



Erasmus + KA220 -VET - Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training

DISCERN: A Customised Digital Space to Foster Circular Economy Entrepreneurship with SMEs

About DISCERN and its main aims:

While the European Commission is actively working towards a circular economy, societal awareness on the subject remains relatively low. Many people are not fully cognizant of the impact that consumerism and waste management have on the planet. The concept of a circular economy offers a solution, encouraging a re-evaluation of processes and the adoption of a more environmentally friendly approach by individuals. Therefore, it is key that VET trainers develop competences on Circular Economy and entrepreneurship so that this knowledge can be transferred to students. In this context, as part of the Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership Project for Vocational Education and Training, the project 'DISCERN: A Customised Digital Space to Foster Circular Economy Entrepreneurship with SMEs' has been underway from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2023. Its main objective was to develop various training materials to enhance the quality of start-uppers, young entrepreneurs, and Vocational Education and Training providers, thereby improving their competences in circular economy entrepreneurship and promoting their professional development. The direct target of the training materials are VET trainers and managers of VET organisations, however, SMEs, start-uppers and entrepreneurs as well as people interested in the topic can also benefit from the course.

DISCERN Outcomes:

The tangible outcomes of the DISCERN project are:

1) A Comprehensive Guide for VET Providers to Foster Circular Economy Entrepreneurship with SMEs!. The Guide is made of 2 parts:

PART A: Curriculum of the Guide - It drives into the innovative curriculum designed to empower VET trainers and managers of VET organizations in cultivating circular economy entrepreneurship.

PART B: Guide Content - "Circular Economy Entrepreneurship: It's Your Best Chance!". The guide lays the foundation for a sustainable future by addressing key themes:

- Module 1: Industry Green transformation – circular design of products
- Module 2: Resource-intensive sectors transformation – Plastic
- Module 3: Towards biodiversity and ecological transformation of companies
- Module 4: Disruptive innovation management for monitoring and optimizing circular economy Performance
- Module 5: Rethinking companies' business model for sustainable development & business plan
- Module 6: Public and private start-up financing opportunities for sustainable growth.



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- 2) **The SME CE Skills & Readiness Verification Tool.** It is created to work in the area of recognition and validation of competences on Circular Economy related aspects and their implementation in day-to-day activities of start uppers. It operates in a sequential manner, where its activities are divided into three distinguishable levels. The first level (A) will focus on performing analysis of current knowledge/skills patterns discovery. It operates as the input layer, acting as a data collector towards what startups know and are able to do. The information collected is then passed on to the next level (B) that is responsible for matching sets of collected data to respective sets of possible discovered learning paths. Finally, the information generated at this stage is then be passed on to the last level (C) which is responsible for building a customized learning path in line with the gaps identified and presenting it to the startups.
- 3) **The CE Coach.** This innovative platform offers a tailored learning experience for SMEs and startups, featuring AR-enhanced case studies, visually rich module presentations, and SCORM-compliant content. Customized learning paths ensure that each business receives targeted resources, empowering them to implement Circular Economy Principles effectively.

DISCERN impact:

The DISCERN project is strategically designed to empower employees within Chambers and VET trainers, equipping them with the essential knowledge and skills necessary to champion and support start-ups and SMEs in the field of circular economy entrepreneurship. The curriculum not only serves as a comprehensive training ground but also acts as a catalyst to amplify the impact of work-based learning processes within SMEs.

DISCERN reach extends beyond borders, the project is not just a local initiative; it's a global effort to foster a community of forward-thinking, environmentally conscious entrepreneurs.

DISCERN partners:

Camera de Comert si Industrie Bistrita Nasaud – Romania (CCI BN). – Project Coordinator

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Bistrita Nasaud (CCI BN) is an independent, voluntary, non-profit association of companies in Bistrita Nasaud county. It was founded in September 1990 and, today, enrolls more than 280 member companies of all shapes, sizes and branches. CCI BN member companies contribute about 80% of gross value added of the Bistrita Nasaud economy and generate 2/3 of sales in foreign markets. The CCIBN is the ideal local partner for foreign investors and business professionals interested in the North West Region. In its 31 years of activity, the Chamber has consolidated its position in the county economic landscape as a market economy useful and necessary institution, actively manifesting its role of frontrunner in approaching the disruptive period to increase the local resilience.

To deal with digital transformation & circular economy, CCIBN become founder of Digital Innovation Hub for Society and member in CLEMS Cluster developing specific actions for local business community. CCI BN provides its members a large training portfolio, many training programmes being the result of different project consortia. CCIBN provide technical expertise in strategic planning, circular economy, digital transformation and different other Vadult& VET



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training programs according to national legislation. CCI BN host a Technical Information Center and provide OSIM services not only local but regional and national as well.

