Skills Agenda** for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience"

➢ **Osnabruck Declaration** and the Council Recommendation: **Vocational education and training** for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience

The Council Recommendation on Vocational Education and Training

6 REFORM CLUSTERS

1) VET is agile in adapting to labour market changes

2) Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET

3) VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for the digital and green transitions

4) VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training and skills

5) VET promotes equality of opportunities

6) VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance

3 TRANSVERSAL PRIORITIES

Support sustainable partnerships for the governance of VET at national, regional and sectoral level, involving all relevant stakeholders

Make the best use of European transparency tools such as the EQF, ECTS, Europass, ESCO, core profiles

Make the best use of EU funds and instruments

3 QUANTITATIVE OBJECTIVES

The share of employed graduates from VET should be at least 82%

60% of recent graduates from VET benefit from exposure to work-based learning during their qualification

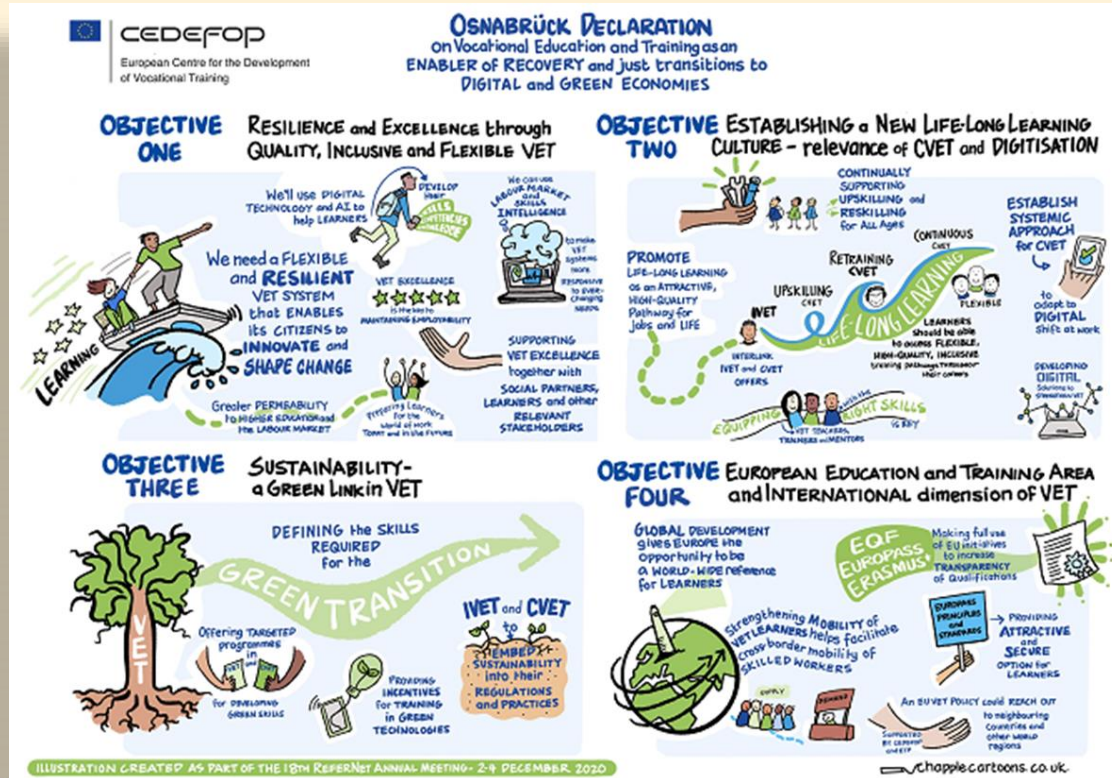8% of learners in VET benefit from a learning mobility abroad

