IO1

TRAINING PROGRAM

Introduction

IO1 is aimed to design the new training program, defining the teaching methods, the criteria to select learners, the assessment methods, evaluation of the learning outcomes achieved through a didactic path based on the following 3 dimensions:

1) COGNITIVE (learning by thinking), mixing classroom seminars and e-learning with the use of OER in order to acquire a reference organic and analytical framework
   - Strengthen the positioning in the online commercial niche at a global level
   - Facing international competitors on Digital and Retail channels
   - Use World-wide Promotion effectively to raise awareness of foreign business capacities to stakeholders, partners and customers
   - Fielding Digital, Mobile and eCommerce Strategy oriented to objectives of visibility, profitability without management/communication gaps
   - Make investments on the Web, Search, and Social Media Marketing needed to develop the company with realistic methods, timelines and forecasts

2) OPERATIVE (learning by doing)
   Beneficiaries will be involved in on-the-job training to implement Check-Ups at their companies to analyse digital internationalization processes, verifying from an as is/to be point of view:
   - commercial media, i.e. set of digital sales channels used to allow final consumers to obtain products
   - logistics channels, i.e. ways in which products sold are distributed on the target market and delivered to the final consumer
   - marketing and communication channels, i.e. the tools a company uses to promote, advertise and inform its target market of its brands and/or its products
   - legal aspects, i.e. management of all regulatory and fiscal practices, customs formalities, regulations and contractual rules for online sales on foreign markets
   - payment systems, one of the most delicate aspects of the digital export model as one must consider associated costs, security levels, level of integration between different systems and online sales management platforms
   - organizational aspects, i.e. the internal organisation structure to govern a new online market, in terms of skills and profiles involved

3) BEHAVIOURAL (learning by acting) staging and interpreting typical situations of Conversational Digital Marketing relationships, to establish direct relationships with potential customers, in order to:
   - adapt interpersonal digital communication techniques to different socio-economic contexts
   - adapt the techniques of two-directional communication between the user and the brand to different international contexts.
   - apply problem solving and decision-making techniques to solve problems deriving from heterogeneity of customer expectations and needs
   - customize the language and the communicative and relational style to the specificities of the single countries and to the customers' sensibilities

This output is split into 3 sub-tasks as follows:

Task 1.1 Field analysis/focus groups through:
- definition of the analysis methodology
- design of FG questionnaires and management tools
- identification of experts and business representatives to be involved in FGs
- realization of the FG in partnership territorial contexts
- preparation of national reports on FG results

Task 1.2 Definition of the training programme
- Detailed design of the teaching modules
- Definition of the structure of the training path and articulation of the sessions in days/hours (classroom, e-learning, work-based learning, movie education)
- Definition of methodologies for classroom sessions, e-learning, work-based learning, movie education

Task 1.3 Definition of the organisational-management aspects of the training programme
- Definition of the criteria to select participants
- Preparation of monitoring tools for the training program
- Definition of methods, criteria and tools to assess, evaluate and certify learning outcomes

1.1 Field analysis/focus groups

The realization of the IO will begin by listening to a group of key people conducted through Focus Groups with the involvement of:
- referees of partner training agencies, to analyse the state of the art of the training offer and to incorporate the strengths and areas for improvement to equip workers with international, digital business management skills
- representatives of small enterprises to ascertain the need for skills typical of digital internationalization processes
- workers of small enterprises, to identify the level of possession and exercise of the target skills and the needs not adequately met by the training offer

1.1.1 Desk research results

The state of the art of the VET (vocational training) educational offer
for *DIGITAL INTERNATIONALISATION*

Courses for *digital internationalisation* at the best VET training companies

Name of the course	VET institution	Teaching hours	Country
Digital Marketing Young Practitioners	Regeneration Academy Of Digital Marketing Young Practitioners	75 h	Greece
Digital Transformation Academy in Retail	Excelixi	51h	Greece
Digital Marketing Practitioner	Excelixi	115h	Greece
Digital marketing training course	KEAK	12h	Greece
Diploma in sales management	ISM	200h	Greece
Digital Marketing Masterclass	TheKnowledgeAcademy	12 h	Greece
Ecommerce Digital Marketing Business Course	DIGITALENT	132h	Greece
Digital Marketing for Business Growth	Studysmart	1 month	Greece
Master Export Management: International Trade and New Markets	ALMA LABORIS BUSINESS SCHOOL	96 h	Italy
Internationalization experts training course for SME	Formit	4 months	Italy

