



Training programme description

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1 Introduction

The worldwide competition can be seen becoming increasingly hard. Could the focus be shifting east? At least China is actively working in this direction. The largest economy in the world, the United States is doing its best to maintain its position. (The Centre for Economics and Business Research, 2020) What will be Europe's position in the future? This is a good question when thinking about the competitiveness of EU and its member countries. At its absolute core are competences and skills. (European Commission 2021)

Partly due to the Covid-19 pandemic, European Commission (2021) has raised the following skills on its agenda:

- strengthen sustainable competitiveness,
- ensure social fairness and
- build our resilience.

Highlighting these skills indicates that the Commission strongly believes in skills and competences as key resources in the future. On a personal level these skills are also good examples of soft skills.

In the project Marketing through Europe (MaTE) the objective is to develop a flexible training programme for business and commerce fields of upper secondary vocational education and training (VET). By developing this flexible training programme, the project enables the students to acquire competences needed when operating in international operational environments and to advance the development of their soft skills.

To learn more about the skills companies in working life seek, we implemented an investigative research. The aim of the research was to compare the marketing competence requirements to get an important overview of the required skills and knowledge. To achieve this objective national vocational qualifications in the four partner countries were analysed and compared. Besides a questionnaire was developed based on the NQ-analysis. This questionnaire was used to gather data from working life representatives of the four partner countries during May 2021. The results of this research process can be found HERE.

The research process was conducted in order to develop the end products of MaTE-project namely the MaTE training programme and the online learning materials related to the implementation of the training programme. The investigative research and it's results gave the developers important perceptions and insights into the needed competences and qualities. The MaTE training programme and the related online materials are based on the research results.





2 Course information

The estimated study time of the course is 4 weeks; including 2 weeks abroad. Concerning the first piloting of the training programme the studies started in April 2022 and ended in June 2022. Concerning the second piloting the studies started in January and ended in February 2023. So the approximate time period needed for implementing MaTE training programme is 2–3 months.

The estimated study time includes and course components are:

- Minimum 10 days group mobility working with European VET-students. The two pilots included VET-students and -teachers from four countries: Finland, Hungary, Netherlands, Portugal. There were 16 VET-students (four from each country) and 8 VET-teachers (2 from each country) involved in each of the pilots.
- Team work in homeland, during mobility and virtually in Teams.
- Getting familiar with and studying the case company; communicating with case company representatives.
- Implementing a small project (marketing related assignment) for the case company, solving the case company's marketing assignment in an international student group. Preparing presentations etc.
- Marketing studies (theories, tools etc.)
- Speaking, writing and presenting in English

3 Target group

This training programme is suitable for European VET-students in the field of business and commerce who want to boost their skills in English and learn the essentials of creating a sustainable marketing strategy. They should also be willing to develop their soft skills like team working, trustworthiness, flexibility and capability to solve problems. The participating VET-students must be interested and motivated in working with European VET-students (teamwork on European level) and be willing to take part in mobility abroad. They should be motivated to work with the case company. The pilot groups consisted of students which were of age 16–20.

The participating VET-students can be selected e.g. through the following criteria:

- English language knowledge
- School results in business and marketing (based on teacher evaluation / other data sources)
- Without disciplinary infractions
- Without Erasmus+ mobility or project participation

The above mentioned are only suggestions. Each VET-school has to decide the final selection criteria and process based on the school's individual circumstances. Application form (questions to evaluate personal and technical competences) can be used e.g. for preselection. Based on experiences gained





through the pilots it's advisable to have a discussion or interview with the applying student before the final decision. If the student is underage it may be important to involve the providers of the student to the selection process.

Based on experiences gained through the pilots it can be stated that the most optimal situation for training programme implementation is if the selected VET-students are with the same level of marketing knowledge and expectations. Therefore it may be important to select students who are on the same level of their business and marketing studies (e.g. same school year or evenly matched concerning studies).

4 Objectives

The overall objective of the training programme is:

The students are able to cowork internationally, to develop soft skills and know the basics of European marketing in a sustainable way.

The sub-objectives can be described as follows:

- What is the influence of the external and internal environment on a firm's marketing strategy? How can these environments be analysed? What kind of tools can and should be used?
- How to make an interesting and informative presentation of a firm's external and internal environment & business concept? How to present this information to an audience in English?
- What are the essential tasks and skills needed to apply Marketing Communications?
 Implementation of a small-scale marketing communications project for the case company e.g. vlogs, social media posts, product videos, flyers, prototypes and other content.
- What are the essential tasks and skills needed to identify customer needs? Implementation of small-scale target group assignment for the case company.
- Getting familiar with sustainability issues which are growing in importance through Europe and can provide companies a competitive advantage
- Developing soft skills such as team working, flexibility, trustworthiness, empathy, resilience, capability to solve problems, innovation, creativity, critical thinking, self-esteem and assertiveness
- Developing English speaking and writing skills.

