



SEAL
SENIORS' LEARNING VALUE



Intellectual Output 02

“National Action Plans”

Report

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union





Project information

Project acronym:	SEAL	
Project title:	Seniors' Learning Value	
Agreement number:	2019 – 1 – IT01 – KA202 – 007593	
Sub-programme or KA:	KA2- Cooperation for Innovation And The Exchange Of Good Practices	
Project website:	http://www.seal-erasmus.eu/	
Lead Partner for the	CIS, Gestione di Impresa	
Report IO 2:		
Date of preparation:	Version 1	Date: September 2021
Report version:	Version 2	Date February 2022
	Version	Date:
Author:	CIS, Gestione di Impresa	
Contributions	All partners	



Partnership



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Preamble

The present report is developed within the project "Senior Learning Value". It is structured in four chapters:

Chapter 1 *Introduction:* presents the aim of the report and the activities performed by describing the research that each partner carried out in its own country. The activities carried out started with a substantial contextualization exercise, in collaboration with local and national stakeholders, which led each partner to collect feedback in relation to the proposed European Framework of competences identified for the SLF profile.

Partners applied the framework of competences identified to their local, regional and national contexts considering legislative, cultural and socio-economic features in order to distinguish which competences will be at the core of the new qualification and as common elements at transnational level, and which ones could be added to respond to local needs.

Chapter 2 *Collection of National Action Plans:* presents an overview of the main results of the research, distinguished in the following areas:

- Education-Enterprise: state of the art;
- The Senior Learning Facilitator profile;
- the profile implementation at local/regional and national level,
- concrete services that the SLF could provide,
- conditions for recruitment and operation of the SLF.

Chapter 3 *Key findings:* presents a number of Key findings derived from the transnational analysis of National Action Plans and, in relation to analyzed areas, that can be considered for the definition of a methodology of implementation of the SLF profile in each partner Countries, building, therefore, a core set of shared skills and competencies and leaving flexibility for a certain adaptation to specific contexts requirements and needs.

Chapter 4 *Self assessment tool:* outlines the development of the self assessment tool for the engagement of the SLF



1. Introduction

The report is set up to provide the points of view of different categories of stakeholders concerning the concept of the Senior Learning Facilitator (SLF) profile and the problems that this professional profile could contribute to solve - through its combination of identified skills and competences - in order to improve the collaboration between Education, Vocational Education and Training systems, enterprise world, productive and economic systems at large.

On the basis of the results achieved in Intellectual Output 1, that is to say the *Senior Learning Facilitator European Framework of Competencies*, the partners, through the implementation of **Intellectual Output 2 “National Action Plans”** defined a first set of requirements for the contextualization and implementation of the Senior Learning Facilitator profile at National / Regional level and they drafted a first proposal of their National Action Plans

The National Action Plans are aimed, therefore, at embedding the project results in the Education and Vocational Education and Training systems and related validation and certification of competences devices, in order to introduce the role of the SLF in the co-operation processes among Enterprises, Education and VET Providers, and the economic system at large.

The following activities were carried out:





Stakeholders survey: activities performed

The research was aimed to contextualize the competence framework for the new profile of Senior Learning Facilitator, based on the idea that the combination of experience in learning processes, the link between education and business and the knowledge of the local labour market contribute to outline an interesting professional profile, able to function both as a learning facilitator at the workplace (in SMEs and the Educational system) and other forms of education/enterprise collaboration. The main sections of the research, were the following:

- Assessment of the status of education-enterprise relationship in the local context and specific involvement of the organization
- Opinions of the interviewees on the project idea and the “composite” nature of the SLF qualification
- Comments on the competence framework and specific competence elements
- the best contractual, economic, organizational, conditions expected)
- services that can be provided by the SLF that would be particularly interesting and related conditions of application (costs, availability, control processes, expected value added, etc)
- suggestions for implementation of the SLF profile in the local/national context

Research objectives

The research was therefore focused on five areas:

- Education-Enterprise: state of the art
- The Senior Learning Facilitator Profile
- The potential implementation of the SLF profile at local/regional and national level
- Concrete services that SLF could provide
- Conditions for recruitment and operation of the SLF

Research design

Stakeholders interviews

Due to Covid restrictions, the interviews were carried out remotely all partners worked on the 5 areas mentioned above using a common grid format (See Annex 1)

The grid was conceived as a flexible tool to collect the points of view of different categories of stakeholders concerning the concept of the SLF Profile and the problems that this



professional profile could contribute to solve - through its combination of identified skills and competences - in order to improve the collaboration between Education, Vocational Education and Training systems, enterprise world, productive and economic systems at large.

The semi-structured interview allowed to engage stakeholders' representatives in an open dialogue, that contributed to the definition of needs and, in some cases, towards a declaration of intents and/or availability to provide candidates according to the specific nature of the addressed organisation and according to the role of the interviewed person.

Stakeholders Focus Group

The aim was to identify the main contextual specifications for the SLF implementation in the country. The discussions covered, in general the following elements:

- SWOT analysis of the SLF in each partner country
- Identification of potential barriers (administrative, organisational, cultural, etc) and alliance opportunities
- Strategies to contextualize the profile
- Approaches and institutional devices for the recognition of competences already available to candidates
- Available learning programmes and resources in the country
- Approaches for the sustainability of the professional profile
- Criteria for recruitment and selection of candidates

The Stakeholders interviewed and involved in the Focus Groups were representative of:

- Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Labour,
- Trade Unions,
- Education provider,
- VET providers,
- Universities,
- Foundations of elderly workers,
- Research Institutes,
- Ministries of Education or local/regional education authorities



- Companies, HR Managers.



2. Collection of National Action Plans

The survey realised by each partner allowed the elaboration of the results of the stakeholder consultation with respect to the national priorities related to:

- the state of the art of the competence system of the profiles operating in the in-company training sector
- the main considerations on how the profile of the Senior Learning Facilitator could effectively contribute to the growth of training ecosystems systems,

Suggestions on the profile implementation at the local and national level,

Concrete services that SLF could provide

Conditions for recruitment and operation of the SLF

The national plans of Austria, France, Italy, Poland and Romania are presented next



2.1 National Action Plan

Austria

Education-Enterprise: state of the art

There are many established relationships between companies and educational institutions. Companies i.e. company employees can access further education offered by:

- Wifi (WIFI is a service institution of the Chamber of Commerce. The mission is to support those working in the economy so that they can better meet the tasks of the challenges on the market. Their goals are to improve professional and entrepreneurial qualifications and to provide assistance with company-specific issues.)
- bfi (The bfi Steiermark, the largest Styrian education provider, has been active for more than 60 years as a labour market and social policy service provider and is an educational institution of the Austrian Federation of Trade Unions (ÖGB) and the Chamber of Labour for Styria (AK).)
- AK (The Chamber of Labour stands up for the rights of workers and provides guidance and support for those who have troubles with their employers.)
- Private Providers and Coaches.
- Practice-based courses of study at the FH (Fachhochschulen - Universities of Applied Sciences) and HTL (Höhere Technische Lehranstalt - higher technical institute, higher technical college).
- In some sectors, e.g. banking, financial sector and insurance sector measures are carried out regionally and nationally, based on developed curriculum or suggested yearly training and upskilling.

There are also some funding programs available over the AMS (Austrian Public Employment Service), e.g. funding programme fit - Frauen in der Technik (Women in Technology), and educational leave (Bildungskarenz).

Although cooperation between educational facilities and companies are to some extent well established in industry there are no systemic approaches set. Schools are looking for companies for co-operation related to apprenticeship if they are interested and communicative themselves. Some corporations also go to schools or education fairs and



present opportunities to attract good apprentices. There are some examples of good practice, however the business sector could/should be more tightly involved in the educational processes on the secondary as well as on the tertiary level. More cooperation with other educational institutions, specialized areas, not local providers, e.g. individual further education through expert visits / mentorship / counselling, etc. is needed.

Both the aspect of inviting the students into the enterprises (business organizations) as well as business representatives visiting high schools and universities would be beneficial. Joint projects should be developed whereby the business organizations would define the topics/challenges from their business operations and the educational community (professors/mentors and students) would then analyse these challenges and co-create solutions.

In addition, a systemic approach to the subject could prove beneficial, especially establishing existing relationships and providing insight into possible connections, such as creating a repository of educational institutions that cooperate with enterprises and connecting the labour market to those institutions to help active job seekers identify possible opportunities as well as potentially improving enterprise scout searching.

Educational offerings are often too academic and too general, especially for young people. More specific knowledge and hands on experience would be needed. Micro learning approaches are missing. Motivation and recognition of continuing education is often lacking. A central overview of educational offers would be very beneficial, otherwise one always has to search in individual institutes to see what might be fitting and appropriate in relation to the needs.

Companies wish for more practical programs offered by educational institutions, according to the principle of "knowledge - ability - application", a lot of emphasis should be placed on practical transfer. More programs that would allow people to work and study at the same time (some programmes - duale ausbildung are available in Austria, in Germany there are way more and it is very well accepted). More flexible studies, less compulsory attendance, that people can better combine studying with your job.



Students can also be seen as "knowledge dealers" that bring new knowledge to the regions, it is about strengthening regions. The students of programs based on dual studies go back to the regions and remain privately and professionally bound in the region.

An exchange platform would be very good and interesting with a collection of best practices where you can learn from and benefit from the experience of others, that would be an essential improvement. This Platform could also have tools for planning of further education related to an individual account - among other things, many free lectures, an account where one has an overview of one's own further education (upload of certificates (subject, field), how many hours are still open, etc.).

The exchange platform could also be a technical support to an informative community with the potential of networking and to collaborate and exchange with other (as for example in IT, UX sectors) companies, exchange of training and resources and informal exchanges.

The topic of further education is actually anchored in the industry and cooperation with training institutions has in some sectors e.g. industria lector a long tradition. Apprenticeship training and supervision of parallel training (duale ausbildung) is given and is supported by different measures like Bildungskarenz, Industriekarenz, Sabbatical etc.

The problem often lies in the social skills of fresh employees from school and university, who see subject knowledge as more valuable and often do not understand why social skills are important. However, if the theoretical foundations are good, new employees can then certainly work practically right away. Social skills can then be trained and improved also on the job. The role of teachers as Learning facilitators is also important, where they not only support the development of professional competences but also development of social skills.

In the art sector this often works through cooperations between education and the institutions. Personal relationships are crucial for cooperation. It is often not due to the overall strategy but with the power of individual initiators that provide more motivation.

The Senior Learning Facilitator Profile

To get as many different perspectives as possible there was a spread of consulted stakeholders between companies (37%), education (45%) and institutions (18%). The consulted stakeholders agree that SLF profile is presented well, however some competences



and areas overlap, and there should not be a duplication of skills in different quadrants, as this might be confusing. The area of 'Bridging Education and Enterprises' quadrant might include insights into educational benefits of a specific VET/School/University and the ability to present these to the business sector (taking into account their specific business challenges). The SLF profile should also be in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework EQF.

The SLF would help to address the challenges identified, particularly concerning the education-enterprise relationship, as it provides a good cross-section of business and pedagogy skills which are important to improve the pedagogical processes in such relationships and help advance innovative approaches.

The SLF should be the First point of contact when companies that want to further train their employees. All training offers should converge here and the facilitator should have a good overview.

The SLF should be in the function of "**Corporate consultant for further training**". The SLF should be in the position and carry out activities as follows:

- Partner of HR Department
- Close cooperation with HR (to identify e.g. career paths and specific needs)
- Network between companies and educational institutions
- Create job profiles and adapt curriculum if necessary (even closer cooperation between university and companies), possibly in the form of projects, internships, dual continuing education
- Good knowledge about the education landscape
- Know where the jobs are currently in demand (AMS statistics, future trend)
- What is needed / which profiles are needed
- Which profiles are valued also in the financial sense
- Having understanding and communicate the benefits for all (employees and companies)



The SLF should already have some experience in the industry, industry knowledge and business basics. The person should not be directly from university and already have work experience preferably in different areas.

In addition, interviewees emphasized the importance of social skills and pointed out that they seem under-represented compared to other areas. Therefore this area in the SEAL graph needs to be presented in more detail.

- Other skills needed:
- Leadership skills
- Social skills and high social competences
- Gender and diversity management
- Change management skills
- Empathy and empathic communication
- Empowerment
- Pedagogical competencies
- Pedagogical leadership
- Didactical skills
- Basics of psychology
- Experience in lifelong learning
- Enthusiasm for learning
- Communication and public presentation
- Mentoring competencies: in addition to soft skills they need to act paternally, maternally and pass on their knowledge
- Knowledge management, knowledge sharing, agility to create common frameworks
- Networking, organising, informing



Work of the future with the human factor. Due to digitalisation in all areas, the topic of social competence will definitely have to follow in order to create a counterbalance. What is the team willing and able to do? Change management in all areas is necessary. Short-term company success is achieved through professional competence, but long-term success is only possible with corporate culture and social skills.

Training is part of the corporate culture and must be exemplified. CEO defines and gives goals and these should be actively pursued. It is important that the SFL is active in the company and knows the company well. He/she must be an advocate for the topic of further education. He/she must be responsible for the budget for it and understand and demand it as part of the company strategy. Half-day position would probably be sufficient as in smaller companies a full time position can be difficult, it does not have to be a full-time position.

If the SLF is a person from outside the company, it needs to have a good liaison within the company that has standing as well as implementation power (e.g. CEO or HR, IT, or especially appointed person). The company's liaison needs to have organisational knowledge, scheduling, knowledge of procedures, working time models, so that suggested solutions are tailor made for the company and can work well. In addition the communication needs to be bi-directions, so the information about new training and opportunities flows back in the company.

The SLF could be a hub for knowledge distribution and would promote active knowledge building. The form of transfer centres for regional areas would be a better organisational structure than single persons in SMEs.

Business consultant agents (accompany and advise business in change processes)

Outplacement position (taking care on cooperations with companies to support trainees to find a job)

Ausbildungsfit: Outplacement position - Company contacts / placement / cooperation.

Human resources department (administrating further education for employees)

From the human resources sector would make the most sense.



Similar profile in Austria is BFI specialist trainer that was in November 2021 classified as training at the NQF level 4¹.