Master in business internationalization	Melius Form Business School	176	Italy
Course for Higher Technician for marketing and internationalization of companies	FONDAZIONE ITS SERVIZI ALLE IMPRESE	1800 h	Italy
Digital export academy	Italian Trade Agency e Confindustria	60 h	Italy
CEIDIM Master, Master in Foreign Trade and Business Internationalization	Italian Trade Agency, INPS, University of Rome Tor Vergata	406 h	Italy
Digital Export	https://businessschool.luiss.it/master-digital-export/	12 months	Italy
Effective e-commerce	Sprawny Marketing	8 h	Poland
E-commerce marketing	Sprawny Marketing	8 h	Poland
E-commerce training	E-commerce manager		Poland
E-commerce agent	Strefa kursow		Poland
Customer acquisition in social media	MDDP Akademia	4 h	Poland
HIGH POSITION IN INTERNET SEARCHES - HOW TO ACHIEVE IT BY USING CONTENT MARKETING	MDDP Akademia	4 h	Poland
Effective export in globalisation	Progress Project	16 h	Poland
ZUNANJETRGOVINSKA ŠOLA	CPU	50 h	Slovenia
Resped Logistika d.o.o.; Maribor	enterprise	6 h	Slovenia
Técnico Superior en Marketing y publicidad	Campus FP	2000 h	Spain
Técnico Superior en Comercio Internacional	Instituto de Formación Empresarial	2000 h	Spain
International E-business	ICEX	520 h	Spain
Máster Marketing de Moda	Elle Magazine + Complutense University + Mindway	1 year	Spain
Master online on Digital Marketing	ESIC Business School	9 months	Spain
The following contents are analysed within the courses dedicated to digital internationalisation related topics:		**Country**	
Basic knowledge on e-commerce; key elements of online shop		Greece, Poland, Spain	
Use of Google Trends and consumer barometer		Greece, Spain	

Google analytics	Greece, Spain
Digital marketing buyer personas; Brand in e-commerce ecosystem, digital marketing plan, digital advertising	Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain
Selling by internet; Selling with social media, social networks	Greece, Poland, Spain
Commercial channels	Greece
Choose KPIs	Greece
Optimization of e-Commerce	Greece, Poland
Target CPA	Greece
Google ads, communication digital tools	Greece, Italy, Poland
Export management; global export	Greece, Poland, Slovenia
Economic, legal and commercial aspects linked to the most relevant production sectors in the economy of the region	Italy, Spain
Insurance-contractual-logistical problems in foreign trade	Italy, Spain
Issues related to international banking transactions and the protection of intellectual property	Italy, Slovenia, Spain
Outline the development lines of an export strategy that makes use of the free tools made available on the web; tools in e-commerce	Italy, Poland
E-commerce platforms, e-commerce technology	Poland, Spain
Industry 4.0. - doing business with foreign partners	Slovenia
Internet of things	Slovenia
Negotiating, marketing and promoting sales in international business	Slovenia
Digital strategy	Spain
Digital business plan	Spain
Skills to be developed during courses dedicated to digital internationalisation topics:	
Knowledge on Google analytics	Greece
Ability to sell on the internet, e-commerce	Greece, Italy, Poland
Knowledge and ability to use the latest Google marketing tools	Greece, Italy, Poland
Ability of using KPIs	Greece
Tools to create and coordinate digital marketing strategy and digital marketing plan	Greece, Italy, Spain
Implementation of digital marketing tools and social media marketing	Greece, Italy, Poland
Knowledge on marketing strategy	Greece, Poland, Slovenia

Skills in the areas of foreign trade techniques and procedure (contracts, transport, payments, insurance, credit risk, export practices, international taxation, etc.)	Italy, Spain
Ability to assess the quality of e-commerce platform delivery	Poland
Ability of international negotiation	Poland
Ability to recognize which products can be exported	Poland
Ability to estimate the access conditions to a given country	Poland
Ability to assess the financial credibility of potential partner abroad	Poland
Risk Management	Slovenia
Change Management	Slovenia
To take decisions about the entry of a company's products in the foreign market by selecting the most appropriate product, price, communication and distribution policies for entering international markets. To be able to define a digital business plan for the internationalisation.	Spain
To identify and contact clients and suppliers by electronic and digital means and with digital resources, following international commercial contracts, and controlling and supervising the development and evolution of sales.	Spain
To ensure compliance with the agreed contractual conditions by using digital resources and metrics.	Spain
To perform the administrative management of import and export operations using electronic documents and procedures.	Spain
To communicate fluently in English and other foreign languages, both in word and in writing, with all operators and organizations involved in international trade operations.	Spain
Profile of training participants (whom are these courses dedicated):	
Owners and managers of SMEs	Greece, Italy, Poland, Slovenia
Sale executives, sales agents	Greece, Poland, Slovenia
Master and MBA students in management, graduates	Greece, Italy, Spain
Business consultants	Greece, Italy
Entrepreneurs	Italy
Lawyers	Italy
Accountants	Italy