The Osnabrück Declaration on VET - *main objectives*

1 Resilience and excellence through **quality, inclusive and flexible** VET

2 Establishing a new **lifelong learning** culture – relevance of C-VET and digitalisation

3 Sustainability – **green** VET

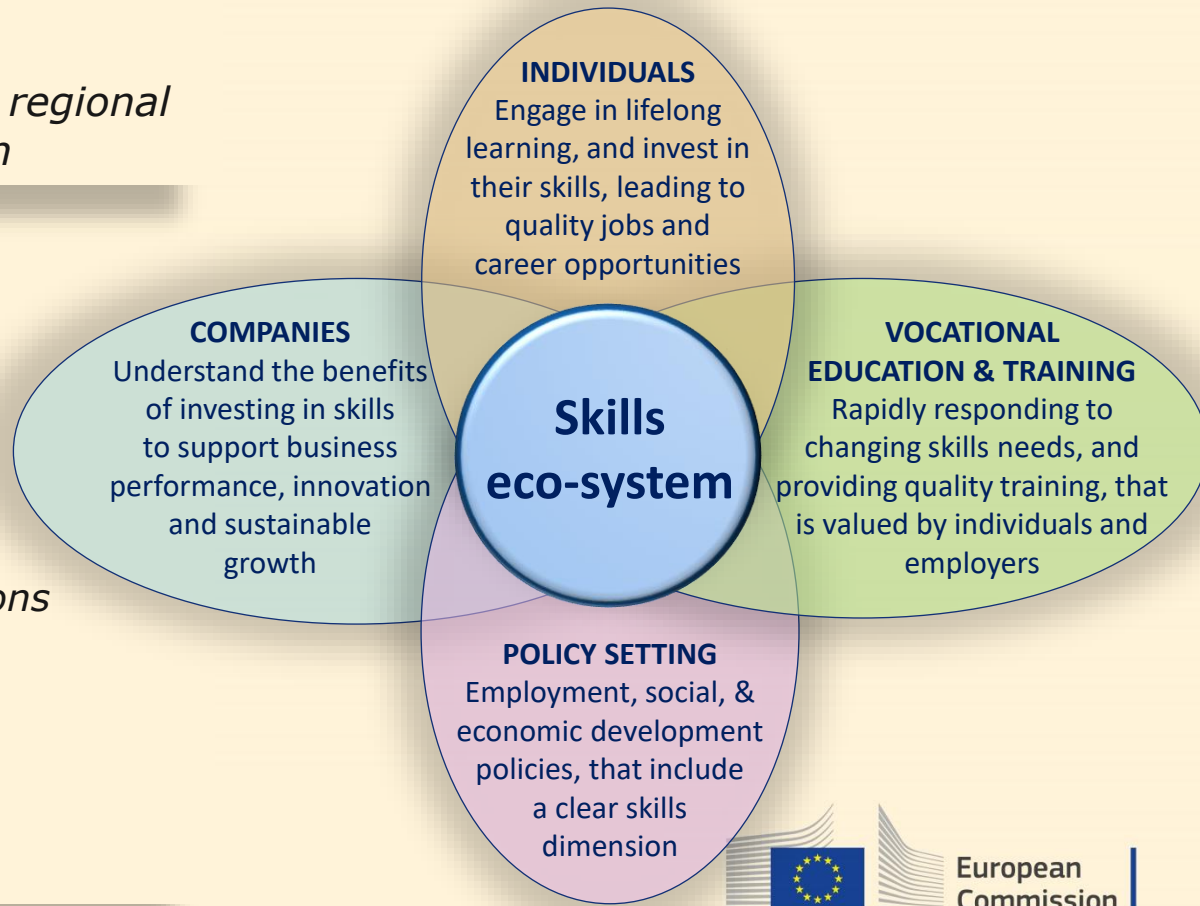**4** European Education and Training area and **international VET**

Centres of Vocational Excellence (The CoVE concept https://europa.eu/!cu83xr)

CoVEs contributing to:

Skills ecosystems for innovation, regional development, and social inclusion

Bringing together:

