

Project Description

Priorities and Topics

Please select the most relevant horizontal or sectoral priority according to the objectives of your project.

VET: Adapting vocational education and training to labour market needs

If relevant, please select additional priorities according to the objectives of your project.

HORIZONTAL: Environment and fight against climate change

VET: Increasing attractiveness of VET

Please explain how your chosen priorities relate to the aims and objectives of your project.

STARLIGHT project intercepts the VET priority “adapting vocational education and training to labor market needs” developing a partnership aimed at promoting work-based learning in all its forms as it supports an exchange between young Europeans accessing the market as tourist operators (guides, tour operators, managers, etc.) and operators already active in the sector. This exchange concretizes in the involvement of enterprises/freelances in the twofold role of “trainers”, passing to young trainees their experience, their knowledge and the obstacles they have encountered, and “learners” receiving from the course and the younger operators’ skills and knowledge e.g., on digital marketing, tools and ICT in general. The project links to VET priority “Increasing attractiveness of VET”: for STARLIGHT it means also learning stargazing while trainers and experts explain what you are seeing and transforming it into a practical experience. This is the aim of the storytelling approach, mixed with scientific popularization and a hint of acting techniques, so that learners will be able to convey in a stimulating way acquired knowledge to future clients. In a specular way, STARLIGHT intercepts also the Adult Learning priority “Supporting the setting up of and the access to upskilling pathways” as it provides upskilling opportunities to operators already working in the sector, by engaging them in learning activities they usually would not have access to. They will have access to class training, webinars, and Summer Schools, both at local level and transnationally. This is a relevant opportunity to foster a lifelong learning approach towards adults. This topic is strictly linked to “Environmental and climate change”, as light pollution is first an environmental problem, affecting biodiversity and natural life. Light causes problems for the environment because both plants and animals live on a 24-hour cycle dictated by the sun and creatures became accustomed to the day and night rhythm (known as the circadian rhythm). The very recent arrival of the powerful artificial light has dramatically (and negatively) affected animal behaviours in mating, migration, sleeping, and hunting. Just as example nocturnal animals have evolved to function at night. The night, in a very real sense, is an important part of their environment—no different than trees and food. Their eyes are extremely sensitive to light, like your eyes when you first wake up or walk out of a dimly lit room into the sunshine. Animals such as bats, raccoons, coyotes, deer, and moose rely on the dark for a variety of natural functions. These species, among others, experience a decline in reproduction and a difficulty foraging for food. In addition, predators that would normally be unable to see these nocturnal creatures are able to do so with more ease, causing an increased mortality rate because of both the predator’s ability to see their prey more easily and the prey’s inability to get away due to vision impairment. But similar impacts can be registered on birds (difficult in reaching their natural migration destination) and reptiles (e.g., sea turtles struggle in finding a dark spot to deposit their eggs due to coastal cities lightning, etc.), as well as many insects species that are vulnerable to artificial light (e.g., the so-called flight-to-light behavior of selected insect families or the firefly light-based communication system) Light pollution is an environmental problem as it affects ecosystems, biodiversity, and wildlife behaviour. STARLIGHT would like to increase knowledge on this topic and increase awareness, contributing at the creation of public debate on this topic. Finally, STARLIGHT partially intercepts horizontal priority linked to Inclusion, as it focuses on rural areas, providing opportunities to young people who wish to work in their regions characterised by fewer job opportunities. In this sense the attention of the project to entrepreneurship is an asset to boot

Please select up to three topics addressed by your project

Environment and climate change

Entrepreneurial learning - entrepreneurship education

Tackling Geographical remoteness and involving rural areas

Project Description

Please explain the context and the concrete objectives of your project.

