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A new cross-European Scale Up Network

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About the project

The project proposes to establish a new cross-European Scale Up Network, working across six EU member states, which will support 140 SMEs to move to the next stage of growth over two years. The profile of participants to be engaged will be senior managers of SMEs that have been established for at least three years, who have a clear ambition to internationalise and grow their company to the next level.At the same time, an innovative model of cooperation between universities and businesses will be created.

Project duration: 7/ 2021- 7/ 2023, Phase I.: 7 – 12/ 2021 (3/2022), Phase II. 1/2022- 7/2023

KIC Innoenergy

Consorcium: I.T. Sligo, Ireland (coordinator) + 5 other European universities

6 HEI's (I.T. Sligo, Ireland; VSB - Technical University of Ostrava, CR; JAMK University of Applied Sciences, Finland; Miskolci Egyetem, Hungary, Karel de Grote Hogeschool Katholieke Hogeschool Antwerpen, Belgium; University of Sannio, Italy)

8 associated/industry partners (innovation centres, SME associations, chamber of commerce, ...)

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VSB TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF OSTRAVA

KdG University of Applied Sciences and Arts

jamk University of Applied Sciences

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Vision and mission

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Equip SME's with the knowledge and tools to expand their Organisation globally

Foster collaboration & networking among SMEs internationally

Develop a model of engagement and collaboration among the HE sector, SMEs and Industry Partners

Engage SMEs in a cross-European network

Develop an academic award based on learning acquired

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Academy - Introduction

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The Academy offers a programme for small and medium-sized companies doing business in the areas of Manufacturing, Digital and ICT, Raw Materials and/or Energy, which are considering expanding into international markets.

The Academy's 18-month program includes mentoring, education, consultations with experts and the opportunity to share good practice and gain valuable contacts. The program is built on mutual learning and sharing (peer mentoring network).

Participating companies will be given access not only to information on current technological developments, trends, the market situation in the given sector and on the export market, but also to expertise within individual fields (EIT KIC, consortium experts and others).

Each company will be assigned a mentor who will accompany the program, help set the expansion strategy, provide the necessary know-how, consultation with experts in the field and education (professional and soft skills).

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Objectives

Recruit	140 SME owner managers onto the program
Deliver	Facilitated peer mentoring meetings for participating SMEs.
Deliver	Training workshops that engages each participant at least twice in the first six months
Engage	80 participants to take part in webinars provided by the KICs
Provide	At least four mentoring sessions for all SME's
Engage	125 will complete a strategic plan for their organisation
Provide	Training and mentoring for 28 group facilitators
Develop	30 case studies to further research on entrepreneurship.

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Innovation

SUA = an innovative model of HEI engagement with innovation and entrepreneurship that will extend the ability of HEIs to engage effectively with SMEs.

1) Just in time learning - entrepreneurs will learn about topics as and when they need to for their own business.

2) Peer mentoring dimension to the programme - participants will mostly learn from each other

3) Internalisation – use of digital technology and access to expertise and learning resources from across Europe

4) Links to KICs – participants will use education or innovation resources available through the relevant KIC + many graduates of the SUA project will be very suitable candidates for participation in Accelerator programmes of KICs

5) Multidisciplinarity - business disciplines, including Marketing, Finance and Human Resources with a focus on the Science and Engineering disciplines applicable to each of the KICs, as well as the harnessing of digital technology

6) Knowledge Triangle - teaching activities of workshops, mentoring and training sessions, opportunities for companies to undertake small research exercises as part of their plan development, the result of which is practical innovation by companies, research case studies to be used by other students etc.

7) Gender Dimension - built-in bias to help increase that proportion by setting a minimum target of 40% of the Owner Managers recruited to the project being women