Export manager	Italy, Slovenia
Marketing managers	Italy, Poland
Digital project manager	Italy
Social media manager	Italy
Employees of SMEs	Italy, Slovenia
Owners of e-commerce shops	Poland
Person intended to create e-commerce shop	Poland
Representative of product brand	Poland
Owners of e-commerce platform	Poland
Staff of companies with international projection and other professionals assisting in this task as part of continuing vocational training programmes for business internationalisation	Spain
After finishing the course, the following abilities and knowledge are supposed to be possessed:	
Understanding of the strategic importance of Digital Transformation and how to address the challenges ahead for their businesses to remain sustainable	Greece, Slovenia
Ability to recognize the need to create a universal digital culture	Greece
Knowledge on the new technologies and business models that lead to the Digital Transformation; plan and implement e-commerce projects	Greece, Italy, Poland, Slovenia
Ability to design and support the adaptations required in the organizational structures, roles, systems, processes & business models; to develop exchange strategies at international level	Greece, Italy
Ability to set a concrete digital business plan; the identification and subsequent development of commercial channels and market opportunities in a specific geographical area	Greece, Italy
Understanding the processes and dynamics related to business internationalization, in particularly for what concerns contracts, international payments, shipments, customs, etc	Italy, Slovenia
Assist companies in the commercial and marketing function at the decision-making level	Italy, Slovenia
Direct the setting up and "technical-operational" management of commercial operations with abroad	Italy, Slovenia
Carry out market analysis by evaluating data and information sources with knowledge	Italy
Organize and manage product marketing plans or product lines	Italy, Poland

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To build relationships with customers, highlighting their needs and contributing to identify the most suitable products and / or services	Italy
Use financial instruments to support exchange initiatives international commercial	Italy, Poland, Spain
Implement an integrated communication plan aimed at supporting the strategies of marketing and to consolidate the corporate image	Italy, Poland
Knowledge of all necessary steps to successfully run e-commerce business	Poland
Ability to plan and implement promotion tools, prepare the company's advertising media	Poland, Slovenia, Spain
Practical skills that allow participants to conduct effective activities related to website positioning and achieving maximum positioning and promotional results using the latest Google guidelines	Poland
Ability to prepare offers and export contracts in which they will be able to optimally secure legal and financial interests, especially in the field of full and timely payment protection.	Poland
Ability to recognize the importance of knowing and taking into account cross-cultural differences in making deals	Slovenia
Knowledge of negotiation techniques and different marketing and sales promotion approaches in foreign markets	Slovenia
Obtain, analyse and organise reliable information on the markets by applying statistical techniques and establish an effective information system (SIM) that supports the preparation of digital marketing actions.	Spain
Organize groups of interviewers and / or interviewers and carry out surveys and / or interviews planning the field work, using the techniques and procedures established to meet the objectives set in the business research plan (to be adapted to market scope).	Spain
Select the most appropriate product, price, communication and distribution policies for entering international markets.	Spain
Assist in the preparation and monitoring of marketing policies and plans by analysing the marketing mix variables to achieve the international business objectives defined by the company.	Spain
Plan and carry out digital marketing actions, managing web pages and communication systems through the Internet to meet the objectives of the company's international e-commerce policy	Spain
Prepare promotional and informative materials, respecting the current regulations on advertising and using computer techniques and applications of editing and design in various media to disseminate them according to the programmed plans.	Spain
Organize and manage marketing and communication events interpreting the	Spain

briefing, hiring suppliers, actors and agents, attending and directing the events to comply with the provisions of the business communication plan.	
Communicate fluently in English, both verbally and in writing, with all operators and agencies involved in business operations	Spain

Curriculum covers the following topics:	
Introduction to Digital Transformation in Retail - What is the digital transformation retail - What are the objectives of it - What are its results and future added value for businesses and companies	Greece, Slovenia
Digital Transformation in Wholesale B2B Collaboration - What are the digital procedures and methodologies related to the exchange of data and information between companies	Greece, Slovenia
Digital Transformation & Logistics - What are the modern approaches to logistics in retail industry, which are based mainly on the use of technology - How to organize logistics to start with e-commerce?	Greece, Italy, Poland, Slovenia
Digital Marketing, marketing in e-commerce - What is the strategy of Digital Marketing in general - What are the efficient data marketing tools that can be used for an effective branding and sells - Social Media Marketing - Direct Email Marketing - Upselling and crosselling - how to increase sales potential - Content marketing - why is it so important these days? How to do it effectively? - Google ads	Greece, Italy, Poland, Slovenia, Spain
e-Commerce and online shops - Development of e-commerce applications - Importance of e-commerce operations - Web domains with different characters from Latin - Graphic localization of the website - Fundamental factors for the choice of web platforms - CMS, Mailing List and Mobile - The main e-commerce platforms: magento, prestashop, shopify - Product descriptions - why they are so important. What should you pay attention to? – E-commerce brands (Holy Trinity: visibility, content, traffic) - Optimization of e-commerce	Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain
Using Digital for cross-border sales - Ways and means of export of the products of companies - The organization of the Export	Greece, Italy, Poland

