Erasmus+

Activity Code O4
Summary Audit Report

SYNERGY

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1. Introduction

Synergy project is born with the aim of improving the quality and the relevance of Vet provision to micro enterprise in order to enhance the European economy by developing a learning environment for vocational education professionals and micro-enterprise owners.

The SYNERGY project team are endeavouring to develop tools and resources to meet the needs of VET providers and micro-enterprises in different countries across Europe. This skill asset audit is necessary to ensure that the content of resources developed are relevant to address skill deficits and are not superfluous to the existing knowledge of the micro-enterprise owners and managers.

The **Summary Audit Report** report aims to create a synthesis of the individual country audit reports and an evaluation of the.

The objectives of the planned audit of micro-enterprise owners will focus on 4 areas;

1) Identifying specific skill assets and knowledge within existing micro-enterprises that could be harnessed to support the development of the sector as a whole
2) The learning preferences of micro-enterprise owners and the most appropriate learning platforms and environments for the proposed peer-to-peer learning;
3) What are the learning areas where gaps in provision exist that need to be addressed with the proposed mini-learning-format resources;
4) What are the skill assets within the micro-enterprise community that could be used to inform the train-the-trainer course-ware to ensure that the skills developed within the VET sector reflect the needs of business.

This summary audit report will establish the state-of-the-art for the areas outlined above. It will be based on a summary of the findings in the 6 individual country audit reports. This summary audit report which will comprise the evidence base for future development actions will be printed and available in all partner languages. It will also be available for download from the project website and included on the USB stick that will contain all project outputs.

2. Methodology used

The audit framework has been implemented and completed by the six implementing partners, with the help of their local business communities. Partners were given a choice of means to complete this audit; these consisted of a focus group, with agreed questions to facilitate the feedback session, an online survey, facilitated through the online platform, Survey Monkey and an option to conduct interviews with members of the target group either face-to-face or using Skype or a telephone.

The survey helped each partner to develop the **Individual country audit reports** .As these were micro-enterprises, it was agreed that business involved in the audit would have fewer than 10 employees. Each partner was then tasked with completing a national report. These reports were compiled by AOA Arges, to produce a summary audit report.

This summary report establishes the state-of-the-art for four thematic areas mentioned in the introduction. This report is based on a summary of the findings in the 6 individual country audit reports, and so it comprises the evidence base for future development actions in relation to the Induction to Pedagogy training, the Mini-learning Formats and the peer-to-peer learning to be facilitated through the micro-social networks.

The total number of participants involved by each country in the audit process	
Irlanda - Meath Partnership	30 participants
Cyprus - Cardet	21 participants
Germany - University of Paderborn	23 participants
Greece - University of Peloponnese	24 participants
Italy – Ares	14 participants
Romania – AOA Arges	20 participants

In total **132** micro-enterprises have participated and responded to the audit questionnaires. The research was conducted using an online questionnaire created and distributed through Survey Monkey. Also telephone interviews and face to face meetings were conducted with the micro-enterprise owners. The survey consisted of 24 questions and took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Questions concerned demographic characteristics, experience of vocational training, attitudes towards sharing skills,

identification of needs for training, resources previously used, obstacles to training, preferred mode of learning etc.

The answers were then manually inputted to the Survey Monkey tool by the partners. The survey also aimed to identify entrepreneurs who might be able to engage in subsequent activities within the context of SYNERGY, and has developed a link between the SYNERGY project and the business environment.

This report contains a summary of all the **Individual country audit reports** and is focused mainly on the four areas mentioned before.

3. Summary of National Results

1. **Please identify specific skill assets and knowledge within existing micro-enterprises that have participated at the audit that could be used to support other micro-enterprises.**

   A. Summary of National Results - this results are based on the research activity and national report of each partner of the project.