Website: www.cciabn.ro

Macdac Engineering Consultancy Bureau Ltd. (MECB) – Malta

MECB Ltd is a Malta based, private company, dedicated to driving excellence & innovation support through partnership projects, training and technical support services. MECB offers clients including EU project consortia, technical expertise in a range of sectors including: Engineering, ICT, eLearning, Sustainability/Circular Economy, Creativity and Innovation, Industry 4.0, STEM training as well as adult & VET Learning. MECB's professional status is reflected by its membership in the Malta Chamber of Commerce Enterprise and Industry, as well as the fact that it has been accepted as a Member of the EU Digital Skills & Jobs Coalition, for contributions it regularly makes to the development and take up of digital technologies across Europe. MECB's 23 staff members have direct experience of participating in a range of EU projects & tenders including Erasmus+, EEA, LLP Grundtvig, Leonardo da Vinci, FP6/7 & H2020.

Website: www.eumecb.com

Município de Lousada – Portugal

The Municipality of Lousada is an institution of local public administration. It aims to pursue the interests of the population in the territorial space of Lousada Council. The Municipality mission is to define guiding strategies and execute the resulting municipal policies towards sustainable development of the municipality, contributing to the increased competitiveness of it, in local, regional and national levels, through measures and programs in various areas of their competence, promoting the quality of life of its citizens and ensuring high standards of quality services.

Website: www.cm-lousada.pt

Universitat Rovira i Virgili (URV)- Spain

Universitat Rovira i Virgili (URV) is a public university created in 1991 by the Catalan parliament. Located in southern Catalonia, it has developed a multi-centre structure with six campus sites. URV is made up of 12 Faculties and Schools, with 24 Departments, having nearly 1,000 full-time equivalent academic staff that welcome annually 12,000 undergraduate students, 2,000 master students and 1,000 PhDs (half of them full time employees), and employing 640 administrative and service staff. The URV is well positioned internationally in terms of research, development and innovation. Thanks to the competitiveness of its staff, it has obtained good results in both the quantity and the quality of its publications and it has been well positioned among the best young universities in the world. URV's long-term co-operative relationship with the industry incorporates both research and human capital development programmes that are relevant to the industry needs. Its industry-centered model is oriented toward increasing the management, productivity, competitiveness and innovative capacity of industry firms, both large and small.

Website: www.urv.cat



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University of Maribor (UM) – Slovenia

The University of Maribor (UM) is the second largest and the second oldest university in Slovenia, where approximately 15,000 students' study at 17 different faculties. One of the faculties is Faculty of arts, where International Center for Ecoremediations (ERM Center) is held.

Faculty of Arts (www.ff.um.si) offers 12 different study programs that can be divided into three main research fields: humanities, social sciences and educational sciences. ERM Center is an applicative research center, which deals with sustainable regional development, natural resources management, circular economy, pollution and degradation prevention, climate change mitigation and adaptation, environmental education and green job creation. The main

aim of the ERM Center is the implementation of sustainable practices to increase environmental and social responsibility. In doing so, the ERM Center successfully collaborates with businesses, municipalities, development agencies, educational institutions and other partners on national, European and intercontinental level. Members of ERM Center were awarded with national prizes for social responsibility, best research and science communication and are also members of expert groups at the ministry for agriculture and ministry for education.

Website: www.um.si

Danmar Computers – Poland

Danmar Computers LLC is a private company operating in the field of Information Technology and providing vocational training in this field. Danmar has an extensive experience in developing modern Web and mobile applications that are used for educational purposes. Danmar also has long-term experience of carrying out European projects within which company's R&D staff conducts research and prepares trainings tailored to the needs of various learners. During 15 years, Danmar has successfully implemented over 50 projects within Grundtvig, Leonardo da Vinci, Progress and recently Erasmus+.

In many of these projects Danmar was responsible for designing and coordinating dissemination strategies. Danmar Computers is the developer and provider of AdminProject, the on-line system for management of European projects. All activities of the company are based on wide and well-established cooperation network, both on national and international levels. The national networks include training and counselling institutions, universities, schools, non-governmental organisations as well as private sector companies. International network includes partners of various profiles coming from every European Union's country. Danmar Computer's mission is the promotion of life-long education and assurance of equal access to education for everyone with the use of modern technology.

Website: www.danmar-computers.com.pl



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Univerza v Mariboru

Filozofska fakulteta



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