- Combining offline and online sales - explore the possibilities.	
In-store Technologies for a Digital Experience - Technologies that enhance the in-store consumer experience	Greece
Big Data and market research - Tools by which modern organizations can collect information - Web Analytics - Foreign market research, market research methods, determining sources and obtaining necessary information	Greece, Italy, Poland
Digital Transformation in CRM - CRM are enhanced to digital tools and contemporary methods of campaign management of higher quality	Greece
Customer experience in digital era and social media - Tools and methods that collect customer satisfaction data - How the above tools are used to improve the customer experience - Selling with social media – selling experience of customers	Greece, Poland
e-HR - Digital tools and contemporary tools that an HR Department of a company needs - Job and career related jurisdiction and contracts in international context	Greece, Italy
Roles & People Management in the Digital Ecosystem - How roles and possible challenge influence HR Departments in today's digital era?	Greece
Business Planning for an eBusiness - Export and import plan - Creation and formulation of P&L in an e-commerce company	Greece, Italy, Slovenia
Digital Tools for Your Business - Digital tools that enhance productivity of employees in their office	Greece, Slovenia
International Negotiation Techniques, communication and cultural differences	Italy, Poland, Slovenia
International contracts, the protection of corporate identity abroad	Italy, Poland
Norms and contracts in international practice, international payments, international taxation, payment systems in international transactions, norms, guarantees, insurance, incentives for international trade	Italy, Poland, Slovenia
Industry 4.0. and internet of things	Slovenia
Digital Internationalisation strategy: the digital business plan.	Spain
Digital Technological Tools (for the internationalisation of the company)	Spain

Discussion and conclusion: General results discussion on the national context [Introduction on the research process, list and present the various keywords used, the databases or sources (national agencies portals, universities, institutions etc.)]	Country
A significant part of trainings, especially in the field of e-commerce, are short 4-hour or 1 month trainings, the purpose of which is to provide: - Marketing ideas - Soft skills related of creating an online store - Technical expertise related to handling of difficult situations with customers - Workshops related to sales management Training in both areas is conducted by training companies, independent consultants and by higher education institutions. Moreover, in Greece we can see many VET programmes related to digital internationalization.	Greece
The revised courses could be divide in three groups: - the first ones were more focused on the internationalization aspects such as empowering the exports, developing businesses abroad, or deepening norms and technicalities of international businesses, including the cultural aspects - the second ones were more on the digital marketing and communication aspects (the courses aimed at updating the employees / training young graduates on specific document or tax-related digitalization requirements, due to recent reforms, were filtered) - finally, some courses, the more recent ones, were focused on both aspects of digitalization and internationalization although these are all structured as master courses, this is maybe why the programs are quite rich and include all these relevant aspects.	Italy
In Poland, it can be seen that there is no training offer in the field of "digital internationalization". However, separate e-commerce and internationalization trainings are proposed, mainly in the sense of export activities. Training in these two areas is conducted at a very different level of education. A significant part of trainings, especially in the field of e-commerce, are short 4-hour or 8-hour trainings, the purpose of which is to provide very practical skills related to running an online store, choosing a platform, using Google ads. In the field of international trade, you can also find one or two-day practical trainings, largely devoted to the possibilities and forms of entering international markets or issues of cultural differences. Part of the content is highly practical, related to the formal side of foreign trade.	Poland
The desk research has been limited just to state of the art of the VET (vocational training) educational offer for DIGITAL INTERNATIONALISATION in Slovenia.	Slovenia

	Spain
In the regulated initial vocational training area, the LOMCE (Organic Law of Education) and its further development by the Regional Education Authorities in the Autonomous Communities of Spain establish two main official courses related to BIG project topic. They are: Technician in Marketing and Publicity. Technician in International Trade. Both are higher level vocational training qualifications, providing credits to those students wanting to become professional in the sector or to follow a University degree later on. These professional profiles aim at work in companies of any productive sector. The first puts the focus mainly on the aspects of Marketing and the second on the aspects of Trade. The course for Technician in Marketing and Publicity sets out functions of planning, organization and management of marketing activities, market research, publicity and public relations. The topic of digital internalisation is included primarily in the didactic module of "digital marketing". Other related modules are: "market research" and "communication channels and media". The course for Technician in International Trade sets out functions of identifying policies of product, price, communication and distribution addresses to international markets. It devotes a significant part of the instruction to management and administrative tasks connected to import-export processes, like logistics, payments and insurances. There is one specific module on "Digital International Trade". Both courses can be followed in public vocational schools and in vocational schools under private-public partnership. They provide an official diploma in the Spanish regulated education system. The typical learning modality is in-class. Some schools offer the dual modality option, where half of the course is implemented directly in a company with the supervision of a tutor in cooperation with the sending school. The sending school counts with cooperation covenants with different companies. In continuing training, different courses are offered depending on where the emphasis is put. There are courses focusing primarily on internationalisation, using digital marketing as a tool. Possibly the best reputed one, especially in e-learning modality, is the International E-business master course offered by the Spanish Institute of Foreign Trade (ICEX). It covers a full specialised set of topics on four areas: Strategy for Digital Internalisation, Technological Tools for Digital Internationalisation, Marketing on-line, e-Business and international markets opportunities. Shorter courses on these areas are also offered to make them accessible to active workers, even by ICEX. This strategy is also followed by different chambers of commerce around Spain, which cover specific topics of Digital Internationalisation in short courses (under three months, usually) and typically in blended modality (course followed at distance, but with periodic sessions in-class, for instance in the evenings or on Saturday morning). Another typical setting is the organisation or specialised workshops	

conducted by professionals in the sector of Digital Internationalisation.