STARLIGHT project aims at increasing job opportunities for young Europeans (18-30) with an education/training background in tourism and upskilling for already active operators in the tourism sector, identifying innovative sectors, in line with market trends and specifically the promotion of dark skies observation as a competitive asset for sustainable and experiential tourism. Despite the economic crisis of 2008, Europe remains the n° 1 tourism destination in the world, employing around 17 million people and contributing to EU GDP by almost 10%, considering its links to other key sectors such as culture, food and transport. European tourism is confronted with many challenges, starting with the need to constantly innovate and improve quality. The sector must quickly adapt to the digital revolution and develop new attractive products in a sustainable manner for local communities and the environment. The challenge is today even more relevant, as the COVID19 emergency hit the world: the impact on the tourism sector is going to be severe and 2021 will be the second year that marks a change in how tourism is perceived and experienced. New elements will enter the scene of experiential and digital tourism, with the perception of "safe tourism" becoming more relevant. "Mass tourism" will probably decrease and this means that tourism operators will have to re-think their offers. New skills, competences and knowledge will be needed, both for young professionals and for experienced operators. Eurostat showed that in June 2020, all sectors within the services sector in the EU decreased compared with February 2020 due to the Covid-19 crisis. The total services sector in the EU decreased by 16.4% during this period, while the tourism services sector fell by 75.0 %. Among the detailed sectors within the tourism sector, travel agencies and tour operators fell the most (-83.6%), followed by air transport (-73.8%), accommodation (-66.4%) and restaurants (-38.4%). While there is no question the pandemic has had a devastating impact on Europe's tourism sector, the long-term hope is it can engender a positive transformation, creating greener and more sustainable holidays. "After this crisis I believe that people will want to know more when choosing their travel options," says Mounier (Secretary General at EU Travel Tech), adding: "They will want to know not only what the best deal they can get is, but also which travel option is more sustainable [...] tourism operators will have to [...] make travel simpler and cheaper, but also safer and cleaner." Astrotourism as conceived by STARLIGHT can be an answer. A Lonely Planet study considers "dark skies" among 2019 travel trends: across the planet, travelers are now seeking out the world's last-remaining dark skies where they can get a clear, unpolluted view of the stars. STARLIGHT also intends to reply to main challenges in the recruitment system, ensuring that VET courses remain relevant to rapidly changing employer's needs, among which there is a need for innovative and flexible forms of training to meet the skill needs of SMEs and family-run businesses, representing a high % of tourism sector. Tourism employers tend to report a shortage in applications from individuals with the necessary skills, particularly in relation to higher skilled and professional roles, in terms of a lack of "work-ready" graduates, often having undertaken courses that employers consider too theoretical or lacking practical work experience. There are skill shortages –and a lack of provision– in emerging areas, notably accessible tourism, STARLIGHT will respond to these challenges, providing a training methodology based on a work-based experience, focusing on topics such as accessible/sustainable tourism, digital marketing, business planning, etc.

How will the project meet the needs of your partnership and those of the target groups?

STARLIGHT target group are: 1.Young Europeans accessing the market with an education/training background in tourism. The minimum level is high school graduation or VET qualification in sectors that belong to the tourism value chain (guides, hotel managers, tour operators, tour managers, etc.) 2.Tourist operators already active in the sector. They can be entrepreneurs, employees, freelance, etc. The economic sectors include: 1) Accommodation 2) Gastronomy 3) Travel and tours 4) Destination management 5) Guiding and experience making. The exchange among those two groups seems today more and more relevant as new forms of tourism will arise after the COVID19 emergency and new tourist experience, near home, solitary and connected to nature (like astrotourism) seem to be one of possible trends in upcoming years. Take Germany as an example: a survey conducted by the travel provider Turlane in October 2020 confirms that outdoor destinations are among the clear favorites: besides clear safety guidelines and hygiene standards (43%) as well as good health facilities (37%), most German travel fans (69%) prefer a holiday destination that offers plenty of time for outdoor activities This shows that STARLIGHT is focusing on qualifications in line with the market at exactly the right time from the tourism supply side. STARLIGHT is in line with the trend towards sustainable, ecological, and experiential tourism, which is likely to continue. In the months of the pandemic, many travelers have become aware of the ecological impact of tourism, e.g., on our climate. Around 17.1 percent of young people in the European Union who are willing to work were unemployed in March 2021. Spain has the highest youth unemployment rate of the EU states at around 37.7 percent. Italy is being set back in its efforts to reduce youth unemployment by the deep recession triggered by the Corona pandemic. In Bulgaria, even though unemployment is at a historic high, the number of vacancies of about 16–17,000 (NSI LFS) has been stable over the past three years, regardless of growth or recession. This was true even