In this diploma course designed by the BFIs, all the knowledge, skills and competences are taught in a total of 112 teaching units that enable the independent planning and implementation of educational events and trainings for adults. These include:

- Basics of teaching and learning: professional identity and role as a trainer, clarification of tasks and goals, learning theories and didactics.
- Presentation and facilitation training: rhetoric and communication, facilitation techniques, teaching materials and use of media
- Course and seminar design: target group-oriented planning of an event, choice and use of methods, feedback and evaluation
- Personal leadership skills: group processes, steering instruments, conflict management, leadership style and reflection skills

These topics are offered in seven modules² as listed below and a practical written work needs to be submitted for the successful completion of the training. Each of the modules has sixteen teaching units.

- Module 1: Basics of training
- Module 2: Presentation and use of media
- Module 3: Course and seminar design
- Module 4: Personal leadership skills and methods
- Module 5: Specialisations (optional content)
- Module 6: Consolidation and transfer

¹ BFI-FachtrainerInnen-Ausbildung auf NQR-Niveau 4 29.11.2021, Text: Michael Sturm, BFI Österreich, Redaktion: Michaela Schneider, [BFI Österreich](https://www.bfi.at/)
https://erwachsenenbildung.at/aktuell/nachrichten/16692-bfi-fachtrainerinnen-ausbildung-auf-nqr-niveau-4.php?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Newsletter+23%2F2021

² BFI information brochure https://www.bfi.at/fileadmin/Media/FachtrainerInnen-Broschuere_2013.pdf



- Module 7: Conclusion and examination

In addition, if all other certification requirements are met, the nationally and internationally recognised personal certificate "Specialist Trainer" according to EN ISO 17024 can be issued after successfully completing this training.

Suggestions on the profile implementation at the local and national level

Organisations that are already involved in vocational training and lifelong learning might be willing to support the development and offer SLF qualification. These organisations are e.g. BFI, AMS, WIFI, other educational institutes (colleges, universities, etc), and along with representative partners from industry.

In industry, some big organisations already have special parts of organisations that are focused on providing specialised training for their employees (e.g. Raiffeisen Campus, AVL Academy , etc)

The inter-organisational framework seems to be fitting well for establishing SLF services. It should be a mix of educational / enterprise / employment agencies – to establish the proper needs, address the real challenges and provide viable solutions experiences from different stakeholders are beneficial to the process. Additionally, other key stakeholders should also be involved, e.g. the innovation-related organizations, professional associations (e.g. Chamber of commerce), policymakers and decision-makers on both sides (business + education). The media should not be forgotten as broad promotion of the SLF profile, supported with good (pilot) case studies, might highly impact the profile's future success.

- Open and modular SFL Course / Training
So people that already have certain competences can upskill in selected areas
- Companies in a sector could jointly finance a SLF person to create training portfolios for the staff related to specific profiles of the sector
- Knowledge broker - team of people with different backgrounds that could work together and provide a comprehensive offer to companies as well as liaise with training institutions



SLF could be for:

- People from companies, that take on board new staff in companies and train them to the operational phase
- People who study (studied) psychology, educational sciences, pedagogy
- People that have experience and knowledge about HR, management, education and educational institutions, consulting
- People who want new career
- Several years of previous experience and sufficient competencies.
- Good standing and personal suitability as SLF, as well as affinity for education.
- Optimally a graduate of several educational institutions himself/herself.

Ideally, SLF should come from either the educational or business environment but with several explicit (project-based or work-based) experiences from the other field (e.g. professor/mentor with experience from business or vice versa). Additionally, innovations-, communications, and/or leadership-related experience might be beneficial.

Organizations and communities gain the ability to adapt and thrive in a fast-changing world through capacity-building with focus on developing their strengths and sustainability.

How can the need for further training be assessed? Meaningful factors for this are: Fluctuation, sick leave - goes hand in hand with dissatisfaction. If employees are not given the opportunity to develop, they become dissatisfied. Appreciation through further training opportunities. Otherwise there is a danger of going to the competitors.

Extra recognition is usually not necessary. It comes from team spirit and group dynamics and that has to be enough. When further education is actively blocked by the staff, they should have disadvantages.

The training is well endowed in most budgets but is usually not exhausted. Reason: first resource savings opportunity, too much work pressure due to the current situation.



SFL would have to find ways to integrate training operationally in the company.

For example: Instead of short-time work³, educational leave with partly specially developed training programmes. This also has the advantage that the employees keep their work routines and can start much better afterwards. Moreover, they are motivated to implement what they have learned. This works very well.

In opera there are specific requirements for employees e.g. language competence is always important as well as organisational knowledge is needed. So the SFL would organise and allocate appropriate training for new and already existing employees.

The SFL position could be part-time, and the person should be communicative, preferably with pedagogical training and competences, well networked and locally well connected. The person must have business practice to understand the concerns, this is very important but can be an external person. A SFL would be helpful and yes it is very important to know about regional specifications to address the needs. Individual coaching would be very helpful but the resources are not available.

In industry, the company usually pays for the training unless it is something that is not directly needed for the company. Then it is often made possible, but not paid for. For Qualification as SLF a neutral training should be implemented by the government/companies/country. First steps could be creating TRANSFER CENTRES and developing University training.

Concrete services that SLF could provide

SFL could together with the HR assess the training needs in the company. First point of contact when discussing employees' career paths and their employees' further development, SLF could seek out suitable options, support employees also in the training process, etc.

Develop key performance indicators to measure success e.g. satisfaction, efficiency, etc. and based on the feedback adjust and fine tune the offer.

If SFL is an external person, this training coach should select a pool of companies and

³ Short-time work makes people deal with other routines and also creates frustration for not being at work.



partners and create a job profile(s) specific for them with the appropriate training offer. This specific offer can be then further adapted to other sectors, as well as adapted and developed over time based on KPIs and as the training needs to change.

External SFL could be one contact person per sector (e.g. sw, or front end, back end), who could let organisations and individual employees know what events there are monthly, and also organise networking meetings. SFL would also mobilise different companies to give these lectures and provide certificates for training. In the company the people who attend such upskilling are also multipliers.

SLF activities and different services they could provide :

- Proactive in the establishment of co-operations.
- Have an overview of training opportunities in a certain sector.
- Knowledge / training broker (similar to insurance representative).
- Sending out periodically a catalogue mailing with further training offers.
- Which are on-line offers, free of charge (trainings that are possible on-line)?
- Respond to different needs in terms of sector and company size
- Show what is the benefit for companies (especially important for SMEs where there is a high turnover of staff)
- Personal coaching and career advice.
- Re-training advice, changing careers.
- A spokesperson in the company for all topics related to further training.
- Planning and implementation of joint education-enterprise projects, e.g. hackathons
- Organizing funding opportunities to support students research of relevant business topics, related to their fields of study
- Advocacy for work-based learning inside the educational organisations
- Communication of the respective needs / requirements in order to make the education practice-oriented



- Establishing a buddy system
- Advocacy for life-long learning
- Provide trainings and workshops
- Funding opportunities for pre qualification
- Encourage cross sector projects
- Mediation / contact in recruiting
- Contact person in case of need for advice (which education is useful)
- Public relations / employer branding
- Assessing the gaps and necessities of training.
- Assessing competencies of trainees.
- Change management skills.

Looking at all age groups in the company and seeing it as a unit is important for leadership. And every management position needs social skills. Empathy, communication, behaviour and also the knowledge of social skills to recognise it and argue it to the management.

- Language training
- international special training
- self-management
- pressure management
- Gender update / conflict management
- Supervision
- Coaching would be desirable
- Didactic training would be desirable

SFL should ideally be placed in the company, but this is unrealistic. Centrally organised would be the next option, and in that case companies could contact the SLF centers to see where



the training potential in the respective market is. The SFL centres should be well coordinated regionally for different subsidiaries.

SFL could have a role of a supervisor who advises company employees from time to time, to quickly teach targeted people skills on an individualised basis and to provide support and assistance with planning training and further education.

Profile of competences of every employee should be assessed and updated every year (It includes: Formal competences, Non-formal competences, Informal competences, Personal competence). Skills that have to be fulfilled - then evaluated per employee - based on this the training potential can be determined and the degree of flexibility of the market can be assessed. This is important for deployment planning.

Conditions for recruitment and operation of the SLF

A project flyer is needed to advertise the SLF curriculum and the time of piloting (e.g. Summer 2022, estimation of effort & ECTS), so people can plan for their participation.

The SLF training could be aimed at people who want to work in adult education and/or human resource development, and at people who want to organise and carry out in-house training for employees. As aforementioned SLF training is intended for people with professional experience who would like to pass on their expertise but do not have any special pedagogical or andragogical knowledge themselves.

Potential interested participants for the SFL course or selected modules is distributed as follows:

- from companies for up-skilling in general and for elderly workers or those who can't work in their original position anymore are retrained to fulfill other job opportunities in the company (approximately 25%)
- re-skilling of staff and training for unemployed (approximately 30%)
- teacher training in the area of emotional and social skills, being an example for the class and their pupils. SLF modules should be listed in the offer of possible yearly teacher upskilling. (approximately 20%)



- universities and research institutions as OER elective subject, feedback on curriculum, sending candidates as well as a need for such services (approximately 25%)

UPS definition: what is the difference between a traditional coach and a SLF coach? Often additional specific training is not needed but in any case pedagogical skills are essential.

Complete secondment from the job seems unrealistic in the operational area (for cost reasons and uncertainty whether there would be a "return ticket"). Partial secondment (e.g. 30%) is conceivable if there is an appropriate quantity structure behind it.

The SLF task force should be a public and national organisation, as many companies have partly very special requirements. Regional could be more difficult to find specific offers. Public organisations also seem more official and trustworthy.



2.2 National Action Plan

France

Education-Enterprise: state of the art

All stakeholders note and appreciate everyone's willingness to work to improve the school-business relationship.

However, each stakeholder easily highlights areas for improvement:

Company representatives deplore the discrepancy between certain training courses provided and the needs of companies, the lack of knowledge of teachers in professional disciplines about the realities of professional practice. They suggest increasing the number of interventions by professionals in schools.

Some people regret a diversion of work-study training, showing that some positions are filled exclusively by work-study trainees who succeed one another.

Some education stakeholders regret both that professionals are unaware of the training offered, and that teachers are unaware of the possibilities for establishing relationships with companies.

Some players at the heart of the school-business relationship denounce a mutual lack of knowledge and would like to be able on the one hand to make the School known to professionals, and on the other hand to see it made easier to adapt training to the expectations of companies.

The people operationally involved in the school-business relationship want to be able to identify a contact person in charge of the school-business relationship in each institution, to make the communication of information easier.

They find that relationships, which are very dependent on people, are disrupted by job changes; they therefore insist on the importance of the stability of the actors to ensure the effectiveness of the relations.

The players in the Region consider that it is difficult to have an exhaustive vision of the actions implemented.



The Senior Learning Facilitator Profile

The survey outlined the following needs:

- ⇒ Knowledge of the company and its codes, knowledge of public, private, initial and continuing training available in the territory and their funding, are skills recognized as essential by most stakeholders.
- ⇒ Knowledge of shortage occupations is important to company representatives.
- ⇒ The SLF must know and master the value chains for the sectors.
- ⇒ The SLF must have a good knowledge of the territory: its recruitment needs, partners, employment actors and employment assistance policies.
- ⇒ A good understanding of intergenerational aspects seems to be an important skill of the SLF for a large company HR.
- ⇒ Some education stakeholders want the SLF to have pedagogical skills and know the different modes of learning, individual or collective, through the development of the project, to propose realistic actions for students in particular.
- ⇒ The SLF must know the techniques of job search, CV writing, interview preparation.
- ⇒ The SLF must be a good communicator, so it must know how to listen, it must have good adaptability and must act diplomatically.
- ⇒ Some business representatives want the SLF to have legal skills and to be made aware of the social aspects of training and employment.
- ⇒ The SLF must have an international outlook and a good understanding of entrepreneurship.

Some possible missions: to help promoting European mobility of apprentices, apprenticeship in the workplace; monitoring skills development, identifying the skills the sector will need, identifying emerging skills, etc...

Suggestions on the profile implementation at the local and national level

Results from the survey:

88% of responses indicate a public body for neutrality:



- ⇒ A ministry: 50% National Education (to facilitate entry into schools) otherwise work or economy.
- ⇒ An administrative Region

>> For a finer territory: CLEE (local business school committees), rectorate (local representation of National Education), DSDEN (departmental representation of the national education administration)

12% remaining on:

- ⇒ University
- ⇒ Professional branch
- ⇒ Chamber of Commerce

Ideal Origin :

50% think that the SLF must come from the business world, from a private company.

50% from education, a professional branch, an association, an employment agency, DIRECCTE, a field facilitator.

85% think that a training experience is a plus: teacher, trainer, tutor, mentor.

- ⇒ 100% think that a good knowledge of company codes is essential.
- ⇒ 20% think that knowing the administrative functioning and the institutions is important.

Ideal profile:

- ⇒ 40% mention a mixed business / education.
- ⇒ 10% of the business world only with a desire to share.
- ⇒ 30% mention educational experience or an inspector's profile with a solid knowledge of the education system, continuing training, and its funding, as well as professional integration
- ⇒ 20% do not mention any particular experience required but underline the importance of interpersonal skills, the desire to transmit, feels invested with an ability to adapt to different sectors (with a broad vision)

Concrete services that SLF could provide

Main mission:



Be a player in the school-business relationship: develop exchanges, wake up the interests of both sides, support teaching teams and school heads in knowledge of the economic world and in guidance actions. He must be proactive, help co-construct projects, formalize ideas.

- Coordinate / align the actions of the various partners.
- Communicate about jobs in their reality, do not embellish them, do not create disappointments.
- Promote the development of training programs linked to economic needs. Maintain work-based learning even in times of crisis.
- Be a project facilitator by connecting the right people together.
- List the schools and training courses in the region.
- Be an actor of an international network-accelerator of partnerships.