Institutions like the ICEX and the Chambers of Commerce offer different advantages to companies to fund the courses for their employees. Normally, part of the course can be subsidized. In certain cases, there are covenants to include students coming from the occupational strand of the vocational training, but this is less frequent because the funding modalities are governed by different institutions as explained above. Training goals are often different as well, which makes it more complicated.

When the emphasis is put on a particular economic sector, the most usual case is that the course is organised in a partnership of different organisations. For example, in the sector of fashion represented by ASECOM, one renowned master course on Marketing and Fashion is offered by a partnership consisting of the Fashion Magazine Elle, the public University Complutense of Madrid, and the human resource company Mindway.

This course tackles Digital Internationalisation from the Fashion perspective with competences in three areas: marketing, communication and digital metrics. The emphasis of these courses is neither internationalisation nor the digital aspect, but the vocation on the particular economic sector. However, highly internationalised and dynamic sectors like fashion usually offer updated training solutions including the most recent trends with a strong orientation to provide highly qualified professionals for the sector. In these courses, the blended modality is used increasingly with master classes by famous professionals from the sector and digital platforms supported by the specialised training institutions participating in the partnership.

Finally, there are specific private business schools offering courses with emphasis on digital marketing as a fundamental aspect of business. The approach is transversal, and internationalisation is just assumed as a part of the global market. Target students of these courses are more oriented to working in a multinational environment, and usually there are multinationals sponsoring the course and participating with professionals in master classes. The vocational aspect in these courses is less visible than in any of the other approaches.

One of the advantages of these courses is that the methodology is usually practical and oriented to solve real cases associated to the collaborative companies. A typical drawback is the accessibility either by economic reasons or previous qualifications required

1.1.2. Focus group

Focus group participants	Country
12 participants: - 6 representatives of SMEs, 4 workers of SMEs and 2 training agents. - 7 are between 31-40 years old, 5 of them are less than 30. - 5 women, 7 men. - 10 with higher education, 2 with secondary education. - 4 with 11-20 years of professional experience, 4 with 6-10 years of experience, 4 with less than 5 years of experience. - All responders claimed their knowledge of English language and the communication was in English.	Greece
8 participants: - 1/3 representative of SMEs ownership, 1/3 workers and 1/3 training agents, - More than 50% are over 51 years old, - 66% were males, - All respondents have higher education profiles, - half of them have got more than 21 years of professional experience, the others have between 11-20 years' experience, - almost all of them speak at least one foreign language (i.e. English) and 4 of them at least 2 (i.e. English and Spanish).	Italy
16 participants: - 13 representatives of SMEs, 3 workers of SMEs, - 9 are 41-50 years old, 5 of them are 31-40 years old, 1 is less than 30 and 1 is more than 51, - 6 females and 10 men, - all participants with higher education, - 8 participants have got more than 21 years of professional experience, 6 responders got 11-20 years of experienced. - Most of participants can communicate in English or German, almost half of responders claimed to speak at least two foreign languages.	Poland
10 participants: - 2 training agents, 4 SMEs representatives, 4 SMEs workers, - 1 person aged 31-40, 7 persons aged 41-50, 2 persons aged over 51, - Half male and half female, - 3 persons with secondary education, 7 persons with higher education, - All speaking English, some English and other foreign languages (Italian, German, Spanish and Croatian), - Half of participants with 11-20 years of professional experience and half with over 21 years.	Slovenia
10 participants	Spain
1. Please, share your experience of internationalisation	**Country**
The majority of the responders have experience in internationalization (9 of 12).	Greece

- 3 of them work in the area of Balkans - 6 of them work in the area of Europe. - 3 responders work locally without being internationalized.	
The main approaches of responders to support internationalization processes: 1. **Relying on Chambers of commerce or government offices:** in undertaking participants' experiences or approaches to internationalisation they relied on internationalisation offices or chambers of commerce; 2. **In-House Internationalization:** in a couple of cases, the internationalization process has been developed almost internally, attending university masters and/or qualifying courses and then bringing the experience back to the company's own field; 3. **Launching a Digital Marketing Strategy**. one company basically took care of its internationalization process autonomously and which declared that it started from a simple digital strategy linked to its e-commerce.	Italy
3 groups of participants: 1. Minor experience with internationalization but they consider to go abroad with their market activities or just started to be international. 2. Participants who work as consultants helping other companies to become international ones by building strategy of internationalization or helping to find financial support to go abroad 3. The biggest group of responders - actively international, working as export and/ import managers, managing international companies, dealing with international licensing, being responsible for international sales across Europe and out of Europe, mostly Asia	Poland
Any business can only be successful if it has a clear vision and high ambitions. We worked a lot on the design of our products, created the value of the brand, increased its visibility and modernised the processes. People from abroad came to the company and prepared a joint project with the then development department. The focus on foreign markets was entirely accidental, not a strategic focus. The company found that it was achieving a higher profit margin in neighbouring markets. Our product is so different that it is also successful in foreign competition. We felt a niche need in a foreign market. Our experience was completely reactionary, we felt that the domestic market was declining and we wanted to move away from the existing competitive forces. Our industry has developed differently over time, also through the view of internationalization, which also strongly depends on the concentration of providers. Translation is an industry that does not exist without internationalization, the change of recent times is that we do almost the entire business through digital platforms.	Slovenia