	Ireland:	Cyprus:	Germany	Greece:	Italy:	Romania
	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	Communications	Communication	Communication	Communication	Communication	Management
2	Management	Management	Teamwork	Management	Human resource	Communication
3	Marketing	Team Work	Marketing	Marketing	Information Technology	Teamwork
4	Teamwork	Human Resource	Management	Information technology	Team work	Negotiation abilities
5	Negotiation	Marketing	Negotiation	Team work	Management	Marketing
6	Finance	Information Technology	Business strategy and growth	Negotiation skills		
7	Information Technology	Finance	Communication and Networking			
8	Human Resources					

By analysing and centralising the responses of the micro-enterprises that have participated at the audit research in each partner country, we can observe that the most present skills are:

1. Communications
2. Management
3. Teamwork
The skills have been identified within all the partner countries.

4. Marketing
The next most common skill identified in 5 of the 6 partner countries is Marketing.

5. Negotiation skills
This response is present in 3 out of the 6 partner countries.

By concluding, the list of skills and knowledge that owners of the existing micro-enterprise possess are:
- 1. Communications, 2. Management, 3. Teamwork – present in all countries
- 4. Marketing - present in 5 partners countries
- 5. Negotiation skills - present in 4 partners countries

> B.   National Results identified in each partner countries:

> **Ireland:**

Responses to Q11, Q12 and Q13 have provided sufficient evidence to identify specific skills and knowledge that respondents are willing to share with other micro-enterprise owners in order to support them in their venture. 80% of respondents said they are willing to share their knowledge and skills in the future. Of these, 69.2% said they would provide knowledge that could be included on an online platform. Respondents also identified a list of the skills and knowledge that they possess and would recommend helpful for other micro-enterprise owners. In order of expertise these are namely:
- Communications
- Management
- Marketing
- Teamwork
- Negotiation
- Finance
- Information Technology
- Human Resources

Additional skills and knowledge highlighted: Planning, Problem Solving and Business Resilience.

> ➢ **Cyprus:**

According to the responses from the 21 micro-enterprise owners that participated in the survey, 19 of participants which represents 90.48%, commented that they are willing to share their knowledge and expertise in the future. However, 73.68% said that they will be willing to do so under teaching for pay circumstances whereas the other 68.42% said that they are willing to provide their knowledge for free through an online platform or either through informal meeting among micro-enterprise owners. This indicates, that despite that the majority are willing to share their knowledge through a reimbursement method, a promising percentage are willing to share their knowledge for free, which is an interesting observation to consider for future training. Moreover, participants consider that the following skills are useful to support other micro-enterprise owners.

- Communication (66.67%)
- Management (61.90%)
- Team Work (52.38%)
- Human Resource (28.57%)
- Marketing (28.57%)
- Information Technology (28.57%)
- Finance (14.29%)

> ➢ **Germany:**

It is necessary to have a look at which skills already exist within the SME business community, to get an idea about the subjects and issues where micro-enterprises could support each other. For this purpose, we will focus again on the following questions:

(1) Q6 and Q15, as they outline where it is required for SMEs to develop skills.

(2) Q13 and Q14, as they provide an overview concerning recently existing skills.

Following the statements of our respondents Communication and Teamwork are two main areas where entrepreneurs need skills to run a business successfully. This is closely followed by skills in the fields of Marketing, General Management and Negotiation. We can find this estimation not only in Q6, but also in the responses to Q15. Here, the following four disciplines were mentioned. They should be covered in future training activities and materials:

- Business strategy and growth,
- Communication and Networking,
- Marketing
- Negotiation

Just a few less of the respondents mentioned Finances, Taxes and Accounting and Information Technology in this context, even if they were estimated as the least required skill areas to run a business successfully.

These findings show us the topics and the disciplines where a demand for training exists. Based on SYNERGYs idea to use the skills assets that recently exist in SMEs to teach other business-owners, both aspects have to be compared: The demands and the currently existent skill-assets as well.

The responses to Q13 show us, that the surveyed persons estimated particularly their skill in Communication as valuable and helpful also for other MEOs; closely followed by Teamwork, Management and Marketing. Strengthening these findings we can have a closer look at the responses to Q14, where the businesses were asked to assess their skills. Additionally, the responses to both questions show us also, that skill assets in Business growth and strategy and Information Technology are existing furthermore.

It is clear, that the demands and the existing assets are matching well at this point. Besides these well matching examples there are also training activities and materials required for the disciplines Negotiation and Finances, Taxes and Accounting. We could not cover this within our sample, as the responses to Q13 and Q14 show. Hence, as a conclusion we suggest to rely on broader networks where businesses from different sectors are connected. An option would be, to link the different networks. Particularly to face, e.g., regional biases.