Concrete mission:

- ⇒ The SLF must know the economic constraints according to the geographical areas.
- ⇒ He must be concerned by the fact that each school could have a network of companies that it can solicit.
- ⇒ Upstream work with partners so that the missions are described:
 - Establish the terms of a partnership contract with companies,
 - Organize awareness sessions for companies (communication)
- ⇒ Become a point of entry for companies to training.
- ⇒ Open international partnerships:
 - Get schools out of their relative isolation by proposing concrete actions in Europe (high schools often operate in a closed circuit)
 - Establish contact with companies that the university cannot approach (especially abroad),
 - Implementation of concrete actions with foreign partners.
 - Create a European network - help the international mobility of young people.
- ⇒ Offer a simple and readable tool on the training process.
- ⇒ If the SLF is attached to a sector: diagnosis of the sector.
- ⇒ Promote vocational education and learning.
 - Change of mentalities
 - Learning issue



- Connecting work-study students, schools, and companies.
 - Coaching of young people starting their work-study program, follow-up of work-study students, upstream work for their professional integration.
 - Create new synergies in trades where apprenticeship is not yet structured.
- ⇒ Encourage transfers between sectors from the least promising to the most promising.
- ⇒ Mapping of local training

Conditions for recruitment and operation of the SLF

The interviewees generally consider that the SLF function occupies a full time but in the case of a secondment, a part time would make it easier to find candidates.

There is no particular preference that stands out between a new contract and a secondment contract.

The secondment has the advantage of being less risky for the potential candidate (who is guaranteed to return to his post at the end of the secondment) and which would perhaps make it possible to find candidates for the post more easily than through a recruitment on a new contract. But many interviewees warned about the duration of a secondment. As this is limited in time (sometimes for a short period of three years), the SLF could be less effective (particularly in terms of setting up and maintaining a network) than if it is recruited from a network, longer term contract. Sustainability is a plus for the network and visibility.

A part-time but lasting secondment could therefore be interesting.

At the level of the attached structures, several interviewees think that the SLF should depend on a public body, this public body being the National Education.

In terms of funding: Most of the interviewees think that multiple funding should be considered: professional branches, National Education, companies (allocate part of the training tax on the financing of the SLF salary), OPCO (operators of skills: bodies responsible for supporting vocational training) and region in particular. This multiple funding will give legitimacy to the SLF. It will be necessary to ensure the neutrality of the SLF vis-à-vis its original organization. The interviewees also mentioned the possibility of calling on ESF (European Social Fund) funding.



It would be ideal for the SLF to have dual experience in business and teaching, but this is not essential. If a choice had to be made between the two, several interviewees gave their preference to a business experience. The individual profiles and appetites of each must be considered.

It has been envisaged on several occasions to set up an SLF pole combining different experiences and skills (complementarity of profiles).

It is important to have a territorial network.



2.3 National Action Plan



Education-Enterprise: state of the art

The level of collaboration between education institutions (VET, schools, universities) and enterprises in Italy is very diverse, depending on the economic and industrial structure of the territories: in general it can be said that collaboration is well developed in quantitative terms – although fragmented- in Northern and Central Italy, while it is less developed in the South and in less industrialized areas of all the country. As it can be expected, VET providers – that can be technical and vocational schools in the framework of National Education, but also different kinds of VET providers mostly referring to Regional Government/ESF funding- has a tradition of closer relationship with industry and typically provides regular internship opportunities with neighboring companies of the relevant sectors. This also happens for general secondary schools- although a very ambitious plan to generalise internship has been strongly reduced for general schools after a couple of years- and for certain University Degrees.

The Emilia-Romagna situation is considered particularly good at the national level in this regard, although 2020 was not a good year to keep the consolidated habit of work-based learning jointly organized between education and enterprises. Not only some internship were cancelled due to the health crisis caused by Covid-19 emergency, but the whole level of confidence in continuing economic development has been challenged by the economic difficulties in some sectors, especially in the service industries.

As a whole, it can be said that much room for improvement exists, in terms of:

- Systematization of collaboration practices and work-based learning
- Collaboration in the definition of emerging needs and new qualification;
- Collaboration in the training of trainers, sharing respective strengths among school and company training practices
- Collaboration in the vocational guidance system and in the monitoring of employment results of youth getting different qualifications
- curricula co- design
- Using a common learning outcomes language to communicate on what is required vs what is provided in terms of competences



- Taking a holistic view on the quality of education provision, including transversal competences to be developed “together” (education and enterprises), beyond the immediate reply to short-term skills shortages
- Improving together the attractiveness of industrial qualifications, in a country which has always considered general education as better and more prestigious.

The Senior Learning Facilitator Profile

The SLF profile presentation to industrial stakeholders received positive feedback in general terms and also with respect to the competence areas integrated into the profile. Someone able to link education and industry with a good knowledge of learning processes/strategies and labour market dynamics would be particularly useful for schools.

A teacher belonging to the technical area who can also take on the role of SLF has been envisaged.

Many of the enterprises that participated in the focus group declared their interest in the profile and in particular in the training course that will be made available. They highlight the need to enhance: knowledge about local training and educational opportunities, funding for businesses, specific skills in defining career paths.

They believe that it could represent a requalification path addressed to professional profiles operating in the HR area, a kind of evolution of the HR professional.

It is recognized that many teachers at school have very vague ideas of how companies work and what skills are presently needed. The French model of *Ingegnieur pour L'Enseignement* (IPE) was stimulating positive comments and helped to reflect on the opportunity that large enterprises might rather be providers (than clients) of senior professionals with a talent for training and communication. The idea of an ad hoc new qualification may be attractive for such a category of people.



Suggestions on the profile implementation at the local and national level

Some of the functions attributed by the project to the SLF are covered, in Italy, by vocational guidance providers and private employment agencies, but the combination of the three areas is interesting to broaden the perspectives of employability strategies, in a public interest perspective. The profile could be piloted as a part-time job for human resources company staff, exploring the use of their competences in schools and smaller companies, or as supporters of collaborative activities involving education and enterprises (career days, introductions to local economy in secondary schools, presenting the range of industrial occupations and enterprise organization to teenagers, transversal competences and entrepreneurship skills development, etc.). More likely than an independent professional, the selected SLFs might be temporarily seconded from large enterprises and remunerated, for their public interest functions, through public funds (regional authorities, national active labour market agency (ANPAL) or, for the training of the SLF, bilateral funds for employees training.

Concrete services that SLF could provide

Beyond the functions mentioned above (presenting the labour market and the industrial jobs within education institutions, supporting education-enterprise collaboration, advising on work-based learning and apprenticeship in SMEs, etc.), an important role is suggested in vocational guidance and mitigation of irrational study and professional choices of young people, women (e.g. towards scientific and technical professions in which they are still underrepresented) and adults having to re-design their professional development path.

In general the stakeholders engaged in the research stressed the importance of the following possible services

- in general strengthen the network and frequency of collaboration between schools, VET institutions and enterprises,
- cooperate in the co-planning of apprenticeship and co- design of WBL



- support and develop the effective participation of enterprise in public events organized by schools, VET providers (open days, fairs, educational events, etc.);
- identify qualitative training supply and select VET providers;
- support development of soft and transversal skills: autonomy, leadership propensity; soft skills about company codes;
- versatile pedagogical engineering: problem analysis skills (from problem setting to solving, applying design thinking and interdisciplinary approach to assess the impacts of the solution);
- develop and support the approach to virtual learning.

Conditions for recruitment and operation of the SLF

The stakeholders consulted assumed that the best candidates for the SLF profile would come from enterprise experience, but they did not exclude that a teacher with good enterprise contact or an independent human resource professional might also be suitable for “the job”. Experience is seen as indispensable, it is not a profile for young people just out of university. The profile might be piloted based on the initiative of industrial associations, but, given its public benefit profile, should be supported by education and employment authorities, like in France. A piloting phase is recommended to fine-tune role and specific services according to the demand.



2.4 National Action Plan

Poland

Education-Enterprise: state of the art

A SWOT analysis on Education and enterprise cooperation was carried out in Poland, following the results:

STRENGTHS: multiple cooperation among education institutions & organizations, better training offers and updated with local/global job and education market. Active cooperation with the economy / administration / organizations (e.g. apprenticeships, internships, training specialist, diploma theses, business councils, job fairs). High mobility of personnel with greater international cooperation and large access to the internet sources;

WEAKNESSES: a lack of better using projects in the process of training and teaching; still a low rate of using digital technology in training process, unattractive offer towards a long-life learning and postgraduate, a lack of promotion and publicity for education and training enterprises; inadequate conditions non-teaching infrastructure (rest area, parking or even gastronomic facilities; unsatisfactory support by central administration units; low expertise at central level; still low level of wage motivation;

OPPORTUNITIES: a higher importance of training & education market in Poland, popularity of dual education and multiple skills & competences, a bigger influence on economy and effectiveness of companies, financial support not only from central and public institutions, distance learning and distance working, quick transfer of modern solutions, low demography

THREATS: institutions and enterprises operating on the services market, advisory and expert opinions, higher competitiveness of training and education enterprises in Poland; inflation and higher costs in global market, too fast rate of developing of technology; public and EU bureaucracy; supporting by public and regional institutions mostly public enterprises;

The Senior Learning Facilitator Profile

The semi-structured interviews have been used to engage stakeholders representatives in an open dialogue that may lean towards the definition of needs or towards the expression of



availability to provide candidates according to the specific nature of the addressed organization and role of the interviewed person.

Some respondents, especially from regional and national authorities, sent materials about their organization and related to the interview.

SLF competencies

Respondents indicated the following competencies:

1. Knowledge Management: The ability to acquire, create, organize, share, use and build on the knowledge that is needed for their successful performance of an organization.
2. Specialized knowledge of manufacturing activities and processes
3. Organizational and process understanding: Having a strong command of business workflow, knowledge management, feasibility assessment, data-driven change leadership, and business impact assessment.
4. Interdisciplinary / generic knowledge about technologies.
5. Statistical knowledge: Using advanced knowledge of statistics, data visualization, and some algorithmic programming.
6. Creativity: The ability to perceive the world in new ways, to find hidden patterns, to make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena, and to generate solutions.
7. Entrepreneurial thinking: The ability to identify marketplace opportunities and discover the most appropriate ways and time to capitalize on them.
8. Decision making: The ability of making choices by identifying a decision, gathering information, and assessing alternative resolutions.
9. Analytical skills: The ability to visualize, gather information, articulate, analyze, solve complex problems, and make decisions.
10. Research skills: The ability to use reliable sources for continuous learning in changing environments.
11. Efficiency orientation: The ability of the efficient use of resources as the main determinant decision and action.



12. Intercultural skills: The ability to conduct intercultural dialogue by the use various forms of communication.
13. Language skills: The ability of using foreign languages, which allows for establishing cooperation with foreign partners and internationalization.
14. Communication skills: The ability to listen without prejudice and send convincing messages. Especially important thing here is the so-called emotional intelligence.
15. Ability to be compromising and cooperative: The ability of experiencing feelings from the point of view of other employees and trade partners. It is also an active interest in their concerns, anxieties and worries.
16. Ability to work in a team: The ability to secure cooperation between all members of the group to achieve a collective goal.
17. Ability to transfer knowledge: The ability to sense the need for growth in other people and to develop abilities in employees by efficient sharing of knowledge.

Respondents indicated the following most 10 relevant competencies:

1. Knowledge Management (100%): The ability to acquire, create, organize, share, use and build on the knowledge that is needed for the successful performance of an organization.
2. Specialized knowledge of manufacturing activities and processes (100%).
3. Organizational and process understanding (75%): Having a strong command of business workflow, knowledge management, feasibility assessment, data-driven change leadership, and business impact assessment.
4. Creativity (67%): The ability to perceive the world in new ways, to find hidden patterns, to make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena, and to generate solutions.
5. Entrepreneurial thinking (65%): The ability to identify marketplace opportunities and discover the most appropriate ways and time to capitalize on them.
6. Research skills: The ability to use reliable sources for continuous learning in changing environments (60%).
7. Intercultural skills (60%): The ability to conduct intercultural dialogue by the use various forms of communication.



8. Language skills (58%): The ability to use foreign languages, which allows for establishing cooperation with foreign partners and internationalization.
9. Communication skills (55%): The ability to listen without prejudice and send convincing messages. The crucial thing here is the so-called emotional intelligence.
10. Ability to transfer knowledge (55%): The ability to sense the need for growth in other people and to develop abilities in employees by efficient sharing of knowledge.

A questionnaire has been submitted to the participants in the surveys. All participants have filled it.

The evaluation of the project's aims and first results have been evaluated as excellent.

Stakeholders opinions about the profile of an SLF

In the Focus group, stakeholders expressed the following main opinions about the SLF profile:

- Such a person should be acquainted with the reality prevailing in a given organization; they should learn about the strengths and weaknesses of the organization.
- Such a person should be familiar with the reality prevailing on the production market; not always technological innovations come to the plant's solutions.
- Such a person should transparently communicate the flaws and shortcomings of the organization.
- Such a person should learn the reality of the company and the environment that affects the organization.
- Such a person should be substitutable; a training team should be developed in the organization in order not to rely only on external entities.

Stakeholders shared the idea that investing in education is a key factor to face the ongoing challenges due to the digital and ecological transitions:

- Professionalism and a high level of services require a continuous training process.
- It is necessary to improve the transfer of practical knowledge to younger employees.
- Employees should be motivated to acquire new soft and hard skills.

Accordingly, an SFL should support managers and employees in:



- Improving the process of transferring practical knowledge to employee groups.
- Developing appropriate responses to increase the company knowledge capital.
- Achieving the organization's mission.
- Improving the communication process in employee groups, observing the relationships that function in the group, paying attention to the "trouble spots" in the group and helping in their elimination, improving communication relations in individual departments of a given institution.

An SFL should know:

- The local environment as well as cultural elements, regional dialects.
- Teamwork dynamics.
- Internal communication.
- How to transfer knowledge or supervise employees.

SFL candidates:

- Should have experience in training in companies, but also from other places, or experience resulting from being an academic teacher.
- Should be able to learn the reality of the company and the environment that affects the organization.
- Should have experience gained as part of their professional path and experience gained in specialized training centers.
- Should have experience primarily derived from employment in the company because it determines the knowledge of internal problems of the organization.