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The trend of increasing internationalization has been emerging in the market for a long time, which meant that our education must also adapt to the trends of labour market requirements.	
- Advice to national companies to integrate into the international markets (helping them with services on financial aid, market research, support in the companies' strategy and action plan, phases of internationalization, travel and trade missions). - Advice on the international expansion of fashion and jewellery brands based on the relationship with the global customer, through websites, social networks, campaigns and publications in magazines from different parts of the world. On the other hand, the most classic form of expansion is participation in international fairs, fashion weeks and other itinerant markets. - Consultant for training, advice and evaluation services, associated with the formal and non-formal education sector. Many of the educational programs are associated with projects funded by the European Commission and are international in nature.	Spain
2. Which factors support internationalisation the most in your opinion?	
Company behaviour, including good use of Internet tools, e-commerce and e-marketing, knowledge gathering and sharing information, participation in international fairs, international network, international experience, low cost, customer-oriented company, innovation	Greece, Poland, Slovenia, Spain
Company resources, including good products, international network and local agent, Internet, skilled employees, communication skills, market knowledge, knowledge of foreign languages, awareness of cultural differences, market knowledge, market understanding and business experience	Greece, Poland, Slovenia, Spain
Global trends, including macroeconomic trends, macroeconomic trends, liberalism, global market for digital services, globalization, unification, decentralization, economic growth, global market for digital services, (including e-commerce).	Greece, Italy, Poland
Identification of the skills to be internalized and specific executive, professionals and blue-collar figures necessary to support the process	Italy
Government aids/activities: both for internationalization in general and specifically for professional figures to be included in the organization chart; formal environment of contracting, law and taxes, support for both local and governmental institutions, easy logistics,	Italy, Poland
Management's attitudes and ability to involve/sharing the strategy with all areas of the company; clearly written "rules" of conduct and standards of communication are important. **Business strategy** • Strategic business plan design. • Generation of valid business contacts (potential customers, providers…) • Diversification of the risk of operating in the same market • Training to adapt the staff qualifications to those demanded by new markets.	Italy, Slovenia, Spain

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• International vocation of the managers • Internal ambition of business growth (desire to sell abroad).	
The small size of the domestic market.	Slovenia
Information / Awareness related to international business opportunities • Analysis of business opportunities • Saturation of the internal market in the country of origin and search for other markets. • Exploring new markets, including those abroad, to take advantage of economies of scale. • Search for less competitive markets or markets at a different stage in the life cycle of the product and / or related services. • Emergence of highly attractive new markets demanding products.	Spain
Marketing measures • Analysis of global Market Places [Alibaba, Amazon, etc.]. • Government incentives to promote products abroad. • Definition of Entry method: how do you approach markets abroad? - collaboration with local entities. Digital marketing may not be enough. • Enlargement of Product Brand, once it is internally consolidated. For some sectors like fashion, brand image may be one of the strongest marketing elements. • Design and management of brand associated digital resources, like webpage, social networks. Crucial to be periodically updated and monitored including impact metrics.	Spain
3. Which factors limit internationalisation the most in your opinion?	
- Size of the company, business know how, business potentials, macroeconomic trends - Legal aspects (law and taxes), political factors - Lack communication skills, lack of market knowledge, lack of foreign languages knowledge, cultural differences, lack of market knowledge and lack of business experience, lack of computer skills and ICT technology - Lack of the use of ICT technology.	Greece
The conversation and think tanking activities has unanimously brought out the difficulty for all the participants of the SMEs' governance and management being responsible and conscious of **adequate investments on human capital and human resource management**. This aspect has been highlighted especially on how is important having a highly trained and professional manager that work in international contexts, over legal and fiscal duties. It also emerged that there is a "lack of experts" who can help companies and owners to sustain the internalization with the new digital tools. As highlighted during the	Italy

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conversation, the lack of specialists in the organizations makes confusion between digital with offline strategy, excluding and neglecting to integrate the customer's journey with omni-channel approaches. These shortcomings also concern **intercultural skills**, the knowledge management inside and outside the company and the lack of relevance for the accumulation of intellectual capital. **These are the three main pillars** for gaining competitive advantage in a global digital arena. Usually, for this type of need the interviewees normally prefer to rely on the Chambers of Commerce or other intermediaries well inserted in foreign business contexts neglecting the importance to sustain internally knowledge creation processes.	
On one hand, part of factors which limit internationalization is the opposite to these which support it, including following ones: 1. **Global trends**, including unfavoured macroeconomic trends, 2. **Business global environment**, including legal aspects (law and taxes) and lack of local or institutional support, 3. **Company resources**, including lack communication skills, lack of market knowledge, lack of foreign languages knowledge, cultural differences, lack of market knowledge and lack of business experience, 4. **Company behaviour**, including lack of the use of ICT technology. On the other hand, some factors were mentioned by responders as the important ones only in the context of being a limit for internationalization. These are: 1. **Business global environment**, including small foreign market potential, custom duty or currency, 2. **Company resources**, including lack of negotiation knowledge and experience, financial constrain, costs 3. **Company behaviour**, including unwillingness to travel, searching for cost advantage, fear, mindset, 4. **Institutional factors,** including informal institutions such as religion, stereotypes or conservatism, and formal institutions such as poor education system, politics, trade protectionism or time shift.	Poland
Wrong people in the wrong places. Operating in foreign markets means a change of lifestyle. Accustoming to a different work rhythm. At home, you deal with only one culture and live in only one time zone. Slovenian companies are mostly dominated by hierarchy, while foreign companies are much more agile and responsive to change. Business flexibility is essential. If you want to be a serious player, you have to know the competition very well. Staff. We cannot grow without the best and committed staff. These are the processes we live from day to day. Without the systematic management of partners and distributors, internationalization is almost impossible. The term human resources is now obsolete, obsolete management and talent development.	Slovenia

