



EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND CULTURE
EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EACEA)

EACEA.A - Erasmus+, EU Solidarity Corps
EACEA.A.2 - Skills and Innovation

Brussels
EACEA.A.2.002/LG

HELSINKI BUSINESS COLLEGE OY
Antti LOUKOLA
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FI - 00520 HELSINKI

Subject: Sector Skills Alliances
Approval of Final Report

Grant Agreement: 612656-EPP-1-2019-1-FI-EPPKA2-SSA-P
(please use this reference n° in all correspondence)

Title of Project: Digital Innovation Hub for Cloud Based Services

Dear Mr. Loukola,

I am pleased to inform you that we have approved the Final Report for the above mentioned project and your score is **82 on 100**. The approval is based on an assessment undertaken by the Agency.

The final European Union grant for the above project has now been established at **EUR 902.465,85**, subsequently a final payment of **EUR 102.560,25** has been initiated in accordance with the Grant Agreement.

Annex 1 presents an assessment of the final report and the comments and recommendations done by the Agency.

Annex 2 provides all details and explanation of the financial analysis and final grant calculation and details of any expenses that have been considered ineligible by the Agency in accordance with the Grant Agreement and its annexes.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that, in addition to the means of redress referred to in the agreement, the following means are available for challenging this decision:

- If you believe that this decision is affected by an error or irregularity, you may request a review of the Agency's decision, clearly stating the reasons for

disagreement, preferably within one month of receiving this letter, by writing to the following address:

Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
Michèle GROMBEER
Head of Sector A2
SPA2 2/93
Avenue du Bourget, 1
B – 1049 Brussels
Michele.GROMBEER@ec.europa.eu

- If you believe there has been a maladministration you may also lodge a complaint to the European Ombudsman in accordance with and under the conditions laid down in Article 228 TFEU within two years of becoming aware of the facts on which the complaint is based (see <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu>).

Please note that, in accordance with the General Conditions of your Grant Agreement, you may be the subject of a financial control by the European Commission or by the Court of Auditors. You are therefore requested to keep all accounting items and all supporting documents related to your project for a period of five years from the date of payment of the balance.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your contribution to the Erasmus+ Programme.

Yours sincerely,

Michèle GROMBEER
Head of Sector

Contact: Vytaute Ezerskiene, tel. +32 2 29-60589, e-mail: EACEA-EPLUS-SSA@ec.europa.eu

Enclosure: 1 Comments and Recommendations from the Agency
 2 Calculation of the final grant and balance payment



Erasmus+ Programme: KA2 Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices - Sector Skills Alliances

FINAL REPORT ASSESSMENT SHEET

Project number:

612656-EPP-1-2019-1-FI-EPPKA2-SSA-P

Project title:

Digital Innovation Hub for Cloud Based Services

	Score /25
<p>1. Relevance of the project Have the project’s activities been implemented in accordance with its aims and objectives as declared in the original application or as officially amended? Please describe the link of the project outputs to EU policy and initiatives: how the project contributed to achieving the EU objectives in the field of VET? Have all deliverables been produced and do they meet the quality standards? Are some important results for the sector concerned developed? Are project results relevant to the needs of the target groups and the sector?</p>	22
<p>Overall, the implementation of the project followed the initial path and the stated objectives have been achieved. The contribution of the project to the EU policy and initiatives in the education and training sectors, including the alignment with Sector Skills Alliance priorities and objectives are clearly emphasised, with arguments related to the development of digital skills and support provided for digital transition and embedding cloud-based technology and services in nowadays economy.</p> <p>The planned deliverables have been achieved as expected and presented along with the final report. Moreover, the training materials are already hosted on the DIHUB service platform.</p> <p>An overview of the achievements per work package (WP) is presented below:</p> <p>WP1: Management and coordination - all planned deliverables have been provided and these meet the required quality standards, respectively the Project report, and the WP1_D1.1._P - Establish a state of art European wide cluster of five interconnected nodes for innovations development, education and for generation of new start-ups benefiting of the latest cloud. Additional documents have been also provided along with the final report (e.g.: WP1_D1.1._ A1_P_DIHUB Stakeholder analysis, WP1_A1_R_Management strategy and plan, WP1_A2_ R_Logical Framework matrix - LFM, WP1_A3_R_Roadmap, WP1_A6_R_Quality assessment plan, Minutes, Quality and Risk Reports).</p> <p>WP2: Digital Innovation hub model for cloud-based services - the stated objectives related to the design of the Digital Innovation Hub for Cloud Based Services have been achieved, along with the hub model (e.g.: WP2_D1_P_ - Digital innovation hub model for cloud- based services). Additional documents have been also provided, such as: WP2._A2_P_ Design sprint for the DIHUB platform and WP2._A1_P_SME Surveys in five partner countries.</p> <p>WP3: One stop hub service creation – all specific objectives related to the development of connections and innovation to feed the company needs regarding the cloud technologies and the development of training</p>	