Stakeholders also sustained that:

- The SFL profile should be implemented through interinstitutional cooperation at a local and national level.
- The SFL figure may replace today's cell or branch manager's role in acquiring soft competences needed for better communication with new employees.
- The SFL figure should improve internal communication.

Criteria and methods to select SLF candidates



Candidates of SLF would base on internal recruitment process within enterprises, among staff of staff and personnel experienced departments and divisions of stakeholders. Because of cooperation with some education institution there would be try to recruit tutors and teachers of vocational classes and courses. The main environment of sourcing SLF candidates will be supervisors of departments and segments of enterprises. Because of technical profile of stakeholders – first of all the most experienced leaders of technical level or divisions will be taken into account first.

Suggestions on the profile implementation at the local and national level

Interviews emerged that:

- Substantially, there is an increasing interest for education interventions to reskill the workforce.
- The most demand is for new technical competence and skills.
- There is a diffused awareness about the necessity to redesign organizational processes due to the integration of different sources of information.
- The smart working is suggesting new educational programs.
- A SLF should lead and help an organization meet its operational objectives.
- A SLF should support teams in achieving their goals and the highest efficiency and performance.
- A SLF should work at the HR department.

Drafting and collecting National Action Plans

At the moment, in Poland there are any National Action Plan to create and establish a figure similar to an SFL.

The Poland situation can be synthesized as follows:

- Coaching development in Poland has progressed since the late 1990s and has become a widespread HR practice.
- Currently, coaching is developing in Poland in two main streams: firstly, in performance coaching (in organizations), and secondly, in business and life coaching (on the free market).



Concrete services that SLF could provide

Respondents suggested that an SFL should master:

- New communication skills (e.g., e-mentoring and e-coaching)
- Deep understanding of digital transformations and ecological transition
- Competence in conflict resolution

Respondents also suggested that an SFL should provide:

- Continually interacting with workers to understand their educational needs.
- Supporting and promoting access to appropriate learning resources
- Playing an active role in suggesting educational programs according to the organization's needs.
- Assessing the impact of the educational interventions.
- Helping groups to create, plan and execute strategies.

Conditions for recruitment and operation of the SLF

Recruitment as was mentioned before should base on the internal process of empowering candidates of revealing skills of SLF. Especially those, whose responsibility to employees and their leadership are significant and proved by the crew, especially in the technical field.

There is a new hire's cultural competency by creating custom learning courses that explain organisation's values and vision. This will not only help new starters assimilate into your company culture faster, but it will also help foster the idea of SLF. A SLF actor might be functioning in organization by the form of secondment as well as the additional charge within the original job duties.

To build teams of engaged employees, there shouldn't be hire only because for experience and competence. Make sure you're hiring for attitude and alignment with the values and tradition of organization. Cultural fit is one of the important one of retaining great employees – employees who don't feel at home in their new role often leave within the first year.



2.5 National Action Plan

Romania

Education-Enterprise: state of the art

The results showed that, given the right circumstances, the Education-Enterprise Cooperation (EEC) in Romania could positively work and have an impact on both processes (e.g. teaching and learning) and outcomes (e.g. learning outcomes).

Particularly, both higher education institutions (HEIs) and businesses are starting to realize that a multidimensional cooperation could be beneficial for all parties involved. Primarily, HEIs are perceived as talent development institutions and businesses expect curricular flexibility, innovation and learning outcomes that will allow the graduates to rapidly immerse in a new job. As expected, HEIs are not seen as innovation and entrepreneurship providers. Romanian academics are involved in a variety of cooperation activities with both private and public sector, but, in most of the cases, those are individually initiated. Thus, the respondents from Academia perceive themselves as active initiators. In this context, they identify the need for a systemic approach to business-university cooperation, financially and institutionally supported. Some of the private sector representatives stated that they are open to partner with HEIs for local and regional development purposes. Although all the participants identified positive examples of EEC, there is not a clear commitment to building long-term strategic partnerships. The limited engagement impacts the relevance of study programmes and skills on the labor market and, eventually, graduates' employability.

Context of EEC

The extent to which Education-Enterprise Cooperation (EEC) takes place is influenced by specific factors related to individuals, organizations, and the supporting mechanisms available at national level. At individual level, the interviewees reported themselves to be active initiators of EEC activities. The lack or limited availability of organizational support and funding mechanisms limit the EEC. The absence of comprehensive policies makes individuals and organizations to focus on separate parts of the EEC process. Some of the interviewees argued for a vertically integrated approach to EEC, where three levels are defined: individuals – organizations – regions.

As the interviewed representatives pointed out, EEC takes place at all three levels, but the lack of synergies is a major drawback. Moreover, the goals of the three different parties are



not fully aligned. The academics argued that the universities tend to stick to long-term policies and development strategies. At the same time, the industry partners are guided by short-term strategies. In other words, there is a disjunction between stability and predictability (in universities) and flexibility and impact (in businesses).

In the following, types of EEC activities, and perceived barriers and drivers of university-business cooperation are discussed.

Types of EEC in Romania

Based on the participants' experiences, a number of three cooperation areas have been identified in education, research and valorization, and management. Given the exploratory nature of the study, these activities are inexhaustive. As all the participants argued, there is room for deepening and extending EEC in all those fields.



EEC areas	Examples of EEC activities
1. EEC activities in education	<p>1.1 (Paid) Internships and placements in companies and public institutions.</p> <p>1.2. Curriculum co-design (e.g. designing study programmes based on specific technologies provided by industry players).</p> <p>1.3. Lifelong learning programmes developed by HEIs for external stakeholders / professionals.</p> <p>1.4. Co-teaching (e.g. co-lecturing, workshops organized in partnership with businesses and NGOs; joint training and open courses);</p> <p>1.5. Students tutoring</p> <p>1.6. Cotutelle dissertations</p> <p>1.7. Recruitment activities (e.g. career fairs organized and hosted by universities, company presentations)</p> <p>1.8. Scholarships for students</p> <p>1.9. Student competitions</p>
2. EEC activities in research and valorization	<p>2.1. Joint research projects</p> <p>2.2. Research laboratories supported by industry partners in universities.</p> <p>2.3. Incubation labs</p> <p>2.4. Providing access to research infrastructures to companies</p> <p>2.4 Patents</p>
3. EEC activities in management	<p>3.1 Joint participation in clusters and boards</p>

EEC Barriers and Drivers

Figure 1 synthetizes the perceived barriers to university-business cooperation. Based on the participants' opinions, five categories of barriers have arisen: (1) misaligned goals; (2) insufficient financial resources; (3) skills mismatch; (4) difficulties in partnership building, and, finally, (5) the lack of legislation.

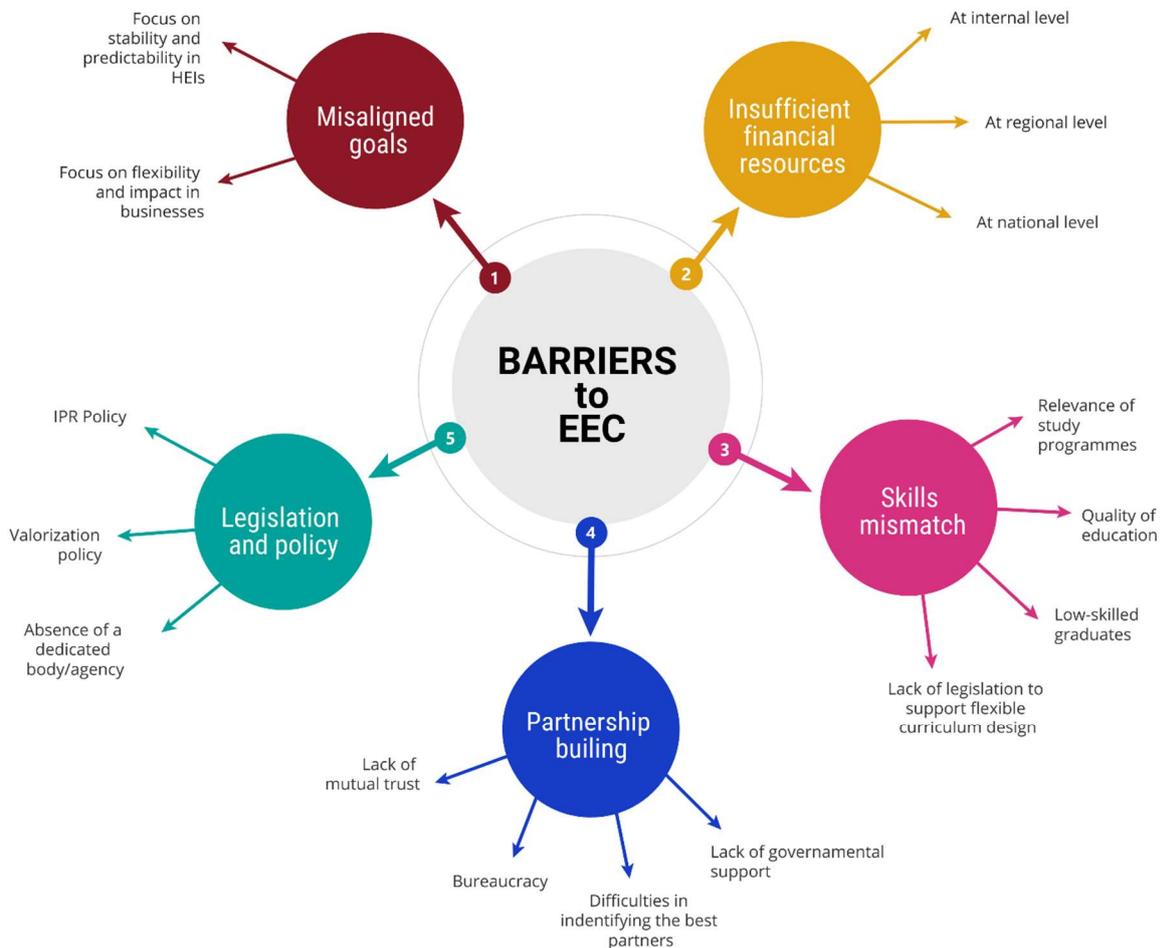


Figure 1. Barriers to Education-Enterprise Cooperation

Various mechanisms and drivers have been pointed out as beneficial for EEC. The collaboration between the university and companies can be stimulated by the functioning of innovation ecosystems or regional networks/clusters/platforms integrating private companies, universities, research institutes, and NGOs.

The functioning of university consortia (e.g. Romanian Alliance of Technical Universities - ARUT) was provided as an example for stimulating the research activity and cooperation, though having a reduced role in effective collaboration with businesses.



An alternative to national consortia is international consortia and professional associations to which universities are institutionally affiliated. Participation in such networks provides access to examples of good practice and transfer of knowledge and expertise, ultimately contributing to innovation (e.g. the participation of the University POLITEHNICA of Bucharest in CESAER or T.I.M.E. Associations). The creation European Universities as a result of the European Commission's initiative is a relevant example from the perspective of innovation, cooperation policies and curriculum design.

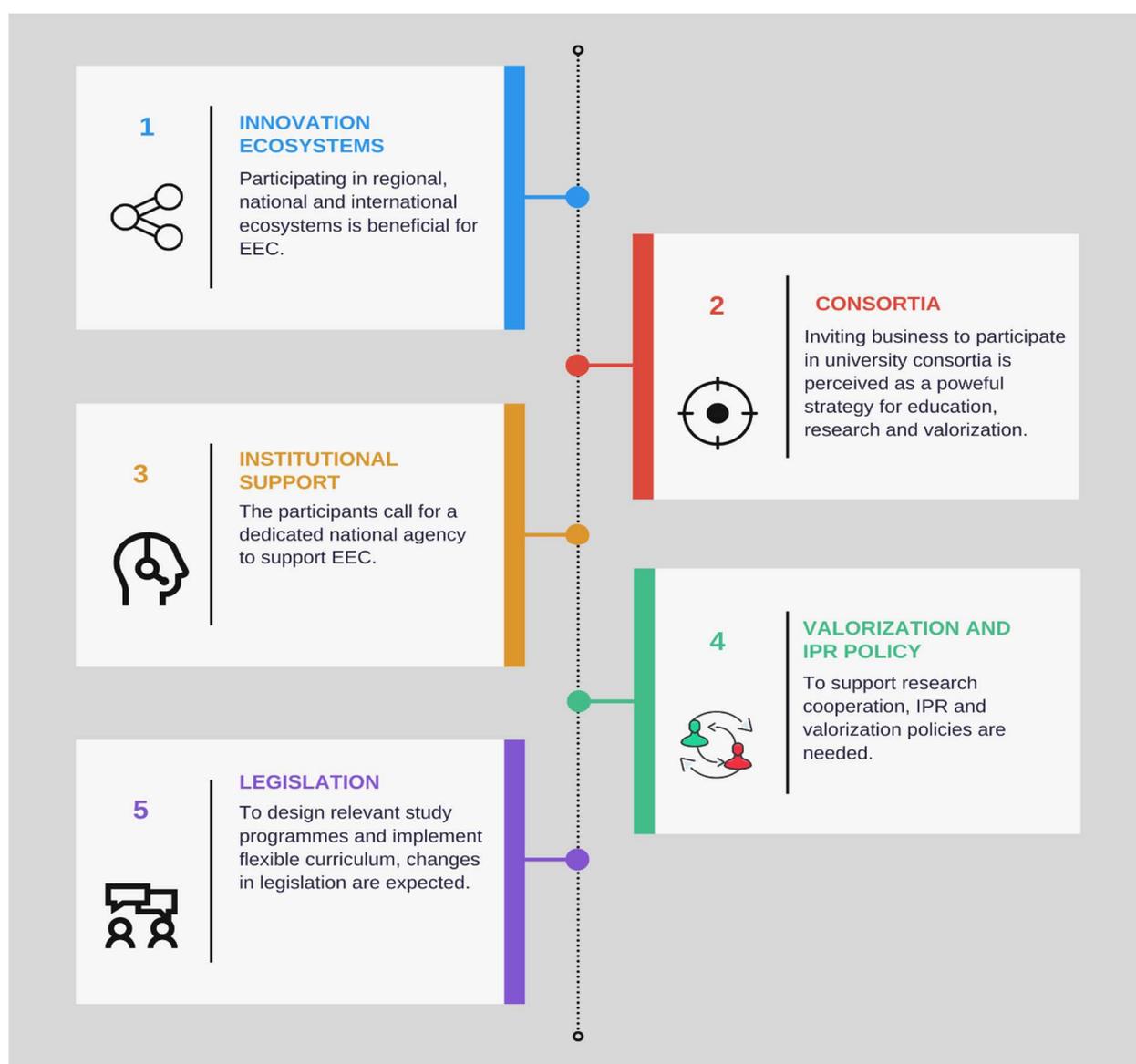


Figure 2. Drivers and mechanisms to support EEC



In order to strengthen university-business cooperation, the interviewees have suggested:

- ⇒ Developing strategic action plans to achieve the objectives of working with the university in an effective manner.
- ⇒ Supporting collaboration between academics and professionals in the socio-economic/business fields to ensure better initial and continuous education of students and graduates.
- ⇒ The inception of funding programmes and instruments.