before the post-pandemic challenges: the “Mapping and performance check of the supply side of tourism education and training Final Report (2016)” lists challenges and needs faced by these target group at EU level, among which, the need to create better educational pathways into and within tourism occupations: STARLIGHT intends to provide already trained persons with these skills, competences and knowledge by proposing a course and a work-based experience focused on a specific topic (dark skies observation) but not forgetting transversal skills as these represent major gaps and shortages. The Report also shows that higher qualified employees are required. And STARLIGHT foresees a 4-EQF entry level and 5 as exit level. The benefits for the partnership depend on their specificity but can be resumed in one aspect: according to research by the Light Pollution Science and Technology Institute, 80% of Earth’s land mass suffers from light pollution, while for 99% of people in Europe&USA the night sky is obscured by artificial lighting. In 2001, the International Dark-Sky Association set up a program to award destinations working to preserve their dark skies, and astrotourism has since been a growing trend. All partners would benefit from the exploitation of Astrotourism in terms of training and dissemination (INAF, NBDN and KuA), sustainable tourism and development (GALEVV, FCL, RRANG, TyEO). E.g. in 2017, the Sustainable Growth Strategy of Slovenian Tourism 2017–2021 was adopted with a clear vision to become a green, active and healthy destination for 5-star experiences. For INAF the project thus represents the possibility to disseminate its scientific knowledge and for the other partners it is the opportunity to gain knowledge on the topic of astrotourism, which could certainly be an opportunity to expand their activities and to attract more tourists in their areas

Outline the benefits of cooperating with transnational partners to achieve the project objectives.

The transnational added value of this project is evident: tourism is transnational and persons willing to operate in this sector need European (when not international) perspectives and mobility opportunities. Even if they work locally, they need to be able to understand tourists’ expectations and culture. Thus, undertaking a transnational training experience provides this possibility and offers networking opportunities for creating transnational offers. There are other reasons, less obvious but for which transnational cooperation is strategic: according to a United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) publication titled ‘International Tourism Highlights’, the EU is a major tourist destination, with four of its Member States among the world’s top 10 destinations. Tourism has the potential to contribute towards employment and economic growth, as well as to development in rural, peripheral, or less-developed areas. These characteristics drive the demand for reliable and harmonized job market characteristics within this field, as well as within the wider context of regional policy and sustainable development policy areas. At this level and addressing tourism, transnational cooperation cannot be neglected and becomes an asset for rural and sustainable development. Tourism can play a significant role in the development of European regions. Infrastructure created for tourism purposes contributes to local development, while jobs that are created or maintained can help counteract industrial or rural decline. Sustainable tourism involves the preservation and enhancement of cultural and natural heritage, ranging from the arts to local gastronomy or the preservation of biodiversity. Geographical distribution is another asset: it involves 7 partners coming from 6 different EU countries, most of them characterized by high/medium level of youth unemployment and by a high tourism potential for economic growth; moreover, they represent instances coming from Southern, Central and Eastern Europe, thus providing a comprehensive overview of EU, and facilitating transferability of results, as well as representing different habitats and settings.

What outcomes, including project results when relevant, are expected during the project and on its completion?