materials have been achieved, and the expected results have been provided (e.g.: WP3_D3.1._P_ - Created Service package and the Training Program / The proof of concept for a training program in cloud-based service creation, WP3_D3.2._P_Training materials created for the Training program, training modules available via the web platform). Moreover, additional documents have been also provided along with the final report (e.g. WP3._D3.1._A1_P_DACUM analysis, WP3._D3.1._A2_P_ Link to DIHUB platform - online).

WP4: Piloting the hub model - all objectives and expected results have been achieved as planned (e.g.: WP4_D1_P_Pilots of the training program, Pilot report and testimonials uploaded on the DIHUB platform).

WP5: Research based on the project activities and future development – specific objectives and planned deliverable have been achieved (e.g.: WP5_D1_P_ - A review report of cluster of interconnected nodes and training programme including development suggestions and future trends on the area of creation of cloud-based services).

WP6: Dissemination and Evaluation - the dissemination activities have been carried out as planned and the main dissemination products have been provided (e.g.: newsletters, project website etc.). Additional documents have also been provided for his (e.g.: WP6._A1_P_ Communication and Dissemination Strategy and WP6_A4_R_ Stakeholder lists.pdf).

All the deliverables have been adequately developed, with a comprehensive content and a well- structured presentation. The results are relevant for the cloud-based services sector from both practitioners’ and VET providers’ / trainees’ perspectives. The findings and the deliverables of the project are relevant for the development of specific competences for the job profiles defined for the cloud-based services, as well as for connecting the stakeholders, respectively VET providers, practitioners and SMEs.

	Score /30
<p>2. Quality of the project design and implementation</p> <p>Are the activities implemented in accordance with the Work Programme? Is the budget implementation coherent with the activities carried out and the deliverables produced? Were the project management measures adequate and efficient? Has the project methodology been followed and adapted if the need was? Have relevant quality control measures been put in place for process and the outputs? ; How the partnership took into account the existing EU tools and initiatives for skills development (EQF, ESCO)? Have mechanisms been put in place for the validation and recognition of participants' learning outcomes, in line with ECVET? Were EQAVET recommendations applied for the training courses (if foreseen in the application)? Have the project management measures been efficient for ensuring smooth implementation of the project?</p>	26
<p>Overall, the activities carried out are in line with the initial work programme, as regards the achievement of the objectives and the expected results, but there are some deviations as regards the deadlines initially planned and the allocation of the tasks, respectively the related budget. As presented in the progress and final reports, some deviations, delays and changes regarding financial allocation occurred especially in the first implementation phases, but there are clear justifications and specific measures for making adequate corrections and maintaining the project on its initial track, as well as achieving the expected results. Firstly, given the pandemic situation and related delays in achieving the expected results (e.g.: the survey for the SMEs in each partner country – WP2, co-creation of training materials and pilot training sessions – WP3, WP4), the duration of the project has been extended by 6 months, with the approval of EACEA. In addition, some organisational and management issues have been also noticed, which also have contributed to the mentioned delays. Thus, the time extension was necessary to overcome the delays registered especially during the first implementation phase. However, the time extension enabled also the development of additional results (e.g.: Design Sprint for the DIHUB platform, Link to DIHUB platform - online) and, especially, to provide advanced technological functionalities to the DIHUB platform, the main deliverable of the project. Secondly, there are significant changes as regards the budget, due to the redistribution of the tasks and the difficulties encountered by some partners in carrying out the planned activities. In this respect, there are changes regarding the financial allocation between partners and also between work packages. For instance, some transfer of financial resources occurred between partners (e.g.: Resource transfer from Helsinki Region Chamber of Commerce to Helsinki Business), as some partners</p>	