➢ VET institutions
➢ Universities of applied science
➢ Research centres

➢ Companies
➢ Chambers
➢ Professional or sector associations
➢ Trade unions

➢ Policy makers
➢ Employment services/agencies
➢ Regional development agencies
➢ Municipalities

INDIVIDUALS
Engage in lifelong learning, and invest in their skills, leading to quality jobs and career opportunities

COMPANIES
Understand the benefits of investing in skills to support business performance, innovation and sustainable growth

Skills eco-system

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & TRAINING
Rapidly responding to changing skills needs, and providing quality training, that is valued by individuals and employers

POLICY SETTING
Employment, social, & economic development policies, that include a clear skills dimension

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Key success factors

➢ **Linked to strategies for regional development, innovation, smart specialisation, clusters, social inclusion...**
Identification of synergies between policies and amongst stakeholders.
Co-creating skills-ecosytems that support strategic development objectives.

➢ **Strong and enduring partnerships**
Between VET providers, higher education institutions, businesses, public employment services, etc.
in which interactions are mutually beneficial

➢ **Integration of activities**
CoVEs achieve more than the sum of the parts.
Much more than just a diploma/certificate.

Collaborative Creativity

@Robert Kelly

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The initiative in a nutshell

The Goal

VET Excellence
- ➢ Innovative and responsive VET institutions capable of **rapidly adapting skills provision** to evolving economic and social needs, including the **digital and green transitions**

How to get there

International collaborative networks of CoVEs

- ➢ ACT LOCAL – Establish strong local partnerships co-creating "**skills ecosystems**" for innovation, regional development, and social inclusion

- ➢ THINK GLOBAL – through **international collaborative networks** of CoVE in other countries to share experience and know-how, to foster mobility of learners and staff...

The partners

VET institutions, Universities of applied science, Research centres, Companies, Chambers, Professional or sector associations, Trade unions, Policy makers, Employment services, Regional development agencies, Municipalities, Qualification authorities, and others
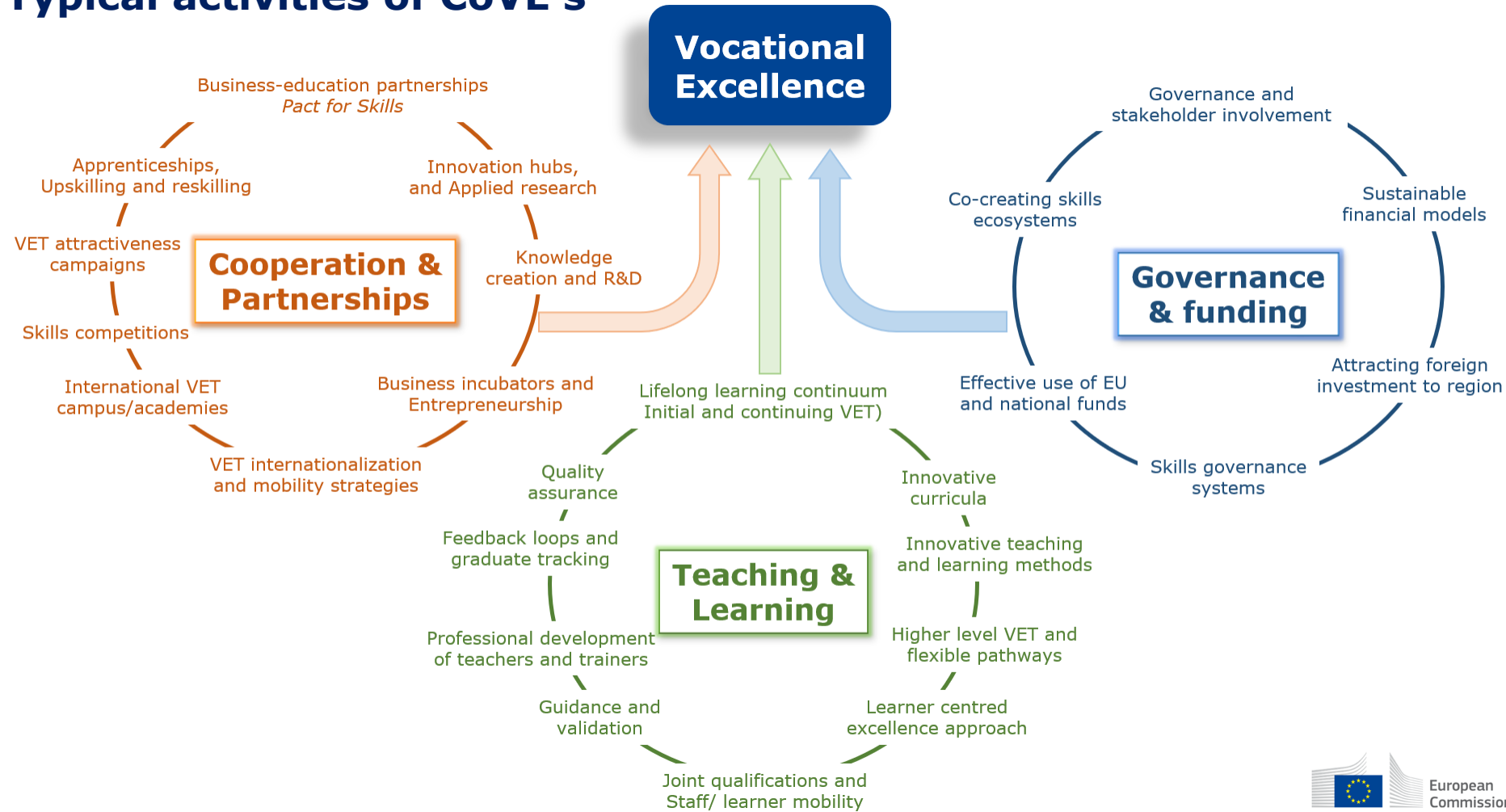
EU Support