According to previously identified objectives, STARLIGHT expected results refer to: - Provide with Knowledge, Competences, and Skills (in line with EQF level 5) to at least 50 young Europeans (tourism new graduates or in VET) able to better respond to the tourism market challenges and trends - create a stable intergenerational exchange and work-based learning opportunities through the involvement of at least 10 tourism operators (e.g., guides, SMEs, etc.) already active on the market but willing to undertake upskilling pathways. - Integrate “dark skies observation” as a learning outcome within mainstream courses for guides and tour operators - sensitize on light pollution impacts and environmental protections, leading to sustainable tourism approaches. Besides Results and Multiplier events (which strongly contribute to project results), these results will be reached through the following outputs: 1) Handbook for technical and financial management to ensure sound and smooth project coordination. It will be made available by the Coordinator by Feb 2022 for the kick-off meeting. 2) Contingency Plan, including risk analysis and responses. It will be discussed during the second meeting (June 2022) and issued by the Coordinator in March 2022 as part of the Project management activity, although it will be kept constantly updated, should conditions change. 3) Handbook for project evaluation, including internal monitoring and evaluation of project results, issued by Kultur und Arbeit by April 2022. 4) Dissemination plan and stakeholders’ analysis, including target groups definition and specific means of communication through which they can be

addressed. It will be discussed during the kick-off meeting under the presentation of a first draft by INAF, as responsible partner, with indication on how to conduct a stakeholder analysis. The final release of the Dissemination Plan will be issued by May 2022 and discussed in the project meeting by the coordinator 2. The dissemination plan, constantly updatable, will set channels of communication, main messages to be conveyed, stakeholders, budget, and resources to be employed. 5) Dissemination tools, including: - Visual identity (project logo, templates for slides and presentations, headed paper, document format, agendas, meeting participant lists, etc.) - Web communication tools, i.e., the main channel for communication, ranging from a project web page to social networks (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn). The web communication activities will be carried out throughout project life although some milestones can be set: social media accounts as well as a web page will be issued by June 2022. Newsletters will be issued throughout project life. The first newsletter will be issued after the kick-off meeting (Feb/March 2022) and then issued every 6/8 months. They will address partners, relevant stakeholders and the general public (under subscription policies). INAF will oversee issuing them, with contribution (in terms of texts, images, and other material) from all partners. - N.1 video or slideshow developed by GALEVV for dissemination purposes, to present the project (context, objectives, partners, activities, expected results, etc.) and the PRs. - n. 1 Video developed with the storytelling technique by INAF with the support of a theatre company, to be included in training and for dissemination purposes to "tell the story" of dark skies observation, its relevance, impacts of light pollution etc. The same story would be told live during summer/winter/spring schools, so to convey to participants also basic acting techniques to be used in welcoming tourists. 6) Sustainability and exploitation plan, issued in September 2024 by GALEVV with the contribution of all partners. It will be aimed at granting the transferability of project results to different contexts.

In what way is the project innovative and/or complementary to other projects already carried out by the participating organisations?

The project STARLIGHT is innovative because, up to the partnership knowledge, there are no specific courses dedicated to dark sky observation as tourism asset. Specifically, STARLIGHT, intends to merge scientific popularisation on light pollution impacts and astronomy with skills and competence on tourist offers (experiential purchase and territorial/digital marketing). The learning approach is also innovative especially for its multidisciplinary approach (from scientific knowledge to specific tourism-related topics, to storytelling and acting techniques) STARLIGHT aim is not to create a new curriculum, but to test and investigate a relevant and trend-setting opportunity for the tourism sector, as dark skies are relevant to cross-cutting issues, which can be resumed in economic, environmental, and social sustainability. Project activities complement and enrich partners' organizations activities and projects carried out. INAF main mission is research, but to this scientific popularization is an important activity carried out by all its territorial observatories. The Turin Observatory has ongoing projects regarding dissemination and the importance of stars observation and dark skies recovery (Astrokids and EduINAF are only two examples). STARLIGHT represents a possibility to conjugate scientific popularization and a dissemination activity towards target groups not usually reached (tourist operators) which represent in turn a multiplier means. Sustainable tourism is one of the main issues tackled by GALEVV in its Local Development Plan. Adding training and competitive opportunities to enterprises in its territory is an added value to complement GALEVV's ongoing projects. Among these, the project Turismo del Gusto (Taste Tourism), financed under the ALCOTRA Italy-France cross-border cooperation program is an example of how STARLIGHT can complement an ongoing project focused on gastronomy and territorial marketing with a wider perspective (e.g., under the sky dinners). FCL is widely engaged in nature and biodiversity protection, thanks to the cooperation with the Picos de Europa National Park which is a perfect example of an Atlantic ecosystem. Spread across 11 villages, Picos de Europa is Spain's only inhabited nature reserve, offering travelers a unique experience. STARLIGHT complements this scenario and the related ongoing scientific popularization by enlarging target groups and promoting areas as "darkest points". For TyEO STARLIGHT is specifically complementary to "Plight with light", a long-term project running for awareness-building for the causes of light pollution, providing information on the effects of the incorrect use of light and information on ways of avoiding light smog and glare to a wide range of stakeholders. KuA has several running projects dedicated to vocational training in the tourism sector, from cultural and industrial heritage (like HERITAGE-PRO) to sustainable tourism (EUROPETOUR and HECTOR), etc. STARLIGHT represents a future-orientated topic with entrepreneurial opportunities and a different approach to complement this partner's training offers. STARLIGHT is complementary with RRANG Centre for Human Resources Development, which takes care of the permanent development of human resources to increase the competitive position of companies and employment of inhabitants and the Local Business Centre which stimulates development in SMEs and promotes innovative activities including tourism. NBDN's mission is to create new entrepreneurial culture, to improve the standard of living through various forms of support for the development of smalls