The Senior Learning Facilitator Profile

Positive opinions and comments have been expressed in relation to the concept of Senior Learning Facilitator (SLF), defining it as relevant, useful, impactful and with significant potential to strengthen EEC. Based on the participants' views and opinions, three segments of SLF supporters have been identified, namely the Enthusiastic Professionals, the Reserved Optimists, and the Handle-with-Care Participants. Most of the participants assessed positively the SLF Competence Framework. As expected, the most positive views and insights were expressed by the interviewees in the segments of Enthusiastic Professionals and Reserved Optimists. From the positive perspective, the insights collected pointed out that the framework is comprehensive, ambitious, and covers the sensitive areas of EEC. The more reluctant comments on the SFL Competence Framework have mentioned the wide range of skills included in the framework. Consequently, this could result in hard-to-find candidates and expensive investments in their training. Similarities with other professions and occupations have been identified, in particular with the career counselors already working in universities.

Concept favorability

From a perceptual perspective, the participants evaluated positively the concept of Senior Learning Facilitator (SLF), defining it as relevant, useful, impactful and with significant potential to strengthen EEC. The Senior Learning Facilitator could have the ability to create meaningful connections with both HEIs and businesses. The respondents' opinions converged in three clusters of perceptions, namely SLF as a promising initiative; SLF as an inspiring practice particularly in academia, and the perceptions of more reluctant interviewees clustered in the depends-on-strategy category (see Figure 3).

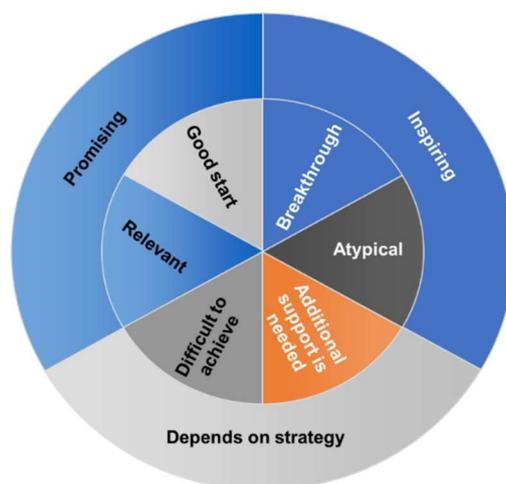


Figure 3. Clusters of perceptions and their respective attributes

The clusters reflect overall perceptions on the SLF concept and unfold specific attributes such as atypical, good start or relevant.

In relation to these clusters, three segments of respondents have been identified (Table 1), namely the Enthusiastic Professionals, the Reserved Optimists, and the Handle-with-Care Participants.



Segment	Relevant Quotes on SLF	General attitude towards EEC
Cluster Inspiring Practice		
<p>Enthusiastic Professionals <i>Mostly academics that have been extensively and intensively involved in EEC</i></p>	<p>'Absolutely, no matter what we call it such an approach I think it should be on the top of HEIs' agenda, from my perspective. Somehow, connecting with business and industry is part of an organizational culture of openness and relevance. [...] Universities should make it happen.' (C.H., full professor)</p> <p>'The message we send to our students is that between university and business, between university and the labor market there is a bridge, and that the university ensures not only the level of schooling and transfer of knowledge but also the next step that interests our young people and their families: co-careering which will empower them to eventually support their own career path.' (G.P., associate professor)</p>	<p>Universities play an active role, and they are 'architects of the future'. The respondents in this segment perceive that educating future generations is the biggest impact HEIs may have on society. No longer do universities have to prepare their students for success in their first job, but for success in future learning, work, and life. Given this context, a position of senior learning facilitator is a breakthrough tool that has the potential to ensure internal cohesion (among various departments of HEIs) and more solid synergies with businesses and society. Nevertheless, the SLF concept is atypical for the Romanian higher education landscape, and it implies a certain level of strategic development commitment and maturity. SLF is undoubtedly perceived as a highly skilled academic.</p>
Cluster Promising Future		
<p>Reserved Optimists <i>Mostly business representatives, actively involved in EEC</i></p>	<p>'What all companies want is skillful, ready to work and future ready. We rarely have such graduates. It is the job of the universities to prepare those people and help them with that (i.e. professional insertion)' (V.T., Head of department).</p> <p>'It is a good thing (i.e. SLF), but universities have other issues to solve. Again, it is a good start, but we need to hear from them that they can deliver high quality graduates, research outcomes and support businesses with concrete results in their work. This is not something that happens very often' (C.M., head of department).</p>	<p>The persons in this segment found the concept impactful, having the potential to be a good start of a systemic change in doing EEC. The voices of Reserved Optimists pointed out the need for a paradigm shift from teaching subject matters to teaching students. Therefore, undergraduates and postgraduates should get a genuine flavor of research, community work, and interact with possible role models in business and industry. SLF is a talent management instrument and should be 'handled' by HEIs. Adopting SLF would challenge universities to empower leadership and be active players in EEC.</p>
Cluster Depends on Strategy		
<p>Handle with care <i>NGO and Public institutions</i></p>	<p>'Yes, it is very generous, and it is a very challenging subject with some limitations. If there is one thing I</p>	<p>They believe the SLF concept is appealing and could make a difference in EEC, but the</p>

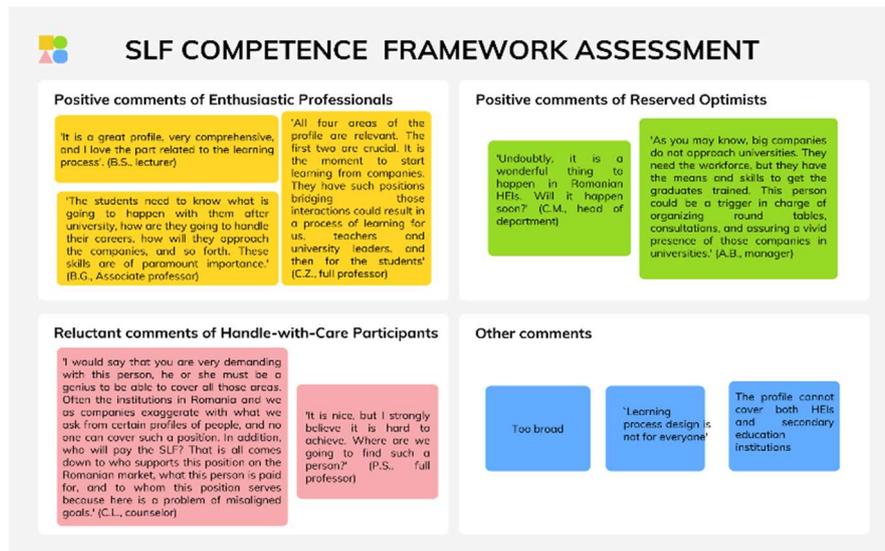


<p><i>representatives, also academics</i></p>	<p>personally reproach universities is that they have extremely limited availability to make changes at the pace that we need. They are undeniably stuck in a paradigm where ‘we think, we do not act’. And I think such a position would allow us to be more connected, socially and business engaged.’ (A.P., NGO representative)</p> <p>‘It is a great initiative. But would this work? I mean ... we have seen many great initiatives, but they are not sustainable in the long run. If this position is not going to be made mandatory in universities, it is not going to work. [...] Universities struggle with so many problems ... this <i>per capita</i> financing scheme, student recruitment, student attrition, rankings, and research production. Strengthening the cooperation with industry is not the top priority, particularly in comprehensive universities’ (C.L., counselor)</p>	<p>universities do not have the means and openness to keep up with rapid technological, societal, and economic changes, therefore they will not be willing to promptly embrace this particular change. This segment considers that universities have adopted a more passive role in EEC and they currently continue to be complacent and just react.</p> <p>The views in this segment share a common perceptual ground with the Enthusiastic Professionals, perceiving the SLF initiative as great and impactful. Nevertheless, the lack of a legislative framework could hinder the impact of introducing such a position in universities.</p> <p>As regards the pre-university education institutions, they are seen as not being powerful enough to support the change, mainly because they do not have an extensive EEC experience. Dual education could be the first context of the SLF inception in VET education.</p>
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Table 1. Segments of interviewees according to their overall attitude on SLF

Competence framework assessment

Most of the participants assessed positively the SLF Competence Framework. As expected, the most positive views and insights were expressed by the interviewees in the segments of Enthusiastic Professionals and Reserved Optimists. From the positive perspective, the insights collected pointed out that the framework is comprehensive, ambitious, and covers the sensitive areas of EEC.



The core mission of SLF is to bridge the communication and exchange between academia and business. Some of the participants recalled what they have experienced in international contexts, where big and small companies were a constant presence in universities. Additionally, they stressed that EEC is not only about creating opportunities for internships and professional practice stages for students but consolidating the presence of businesses in universities. Sharing research infrastructures, organizing big events (e.g. career fairs) are important ways of developing EEC. Even so, both academics and business representatives commonly expressed the idea that talent mobility is key to ensuring an effective university-business cooperation. In the process, the role of SLF is to seize opportunities and build upon them.

The Learning process area of skillfulness was highly praised even by the persons who generally expressed more reluctant views. The motivation is associated with empowering universities to deliver on their primary mission, which is (quality) education. With the contribution of other departments and professionals, the SLF could design strategies employers are seeking to accomplish in terms of curriculum co-design, co-teaching, experiential learning, and the use of innovative pedagogies to boost learning outcomes.

In line with the idea of talent management and development, some insights touched on the need to better counsel students on their future careers, education, and professional development. This set of skills is highly relevant to boost employability. Nevertheless, some concerns have been expressed by the participants working in Academia. They have



identified a potential role overlapping of SLF and career counselors⁴ already working in Romanian universities.

Business representatives and some academics have suggested that the portfolio of soft skills could be enlarged by including negotiation skills, grit/perseverance, and creativity. More particularly, creativity relates to innovation applied in curriculum design and problem solving. One concrete suggestion mentioned the need to be familiar with innovation methodologies such as design thinking.

The more reluctant comments on the SFL Competence Framework have mentioned the wide range of skills included in the framework. This could result in hard-to-find candidates and expensive investments in their training. A possible inconsistency has been identified. On one hand, the framework aims at a senior position that could be possibly assumed by an academic. On the other hand, extensive additional training is required to achieve the desired level of depth of the skills in the framework. To effectively combine both learning/curriculum design with industry experience, SLF needs to prove relevant experience in academia and business alike.

Similar profiles

Two of the participants expressed expert opinions on the existence of similar profiles. **Errore. L'origine riferimento non è stata trovata.** presents a selection of those professional profiles being mentioned in the Romanian Qualification Framework. There have been indicated similarities with other professions. However, the selection is based on similarity criteria.

Description	
Level of qualification according to EQF	6
Identification number in the Romanian Qualifications Framework Coaching specialist	242412
Knowledge & Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Fundamentals of coaching <input type="checkbox"/> Personal and organizational coaching <input type="checkbox"/> Ethics and professional standards in coaching <input type="checkbox"/> Establishing the coaching relationship <input type="checkbox"/> Communication in coaching <input type="checkbox"/> Coach attitude 	

⁴ Starting with 2014, the Ministry of National Education approved a methodology and the necessary legal support to create centers for career guidance and counselling in Universities (CCOCs). These services could address students, pupils and alumni.



<input type="checkbox"/> Coaching techniques <input type="checkbox"/> Performance evaluation (methods) <input type="checkbox"/> Self-development and self-observation <input type="checkbox"/> Management of the coaching contract <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing of coaching services <input type="checkbox"/> Practical coaching experience	
Level of qualification according to EQF	6
Identification number in the Romanian Qualifications Framework	242324
Counselor for personal development	
Knowledge & Skills: <input type="checkbox"/> Creating the interaction space <input type="checkbox"/> Investigation of problematic situations <input type="checkbox"/> Exploring potential solutions to existing problems <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling to support personal development	
Level of qualification according to EQF	6
Identification number in the Romanian Qualifications Framework	235902
Mentor/Mentor for professional development/Teacher mentor	
<i>Note: the occupational standard was developed in 1999 and it has never been updated since then. However, these qualifications are associated with the teaching profession. The teacher mentors are responsible for the professional insertion of early career teachers in pre-university education.</i>	
Level of qualification according to EQF	6
Identification number in the Romanian Qualifications Framework	242315
Vocational counselor	
Knowledge & Skills: <input type="checkbox"/> A Vocational counselor is a specialist who provides social services of vocational evaluation, professional guidance and motivational support in order to develop personal autonomy. Vocational counseling is a long-term, continuous process, during which vocational evaluation, professional orientation, job identification, employment, post-employment support are framework steps in the development of independent life skills, autonomy, and socio-professional development, in the sense of fulfilling personal vocation.	
Level of qualification according to EQF	6
Identification number in the Romanian Qualifications Framework	242308
Job market analyst	
<i>Note: The occupational standard was developed in 1999 and it has not been updated since then.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Based on the description in the standard, The job market analyst is working within the Public Employment Agencies. The basic activity consists in providing information services related to the labor market and analyzing its situation in terms of the evolution of different sectors of activity, the effects of the application of different measures of intervention on the labor market. He or she identifies in advance the professions and	



<p>qualifications in which the workforce needs to be prepared, identifies local actors who may be involved in solving employment problems. The activity involves a permanent analysis of the situations on the labor market, offering viable solutions. The job market analyst carries out a research activity for the purpose of developing forecast studies and developing programs to solve problems in the labor market.'</p>	
Level of qualification according to EQF	6
Identification number in the Romanian Qualifications Framework Labor consultant	242307
<p><i>Note: The occupational standard was developed in 1999 and it has not been updated since then.</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Based on the description in the standard, 'The labor consultant works within the public Employment Agencies but can also work in private employment agencies. The labor consultant has as his core activity the preparation of studies on the labor market'.</p>	
Level of qualification according to EQF	6
Identification number in the Romanian Qualifications Framework Professional Competences Evaluator	242405
<p>Knowledge and Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment tools design <input type="checkbox"/> Counselling the candidates <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment process management 	
Level of qualification according to EQF	6
Identification number in the Romanian Qualifications Framework Process Improvement Manager	241946
<p><i>Note: The occupational standard was developed in 2008 and it has not been updated since then.</i></p> <p><i>Based on the description in the standard, 'The Process Improvement Manager's role is to manage an organized system to enable the continuous approach and resolution of problems arising during current activities, in order to allow continuous improvement of the results obtained (reducing consumption and costs, increasing productivity, reducing delivery time, increasing flexibility in meeting customer requirements, etc. – all these improvements with the effect of increasing competitiveness).</i></p>	
Level of qualification according to EQF	6
Identification number in the Romanian Qualifications Framework Organizational Development Specialist	242322
<p>Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> identifies learning and development needs; <input type="checkbox"/> develops/implements programs to meet these needs; <input type="checkbox"/> designs, delivers, facilitates and evaluates training and development programs, learning processes; <input type="checkbox"/> Implements Human Resources policies, processes and programs; <input type="checkbox"/> advises managers and employees and provides the interface between them and HR units and initiates specific solutions and/ or programs tailored to the needs of the assigned structures. 	