Erasmus+ funding 2021-2027: €400 million for 100 CoVE networks

Technical support: Build evidence, Facilitate networking, Tools & Guidelines...

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Typical activities of CoVE's

Vocational Excellence

Cooperation & Partnerships
- Business-education partnerships *Pact for Skills*
- Apprenticeships, Upskilling and reskilling
- Innovation hubs, and Applied research
- VET attractiveness campaigns
- Knowledge creation and R&D
- Skills competitions
- International VET campus/academies
- Business incubators and Entrepreneurship
- VET internationalization and mobility strategies

Teaching & Learning
- Lifelong learning continuum Initial and continuing VET)
- Quality assurance
- Innovative curricula
- Feedback loops and graduate tracking
- Innovative teaching and learning methods
- Professional development of teachers and trainers
- Higher level VET and flexible pathways
- Guidance and validation
- Learner centred excellence approach
- Joint qualifications and Staff/ learner mobility

Governance & funding
- Governance and stakeholder involvement
- Co-creating skills ecosystems
- Sustainable financial models
- Effective use of EU and national funds
- Attracting foreign investment to region
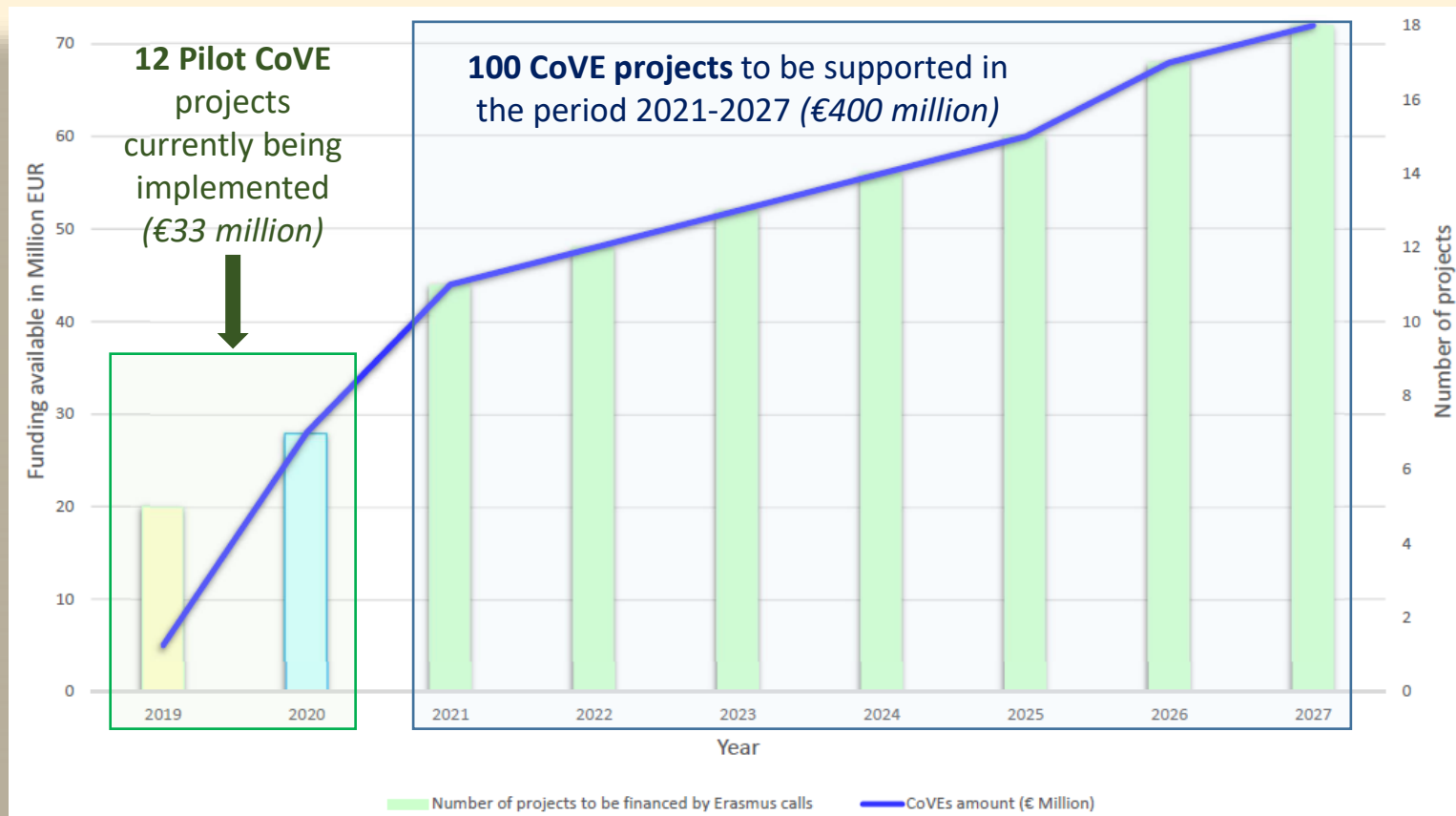- Skills governance systems

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Erasmus+ funding under Partnerships for Excellence (Ka2)

➢ **2021-2027:** €400 million for 100 networks of CoVE

➢ **Applicant**: Any organisation established in a E+ Programme Country

➢ **Partners**: Any public or private organisation active in field of VET, or world of work. Can be from any country in the world, but non-programme partners must bring an '**essential added value**'

➢ **Partnership:** at least 8 full partners from a minimum of 4 Programme
  - a) at least 1 enterprise, industry or sector representative organisation, and
  - b) at least 1 VET provider (at secondary and/or tertiary level)

➢ **EQF levels:** Can be at any EQF level but must include levels 3, 4 or 5

➢ **Maximum grant**: €4 million per project with 4 year project duration

➢ **Erasmus+ 2022 call**: Deadline for project applications **7 September 2022**

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Erasmus+ funding (estimated) for the CoVE initiative 2019-2027

