

## A cross-functional and multidimensional model for cooperation and collaboration dynamics between Universities and Small Medium Enterprises

According to recent assessment from official EU sources (European Commission, *State of University-Business Cooperation in EU*, 2018), cooperation and collaboration dynamics among Universities and private sector's representatives (mainly, small and medium enterprises) are still too weak and fragmented to generate those major socio-economic outcomes as ideally foreseen.

Labor market relevance of study programmes and the very same employability opportunities of fresh graduates are negatively impacted by this scenario. Interestingly enough, the causes from this mismatch seem varying from the source and nature of literature: academics name bureaucracy and lack time as main inhibitors, while business identify cultural differences, different management styles and diverging motivations as obstacles.

With the scope to overcome such *paradigm's* barriers, the European Commission contributed to the co-financing of the JUST project, a transnational initiative carried out with the support of the Erasmus Plus programme: 9 organizations in total are involved, coming from 5 different countries, and representative of the many groups of interest gravitating around this collaboration axis.

In the next two years, partners will collaborate to develop innovative tools to broker sustainable and fruitful collaboration between HEIs and SMEs, and for the further development and delivery of labor market-relevant curricula; definition of joint Work Based Learning (WBL) arrangements; increased collaboration in career guidance and placement. The development of these tools starts from the recognitions, assessment and evaluation of critical success factors / good practices / case studies that can support the transition from theory to practice of sustainable and long-term oriented collaboration models.

The needs-analysis as described is a formal project result of JUST, and anticipates the developed of the three aforementioned deliverables. Under the lead of the School of Advances Social Studies in Nova Gorica, and the expect co-guidance of Institut de Haute Formation aux Politiques Communautaires, partners carried out with referenece to the national context an in-depth and comprehensive analysis aimed at hihglighting what might be the *theoretical* premises of such collaboration model. Referenes and sources were distinguished based on the instututional nature of the partner involved in the assessment:

HEI were requested to:

- Identify and disclose (if possible) systems and mechanisms for HEI and SME collaboration already existing at their institution
- Collect existing memorandums, protocols, guidelines, information on web pages and other documents on collaboration between HEI and SME
- Prototype the role and responsibilities of the promoter at HE level of such dynamics
- Gather good practices and students' dimension

...and on the other hand, partners that represent the SME cosmos were requested to:

- Review of existing models and documents about cooperation of SME and HEI
- Identifying ways in which SME (might) initiate collaboration with HEI
- Review goof practices form industry reports and other forms of business publishing

This transnational and cross-dimensional analysis in complemented by 5 additional resources:

1. Set of Selection Criteria to ease STKHs management and engagement
2. Collaboration protocol the better establish the scale and scope of the collaboration
3. Code of conduct on how to implement and develop over time fruitful collaborations
4. A template of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)
5. Good practices and recommended working methods

All resources and deliverables prepared and compiled by partners will be available for free and in open access format via the official Open Education Resource Platform of the project under the [Model](#) section. To know more about the project, please feel free to consult: [www.just-training.eu](http://www.just-training.eu)