and medium businesses and ensuring greater employment opportunities in the rural and lagging areas of Bulgaria. Thus, STARLIGHT is complementary as it offers the possibility of high-quality services that empower entrepreneurship and local economies, while contributing to the preservation of the local, regional and national cultural and natural heritage.

How did you choose the project partners and what will they bring to the project? Does it involve organisations that have never previously been involved in a EU-funded partnership project?

The partnership has been chosen following different criteria: - partners' competences and experience: INAF represents the "scientific partner" and its knowledge on astronomy is fundamental to convey correct information on stargazing and relevance of dark skies observation. FCL represents a link between cultural, environmental, and touristic heritage, providing to STARLIGHT the perfect conjunction between touristic outreach and environment/biodiversity protection, both elements strictly linked to STARLIGHT approach and project. GALEVV, RRANG and TyEO are local public bodies and as such represent the local development approach of the partnership. All three have direct contacts and represent a point of reference both for public and private entities, being the link between regional authorities, municipalities, enterprises and, ultimately, citizens. GALEVV has a strong focus on sustainable development, as it is considered the pivotal point of its local development plan and an economic lever to ensure sustainable development. RRANG involves many stakeholders, supporting empowerment of both citizens and entrepreneurs, having thus a good network and a strong engagement potential. TyEO is an institution with a mandate to represent the interests of nature and the environment in approval procedures. In addition to involvement in official proceedings, the TyEO uses several platforms to sensitize for Tyrol's natural assets and, among these, the project "Plight with Light" is an outstanding example related to light pollution reduction. KuA and NBDN represent the training component of the partnership. KuA is a non-profit association for vocational training at the interface of culture, nature, tourism, creative economy and education focused on interdisciplinary projects and partnerships. It will provide its experience in VET, learning outcomes definition, EQF links and evaluation. NBDN is experienced in VET (it has its own vocational centre and provides training in 28 vocational sectors including 95 specialties and 179 professions) and, in parallel, has a strong link with the labour market and businesses world. It will provide its significant experience in the field of entrepreneurial skills enhancement. The partnership is also a balanced mix of experience in ERASMUS+ projects, with very experienced partners (KuA), partners with average experience in Erasmus+ and other programs (INAF, GALEVV, NBDN, RRANG) and partners with no experience in Erasmus+ (FLC, TyEO), although involved in other EU projects. - multidisciplinary approach: given partners' previous experience each contribution comes from a different sector: two organizations involved in VET provision and development and lifelong learning; a research center on Astronomy, providing scientific knowledge and popularization; a Foundation active in a natural park, focused on biodiversity preservation and environment protection; three local public bodies, providing their perspectives on territorial marketing, cultural and natural heritage promotion, sustainable development; one network providing entrepreneurial skills; - sustainability of project results: the partnership, as well as their associated partners, have been selected considering their contribution to support project results upon its closure. Thus training organisations grant the continuation of the training course, integrating it in their offer; the research center offers the possibility to maintain popularisation on the topic to a wider target groups (i.e. not only schools, but also tourist operators); the Foundation represents the possibility to replicate summer school format, to train local guides using STARLIGHT approaches and offer traineeship to participants; the business network can also support entrepreneurship of participants after the project closure and follow them in concretizing what learned; local public bodies represent the opportunity to mainstream, both horizontally and vertically, project results.