We face difficulties in identifying business opportunities abroad. We face special obstacles in accessing market information and finding potential customers and the right partners. Compliance with foreign legislation, such as mandatory contract law, customs regulations, technical regulations and standards, technology transfer management, and the protection of intellectual and industrial property rights. Too little time dedicated by managers to internationalization. Cultural differences (including business culture). Other laws and regulations in the foreign country - tariffs or other barriers to trade in the home country.	
Internal Factors • Limitation of financial resources • Lack of trained personnel and correct planning. (Deficits in foreign languages and the use of digital resources). • Difficulty in identifying potential clients or partners and business opportunities in other countries. • Technical and administrative difficulties. Practical communication in foreign languages, transaction procedures… • Small size of SMEs that may affect different of the previous factors. A high proportion of the businesses are micro companies with little technical and financial capacity to approach other markets. **External Factors** • Difficulty to obtain relevant information on realities in certain foreign markets. • Influence of governments on the economy (protection measures). • Competition with other international companies. • Frequent unstable worldwide situations: economic crisis, sanitary emergencies, political uncertainties, ...	Spain
4.Which skills and competences are needed to become international in your opinion?	
- Cultural awareness. - Language and communication skills. - Adaptive thinking. - Marketing Skills - Flexibility - Knowledge of the market (including market trends, laws and taxis) - Business potentials - Business Network	Greece
- **Marketing/communication skills:** seen in different ways: in terms of marketing	Italy

strategy, in terms of communication and/or with reference to the website and web marketing activities. The gaps that companies perceive as primary are therefore in reality very technical and often outsourceable such as: making a video presentation to participate in virtual trade fairs (in the absence of physical ones, which "for some areas of B2B still represent a strategic asset"), build a site that is in line with the canons of the country you want to attack, integrate the IT strategy of the web agency with the marketing strategy of the company, analyse the trends of "Google Analytics" and in general the so called big data, etc.; - **The cross-cultural skills** based mainly on the knowledge of host countries the firm aim to approach: these skills are useful for the "real" context and also in the "digital" one. Consumers and customer culture has an impact in all the fields - **Logistics and legal knowledge**: payment and revenues management (e.g. e-commerce has been mentioned), compliance with laws, logistics management. - The ability to share and disseminate **the corporate vision** to those should create the image and content of the company abroad; - **The open-mindedness of the management** towards digital innovation is a key to a sustainable growth in a global market.	
- **Personality factors**, which are difficult to be shaped by education process as they are part of individual characteristics of a person. To this group of treats, following ones belong: open-minded, courage, curiosity, well-organized, flexibility, optimism, independence, quick learner, - **Skills to develop**, which might be shaped by education and learning, including: foreign language skills, communication (also cross-cultural), emotional intelligence, cultural awareness, cooperation skills, negotiation skills, sales skills, - **Knowledge to gain**, including knowledge on international business rules, techniques and customs, knowledge on international finance, knowledge on commercial law, skills to prepare documents in international business, knowledge of risk management, knowledge of global online services, knowledge on strategy (long term strategy and strategy adoption to local market), ICT competences, marketing competences, knowledge on customer needs, analyses of competitors, - **Understanding** of local cultures and of local markets.	Poland
- Good communication. - Open minded people. - Marketing communication is very important, it must be coordinated with sales. - We need to ask ourselves what we offer, why people would buy our products and how we are different from others. - Precise market segmentation is important. - We adapt the product, price and communication to each market. - Logistics and communication systems need to be significantly improved. - Knowledge of cultural differences (including business culture). - Good translation and knowledge of foreign languages. - Process competencies. - Engineering and Technology. - Specialized mechanics, for example to install and maintain machinery. - Customer and personal service. - Sales and marketing	Slovenia
General competence needs of the company staff	Spain

- Strategic analysis capacity

- linguistic and culture skills => Intercultural Competences

(Hard competences)

- Technical knowledge about Internationalisation

- Education degree according to the needs of the company (function/ product/ sector).

(Soft skills)

- Leadership, negotiation and business vision skills.

- Communication and practical use of the language.