Anyway, our conclusion is the following: Even when we are looking at the small sample it can be said, that most of the requirements regarding information and knowledge can be covered within the group itself. For this purpose, a mechanism for an efficient and effective exchange of the different skill assets has to be established. Furthermore, the openness and willingness for using such mechanisms like, e.g., a network, has to be promoted. Looking at our findings, there was only a small number of training demands that did not appear within the surveyed group. But these affected particularly those disciplines which are represented by businesses of branches not represented in our sample. Hence, the conclusion could be either to consider that networks in which the exchange may take place are composed of enterprises from various branches or, that the aforementioned topics are of a type, where external providence is required.

Summarizing it can be said, that there are manifold skill assets available in our SME community which could be harnessed. Thereby, most of the learning requirements of various kinds could be faced within the community / network of the exchanging persons itself.

> **Greece:**

Participants thought that the most useful skills they could offer other micro-enterprise owners were:
- Communication (62%)
- Management (58,3%)
- marketing (54,2%)
- information technology (41,7%)

In contrast, team work, negotiation skills and human resources did not rank as high within the skills set micro-entrepreneurs had, with finance ranking as the least useful skill. Furthermore, participants also stated that they were most confident about their knowledge on strategy and business growth as well as marketing and information technology.

> **Italy:**

What emerges from the answers of our target group (14 participants) is that almost total of participants are agreed that sharing experiences could represent a key role for the development and growth of their own micro enterprise and they are going to share them also in the future (92,9%). They also think that sharing experiences for free, on website platform , 69,2%, could represent a good mean.

Moreover, participants consider that the following skills are useful to support other micro-enterprise owners.

Management	21,4%
Team work	28,6%
Communication	42,9%
Human resource	42,9%
Information Technology	35,7%

> **Romania:**

After concluding with the 20 responses from the micro-enterprises owners, the results show a positive way of dealing with developing and improving other micro-enterprises.

Hence, 89.47% of the participants are willing to share their knowledge with others, most of them preferring to do this through an online platform.

As we could see in the above questionnaire, the most important abilities for the business owners are: Management (72.22%), Communication (61.11%), Teamwork (55.56%), Negotiation abilities (44.44%), Marketing (38.89%) and Information technology (11.11%).

2. **Please define the learning preferences of micro-enterprise owners that have participated at the audit, and the most appropriate learning platforms and environments for the learning.**

   A. Summary of National Results - this results are based on the research activity and national report of each partner of the project.

	Ireland:	**Cyprus:**	**Germany**	**Greece:**	**Italy:**	**Romania**
1	Mentoring	Online Courses	Mentoring	Online courses	Case Studies	Online courses
2	Interactive Learning	Podcast	Interactive Learning	Interactive learning	Interactive Learning	Podcasts
3	Peer to Peer Learning	Peer to Peer Learning	Online Courses	Case studies	Peer to Peer Learning	Mentoring
4	Case Studies	Mentoring	Peer to Peer Learning	Mentoring	Podcasts	
5	Online Courses	Case Studies			online courses	
6	Podcasts	Interactive Learning				

By centralising the answers form the national responses of the micro-enterprises that have participated at the audit research, we can observe that:

1. **Mentoring** - is present in the top 4 answers in Ireland, Cyprus, Germany Greece and Romania, thus being one of the most desirable learning preferences
2. **Interactive Learning** - is present on the second place in 4 of the 6 partner countries.
3. **Online courses** - as a learning platform is presented as the first choice in Cyprus, Greece and Romania, and is also present in Ireland, Germany and Italy on the third and fourth places.
4. Peer to Peer Learning - is on the third place in Ireland, Cyprus, Italy, and on the forth in Germany. But it Cyprus, Greece and Romania it is not present in the top answers.

Also result shows most respondent are happy to use traditional learning formats.

In terms of learning resources, respondents showed preference to: to business seminars/webinars , case studies/worksheets , and online courses.

According to participants, there were a number of obstacles that they faced from previous training. Most of the obstacles are represented by costs and time.

B. National Results identified in each partner countries:

➢ **Ireland:**

Respondents to Q12, clearly indicated that the most time they are willing to invest in training on a weekly basis is between 1-3 hours. In terms of training support, respondents to Q16 clearly indicated Mentoring to be the most important, however it is also noted that a significant proportion of respondents to this survey who ranked mentoring as the training support they prefer were from the Food & Hospitality sector. This was followed by Interactive Learning, Peer to Peer Learning, Case Studies, Online Courses and finally Podcasts. The focus from respondents is for a more interactive learning support.