have not used their financial allocation, meanwhile the coordinator needed additional resources for the management activities and for subcontracting the activities for the DIHUB platform. For a more balanced and realistic distribution of the budget, the coordinator requested an amendment to the budget during the second implementation phase. Furthermore, the coordinator spent 20% more own funding than initially planned for ensuring the smooth and successful implementation of the project.

The management arrangements have been insufficiently addressed during the first implementation phase, but initial issues have been solved and appropriate tools and measures have been used. In this respect, the coordinator has developed additional documents and measures, with focus on coordination, quality and risk assessment (e.g.: management strategy and plan, Logical Framework matrix - LFM, Roadmap, quality assessment plan, quality and risk reports). Moreover, the manager of the project has been changed after 9 months from the beginning of the project. In addition, the leaders of the WPs had sometimes difficulties in playing their roles, but with the support of the coordinator these issues have been solved. Positive is the fact that the partnership has taken into consideration the suggestions from the mid-term evaluation report. After adequate changes regarding coordination, monitoring and evaluation processes, there is clear evidence of the efficiency of the management process.

Overall, the methodological approach followed the initial plan and appropriate adaptation have also been clearly mentioned and documented, demonstrating a positive approach and the achievement of additional results (e.g.: building the DIHUB platform based on advanced share point solutions with facilities of content creation and the integration of the platform in the coordinator's infrastructure as a part of its natural learning environment).

The quality management process was focused on both internal and external evaluation. In this respect, there are clear references to the evaluation of the activities, deliverables and impact. Positive is also that an external evaluator has been also appointed for quality assurance.

The training curricula and training materials developed cover the EQF levels 4 to 6 and have been tested during the pilot training sessions organised in all participating countries. The feedback from the participants in the first training pilot sessions have been positively considered for refining the curricula and training materials, which have been further tested in the second pilot session. According to the foreseen EQF levels, adequate ECVET or ECTS have been considered. The training programs EQF levels 4 to 6 and have been integrated into the curricula of the VET providers participating in the consortium. The way of feeding into ESCO is clearly described, with explicit information related to specific competences needed for new job profiles related to cloud computing and cloud-based services. The articulation with EQAVET is clearly referenced, along with appropriate indicators.

Except for the first implementation phase, the management measures have been clearly presented and efficiently applied, with clear contribution to overcoming the delays and issues at the beginning of the project. Moreover, it is positive that the suggestions from the mid-term evaluation report have been taken into consideration and significant actions have been taken for better coordinating and monitoring the implementation. In this respect, additional tools have been developed and used and related supporting documents have been provided along with the final report.

	Score /25
3. Project consortium and cooperation arrangements Were the mechanisms for coordination and communication between partners efficient? Were all partners involved according to initial planning at the application stage?	16

The cooperation arrangements within the consortium are explicitly presented, with details about the difficulties caused by the pandemic situation and the lack of face-to-face meetings and activities. However, the partners provide clear explanations about the online communication tools (MS TEAMS) for supporting the online interactions. The issues regarding the cohesion of the consortium, noticed during the first phase, have caused delays related to the implementation of the work plan and the achievement of the expected results. All these aspects have been corrected during the second phase, building on the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation report and of the external evaluator's recommendations. In this respect, the coordinator played a major part regarding the support provided to the partners and the monitoring of the activities carried out, as well as the evaluation of the deliverables. Despite the change of the project manager after 9 months, the coordinator succeeded to manage the project and to put it back on track. However, some deviations have been mentioned as regards some partners' involvement in the activities planned, such as delays in delivering the results, the lack of use of the templates for reporting documents. Accordingly, there are some changes compared with the initial plan, as regards the allocation of the tasks and the related budget. These aspects have been clearly explained and documented.