5 Contents and Schedule

The training programme is structured into 4 courses. An essential part of MaTE training programme is case company involvement. There should be case companies which are involved in the realisation of the training programme. Concerning the first piloting of the training programme one case company was chosen from each partner country: there were altogether four case companies involved in the first piloting. In the second piloting of the training programme the four case companies were from the





country of mobility (Netherlands). Both ways of implementing the case company involvement were suited for the objectives of the training programme.

The first two courses deal with how to analyse a firm's external and internal environment. During these courses the VET-students analyse the chosen case company either in their home countries or in the country of mobility (depends on the way of implementing case company involvement). This will be done in student-team (4 students).

Based on their analyse of the case company the students / the student-team prepare a presentation in English. The students are prepared to give this presentation during the mobility week in English to explain the situation of the case company to VET-students of other European countries.

Before the mobility period students and teachers meet in Teams- or other virtual environment to get to know each other and the study programme during the mobility.

During mobility the students receive small-scale assignments from the case companies. These assignments will be done in multinational student teams (one student from each participating country). The assignments are related to marketing of the case company. The multinational student team (4 students) will try to solve the assignment to their best knowledge and is coached by the European VET-teachers. Constant feedback is given by the VET-teachers and the VET-students also evaluate themselves. At the end the students present the results to each other and the students. Company representatives can be present to evaluate the results either live or virtually. Feedback is given and assessment is made. For assessment purpose a separate assessment form has been created. Peer feedback can also be given. Self-assessment is also an essential part of the feedback process.

The figure below summarizes the MaTE training programme and highlights the process.





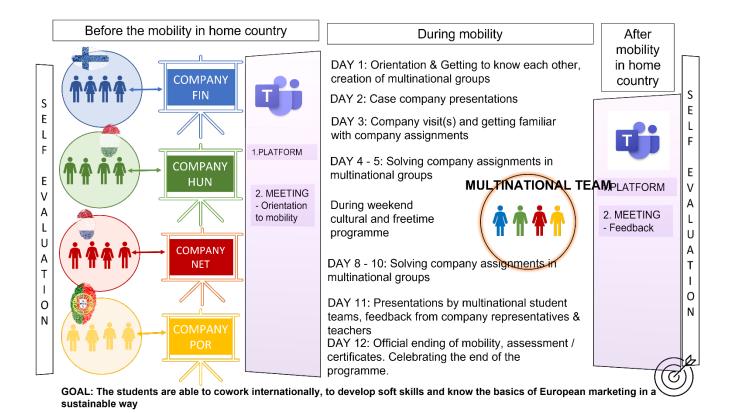


Figure: The MaTE training programme process

The figure shows the process of MaTE training programme. The process includes three phases

- 1. Before the mobility in home country the self evaluation of students related to soft skills takes place. The case companies in each country will be selected and the students get familiar with the selected case company. The students prepare a presentation of case company. Teams-meeting of students and teachers will be organised in order to be oriented for the mobility abroad. Also Teams-platform will be opened and sorted out so that e.g. all materials can be found from platform.
- 2. During mobility there is daily programme. In this general process description a recommendation is given that the mobility abroad would be 10 working days & weekend. The daily programmes include orientation, case company presentations by students which were prepared before mobility in home country, company visits, solving company assignments in multinational student groups, presentations by multinational student groups of their solutions to company assignments, teacher and company representatives feedback, official ending of mobility.
- 3. After mobility in home country a Teams-meeting of students and teachers will be organised in order to give feedback on the training programme as a whole. Students also do the self-evaluation related to soft skills development. Teams-platform will remain open for a couple of months in order to ensure availability of materials and presentations & possible posting and discussion after the training programme end.





5.1 Internal environment

The students are asked to develop the basic understanding and practice of the marketing internal analysis process, from the point of view of sustainability, in a real company. The students can do this in their home country with the chosen national company partner or during mobility abroad with the chosen case company of mobility country.