Respondents also provided details regarding obstacles they have previously experienced when participating in training and or VET programmes. The most difficult issue raised was the relevance of the course content provided in the training. This was closely followed by cost and location. The remaining barriers included training time, delivery methodology, training duration and classroom size.

Answers given to Q23 demonstrated a preference towards external guidance by professionals through delivered materials when it comes to guided learning as opposed to self-paced learning. Mentoring or teaching by more experienced persons was the next selection followed by learning in a peer group while supporting each other. This information will allow for further consideration when planning the SYNERGY content to ensure the needs of micro-enterprise owners are catered for.

In terms of learning resources, respondents showed preference to business seminars/webinars followed by case studies/worksheets/delivered training material. Podcasts/speeches were the third preferred resource with online course coming in the least preferred learning resource.

➢ **Cyprus:**

As indicated from the responses of the micro-enterprise owners that participated in the survey, their most important learning preference is through Online Courses followed by a close proximity with Podcast, Peer to Peer Learning and Mentoring. It should also be noted, that their least important learning preference method is from Case Studies and Interactive Learning. Therefore, there is a clear indication that micro-enterprise owners prefer a more technological approach to learning rather than traditional methods such as case studies. Most probably this is related to their limited availability for training on a weekly basis.

In addition, micro-enterprise owners consider that learning in a peer-group while supporting each other as the most important preferred method of guided learning, which is followed by mentoring or teaching by more experienced persons. Moreover, the least important learning method is through external guidance by professionals thus exhibiting a preference of interaction among each other which also aligns with the learning methodology that will be applied to project SYNERGY.

With regards to their preferred learning resource, micro-enterprise owners indicated a clear preference for Online Courses as already specified from prior training. Their second most important learning resource is Business Seminars or Webinars which was followed by Podcasts or Speeches. Once again, the least important method is through case studies or from articles or books.

➢ **Germany:**

Now, we would like to take a look at the responses to Q11, Q12, Q17 and Q21-Q24 again. The responses to these questions provide insights into the respondent's mindsets regarding an organized exchange of knowledge, the right circumstances under which the training activities should take place. Moreover, we will get information about the preferred method as well. This kind of information will be used to deduce hints regarding the conceptual work of future training activities and materials.

The learning needs can be covered by the available skill assets. But, for this purpose there is the need for an exchange mechanism like a network. Hence, the participants of such networks necessarily need to be open for sharing knowledge, information and experiences. In this context, the responses to Q11 provide an optimistic impression. 95% of our respondents were up for such exchange.

In this context the participants mention, that the exchange should be based on a quid-pro-quo situation or that the recipients should not be market-competitors. Given this circumstances, the respondents would also be willing to share their knowledge on an online-platform (see finding of Q12).

The costs and the contents' relevancy were critical aspects for our respondents. The vast majority perceived these criterions negatively in the past

SYNERGYs project partners should have these findings in mind, too. Particularly when we are trying to foster the enterprise owner´s willingness to share their knowledge it is important to remind us of these facts.

Fortunately, the method of the training activities in which our respondents have been engaged yet, were not perceived negatively at all.

Additionally, seminars, topic-based internet forums, online journals, literature of any kind, lectures, etc. are included in this definition of traditional learning format, too. When it comes to guided-learning, our respondents are more interested to be addressed by an experienced person than to encourage peer-to-peer learning situations. (see finding Q23). Furthermore,

- business seminars and/ or
- webinars and, slightly behind,
- case studies and working sheets

are preferred over

- online courses and
- MOOCs, podcasts and/ or
- talks, and
- external delivered materials that will be worked out on one´s own guided by a more experienced person..

Our survey-participants prefer traditional learning resources over more modern, digital resources and self-guided learning over guided-learning. These findings are not pleasing, when looking at SYNERGYs idea of establishing knowledge-exchange networks and a mini-learning-format-resources based online platform. Here, our finding is conflictive with those of the literature, where learning-resource based online platforms used for a structured exchange and self-guided learning processes are promoted (cf. also Koscheck, S. / Weiland, M. 2013: 8).

> **Greece:**

With regards to Greek participants' preferred training support method, online courses were given as a first option, followed by interactive learning, case studies, and mentoring. Peer to peer learning and podcast were their least preferred options.