If relevant, please identify and explain the involvement of associated partners, not formally participating in the project. Please explain how they will contribute to the implementation of specific project tasks/activities or support the sharing of project results and the sustainability of the project.

KuA has involved as Associated Partner the Tourism Destination Management Organisation (DMO) Heilbronner Land (Germany). The DMO represents a rural area in the German region of Baden-Württemberg which is considering exploring star tourism as a new offer to visitors of the region. They are currently checking links to other European regions and DMOs with experiences in the field for exchange of experiences and setting up respective networks. NBDN has involved the Pirin National Park, which encompasses the larger part of the Pirin Mountains in south-western Bulgaria, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983 as an area of outstanding natural importance. The entire territory of the park is included in the European Union network of nature protection areas Natura 2000. Pirin National Park is a popular tourist destination. The park's headquarters and main information center are in the town of Bansko, and offers a range of classes for both younger visitors and adults, held in the park's "outdoor classroom", becoming a perfect setting to host the 1st STARLIGHT Summer school. GALEVV will involve i. Turismo Torino e Provincia is the Convention & Visitors Bureau for

the city of Turin and its provincial territory. It is the organisation for promoting the province of Turin as a tourist destination. It will support the project: for the involvement of enterprises and tourist operators (despite being itself a possible target group); as a multiplier for the dissemination of the course and its replicability upon its project closure; and for its role as expert in providing contents, for Project Results; ii. CIPRA international has a focus on biodiversity, ecosystem services and ecological connectivity, and expertise in working on policy recommendations and governance tools. They provide the opportunity to enhance our network and provide skills and knowledge to partners from the alpine region; iii. Mountain Union of the Olympic Municipalities and Milky Way, a public institution grouping 6 Municipalities located in the high valleys, with a strong tourism vocation, especially for winter sports, but working also on differentiating tourism offer specialising on sustainable tourism (as for example soft mobility); iv. Parc des Monts d'Ardèche (FR) who will support dissemination and can integrate results to solve their main challenges: tourism, youth employability and biodiversity. INAF will involve: i. Cultural Association "La Cevitou", Occitan name denoting the importance of the geographical location and the term Owl, symbol of Culture in ancient times, it also underlines the nightly industriousness. The Terre del Castelmagno Ecomuseum originates from the association, of which it is the managing body. So the Association is a wonderful occasion to show how tourism and dark sky observation can be conjugated; ii. Unione Montana Valle Grana which cooperates in the implementation of development, protection, promotion and revitalization policies of mountain areas. It promotes tourism, environmental hydrogeological protection and economic development. The geographical conformation allows for one of the dark skies with the lowest level of light pollution in Europe; this led to the UNESCO Heritage Astronomy nomination in 2020 as "Skies of the Grana Valley" for its specificity as a "dark night sky". The Unione Montana Valle Grana shares and supports the Starlight project. The objectives of the project are fully part of its development policies. For these reasons it promotes the project by giving its patronage as a warning of commitment to communicate and spread it within its own territory. Given the specific nature of its "own" dark sky, the Organization will collaborate in the eventual realization of a training internship in the valley.

Participants

Please briefly describe how you will select and involve participants (e.g. learners, staff, etc.) in the different activities of your project.