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Work packages and work plan

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WP 1	WP 2	WP 3	WP 4	WP 5	WP 6	WP 7
Project Co-ordination	**Academic Management**	**Peer Mentoring Network**	**Strategic Plan Development**	**Training and Expert Events, Raw Mater. and Manufacturing**	**Training and Expert Events, Sustainable Energy and Digital**	**Promotion, Evaluation and Dissemination**
IT Sligo	IT Sligo	Karel de Grote	University of Sannio	University of Miskolci	VSB - Technical University of Ostrava	JAMK University of Applied Sciences
Project management & co-ordination Management of Steering Committee Reporting to EIT Budget & financial management Monitoring progress and activities against milestones	Developing academic accreditation for project Liaison with academic partners in assessment of strategic plans Overall academic leadership	Training of 28 group facilitators – 4 / 5 days training Set up and manage peer mentoring network – 140 event per year approx Quarterly reports of learning from peer mentoring network	Manage the development of strategic plans for each company Provision of training workshops on strategic planning topics Deliver mentoring to participants on strategic planning	Develop and deliver sector specific training workshops on the Raw Materials and Manufacturing sectors Contribute to development of at least 35 case studies	Develop and deliver sector specific training workshops on the Sustainable Energy and Digital sectors Contribute to development of at least 35 case studies	Website Internal and External Communications Evaluation of Project Impacts and Outputs Collation and Dissemination of Results
140 SME's recruited Project and budgetary reporting	Accreditation for process and strategic plan	28 facilitators trained	125 strategic plans completed 500 individual mentoring sessions 25 – 30 training events	Completion of 35 case studies 120 training events		Website launched Social media campaign Successful communications

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IVAP

Innovation Vision Action Plan

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IVAP development

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Aims:

- Strengthen the entrepreneurial and innovation capacity of HEIs at institutional level
- Strengthen integration into innovation ecosystems

Content:

- a long-term view towards increasing the innovation and entrepreneurial capacity within the corresponding HEIs, at institutional level.
- designed on the basis of an HEInnovate self-assessment

Perform HEInnovate self-assessment	Create Innovation Vision Action Plan (IVAP)	Implement IVAP Phase 1	Implement IVAP Phase 2	Implement IVAP Post-Project

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Self-assessment

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SUA addresses four weaknesses (average score of 2 or less) that have been identified through the exercise:

Incentives and rewards given to staff who engage with entrepreneurship
Results of entrepreneurship research inform delivery of teaching
Assessment of how people and resources support entrepreneurship
Assessment of the international dimension to entrepreneurial education

Project will build on the following collective strengths (average score of 3 or more):

Capacity and culture to build new relationships and synergies
Provide diverse informal learning opportunities and experience to stimulate entrepreneurship
Co-design and deliver programmes with external stakeholders
Support the use of digital technologies to enhance quality of teaching and learning
Active involvement in partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders
Support the international mobility of staff and students.

Domains and Actions

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Domain 1 - Fostering institutional engagement and change:

Multi-disciplinary support structures: The development of a new form of HE cross-disciplinary qualification, awarded to SME owner managers on development of a strategic plan for their company.

Domain 2 – Strengthening Partnerships:

New collaborations: A peer mentoring network will be set up for 140 SME owner managers, overseen by the partners with Group Facilitators put forward by them and trained for the role.

Exchange good practices: There will be quarterly reports from the Facilitators, highlighting points of learning encountered in each of the groups and sharing these across the network.

Domain 3 – Contributing to Developing Innovation and Business

Structures for innovation-driven research: This strategic plans developed by the SMEs will be treated as research projects to be assessed for the award of a postgraduate qualification and will further feed in to research on entrepreneurship.

Domain 4 – Enhancing the Quality of Education

Innovation and entrepreneurial curricula: Most of the training provided through the programme will be organised in response to the specific needs of participants. This “Just in Time” learning approach is key to keeping SMEs engaged in the programme and the effectiveness of the learning. The programme will include in its portfolio skills development activities being provided through the KICs.

Training programmes and mentoring schemes: Mentoring will be provided for both SME owner manager participants and for the Group Facilitators, half of which will be HEI staff and half from outside of HE.

Project management and administration

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- **Contracting** – one grant agreement signed by also partners (no consortiuma greement)
- **Financial rules** similar to HE rules, cost catogries, indirect costs, calculations (however – different reporting periods, budget cannot be transfered between the periodsnor phases, etc.), no manual available
- **Support from EIT** – project officers present at Steering commitee meetings, provision of on-line trainings and consultations
- Support provided at different levels – project officer at the project level + each partner has been assigned its regional partner contact
- **Reporting** – performance and financial reports (EOI system) + Phase One Review Meeting with external evaluator (online, MS Teams)