Participants in the current sample also stated that they were willing to invest between 1 and 3 hours per week for training (58,3%). A smaller percentage of the sample (25%) stated that they were willing to invest between 3 and 5 hours per week.

With regards to obstacles they encountered during training, participants stated that the most difficult thing for them was the cost of the training, the relevance of the course content, the location and the training delivery methodology. The least difficult thing was the size of the classroom, the time of training and the duration of training.

Participants stated preferred mentoring / teaching as their preferred method of learning, followed by external guidance by professionals while learning in a peer group was their least preferred option. Participants stated that the learning resources they preferred were case studies and worksheets and/ or delivered learning material with questions to work out,

articles and/ or books, followed by business seminars or webinars, online courses and/or MOOCs and finally podcasts and/ or speeches (e.g. TED talks).

> **Italy:**

Our micro enterprise owners are sincerely interested in e learning platforms but another important preference has been showed regarding case studies. This means that they want an on line platform in which they could learn by themselves but they also need "real example"

> **Romania:**

In terms of learning preferences, the micro-enterprises owners who have participated in the survey, have chosen in their majority the online courses. Moreover, the results have concluded that the next most preferred learning method of the participants is represented by podcasts. Mentoring is one of the top 3 preferences listed by the participants, followed by peer to peer learning, case studies and interactive learning.

3. Please pinpoint the learning areas where gaps in VET provision exist within the micro-enterprises that have participated at the audit.

A. Summary of National Results - this results are based on the research activity and national report of each partner of the project.

	__Ireland:__	__Cyprus:__	__Germany__	__Greece:__	__Italy:__	__Romania__
1	Supply Chain Management	Information Technology	Supply chain management´	Business law	Business Law	Strategy and business growth
2	Business Law	Strategy and Business Growth	Business law	Logistics	Marketing	Business law
3		Logistics	Logistics	Supply chain management	Logistics	Information technology.
4		Marketing				

By analysing the answers form the national responses of the micro-enterprises that have participated at the audit research, we can observe that participants rank certain skills as not as important to them.

It is logical to assume there is a gap in VET areas, but also these results can be caused by a bias based on our sample structure.

- **Business Law** - is present in 5 out of 6 partners (Ireland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Romania)
- **Logistics** - is present in 5 out of 6 partners (Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Italy)
- **Supply Chain Management** – is present in 3 out of 6 partners (Ireland, Germany Greece)

B. National Results identified in each partner countries based on the national results :

➢ **Ireland:**

In terms of pinpointing gaps in VET provision, Q14 allowed respondents to provide information on the knowledge and expertise they had in different business areas. Respondents to this question ranked their business knowledge of a particular area from 1 (poor) to 7 (excellent). Marketing was selected as the most knowledgeable followed by Information Technology, Logistics, Strategy and Business Growth and Finance and Accounting.

Supply Chain Management and Business Law received the lowest rankings. These results demonstrate areas where microenterprises have both strong and weak understandings of certain business areas and where gaps in VET provision exist.

➢ **Cyprus:**

According to the responses from the micro-enterprise owners that participated, the area of knowledge which they consider that they need more training is Information Technology since it was ranked with the lowest score. This might also be related to the demographics from the sample survey since the majority of the participants are ranging from the age of 30-49 and they might not be technologically proficient. On the contrary, their most knowledgeable areas are Supply Chain Management, Finance and Accounting and Business Law. On a more moderate rank, where Strategy and Business Growth, Logistics and Marketing. As such, it can be concluded that in certain areas where knowledge gaps were identified, they can be reduced and further enhanced through the knowledge that each micro-enterprise owner assess as long as they are willing to share their knowledge.

> ## Germany:

With this third focus, we will take a closer look to Q22. We asked in Q22 which criteria were perceived negatively when using training offers in the past. The results provide unambiguous information about difficulties. It also focusses on gaps in provided VET measures. Therefore, we will focus on three aspects in particular, the costs, the relevancy and the methodological aspects.