As stated before, the roles and tasks of SLF overlap to some extent to those of counselors in the Centers for Career Guidance and Counseling. According to the Minister's Order no. 650/2014, the counselors working in these centers have the following roles and responsibilities:

- informing, guiding, and advising students in their final years of high school and undergraduates by offering the following services:
 - educational and vocational advice;
 - counseling and psychological evaluation;
 - career advice;
 - the development of materials for information, guidance and advice.
- actions related to increasing the employability of students and graduates by offering services such as:
 - employment portfolio training sessions, simulation of the job interview;
 - organizing company presentations;
 - training sessions for the development of students' transversal skills;
 - carrying out regular studies and analyses on university drop-out, the integration of graduates into the labor market, the impact of counseling and vocational guidance services, and the proposal of measures to improve them;
 - the development and application of specific instruments for the purpose of monitoring employment market insertion;
 - participation in activities organized by alumni;
- informing and advising students on the educational and occupational routes available in the university curriculum, the system of transferable credits at university level, in accordance with the National Register of Qualifications in Higher Education and the National Qualifications Framework, by specific means such as "open-door days" presentation sessions, educational fairs, thematic visits etc.
- informing and advising students on educational and occupational routes within higher education institutions for master's and Ph.D. degrees.

Suggestions on the profile implementation at the local and national level

The general opinion is that SLF could help universities cope with the challenges related to their primary mission: to boost learning relevance, embed innovative approaches and curriculum flexibility in the programmes they design and relate more effectively to external stakeholders. Therefore, the needs that SLF could address point towards universities. To be able to initiate and conduct change processes, SLF will be affiliated to a higher education institution. The degree of SLF Competence



Framework complexity has entangled the projection of a clear career path. Nevertheless, two possible approaches have been identified and described.

Most of the participants clearly indicated that SLF should be affiliated to universities. Based on the SLF Competences Framework, the interviewees appreciated the profile to be of a senior professional with extensive work experience in Academia and business alike. The affiliation is motivated by the fact that most of the skills and responsibilities of SLF concern the academic environment. To anticipate the more in-depth discussion in Section 4, three major roles have emerged: learning innovator, knowledge steward, and community builder. Subsequently, the activities associated with these roles point towards processes and aspects traditionally associated with HEIs. Moreover, HEIs have been identified as the vulnerable partners in EEC. In other words, universities need to make appropriate changes to ensure the future-readiness of the students and graduates. University diplomas may soon no longer be the only pre-requisite for the engineering professional world. The job market assesses the competency levels of their future employees themselves, based on a portfolio of accomplishments and personal synthesis of learning gains at university level and daily life. It will require new forms of teaching, certification, and administration. Naturally, this leads to SLF as an organizational innovator able to help academics and leadership teams to address those challenges.

Although the career path has not been revealed clearly, some recommendations and potential routes emerged.

Figure 4 graphically represents one possible career path for SLF.

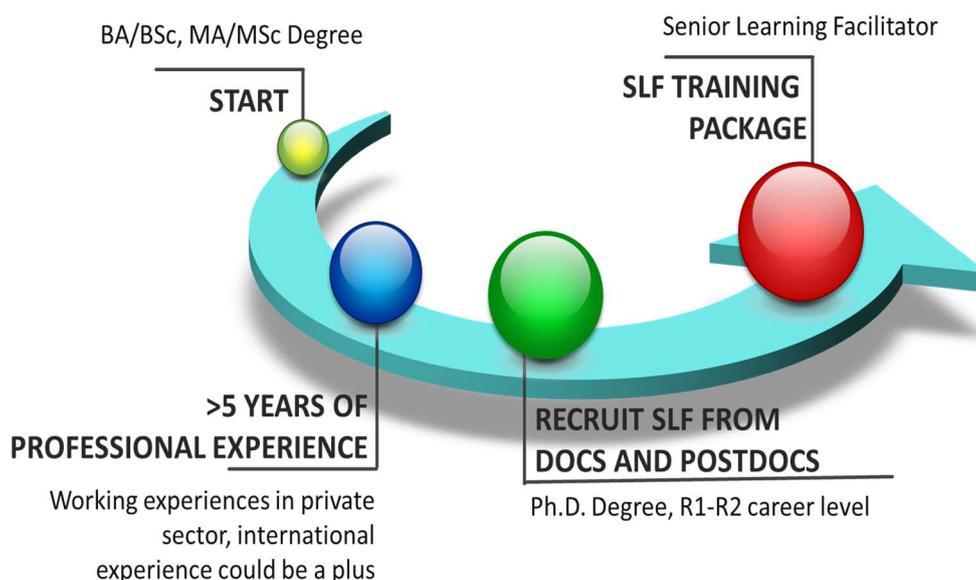


Figure 4. Possible career path proposed for SLF (1)

The peculiarities of the career path above rely on recruiting the candidates who primarily have worked in the private sector and deeply understand their area of business. In the best-case scenario, those professionals enroll for a Ph.D. degree which will give them the context to immerse into the academic environment. Mentors and Ph.D. supervisors would play an essential role in identifying the potential candidate for a SLF position. Additionally, extensive training is needed⁵.

The second career path in **Errore. L'origine riferimento non è stata trovata.** builds upon an extensive academic experience and proposes two additional layers: international mobilities and participation in professional associations or task forces covering SLF areas of expertise.

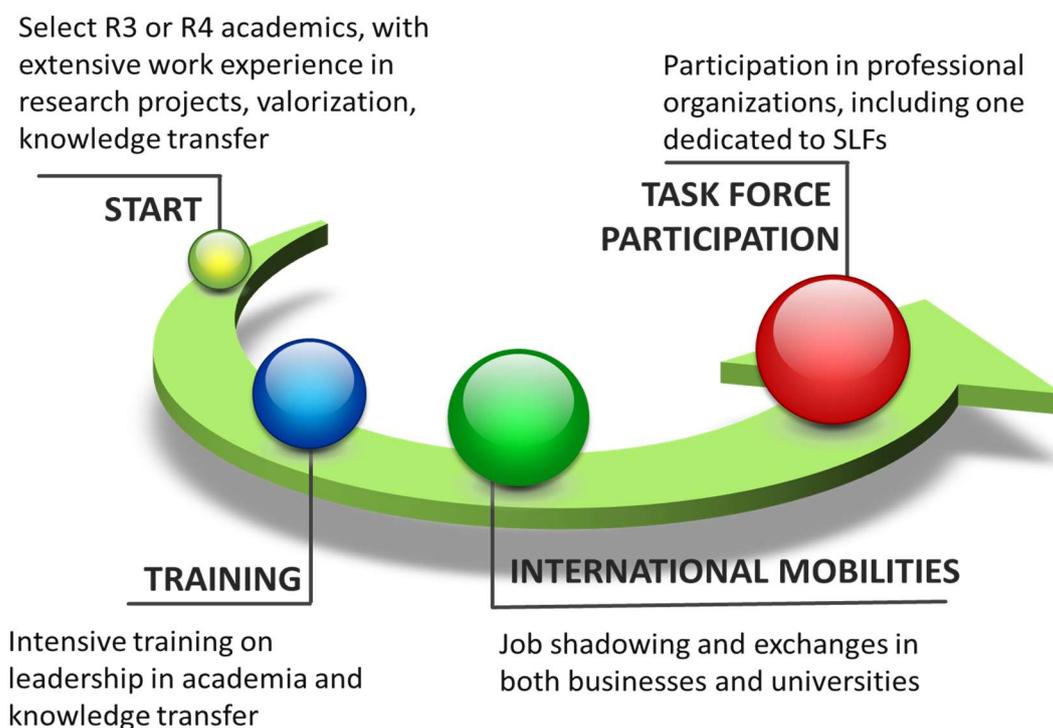


Figure 5. Possible career path proposed for SLF (2)

Concrete services that SLF could provide

Following the EEC types unfolded in previous sections, several concrete roles, services, and activities have been identified. Based on the number of mentions, two primary areas of intervention have been

⁵ The suggestions on the topics that could be addressed have been integrated in the modules proposed in Appendix.



revealed, namely education and partnership building. More precisely, SLF is expected to be a learning innovator and community builder, who leverages both internal and external cooperation opportunities. Secondly, SLF should play the 'white hat role'⁶ in management activities, by contributing to stakeholder segmentation, strategy development, and study programmes' accreditation. It is to mention that the roles and services identified are described from a university perspective, given most opinions supporting this affiliation of the senior learning facilitator.

Three major roles – **learning innovator**, **community builder** and **knowledge steward** – of SLF sparked during the interviews, indicating that SLF would have a complex and influential role in Academia and business alike.

This profession is clearly associated with **innovation**, in the first place. Therefore, designing learning for human needs and promoting learning, unlearning, and relearning of staff competencies are the main expectations related to SLF contributions to EEC in education. This comes to mitigate a major concern of businesses, which is the relevance of learning outcomes and certificates. Thus, SLF will need to have sound knowledge on curriculum design, higher education pedagogy and innovative pedagogies to be able to empower HEIs and teachers to design learning experiences that will align with the needs of the world of work or societal needs. To achieve impactful outcomes, SLF will organize **small events** to disseminate knowledge and good practices on higher education pedagogy and will assist teachers in preparing subject matter **syllabi**. He or she will, therefore, provide faculty members with **pedagogical knowledge**. Complementarily, SLF will organize training or workshops addressing students. The main topic of the workshops would be self-regulated learning skills.

Additionally, SLF could provide future potential students with information and advice on the available study programmes, the specific requirements, opportunities (e.g. mobility windows, internships) and their relation to the job market. **Graduates' employability** should be of great interest for this position. SLF could survey employers and other stakeholders, **conduct research** to support the inception of new study programmes and provide the leadership team with up-to-date information on the job market.

⁶ A reference to Edward de Bono's 6 thinking hats method applied to spark creativity and problem solving. The white hat is usually associated with the persons who seeks facts and provides others with quality information.



Moreover, SLF could contribute to strengthening the cooperation and exchange among faculty members and across departments and faculties. By doing so, SLF would contribute to the development of interdisciplinary study programmes and support the inception of **vertically integrated projects**.

Another important contribution relates to **partnership building**. SLF would participate in brokerage events to promote the university's research infrastructures and human capital. In the same line of action, SLF could actively engage in consortia development by identifying potential partners, surveying dedicated platforms, posting, and receiving partnership offers.

Since participation in international professional organizations is highly regarded in Academia, SLF will have an active presence in **events** and **task forces** related to business-university cooperation, the future of learning and work etc. Nevertheless, drafting internal policies on EEC and contributing to university's strategic planning could be included into SLF's service portfolio.

Figure 6 synthesized the services and potential activities in three areas of EEC.

Conditions for recruitment and operation of the SLF

The Senior Learning Facilitator is expected to plan, develop, and execute communication initiatives, campaigns, events, and projects that engage students, staff and community cohorts and align with the strategic plan of the University. SLF is required to provide strategic communications, student, staff, and stakeholder advice to the university leadership team. The position provides an accurate delivery of communications, reports, and analyses on graduate employability, skills, job market and stakeholders' needs, and opinions. SLF would effectively represent the university in various events and working groups, engaging with potential partners and collaborators.