12 Pilot CoVE projects currently being implemented *(€33 million)*

100 CoVE projects to be supported in the period 2021-2027 *(€400 million)*

Funding available in Million EUR

Year

Number of projects

Number of projects to be financed by Erasmus calls · CoVEs amount (€ Million)

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Erasmus+ 2019 & 2020 Pilot projects

Advanced Manufacturing 4.0
https://examhub.eu/

Water sector
https://povewater.eu/

Digital Innovation Hub
https://dihubcloud.eu/

Cultural and creative industries
http://deuscci.eu/

IoT in Smart manufacturing
https://talentjourney.si/

Inclusive excellence
https://www.thegiveproject.eu/

Microelectronics
https://ecovem.eu/

Finfish industry
http://www.bridges.eu/

Furniture and Wood
https://www.allview.eu/

Green Innovation
http://www.greenovet.eu/

Urban Greening
https://www.platformurbangreening.eu/

Innovation in the Green Economy
https://3-loe.eu/

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Overview of CoVE projects selected in the Erasmus+ 2021 call

Offshore Renewable Energy (**T-SHORE**, led by Belgium)
Clean and sustainable energy (**SECOVE**, led by Greece)
Sustainable energy (**SEED**, led by The Netherlands)
Water sector (**PoVE**, led by The Netherlands)

Dairy agri-food (**AEDIL**, led by Denmark)
Multifunctional Agriculture (**AgriNext**, led by Slovenia)

Sustainability for business transformation (**CATALYST**, led by North Macedonia)
Artificial Intelligence, Virtual reality, and Social innovation (**EULEP**, led by Belgium)

Advanced manufacturing (**LCAMP**, led by Spain)
Arts and Crafts (**MOSAIC**, led by France)
Fashion, textiles and apparel industries (**FEA-VEE**, led by Greece)
Health care (**EUVECA**, led by Denmark)
Tourism (**TOUR-X**, led by Greece)

CoVE projects - *Erasmus+ 2021 call*
SECOVE - Sustainable Energy Centres of Vocational Excellence

Aim:

Establish a network of cooperation among CoVEs in 5 European countries, in the sector of clean and sustainable energy. The CoVEs will cooperate transnationally with each other through common structured forms of dialogue and communication

Objectives:

➢ Target a wide range of groups in the area of sustainable energy: VET students and institutions, companies (both staff and managers), women across educational levels and sectors, policymakers

➢ Organization of impactful events: 28 local and transnational workshops, networking events, capacity building, transnational Conferences

➢ Training of adults in partner organizations

➢ Mobility of VET learners

➢ Summer VET academies for girls in secondary education

EU Grant: € 3.750.688   **Project duration:**   4 years

Partner countries: Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain

Coordinator: PANEPISTIMIO DYTIKIS ATTIKIS (EL)

CoVE projects - *Erasmus+ 2021 call*
PoVE - Platform of Vocational Excellence Water Scale-up

Aim:

A joint initiative of 8 VET schools, 7 Water industry professionals,

4 academic partners and 3 support partners, to educate and train VET learners

to become agile, digitally skilled and sustainable oriented water sector professionals

Objectives:

➤ Holistic approach to VET in the EU Water sector with a central role in regional Innovation Ecosystems, and partnerships between VET, research and the water industry

➤ Setting up and interlinking CoVE Water networks that operate on interregional level

➤ Drive innovation by developing Digital, VR learning materials and blended training

➤ Increase student's, teacher's and professional's competence through international mobility

➤ PoVE Water as a worldwide point of reference for VET in the water sector

➤ Raising the attractiveness of the Water sector

EU Grant: € 3.995.489   **Project duration:**   4 years

Partner countries: Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, South Africa

Coordinator: Stichting voor algemeen voortgezet onderwijs, beroepsonderwijs en volwasseneneducatie (NL)