Ten of our 22 respondents decided to put costs on rank seven. This was the worst ranking of a criterion concerning the perception of training activities in the past. Hence, this criterion is a crucial aspect that developer of CVET offers have to consider for their future work. Unfortunately it cannot be said, if the respondents have really used these offers, yet. However, against the background that overall 16 persons put the costs on the fifth, sixth or seventh rank, SYNERGY needs to find a way to provide less cost-intensive resources. And it is not only the project-consortium that should consider the perception of such criteria, but professional VET providers, too. These groups have to remind these aspects, particularly when targeting on micro-enterprises. Considering the mentioned preferences with regard to the integrated methods, this is a huge challenge. Hence, it needs a lot of effort and work to find less cost-intensive ways to provide substitutes for seminars or colloquiums like, e.g., webinars.

The target group perceived the relevancy of the activities second worst. Based on our findings it would be our recommendation to professional training providers not only to focus on the disciplines mentioned in Q6 and Q15. It seems to be important to focus on subjects related to negotiation skills and finances, taxes and accounting in particular, as the demands here cannot be covered within the SME community. In this context, it could be an approach to see professional VET providers more in a role of an organizer or facilitator of learning processes. This approach bases on the idea that the skills, which are necessary to run a business successfully, already exist. But they have to be harnessed and prepared for an educational use. Thus, our suggestion for the VET providers is to see themselves more as a facilitator and less as a provider. Thus, our summarizing conclusion is to focus especially on the requirements and circumstances under which learning takes places. It is of high importance to ensure the right setting to enable efficient and fruitful learning processes fitting the target-group's needs.

> ## Greece:

Participants stated that marketing (83,3%) was the most important skill to them as a micro-enterprise owner, followed by strategy and business growth (66,7%) and communication and networking (66,7%), fund raising (41,7%) and finance (37,5%). In contrast, negotiation (29,2%), information technology (12,5%), supply chain management (8,3%), logistics (4,2%), business law (4,2%).

In addition, participants also stated that they were not confident about their knowledge on business law, logistics and finance and accounting and supply chain management.

In conclusion, participants rank certain skills as not as important to them. Simultaneously, they are also not confident about their knowledge in these same areas. Gaps in VET provision refer to learning areas content relevance rather than area provision.

> **Italy:**

In terms of the assessment of their business knowledge, participants ranked technology information as the most knowledgeable area

> **Romania:**

Observing the results from the question where participants were asked to rank their knowledge within their businesses, we can conclude the following: there are some gaps in VET provision regarding strategy and business growth, business law and information technology.

4. Please identify the skill assets within the micro-enterprise community that could be used to inform the train-the-trainer courseware to ensure that the skills developed within the VET sector reflect the needs of business.

A. Summary of National Results - this results are based on the research activity and national report of each partner of the project.

	Ireland:	Cyprus:	Germany	Greece:	Italy:	Romania
1	Marketing	Strategy & Business Growth	Business strategy and growth	Management	Strategy & Business Growth	Communication and networking
2	Strategy and Business Growth	Marketing	Communication and networking	Marketing	Marketing	Marketing
3	Communications and Networking	Communication & Networking	Marketing	Communication & Networking	Communication & Networking	Strategy and business growth
4	Fundraising			Teamwork		
5	Information Technology and Finance and Accounting.					

Analysed and centralized answers show that:

1. **Strategy and Business Growth** - is one of the skills identifies by the micro-enterprises that could be used to inform the train-the-trainer courseware to ensure that the skills developed within the VET sector reflect the needs of business. It is presented as the first choice in Cyprus, Germany and Italy.
2. **Marketing** - is also present in the top 2 answers in all the partner countries. Many participants ranked Marketing as their most knowledgeable business area but also selected marketing as an area they want to include in future training material.
3. **Communications and Networking** – is present in all the national audit reports partner countries and is in the top 3 answers in all the partner countries

Also the national reports show these skills were also sought via vocational training in the past.

B. National Results identified in each partner countries:

➢ **Ireland:**

Q15 of the Audit Questionnaire, respondents were asked to suggest three skills that they would suggest as most relevant and important to them, bearing in mind that it will be relevant to the development of new training material and courses. Respondents to this question selected Marketing as the most relevant and important skill for them as a micro-enterprise owner. This suggests that this is an area that where knowledge is consistently updated and training material needs to be regularly revised. Strategy and Business Growth came in second followed by Communications and Networking, Fundraising, Information Technology and Finance and Accounting.

These were followed by Business Law, Logistics, Supply Chain Management and the lowest ranked was Negotiation skills. These responses pinpointed gaps in current VET provision and provides a good foundation for training planning going forward by highlighting distinct skills training that lack amongst respondents at present.