STARLIGHT addresses two specific target groups: 1. Young Europeans accessing the market with an education/training background in tourism (primary target group). The minimum level is high school graduation or VET qualification in sectors that belong to the tourism value chain (guides, hotel managers, tour operators, tour managers, etc.) 2. Tourist operators already active in the sector. They can be entrepreneurs, employees, freelance, etc. The economic sectors include: 1) Accommodation 2) Gastronomy 3) Travel and tours 4) Destination management 5) Guiding and experience making. They will both be involved in all activities of the project, from training to dissemination and sustainability. Their selection will start in early steps of the project via dedicated public calls (see dedicated box for learning, training and teaching activities), in order to grant their participation. Two different calls will be launched, one for young trainees and one for enterprises/operators, as they respond to different criteria and obligations (as for example State Aid constraints for enterprises). Young Europeans will be involved as "students" during the Webinars, the summer/winter/spring schools and will be a means for dissemination and sustainability, becoming "stargazing ambassadors" to contribute to raising awareness on the importance of reducing light pollution and re-discovery of dark skies. Operators will be involved, directly or as "associated partners" during the development of training material, in order to provide both content and evaluation (e.g. peer reviewing). They will be involved in Webinars and Winter/Summer/Spring schools. They are relevant source of information and experience, but also fundamental in terms of dissemination and sustainability. So, they will be asked to promote the course, but especially to promote tours and packages produced within the project. In exchange, they will be provided with skills, knowledge and competences regarding digital marketing, ICT, new experiential purchase patterns and, of course, dark skies observation and stargazing. The ideal relation between the two target groups starts with intergenerational exchange with a mutual enhancement of skills (e.g. experience vs. digital skills), goes through a mutual empowerment and ends with the construction of professional careers for young trainees (ideally within involved operators' enterprises and/or territory) and the reinforcement of competitiveness for already active operators. Last, also partners' staff (other than the project team) and professional networks will be involved in the project, maximizing its impacts and mainstreaming its results in day-to-day activities. Other participants may be involved: - As associated partners - As members of expert networks linked to partners, chosen according to their interest in the topic - As knowledge providers from the VET sector, chosen according to their expertise, experiences, and position in the market All participants will be invited to Multiplier Events and will be carefully segmented for an effective dissemination and communication strategy.

Participants with fewer opportunities: does your project involve participants facing situations that make their participation more difficult?

No

Preparation

Please describe what will be done in preparation by your organisation/group and by your partners/group before the actual project activities take place, e.g. administrative arrangements, communication about the activities, selection of the persons, coaches, involvement of stakeholders, etc.

Considering usual timing, the preparation phase can be described as follows. The announcement of a successful application will take place probably during July 2021 by the National Agency. The coordinator will inform the other partners accordingly and prepare the implementation during September 2021. The coordinator's staff is willing and flexible enough to adapt the preparations for the project's implementation with their holidays. All partners have secured a commitment to the project of local and regional stakeholders. Engaging the stakeholders in this early phase of the project ensures an integrated approach and high impact once the project starts. The project partners made sure that every country has a local/regional/national support network consisting of e.g. national development associations, local citizens' actions committees, training institutions in the field of regional development, business associations etc. The preparation phase will take place approximately from July to October 2021. During this phase, the Coordinator will:

- participate to the national meeting to launch approved projects;
- meet requirements and sign required agreements and contracts with the National Agency;
- start to set up the management tools useful to draw the Technical and Financial Handbook;

All partners together will start working on project topics. More specifically:

- they will all contribute to the definition of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) rules for procedure, which are going to be delivered by the Coordinator by the kick-off meeting. This document will define how cooperation will work, how financing instalments will be managed, tasks and responsibilities of each partner; all partners will identify their internal members of the PSC.
- each partner will identify the project team (project managers, financial managers and communication managers) as well as the professional roles involved in the elaboration of the Results (trainers, researchers and technicians).
- the kick-off meeting will be scheduled;
- the time schedule will be updated, if needed, to be ready to be presented in its definitive version for the kick-off meeting;
- associated partners will be informed on project approval and start. Announcements will be published on the partners' website and their social media tools. The first press information about the objectives and expected outcome of the project will be released in all partner countries after the kick-off.
- material for PR1 will start to be collected