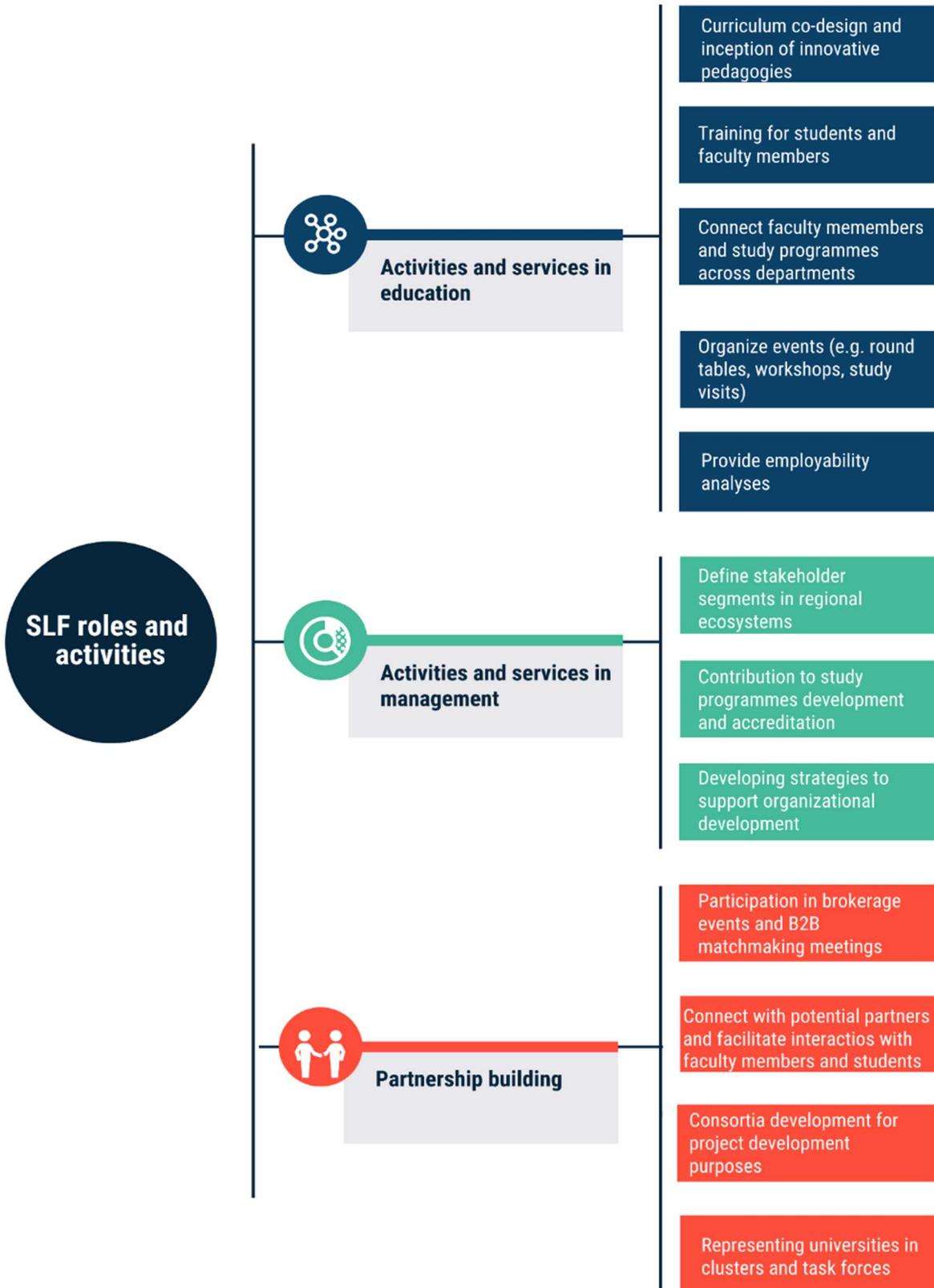


Figure 6. Types of activities and services for SLF



3. Key Findings

3.1 Education-Enterprise: state of the art

Although the Covid19 pandemic has marked a difficult period in the implementation of dual learning and any specific form of traditional internship, the relationship between education systems and the world of enterprises has not been frozen: the increase of digital competences in the world of education and in every communication practice has allowed to explore new modalities to collaborate and to participate in working process while not being physically in the same place. This in itself is a very positive development because it moves the focus of collaboration **from** “stage” and “internship” (meaning being IN the place where the company is) **to** being within a collaborative learning project in which enterprises and education institutions are both involved and the role of learner’s self-regulation and the development of other transversal competences is progressively increasing. This evolution towards more articulated and diverse forms of education-enterprise collaboration creates favorable conditions to the emergence of specialized “design, support and liaison” services such as the ones originally thought by the project for the Senior Learning Facilitator profile.

In fact, most of the partners’ regions are good examples of a collaborative climate between education and enterprise, but a systemic approach to it is recognized to be missing.

Thanks to the differentiated profile of project partners and related different level of interventions and/or connections with the Education and Vocational Training systems, an analysis of this relationship between Education and Enterprises at different level could be possible, that is to say:

- relationships between HE and Enterprises was widely explored in Romania, Austria and Poland
- relationships between School and Education systems with the productive sector has more widely been explored in France, Austria and Italy relationships between VET and continuous training systems and Enterprises was explored more in depts in Italy.

This differentiation feed the findings of the Senior Learning Facilitator profile analysis carried out in the development of IO2, leading to a first positive assessment of the wide flexibility that this professional profile could express, being able to connect different level of education with the productive world and acting as an important *trait d’union* between these two strongly



complementary worlds, which are still struggling to find a systematic way of interacting and communicating.

On the other side, complexity is always difficult to manage or, in the case of the SLF Profile, to be mediated at transnational level.

3.2 The Senior Learning Facilitator Profile

The idea of the SLF profile was **generally welcomed in all countries**, but comments were made that show different interpretations of the main role that SLFs may play – also depending on the existence of similar profiles in the country or, in some cases, on the nature of the partners that collected the information from stakeholders. For example:

- Polish respondents underline **the role of SLF within the enterprise**,
- Romanian respondents underline the **importance of an academic preparation** while envisaging different paths into this profession,
- France ??????
- Italian respondents stressed more the liaison function and the service to both SMEs and education institutions.

In some cases stakeholders consulted considered **that the SLF profile and the related framework of competences proposed appears:**

- **too broad or better “too ambitious”**,
- **difficult to be attained by a single person**, since it gathers three core professional components (learning support, liaison education-enterprise and labour market expertise) and a set of key transversal competences necessary to perform the tasks at a high proficiency level;
- **and, on the other sides, to be differently endowed with specific skills as required by the different country related contexts**

This point of criticism is certainly relevant, but it must be remembered that **the profile has been thought** not for young students finishing their studies and looking for a job, but **for experienced professionals with a seniority properly linked to experience rather than age. This expertise should be possessed by the SLF in one or more of the three core**



competence areas identified for the job profile, on which the ideal candidate could be called to be trained only in the missing ones, so as to integrate their already possessed competences filling the gap with the required ones.

In other words, although at the end of this project a comprehensive training standard programme will be designed and tested for all the competences that will be retained in the consolidated competence framework, it is not expected that a single training path will be run by any individual candidate, since validation of existing learning outcomes from work experience or any other form of learning will be in place.

Furthermore, as also highlighted by different stakeholders interviewed at transnational level, it is exactly in the combination of the three areas that the SLF is innovative, grouping elements of already existing profiles - who seldom interact between them and within the different systems concerned - to propose a more versatile professional profile who is able to address and deal with learners, teachers and trainers, curriculum developers, enterprise managers, productive system stakeholders and local policy makers having a broader picture of the challenges to face.

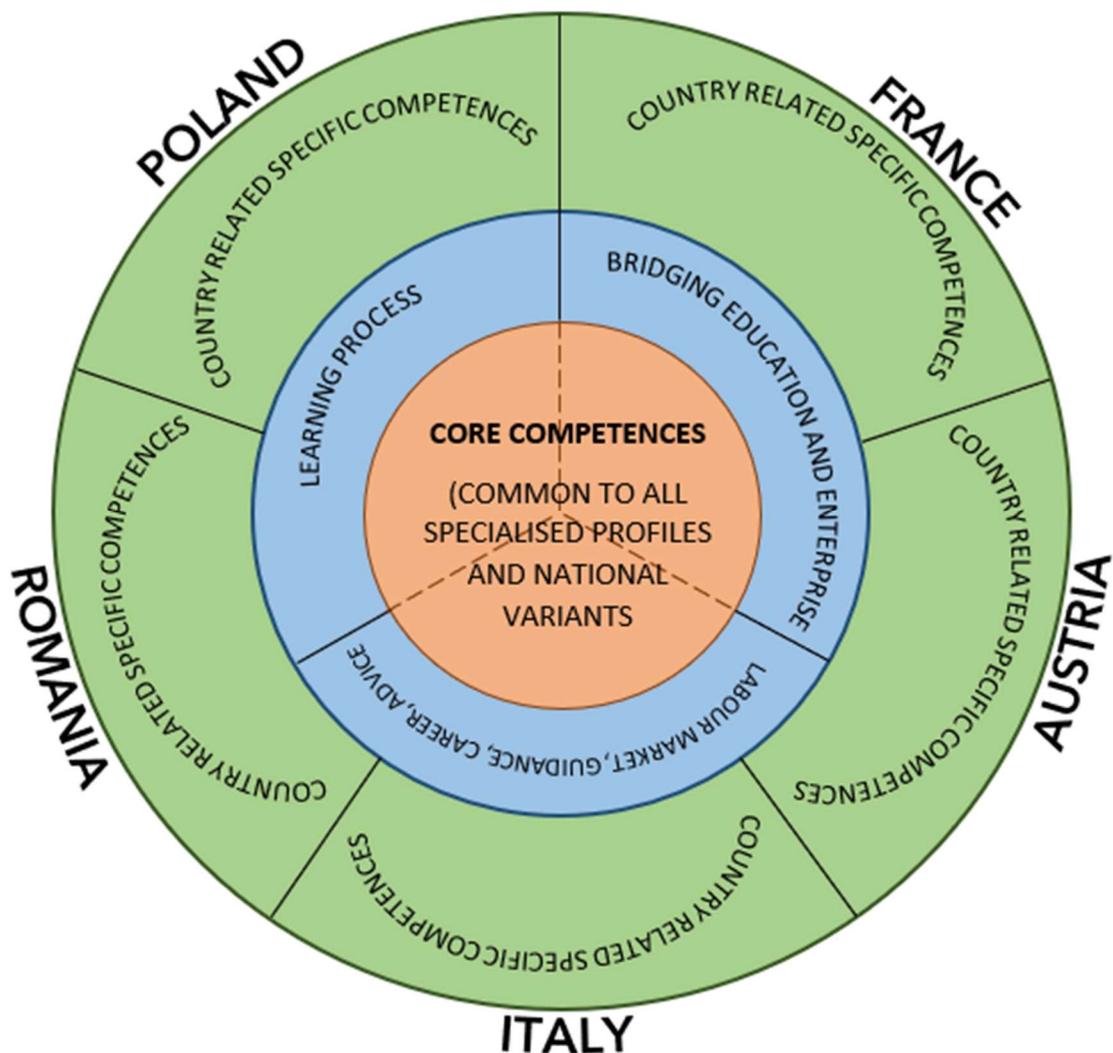
The strengths of the proposed profile has been differently stated by the stakeholders involved in the research phase at transnational level.

In other words:

- as suggested by Austrian stakeholders interviewed, **the SLF could act as a “knowledge hub”** among different stakeholders, and be able to generate system view and systemic benefits;
- as suggested by Romanian stakeholders interviewed, **the SLF could act as a learning innovator, a knowledge steward and community builder, i.e. an organizational innovator;**
- French stakeholders highlighted a broader definition for the SLF, that is to say **a player in the school-business relationship;**
- In Italy it could represent **a requalification path addressed to professional profiles operating in the HR area, a kind of evolution of the HR professional-**



Having said all that, the consultations confirmed the idea that one way to design a professional profile with a European breadth is to build the competences framework identifying the core competences that will represent the “foundations”, i.e. the common basis for all SLFs, integrated by a group of competences to be articulated according to organizational and functional specifications, and possibly a third area of tailor-made sets of competences referred to the national regulatory, educational and economic context that might contain additional and specific competence requirements.





3.3 Suggestions on the profile implementation at the national level

On this point, as it had to be expected, National Plans are quite different and refer to many contextual elements: in all countries the primary involvement of public authorities and enterprise associations is recognized as a key pillar for the success of the profile.

Although in every country the importance of **coming from the business sector/having worked in enterprise is recognized as a fundamental requirement for SLF candidates**, most countries underline the importance of an independent, “public good” orientation in the performance of the services, thus suggesting **an inter-organizational framework to gather and govern the groups of SLF** (e.g., an association with public support and employers association mandate, a special agency in which all stakeholders are represented to set the rules and monitor developments).

The option of **a service for enterprises** (mostly SMEs) provided by other enterprises (mostly large) is not excluded but is less quoted in the National Plans.

Concerning the aspect of formal recognition, the Romanian report analyses requirements and proposes procedures to have the profile academically and professionally recognized following the EU instruments for transparency, quality and mobility (EQF, ESG and EQAVET, etc.)

A well-documented experimentation phase at a local/regional level is recommended before proposing a national operation to launch the SLF



3.4 Concrete services that SLFs might provide

National Plans contain a very articulated and promising list of services that SLF could provide, thus confirming existing unsatisfied needs.

The Romanian Plan provides an interesting way to group the services that might be provided :

1. Services to education,
2. Activities and services to companies (management);
3. Partnership building.

Based on this categorization, a specific format may be provided to check the interest and feasibility of each service proposed in all National Plans. One further dimension still to be fully explored is the economic model on which the services will be provide to the different target groups.

The public interest of the overall SLF function is recognized as a starting point, but this does not automatically lead to a complete public funding of all its services. Different models should be proposed keeping in mind the context specificities and also the particular moment that Europe is facing, post pandemic and strongly oriented towards massive transformations of the economy, while guaranteeing that social exclusion is adequately fought. This might create important opportunities to justify and support effort in the professional guidance of youth and adults to be re-converted.



3.5 Conditions for recruitment and operation of the SLF

In the original idea of the project, also inspired by the French *Ingenieurs pour l'Ecole* (IPEs) model, the SLFs should mainly come from a medium-large enterprise in which they had some managerial and tutor/mentor/trainer's experience and some relations with the world of education. The National Plans do not contradict this idea but offer the vision of other paths to get into the SLF job, some from the position of experienced school teachers -especially from technical and vocational education-, some from the world of consultancy for vocational guidance and labour market services, some through an ad hoc academic path integrated with enterprise experience⁷.

Concerning the operation of a SLF Network, this depends on some of the factors presented in the previous point: recognition as a public interest service, role of public authorities, enterprise associations and other stakeholders, legislation and regulations at the different institutional levels.

In addition, several Plans support the idea that SLF might also be a part-time job and/or a secondment from a maintained permanent job in industry or the Public Administration. These aspects also deserve some deeper analysis that will be possible in during the next partner meeting.

National Plans also contained a section on "Possible involvement of associated partners in the design and implementation of the National action Plan". These sections are too country-specific to be summarized here, but they confirm the necessity and the interest to activate a multi-stakeholder operation in each country, enriching rather than duplicating existing services and structures: these, on the contrary, should be involved in the design and implementation of the new profile, focusing on integration of existing functions: filling gaps and providing a knowledge hub opportunity in local and regional systems of education-enterprise cooperation.