NAME Part 1: Internal environment				
Contents	 To develop on students the basic understanding and practice of the marketing internal analysis process, from the point of view of sustainability, in a real company 			
	 Provide students with skills and knowledge necessary to use the main analysis tools with critical thinking 			
	Comprehension of company activity and business			
	STP model and Marketing mix policies (4P's)			
	 SWOT analysis (Internal Analysis Outcome: Strengths and Weaknesses) 			
	Learning guide how to do internal analysis and key concepts of the main tools, provided in advance. Predefined templates to fulfil the task.			
	Students are asked to prepare an internal analysis of the chosen company in their home country. During mobility students should do an English presentation in PPT to explain the situation of the case company to the VET- students of other European countries.			
Learning outcomes	Knowledge Derticipants are able to			
outcomes	 Participants are able to Carry out an internal analysis to identify the company key challenges to take effective and sustainable marketing decisions 			
	Identify and explain the marketing strategy (STP model).			
	Identify the present marketing mix policies			
	Analyse product portfolio			
	 Make and analyse the SWOT matrix (Strengths and Weaknesses) 			
Skills				
	Participants are able to: • Undertake analysis with critical thinking			
	Have logical and structured thought			





	Organize, filter, and select relevant information for marketing decisions making
	Think strategically
	Develop an argument and express themselves clearly in written and oral communication
	Successfully work and take decisions as a team
	Be sensitive to sustainability issues
Developed by	ENSINUS (INETE) - PORTUGAL

5.2 External environment

Provide students with skills and knowledge necessary to use the main analysis tools with critical thinking developing a comprehensive set of PESTAL (MACRO) and ABCD + Porter competitor Matrix (MESO). The objective of parts 1 and to is to finish the SWOT analysis of the chosen case company.

NAME	Part 2: External environment
Contents	Students work on the external analysis keeping overall attention on sustainability issues. External analysis is divided into:
	4. The MACRO analysis by using the DESTEP method - demography, economy, social cultural related developments, technology, ecology and political related developments (laws, legislation) Filling in the DESTEP.
	5. The MESO analysis by using
	 The ABCD method (demand, branch, competitor and distribution investigation). Filling in the ABCD
	Five Competitor-forces model of Michael Porter. Making the Porter competitor matrix
	6. Defining the opportunities and threats for the company
	Learning guide how to do external analysis and key concepts of the main tools, provided in advance. Predefined templates to fulfil the task.
	Students are asked to prepare an external analysis of the chosen company in their home country. During mobility students should do an English presentation in PPT to explain the situation of the case company to the VET- students of other European countries.
Learning outcomes	 Knowledge Participants are able to practice the theory of DESTEP (Macro analysis)





- practice the theories of ABCD analyses and the Porter competitor matrix
- translate the outcome of their analyses to opportunities and threats for the company.
- explain what the external environment is.
- define to which stakeholders etc. are involved in the external environment.
- explain tools and to analyse the market.
- explain how the outcome of the analysis can effect future decisions.

Skills

Participants are able to:

- make analyses
- solve problems (thinking out of the box)
- show flexibility and creativity
- make connections in what they see in relation to the market approach of the company
- observe the organisation's external environment
- the ability to define the different stakeholders on all sorts of criteria's.
- being confident in approaching the different stakeholders
- take advantage of their communication and interaction skills taking into account the stakeholders, also using English.
- Being able to collect, interpretate and provide information and tasks to the board.

Developed by

GRAAFSCHAP COLLEGE - THE NETHERLANDS





5.3 Identify customer needs

The students will learn how to make market research, they will be able to create questionnaires, organize interviews and learn about market segmentation and targeting.

NAME	Part 3: Identify customer needs			
Contents	The students learn how to make market research, they will be able to create questionnaires and organize interviews. Students learn about market segmentation and targeting.			
	Steps and method of market research, question types, steps and parts of STP strategy.			
	Plan the research (hypothesis, deadlines etc.), create online questionnaire (e.g. with Google Forms), organise an interview, using Canva and Power Point, choose segmentation criteria.			
Learning Knowledge				
outcomes	Participantsknow the process and methods of market research			
	know the types of information (primer-seconder)			
	know methods of identifying customer needs used by the company			
	 know how to create questionnaire (type of the questions, structure of questionnaire, online platforms) 			
	know the rules of an interview			
	use apps to make presentations (Canva, Power Point)			
	know the STP strategy steps			
	create segmentation criteria after observing the environment of the company			
	divide the customers to groups according to segmentation criteria			
	choose the target group of the company			
	Know how to analyse data			
	Skills Participants are able to: compare the methods and the practice			
	 recognize the similarities and the differences set the points which need developing 			
	recognize the possibilities of using secondary information			
	communicate with managers-customers			





	use digital tools
	store information in a systematic way for using in the future
	summarize the results of the research
	make up suggestions for the future
	work as part of a team
	make analysis of data
Developed by	ANDRÁSSY – HUNGARY

5.4 Content production

The students are able to do project planning regarding content production. They are able to implement some of the plans e.g. do an ad with Canva or other application.