CoVE projects - *Erasmus+ 2021 call*
CATALYST - Sustainable Systems and Business Transformation

Aim:

Contribute to the European Green Deal and the new Industrial and SME Strategies. Establishment CoVEs in 5 countries and create educational offer for personal and organisational development, enabling SMEs to re-think and re-design their business models

Objectives:

➢ Establish 5 CoVEs and a network anchored in a European VET eco-system

➢ Implement VET trainings, pilot-project with SMEs and applied research projects in selected sectors according to the national S3

➢ Co-create and disseminate applied knowledge inspiring business-education partnerships involving students, professionals & SMEs

➢ 70 VET courses for up-skilling professionals and students

➢ Raise demand and attractiveness of VET

EU Grant: € 2.770.131   **Project duration:**   4 years

Partner countries: Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom

Coordinator: INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN ENVIRONMENT, CIVIL ENGINEERING AND ENERGY, SKOPJE **(MK)**

CoVE projects - *Erasmus+ 2021 call*
EULEP - *innovative transnational C-VET training in AI, VR, & social innovation*

Aim:

Make C-VET more attractive for lifelong learning, offer businesses new and tailor-made training modules that correspond to their skills needs in innovation-oriented subjects (artificial intelligence, virtual reality and social innovation)

Objectives:

➢ Establish or reinforce knowledge triangles at regional and national level, through the triangulation business - VET provider - European Digital Innovation Hub (EDIH)
➢ Embed VET in regional economic development strategies and reinforce its governance
➢ Involvement of 500 companies in different activities including skills intelligence
➢ Regional VET Councils designing VET strategies and dissemination plans
➢ Online learning platform for VET providers
➢ European Learning Academy for training of VET trainers
➢ Regional multiplier events, and VET promotion campaigns
➢ Project management templates, tools and methodologies for training modules creation and teaching
➢ Transnational VET modules development, a guidebook for SMEs, EDIH partnership MoUs

EU Grant: € 3.940.376   **Project duration:**   4 years

Partner countries: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Italy, Latvia, Spain, Turkey

Coordinator: Eurochambres-Association des chambres de commerce et d'industrie europeennes **(BE)**

CoVE Erasmus+ call 2021: *Countries of participating organisations*

13 projects selected for funding (84 projects submitted)
Grants approved €46 million (grants requested €283 million)
37 countries in projects approved (55 in project applications)
331 participating organisations in projets approved

➤ *Shows capacity of the initiative for the **Internationalization of VET** attracting partners from all over the world*

CoVE Erasmus+ call 2021: *Type of participating organisations*

Chart — Type of participating organisations by Applicant Role

Organisation type	Coordinator	Partner	Affiliated	Associated
ACCREDITATION, CERTIFICATION OR QUALIFICATION BODY		1		
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE		2		
FOUNDATION	1	2		
OTHER ASSOCIATIONS ACTIVE IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING		2	1	
COUNSELLING BODY		4		
PUBLIC SERVICE PROVIDER	2	3		
ADULT EDUCATION		5		
EU-WIDE NETWORK		9		2
REGIONAL PUBLIC BODY	2	9		
RESEARCH INSTITUTE/CENTRE		8	2	3
NOT SPECIFIED	1	14		
LARGE ENTERPRISE	3	8		4
LOCAL OR NATIONAL PUBLIC BODY		8		8
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION/ASSOCIATION		16	4	9
SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISE		19	1	13
SOCIAL PARTNER	2	29		8
HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION (TERTIARY LEVEL)	2	32	5	13
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING	6	44	11	13

*Large variety of participating organisations from Education and Training providers **at all levels**, as well as companies, social partners, regional authorities, research centres, etc.*