➢ **Cyprus:**

According to micro-enterprise owners, the top 3 skills that would be most relevant and that they would like to further enhance are Strategy & Business Growth, Marketing and

Communication & Networking. This suggests that micro-enterprise owners would like to improve their knowledge and expertise in these areas, since based Question 14 it was indicated that these areas were considered as a weak spot and where a gap in provision exists. In a less moderate approach, micro-enterprise owners pinpointed Fund Raising, Finance & Accounting and Supply Chain Management as areas were further development is needed. Consequently, the gaps in the skill assets with help in the development of the train-the-trainer courseware in order to ensure that the right skills and resources will be developed with the VET sector to reflect the most current needs of businesses.

> **Germany:**

This focus is quite much the summary of the previously mentioned ones. Therefore, this will be something like an overall-conclusion. But, special attention will be paid to the guidance resp. provision process and the training process of the VET professionals. In this regard, we will provide hints and recommendations. These recommendation focus safeguarding that the train-the-trainer courseware ensures and the aspect that the skills developed within the VET sectors reflect the needs of the business community. Hence, our recommendations are:

1. Generally spoken, VET professionals should be enabled to research, create and use learning resources matching with the target-groups/ person's needs. For this purpose, the train-the-trainer curriculum should pay special attention to include training-activities regarding methodological and didactical aspects.

2. In the third focus, we suggested that the VET professionals should be more like a learning facilitator than a content provider. Nevertheless, it is a necessity for them to have a sound knowledge about what skills are needed to successfully run a (micro) business. Thus, the train-the-trainer curriculum should also encompass selected business administrative learning modules.

3. VET professionals have to be informed about different resources available for and fitting with their training activities. Additionally, they should have knowledge about the specifics of different resources, what their pros and contras are, and how learning outcomes can be assessed and ensured. For this purpose, we would suggest to create a training-module where an overview over different resources and their specifications is provided.

> **Greece:**

The skill assets as stated by participants were: communication (62%), management (58,3%), marketing (54,2%), information technology (41,7%). Most of these skills were also stated as the most important skills needed to run a business namely: management (62,5%), marketing (58,3%), communication (54,2%) and teamwork (50%), with the exception of information technology. Furthermore, these skills were also the skills sought

via vocational training in the past placing them as some of the most important skills that could inform the train the train courseware.

➢ **Italy:**

The top 3 skills that would be most relevant and that they would like to further enhance are Strategy & Business Growth, Marketing and Communication & Networking. Considered as a weak spot and where a gap in provision exists. In a less moderate approach, micro-enterprise owners pinpointed Fund Raising, Finance & Accounting and

➢ **Romania:**

In order to identify the skill assessed that are needed in order to improve the train-the-trainer courseware, we need to identify the domains where there are gaps in VET provision.

From the Romanian survey results we can conclude that there are gaps regarding human resources sector and the finance sector (only 5.56% of the participants have chosen these as their useful abilities). Another gap is found in the information technology area, where participants listed this as one of the lowest sector they are good at.

4. Glossary

Pedagogic Strategy:

The pedagogic strategy is based on the results of the Summary Audit Report respectively the learning needs and preferences of the MEOs. This strategy shall give didactical and thematic hints to MEOs when they design mini-format-learning-resources to provide them via the Online Platform to other enterprise owners. The strategy shall ensure a pedagogical sound design of the learning resources developed by the MEOs within the local networks.

Mini-format-learning-resources:

Mini-format-learning-resources are learning resources developed within the enterprises which participate in the local networks. These resources will be uploaded on the Online-Platform that will be developed within the SYNERGY project. Hence, the different network participants may have access to the learning resources uploaded by other participants. The idea is, that these resources will perfectly match with the learning needs of the enterprises and MEOs engaged in the networks.

Focus group/ local networks:

The focus groups (or: local networks) are networks of MEOs that will be established on a local or regional level. These networks are designed to foster knowledge- and experiences exchanges between the participants. Furthermore, the MEOs shall get the opportunity to get in touch with VET professionals, so that their needs and demands are considered in future training activities. Additionally, the mini-format-learning-resources will be developed by the participants of these networks. Therefore, they will have to decide what kind of learning resources are designed, how they are designed, and who will have access to them.