



Growing Apprenticeship Partnerships for SMEs



About the SME GAP Project

Growing Apprenticeship Partnerships (SME GAP) is funded under Key Action 3 of the Erasmus+ programme for Support for Policy Reform and the specific Call 'Support for small and medium sized enterprises engaging in apprenticeships'. The project aims to carry out a number of measures to increase the numbers of SMEs engaging with apprenticeship programmes across Europe.

Growing Partnerships

SME GAP focusses on 'building capacities of intermediary bodies' to support apprenticeships in SMEs.

Intermediary Bodies are on the frontline of provision of advisory services to SMEs in relation to the provision of apprenticeship programmes. They vary between country and sector, however the issues they face are similar, including:

- Understanding different types of apprenticeship programmes available
- Ensuring intermediary bodies are able to point SMEs to quality provision
- Identification and removal of barriers for SMEs to participate in apprenticeship programmes
- Promoting the benefits of participation in apprenticeship programmes to SMEs
- Driving improvements in provision of apprenticeship programmes by understanding SME needs

Our Approach

Partners in Manchester (United Kingdom), Vienna (Austria), and Cordoba (Spain) will work with their local stakeholder organisations and deliverers of apprenticeship programmes to assist them to better target the needs of SMEs with the aim of increasing the number of SMEs taking on an apprentice.

Each area will also see a series of awareness campaigns over a two-year period, bringing together SMEs and deliverers of apprenticeship programmes.

In order to identify the specific barriers that SMEs, apprenticeship deliverers and policy makers face and to ensure greater numbers of SMEs are aware of the opportunities available to them, European partners will work together to identify case studies of successful arrangements and practices.

Through a process of peer reviews between regions, partners will assist each other to close the gaps that currently exist through the identification of shared solutions.



About the Partnership

The project partnership consists of partners involved in apprenticeships and other work based placements from different sectors.

Partners were selected to enable the project activity to draw upon the widest possible scenarios, experiences, cultural and legislative situations in relation to supporting SMEs and apprenticeships with the ultimate goal of producing the widest range of solutions to enable greater SME involvement in apprenticeship programmes.

Each partner will engage their local and national stakeholders in the delivery of the activity.



Project Outcomes

Over a period of two years, SME GAP will:

- Identify issues faced by SMEs and identify solutions to enable more SMEs to take on an apprentice
- Work to strengthen local partnerships to better target provision and make SMEs aware of current opportunities
- Produce a number of case studies in relation to successful SME/Apprentice relationships
- Carry out 3 Peer Reviews (one in each region) to identify tailor made recommendations for improvements
- Produce a Best Practice Guide for use outside of the partnership and across the rest of Europe
- Create an SME Readiness Toolkit to help SMEs assess their own capacity to employ an apprentice
- Develop an online platform to bring providers together
- A series of conferences and workshops to widely disseminate opportunities for SMEs and the learning from the activity
- Other solutions in response to findings during the activity



Partners



Activity is coordinated by the Centre for Enterprise (CfE) at Manchester Metropolitan University, the entrepreneurship centre dedicated to 'putting knowledge to work', and the Apprenticeships Unit in the Business School. Manchester Metropolitan University will lead the peer reviews to ensure consistency and enable knowledge to be turned into work. CfE is a practical deliverer of SME support with significant experience in driving partnerships across Europe.



Amadeus Association based in Vienna is an NGO education agency and training institute offering vocational guidance, language training, professional seminars and high quality internship placements for young workers and graduates. With more than 18 years experience in the LDV/Erasmus Plus and ESF programmes, AA co-operates with more than 280 SMEs in all economic sectors and hosts 700 participants from more than 30 countries worldwide each year on average 3 month stay in Austria.



The Provincial Consortium for Economic Development of Córdoba (CPDE) is a public entity created in 1998 by Diputación provincial of Córdoba (the provincial government) with the collaboration of the social and economic agents - trade unions UGT and CCOO and the provincial entrepreneurs association CECO. As executive agency for the economic development in Cordoba province, the CPDE activities are aimed at promoting the conditions which are conducive to economic, competitive and sustainable development, which ensures the consistency of government departments and the economic and social agents concerned with local government.



Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce will provide direct partner input to assist in formal recommendations. It has a wide network of partner Chambers across EU including in Austria and Spain, which will add significant value in terms of dissemination (Salzburg, Barcelona). The Chamber is also responsible for chairing the Greater Manchester Stakeholder Forum to drive the activity in Manchester.

Connect with Us

- @mmucfe
- Centre for Enterprise
- mmu.ac.uk/centreforenterprise
- 0161 247 3871