⁷ All these options will be further explored in the coming partners meeting scheduled in November 2021.



3.6 Conclusive remarks and steps forward

The National Action Plans provide general very positive feedback and many concrete ideas:

1. to refine and adapt the competence framework for the Senior Learning Facilitator
2. to propose some degree of flexibility and adaptability to specific countries circumstances
3. to conceive a broader range of services to be provided to the different target areas
4. to suggest recruitment and access paths to the new profile
5. to build a recognition and validation path for a new qualification, particularly relevant in the present phase of instability of the labour market
6. to propose inter-organizational frameworks in which the new profile may be implemented
7. to involve stakeholders much beyond the concept-validation phase, and to make them co-owner of the project ideas and development.

Finally, some considerations on the idea of the expected learning path are worth mentioning, as the French Plan clearly states, integration of present functions is probably as important as training in making the SLF a sustainable reality: rather than a totally new learning path, the competence framework offers an instrument for self-assessment, validation and enrichment of already existing “partial” and more specialised profiles. Professionals in the three core areas should be the first candidates to consider the application to become a SLF, thus reducing their training path to the “missing elements” in terms of competences.

The next steps in the project development is now to pass the results of this phase to the partners in charge of defining the learning paths and building/selecting appropriate learning resources. At the same time, the National Action Plans will start to be implemented, thus creating the conditions for an experimentation in each of the partners’ country. Transnational collaboration will contribute to share challenges and solutions and to further develop the partnership activities towards sustainable results.



4. Self-assessment tool for the engagement of the SLF

4.1 Attitudes

Based on the pre defined clusters, bridging education and enterprises labour market + guidance career advice learning process (tutoring, design, mentoring, wbl,) **a set of attitudes has been identified. These attitudes could be assessed to show candidates predisposition to undertake a specific training path and finally reach a Senior Learning Facilitator role.**

We moved forward also considering WEF indications on Future Skills trends to 2030 where social and emotional skills, such as empathy and respect for others, are considered key as classrooms and workplaces become more and more diverse.

Finally we took in consideration potential added value of fusion skills, the ability to "interact" effectively with artificial intelligence, in parallel with soft and hard skill to complete Senior Learning Facilitator Profile

Self-Awareness

Senior Learning Facilitator needs to be strong and solid, with a resolute personality, able to focus attention on his/her own emotional state in any situation, and being able to effectively process this state and use what you know to better inform future actions. SLE is also able to use his/her own emotions to affect positive change through pursuing fixed goals, employing emotions toward positivity, optimism, confidence and persistence.

Communication Skills

Here are listed some basic skills that will allow the Senior Learning Facilitator an effective management of the classroom and will allow him/her to build a personal standing to strengthen his technical know-how.

Active listening

Feedback culture

Reading complex contexts

Communication modulation

Basic teaching skills



Social And Emotional Skills

The Senior Learning Facilitator has to be passionate about people and able to inspire. He/She has the ability to read any context in which he/she is acting and to manage, through an affective self-regulation, self-control and ownership of his/her emotions, driving emotional reaction in conflicting contexts. He/She is also able to feel what another person is feeling, and to see and feel life from their perspective. A clear understanding of their emotional state will be useful to define how best to drive them through their learning path with positivity and optimism.

Flexibility & Problem Solving

SLE is able to question certainties if needed and reconsider positions at any time. Is also skilled in the problem solving which includes such as considering failure as a part of learning process. He/she is strongly target oriented, keen, enthusiastic and dots connector. Moreover he/she has got intercultural skills, which enables him/her to understand different ways of expressing ideas and relate them.

Time Management & Planning

SLE is a good planner, always focused on the main objective thanks to a strong attention to time. He/she is accurate, methodical and cares details. He/she is always able to fix measurable targets and reliable KPI. He/she knows how to manage priorities.

Business Intelligence & Approach

SEL is able to read data e connect info to business strategy and global vision and to integrate technical skills with organizational processes.

Negotiation

SEL add to strong relationship skills the ability to negotiate with strong pragmatism, adaptability and flexibility, and mediate among different positions.

Cross Cultural Approach

SLF has the ability to navigate between different cultures but also different items and processes through an open-minded approach and a careful and sensitive communication, focused on peculiarities of each interlocutor or counterpart.



Diversity And Gender Sensibility

SLF is able to grasp the uniqueness of each individual by recognizing their individual differences, transforming them into bridges for new opportunities and mutual learning. SEL is also aware and sensitive to gender differences in life and work.

4.2 Linking competences to Attitudes

Once the attitudes were defined and shared among the partners, they were correlated with the previously identified competences.

A) BRIDGING EDUCATION AND ENTERPRISES

*Communication Skills: Active Listening (AL) – Feedback Culture (FC) – Reading Complex Contexts (RCC) – Communication Modulation (CM) – Basic Teaching Skills (BTS)

	Self-Awareness	Communication Skills*	Social and Emotional Skills	Flexibility & Problem Solving	Time Management & Planning	Business Intelligence	Negotiation
1. Help teachers to plan work-based learning	X	X (BTS, CM)		X	X		
2. Understanding of the business		X (RCC)	X			X	
3. Knowledge of the Business Process		X (RCC)				X	
4. Organize Techno access by SCHOOLS/VET (Vocational Educational Training/HE (Higher Education – University)		X (CM, RCC)	X		X		X
5. Organize the presence of company experts in VET/schools/University		X (CM, RCC)	X		X		X



6. Overcoming lack of confidence between Education and Enterprises	X	X (AL, CM)	X				X
7. Promote European Mobility for apprenticeship in Company		X (CM, RCC)	X		X	X	X
8. Manage the relationships with local/regional enterprises, Institutions, key-actors, stakeholders	X	X (CM, RCC)	X	X			X
9. Understanding of the education system	X					X	
10. Acknowledgment of the facilitating activities	X	X (BTS)		X			
11. Outreach activity towards the education/economic community	X		X	X		X	X

B) LABOUR MARKET + GUIDANCE CAREER ADVICE

*Communication Skills: Active Listening (AL) – Feedback Culture (FC) – Reading Complex Contexts (RCC) – Communication Modulation (CM) – Basic Teaching Skills (BTS)

	Self-Awareness	Communication Skills*	Social and Emotional Skills	Flexibility & Problem Solving	Time Management & Planning	Business Intelligence	Negotiation
1. Understanding of the business		X (RCC)	X			X	
2. Knowledge of the Business Process		X (RCC)				X	



3. Competences in learning motivation	X	X (BTS, FC, CM)	X				
4. Transmit soft skills about company codes	X	X (FC)	X				
5. ICT Impact on jobs and/or qualifications		X (RCC)				X	
6. Develop vocational guidance and training activities matching the needs and requirements of the territory/context, in cooperation with relevant key-actors and stakeholders	X	X (AL, RCC, CM)	X	X	X (RCC)	X	X
7. Analyze the socio-economic context in terms of training needs and labour market requirements			X			X	
8. Help learner identify career opportunities	X	X (AL, FC, CM)				X	X
9. Open professional network to junior workers		X (AL, RCC, CM)	X				X
10. Know how to map/prioritise stakeholder for training/education at local level					X		
11. Know how to represent emerging skill needs (of a sector) and training perspectives "outside" the company context	X	X (RCC, CM)	X			X	
12. Knowledge of the value chain	X					X	
13. Knowledge of regional and international trends			X			X	
14. Knowledge of labour market dynamics and legislation			X			X	
15. Policies					X		
16. Formal opportunities (Bildungskarenz –AT), Programs, Scholarships			X		X		X



C) LEARNING PROCESS (TUTORING, DESIGN, MENTORING, WBL, CVET etc.

*Communication Skills: Active Listening (AL) – Feedback Culture (FC) – Reading Complex Contexts (RCC) – Communication Modulation (CM) – Basic Teaching Skills (BTS)

	Self-Awareness	Communication Skills*	Social and Emotional Skills	Flexibility & Problem Solving	Time Management & Planning	Business Intelligence	Negotiation
1. Help teachers to plan work-based learning	X	X (BTS, CM)		X	X		
2. Organize Techno access by SCHOOLS/VET/HE			X			X	
3. Competences in learning motivation	X	X (BTS, CM)	X				
4. Support the development of soft skills	X	X (AL, FC, RCC)	X				
5. Support people to be autonomous learners		X (AL, FC, RCC)				X	
6. Support project based learning	X	X (AL, RCC, CM)	X	X	X (RCC)	X	X
7. How to integrate and/or match teaching/learning and teachers/learners perspectives and needs		X (AL, RCC, CM)	X		X	X	X
8. Be aware of the local learning ecosystem	X	X (AL, FC, CM, RCC)	X			X	
9. Acknowledgment of autonomous learning		X (AL, RCC, CM)	X	X			
10. Pedagogical skills	X	X (AL, FC, CM, BTS)			X		



D) LEARNING PROCESS (TUTORING, DESIGN, MENTORING, WBL, CVET etc.

*Communication Skills: Active Listening (AL) – Feedback Culture (FC) – Reading Complex Contexts (RCC) – Communication Modulation (CM) – Basic Teaching Skills (BTS)

	Self-Awareness	Communication Skills*	Social and Emotional Skills	Flexibility & Problem Solving	Time Management & Planning	Business Intelligence	Negotiation
1. Help teachers to plan work-based learning		X (BTS, CM)		X	X		
2. Organize Techno access by SCHOOLS/VET/HE			X			X	
3. Competences in learning motivation	X	X (BTS, CM)					
4. Support the development of soft skills	X	X (FC)	X				
5. Support people to be autonomous learners		X (RCC)				X	
6. Support project based learning	X	X (AL, RCC, CM)	X	X	X (RCC)	X	X
7. How to integrate and/or match teaching/learning and teachers/learners perspectives and needs			X			X	
8. Be aware of the local learning ecosystem	X	X (AL, FC, CM)				X	
9. Acknowledgment of autonomous learning		X (AL, RCC, CM)	X				
10. Pedagogical skills					X		



4.3 The Questionnaire

The self-assessment questionnaire is aimed to get some useful information about a list of main relevant attitudes for the SLF profile.

These attitudes, once assessed, can show a predisposition to undertake a specific training path and finally reach a Senior Learning Facilitator role.

You're asked to complete the questionnaire of 33 statements.

SLF'll be asked to give their personal agreement by using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= not disagree nor agree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree.



<u>MAIN ATTITUDES</u>			ITEM	strongly disagree	disagree	not disagree nor agree	agree	strongly agree
				1	2	3	4	5
<u>SELF-AWARENESS</u>	SA1	1	I'm aware of my strengths and weaknesses and their impact on my work environment.					
	SA2	2	I'm able to focus on my emotional state in any situation and effectively use it to better inform future actions.					
	SA3	3	I think to have a strong and solid personality.					
<u>COMMUNICATION SKILLS</u>	CS1 <i>Active Listening</i>	4	In communication with others I always make an effort to get both verbal and non-verbal aspects.					
	CS2 <i>Feedback culture</i>	5	Giving and receiving feedback are key activities to succeed in my job.					
	CS3 <i>Reading Complex Contexts</i>	6	When I face with an unknow situation, before acting I always try to know and quantify all the factors at play (*).					
	CS4 <i>Communication Modulation</i>	7	It's easy for me to change the way of communication (style, language etc.) according to the people in front of me.					
	CS5 <i>Basic Teaching Skills</i>	8	I know and regularly use models, approaches and tools that can facilitate adult learning processes.					



	CS6 <i>Empowerment of Communication (respect and motivation in communication)</i>	9	I can easily capture the attention of the people around me and inspire them when talking about my job.					
<u>SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL SKILL</u>	SES1	10	My approach is empathetic, intuitive and passionate about ideas and people.					
	SAS2	11	I'm naturally oriented to my team, able to create connections and allow people to work better without fear of making mistakes					
	SAS3	12	I'm able to understand other people's feelings and how to drive them through the learning path with positivity and optimism.					
<u>FLEXIBILITY & PROBLEM SOLVING</u>	FPS1	13	I'm able to address problems and look for alternative solutions.					
	FPS2	14	I consider failures part of the learning process					
	FPS3	15	In case of recurring problems, I prefer to find the solution by myself *					
<u>TIME MANAGEMENT & PLANNING</u>	TMP1	16	I'm a good planner, always focused on the main target, thanks to an excellent time management.					



	TMP2	17	In my job I like to be in control of anything.					
	TMP3	18	I've a methodical and accurate approach in my job, I care for details and manage priority, and monitor the activities through KPI.					
<u>BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE</u>	BI1	19	I'm able to read and connect information data from the context to business strategy and global vision.					
	BI2	20	I can easily understand how technical skills are connected to organizational processes.					
	BI3	21	I think that leading a Company towards successful results has much more to do with intuition and charismatic leadership than the ability to manage big data. *					
<u>NEGOTIATION</u>	NE1	22	I'm successful in relationship with people thanks to my ability to mediate among different positions.					
	NE2	23	Pragmatism, adaptability and flexibility are the main values in relationship with other people.					
	NE3	24	In a team work, If there's waste of time or something inappropriate, I try to influence people to support my idea*.					
<u>DIVERSITY AND GENDER SENSIBILITY</u>	DGS1	25	I like culture cross contamination between different areas and people.					
	DGS2	26	I have an attitude to enhance team members' contribution, taking advantages of their differences.					



	DGS3	27	In my job, diversity and gender sensitivity are mostly a duty than an opportunity to pursuit fixed goals.*					
<u>INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION</u>	IC1	28	I like working with people from different cultures and nationalities because it allows me to understand other ways of thinking and how to approach them more effectively.					
	IC2	29	I love brainstorming with other people because it's the best way to find original solutions.					
	IC3	30	Companies should be more open to other contexts (i.e. Academic, Communities) to better know how in day by day activities.					
<u>DIGITAL/TECHNOLOGY APPROACH</u>	DA1	31	I am always looking for technological tools to introduce improvements or solve problems and doubts in my job.					
	DA2	32	I'm skeptical about the idea that new technologies could really improve my job. *					
	DA3	33	Generally speaking I'm very curious about technological innovations.					