	Score /20
<p>4. Impact and dissemination</p> <p>How went the implementation of the dissemination plan? To what extent were the target audiences reached? Did the project involve relevant stakeholders from the sector and in what activities? How the main results are accessible to the public? What was the impact of the deliverables of the project for participating organisations and target groups? How the partnership ensures the sustainability of the project results? Are the project results going to have an impact in the sector after the project end as described in the application?</p>	18
<p>The dissemination activities and materials are clearly listed, and shows the alignment with the initial dissemination and communication plan. Positive is also the fact that the final report presents the achieved dissemination impact along with the specific indicators. The main communication tool is represented by the project website (https://dihubcloud.eu/), that was functional since the first implementation phase and there are clear provisions to be maintained in function at least 5 years after the project lifetime. In addition, social media and other digital channels have been intensively used. Moreover, complementary channels and materials have been also used for improving the marketing of the project. The relevant stakeholders have been mentioned, with clear information about their profiles and number of impacted actors.</p> <p>The final report describes the impact of the project in a well-structured manner and shows the correlation of the main project results and the stakeholders' profiles. Moreover, the benefits are presented for each category involved in the target group, as well as for stakeholders. In addition, there are clear impact indicators, along with clearly registered values for demonstrating the effectiveness of the implementation.</p> <p>The sustainability of the project builds on the further exploitation and development of the DIHUB platform, representing a digital innovation hub for multiple cooperation purposes, according to the stakeholders' profiles (VET providers, universities, research centers, incubators, SMEs, regional development agencies and others). Besides the cooperation facilities, the training resources represent also an important asset, that will be further updated and developed. An important role is played by the industry/business support organisations, facilitating the links to the companies for the further development of the cloud-based services. Moreover, the platform represents an ecosystem that could be connected with other digital innovation hubs providing access to the latest knowledge related to digital innovations, which could multiply and extent the results of the project, supporting also its sustainability. Plans for sustainability last for 5 years, with clear objectives to create a dynamic multi-actor community, integrating VET learners, trainers, VET providers and other stakeholders working together to develop innovative solutions and skills within the cloud-based technologies field. The DIHUB platform will also provide further access to the training resources developed, taken into consideration also the intellectual property rights. On a long-term perspective, the platform will enable the transfer of knowledge, results and good practices, for facilitating the technological progress and supporting the training process even beyond the partnership's boundaries. Clear responsibilities and organizational provisions have been presented for demonstrating the partners' commitment to exploit and further develop the DIHUB platform and its content. In this respect, the coordinator assumes the responsibility to maintain the digital online platform, as well as the related core services. In addition, the platform will also be embedded in its own training process. All the partners will further contribute to the content development, each one having a content</p>	

manager responsible in this regard. The partners will participate in the meetings of the steering committee responsible for the maintenance of the project.

Sectoral impact is significant, as the project has relevant results in an emerging sector, contributing to the development of adequate skills for specialists in cloud-based services, through a strong cooperation between the VET providers and the business actors in the addressed field.

Global score

82 / 100

Maximum number of points for a criterion	Range of scores			
	Very good	Good	Fair	Weak
30	26-30	21-25	15-20	0-14
25	22-25	18-21	13-17	0-12
20	17-20	14-16	10-13	0-9

Annex 2: Calculation of the final grant and balance payment

CALCULATION OF THE FINAL GRANT AND BALANCE PAYMENT

Grant Agreement ref.: 612656-EPP-1-2019-1-FI-EPPKA2-SSA-P

Section 1: Result of the financial analysis

The analysis of your final report was based on the documents you have submitted in your final report and after possible supplementary information request.

1. Maximum grant resulting from the number of unit costs approved in agreement.	999.882,00 €
2. Actual costs reported.	902.465,85 €
3. Final grant resulting from the number of unit costs approved after final report assessment .	902.465,85 €
4. Maximum to be paid for the project (the lowest of 1, 2 and 3)	902.465,85 €
5. Advance already paid.	799.905,60 €
6. Final Balance to be paid	102.560,25 €

Section 2: Explanation of the reduction of unit costs approved after final report analysis

There are no ineligible costs.