NAME Part 4: Marketing communication plans				
Contents	Students are able to do project planning regarding content production. They are able to implement some of the plans e.g. do an Ad with Canva or other application.			
	Acquiring knowledge about content marketing and its production.			
	 Taking into account main rules, regulations and ethical principles of marketing 			
	 Getting familiar with the use of Canva application (or other suitable application for content production) 			
	Planning marketing communications measures or contents			
	Taking advantage of digital marketing in the plans			
	Sketching out the need of resources for the plan			
	 Implementing marketing communications on different channels. 			
	Analysing the social media visibility & reachability			
Learning outcomes	Knowledge Participants are able to • explain what content marketing is			
	define to whom the content marketing is targeted			





	 choose proper channels for content production of the case company describe how Canva application works in general Skills Participants are able to: observe the organisation's communication strategy (case company) take advantage of the opportunities provided by the digital operating environment (know how to use e.g. Canva, know basics e.g. about Instagram, FB) implement communications on chosen channel(s) take advantage of their communication and interaction skills taking into account the customer target group, also using English.
Developed by	WINNOVA - FINLAND



6 Pedagogical methods

In the learning process of Marketing through Europe in a sustainable way the students learn in different teams. We can call it collaborative learning model. From the point of view of the students they work both in home teams and specialist teams. The whole learning process has been organized as a project with the goals and resources. According to the official goals the students learn especially marketing skills. By working in teams they also learn many soft skills such as features / skills like empathy, resilience, capability to solve problems, self-esteem, assertiveness and trustworthiness, which are essential in the future of work.

In the first phase of the project the students work in the home teams in their home countries. They get to know the case companies (one in each country) and their internal and external marketing environments. In pedagogical sense, it brings authenticity to learning. They take contacts, organize meetings, collect information, negotiate about the business goals and even create knowledge. They learn many things needed in real business life. The students plan and in the beginning of the mobility week implement a presentation about their case companies.

In the second phase of the project, the students meet each other and continue working and learning in mixed teams that can be called specialist teams. The specialist teams get small-scaled assignments from the case companies. The students collect information for example by reading, observing, making interviews or implementing small researches. Thus, they specialize in their assignment. Finally, the results will be presented in the big group. About one week after the mobility the students will reflect their experiences in original home groups and also share the results of their reflections in the Teams meeting for all the students, teachers and other project actors.

Pedagogical method is not a learning process only for the students but also for the teachers. During the learning process of the students, the teachers give advises but also let the students find out the solutions by themselves. The give space to the own thoughts of the students. The teachers learn and get used to use modern pedagogical and didactical methods in their teaching. The teachers also reflect their experiences by answering to questionnaires and in the separate meetings during the mobility. The try to find out both successes and opportunities of development.

These pedagogical methods are an essential part of the training programme development since the learning outcomes of the training programme are not only content-based (marketing planning, implementation and evaluation skills and knowledge) but also connected to developing students and teachers, soft skills that are skills that are needed in working life now and in the future.



7 Learning environments

Pedagogically it has a great meaning in which environment learning happens. The more authentic it is, the more significant meanings the students can give for the things learned. The case companies can offer this authenticity for the learning in the MaTE model.

The other important dimension in a learning environment is the social aspect. In the working life and in life general we need cooperative skills. We are not able to act alone. In the MaTE model the students interact with each other in more than one team. Thus, they inevitably gain new contacts and experiences.

The learning environments of the training programme include

- Teams as digital learning environment
- Mobility period during which multinational teamwork
- Working with case company representatives / working in the case company
- Teamwork in home country

8 Assessment

The participating students are asked to fill in soft skills' self-evaluation form before the start of the MaTE training programme. The students fill in the same form after they have completed the MaTE training programme. The basic meaning of this data collecting is to find out if the soft skills of the students', have changed during the period. The assumption is that the soft skills of the students would have improved but we cannot be sure without finding out. It might be of more academic interest, but on the other hand, it brings important information from the point of view of development the learning process in the future. The soft skills evaluation form can be found as attachment one.

The teachers assess their own teaching and the learning of their students in the questionnaires. The responses are discussed in a separate meeting during the mobility and also in Teams meetings before and after the mobility period.