> *The initiative **brings together relevant partners** for skills-ecosystems*

CoVE Erasmus+ call 2021: *Activities prioritized by projects*

Business-Education partnerships
12

Governance and stakeholder involvement
12

Initial and continuing VET
11

Innovative curricula
11

Teaching and learning methodologies
11

Effective use of EU and national funds
11

Professional development of teachers and trainers
10

Joint qualifications and Staff/ learner mobility
8

SME Support for training
8

Internationalisation strategies and mobility
8

Co-creating skills ecosystems
8

Sustainable financial models
7

Learner centred excellence approach
6

Innovation hubs, Technology diffusion, applied research
9

Higher level VET and flexible pathways
7

Feedback loops and Graduate tracking
5

Internati... VET campus/ academies
4

Quality assurance
3

Skills governance systems
3

Gu... and val...
1

VET attractiveness
9

Knowledge creation and R&D
7

Skills competitions
5

Attracting foreign investment
2

Bu... inc... and en...

All 25 activities covered with predominance of actions for:

1) *Business-education partnerships*
2) *Governance & Stakeholder involvement*
3) *Initial and continuing training*
4) *Innovative curricula*
5) *Innovative teaching & learning methodologies*

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The Community of Practice (CoP) of Centres of Vocational Excellence

✓ CoP set-up **by** and **for** the Erasmus+ CoVE project leaders

✓ A bottom-up **learning community of practitioners**

✓ **Sharing experience** through **concrete activities**, aimed atmodernising and innovating in VET provision

✓ **Addressing challenges** together

✓ Collecting & sharing **best practices**

✓ **Informing policy makers** on their experiences in setting-up CoVEs, and improving the initiative on Vocational Excellence

European Training Foundation (ETF) leading the work on the "International Dimension of Vocational Excellence"

PUTTING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER

ETF Network for Excellence

Why collaborate closely with the European Training Foundation?
https://www.etf.europa.eu/en

Core **mission of the ETF** is to support transition and developing countries to harness the potential of their human capital through the reform of education, training, and labour market systems

Expertise on Vocational Excellence:
➢ European Agency supporting VET reforms in 29 countries outside the EU
➢ Delivering expertise on Skills in the context of EU external relations policies
➢ Highly qualified staff with know-how in vocational excellence
➢ Launched a very successful "ETF Network of Excellence" offering a platform for continuous exchange of practice among Centres of vocational
➢ Developed methodological tools to support the development of vocational excellence

The aim	Build a strong international cooperation dimension on **Vocational Excellence**
The Deliverables	**Four Work Packages:** 1. Creating an international vocational excellence **quality and development tool** *(Self-assessment tool allowing VET institutions to assess and design their path to Excellence)* 2. Explore the feasibility of a **Quality award on Vocational Excellence** 3. **Building evidence** to support vocational excellence for the digital and green transitions 4. **Policy support** activities and **capacity building**
The contract	➢ 24 months contract, starting November 2021 ➢ Deliverables will be integrated in future CoVE support services *(launch 2022)*

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More information

Europa **Website on CoVE**:
https://ec.europa.eu/social/vocational-excellence

The **Erasmus+** programme
https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en

Functional mailbox for all questions related to CoVE calls:
EACEA-EPLUS-VET@ec.europa.eu

Applying for Erasmus+ CoVE funding in the Funding & Tenders Opportunities Portal (FTOP)
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/erasmus-edu-2022-pex-cove

Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs)

Finding partners for CoVE projects:

➢ Use the "**Partner search announcements**" in FTOP
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/erasmus-edu-2022-pex-cove

➢ The Center of Vocational Excellence **Match Making Map**
https://www.wearekatapult.eu/cove-match-making-map/

➢ **European Training Foundation (ETF) Network for Excellence (ENE)**
https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/projects-campaigns/projects/vocational-excellence

➢ Contact European **Associations of VET Providers** (e.g. EVTA, EVBB, EfVET, EUproVET, EURASHE, EUCEN)
https://hub.vet4eu2.eu/blog/2021/04/27/vet-european-networking-enhancement/

European Commission