The assessment is important in giving information about the competences, knowledge and skills of students. But it also important in guiding the learner in the desired direction. Thus assessment can be based on the meaning and thoughts of one teacher. However, it would be more reliable if we can use information from several sources. We can for example let the students assess their learning themselves and call it self-assessment. We can also ask the other students to assess each other and call it peer-assessment. After the completion of courses 1 and 2 and the presentation of the case company self-assessment of knowledge, skills and competences is done according to the guidelines provided. The self-assessment guideline can be found as attachment two.

At the end of MaTE training programme the participating students were given the opportunity to give feedback. The feedback questions can be found from attachment three.





9 Sources

The Centre for Economics and Business Research. 2020. *World Economic League Table 2020*. Retrieved May 24, 2021 from https://cebr.com/reports/world-economic-league-table-2020/

European Commission. 2021. European Skills Agenda – for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience. Retrieved May 17, 2021 from

https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&furtherNews=yes&newsId=9723&langId=en





10 Attachments

10.1 Attachment 1: Soft skills evaluation questionnaire

Claims in the MaTE soft skills evaluation questionnaire targeted to students (see chapter 8, first paragraph).

It should be noted that the bolded headings were not used in the self evaluation questionnaire sent to the involved VET-students. The heading are only to point out what was measured with each question. The headings should be removed when creating the questionnaire. The questions can also be mixed if needed.

Questionnaire scale 1–5: I totally disagree, I do not disagree or agree, I agree and I totally agree.

Introduction text in the beginning of questionnaire: In MaTE-project we are interested in the soft skills of the students. In the Self Evaluation Form below we have set some statements and we hope that you will evaluate them in relation to yourself.

We also hope that you are ready to answer these questions both in the beginning of our MaTE training program and in the end of it.

Empathy

- I can put myself in other person's shoes
- I notice other people's feelings easily

Resilience

- I cope well in new situations
- I like to work in an uncertain situation.

Capability to solve problems

- It is easy to me to solve different problems
- I like solving problems

Self-esteem

- I believe in myself
- I am long term and stick to my plans

Assertiveness

- I can defend my opinions
- I am a good team leader

Trustworthiness





- I always do what I promise
- Team members can trust in me

Team working

- I think that team working is more effective than individual working
- I like team working
- I listen carefully to the opinions of my team members
- I take responsibility for achieving the group's goal

Flexibility

- I easily accept solutions that go against my own opinion
- I listen to the opinions of others

Goal orientation

• I set goals and work hard to achieve them

Entrepreneurship

- I come up with my own ways of working and doing things
- I want to try new things
- I like to create new ways of doing things

Critical thinking

- I don't believe everything that I have been told
- In social media there are a lot of "fake news"





10.2 Attachment 2: Student assessment guideline

See chapter 8, paragraph 2 for details.

Student assessment in MaTE training programme

[student full name] has been involved and present at [school name] training programme, as part of ERASMUS+ MATE – Marketing Through Europe Project from [date1] to [date2].

During this period [student full name] has shown himself/herself as a (list minimum of three key traits, e.g. patient, knowledgeable, flexible, sociable, exceptional) MaTE project colleague.

[student full name] has also developed the following competences and soft skills to a higher level.

Skills	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
English language skills			
Intercultural communication			
Business communication			
Team working			
Flexibility			
Trustworthiness			
Working in international settings			
Capability to solve problems			
Innovation and Creativity			
Improvising in critical thinking			

Signature (by tutor team of teachers)





10.3 Attachment 3: Feedback form to VET-students concerning the realisation of MaTE training programme

Check chapter 8, paragraph 3 for details.

The scale is 0 - 10. 0 = strongly disagree. 10 = strongly agree.

Rate the following questions.

- 1. During the week it was easy to stay concentrated
- 2. The lessons, visits etc. were easy to follow and understand
- 3. I felt motivated
- 4. I staid active the whole week
- 5. I liked the teaching / coaching style
- 6. An international experience should be part of everyone's marketing / business studies
- 7. How likely would you recommend such an experience to other students?(scale 0 = very unlikely 10 = very likely)
- 8. Why would you recommend / Why wouldn't you recommend such and experience? Please give arguments, reasons for your previous answer. (Open question)
- 9. Did you develop your soft skills during MaTE training programme and the mobility in [place, country] (Scale: Yes / No)
- 10. Did you develop your marketing skills during MaTE training programme and the mobility in [place, country] (Scale: Yes / No)
- 11. How and/or why did you develop your soft skills and marketing skills (Open question)
- 12. In one word or with couple of words How would you describe the MaTE training programme and the mobility in [place, country] (Open question, producing a world cloud)