Business related competences (depending on the specific sectors)

1. Negotiation in a specific market environment.

2. Management of cultural diversity

3. Effective communication and analytical thinking

o Development of an innovative mind

o Openness to new knowledge

4. Specific technical knowledge (depending on the function) on:

o Administration.

o National and international legal issues.

o Marketing.

o Economic-Financial issues.

o Logistics.

o Information and Communication Technologies.

5. Leadership

6. Values

o Business ethics.

o Respect for the environment

o Social responsibility.

5.To which extend digitalization can support the internationalisation of companies in your opinion?	
- The effect of digitalization is critical for new venture internationalization, in view that technological change is the foundation for speedy internationalization. It is the	Greece

technological change in the last two decades that stimulated and facilitated the speedy internationalization of born global. The digitalization will improve learning and networking abilities. - Digitization makes the process of internationalization easier and faster. Gives information about companies and products and supports digital marketing and e-commerce**.**	
All participants confirm a positive attitude concerning the digitalization especially oriented to reboot the value chain of commercial area. Digitisation can support the company in the process of internationalisation "by providing additional opportunities in different markets and enabling company to enlarge its customers basket and increase profits (by diversifying production)"; It is one of the tools that can be included in the sales strategy and that can lead to commercial development. It must be an aspect to be integrated with the "face to face" strategy with the customer that is still important and that together they are an important way to obtain data and feedback from the market.	Italy
- **Feature of digitalization** in internationalization process: digitalization as a key for internationalization (repeated by 3 responders), thanks to digitalization there is no time and space limits, it makes easier to transfer knowledge and it push towards innovation, - **Benefits** of using digitalization in the process of internationalization: it makes easier a lot of aspects of internationalization (contacts, documentation preparation, access to customers, to build trust with social media support), it makes the process faster, digital services are very similar across the world, many services can be delivered online, availability of information about companies and products, it supports digital marketing and e-commerce, availability in internet in real time, lower costs. Among these benefits, making the internationalization process easier was the most often repeated benefit (by 9 responders). - One **limitation** of the use of digitalization in internationalization process was mentioned: it needs to be correctly checked. - As **cultural aspect** of internationalization was highlighted in earlier discussion, also 4 of responders pointed out this issue. Thanks to digitalization in the support of internationalization, cultural differences are less important, it makes contacts less formal, let to standardize global operation. Digitalization let to bridge the cultural divide. - Another important aspect of internationalization is the **knowledge of foreign language**. 4 of responders noticed that digitalization supports internationalization also thanks to English used worldwide in online communicators, language support available online, possibilities to arrange online meetings and to overcome communication gap.	Poland
- In our case it is prerogative to sell products in digital. - Digitization allows thorough market research to be done. - In designing our products and brand communication. - We want to be attractive and innovative and adapt to the requirements of individual markets. - The best brands have well-defined key points of contact. They happen online. - Greater use of digital technologies improves employee recruitment.	Slovenia

- Digitization is the focal point of internationalization, it is no longer possible without it.	
Key ideas arisen from the focus groups are: - Digitalization and internationalization are linked - Digital tools are very useful for internationalization purposes. - For marketing purposes, digital tools provide cost economies. In addition, market places and other advanced sale tools provide more direct transactions. Finally, segmentation and selection of specific target groups can be achieved more easily than with other traditional methods. Impact metrics are powerful tools for marketing purposes. - Communication with customers and providers have been also transformed with the digital tools. In highly internationalised sectors like fashion, around 90% of communications are arranged with digital tools.	Spain

6. To which extend digitalization can limit the internationalisation of companies in your opinion?	
- There is no limit of digitalization to internationalization. - Digitization due to the fact that it has evolved a lot and quickly some markets are difficult to follow and support it which may be an obstacle to the development of internationalization. - Digitization makes the part of internationalization and communication easier because it is more direct and broad to the markets and extremely necessary. - The digitalization can limit the experiential learning, on-the-job training. - Digitalization limits the face –to- face contact (2 responders claimed)	Greece
The search for intangible and soft skills often missing in the organization: the lack of digital skills in an international context is one of the most important gap that need to be filled, especially for a SME that can reboot the business model and the value proposition accordingly in order to recover competitiveness and innovativeness. One participant stated that she has a university master's degree in order to better understand foreign markets and to be able to manage in house the digital conversion strategy. Even proactive, the same participant admitted that her digital dived and the need for a strong education training, especially in terms of site construction and social strategy. In the same wake of the case just presented, another participant then stated that he had built his own website for his activity in foreign markets. **It could be a very expensive and inefficient activity** thus limiting the budget (often difficult to balance) allocated for domestic markets. **The industry in which the company operates**: it has been pointed out that the digital world is more difficult to deal with for some sectors (such as the one related to wine, experience brought by one of the companies present) than others for which products are better suited to be presented/sold in online channels (such as clothing).	Italy
- Foreign market should be mature enough to use digitalization in supporting internationalization process,	Poland

- Digitalisation can create misconceptions about the company and the local support of institutions present in the target market is key in assessing the actual integrity and business experience of the local contact we are dealing with, - Bad user interface and implicit language of a system can hinder the usage for people of different cultures, - Products and services from home countries will also be more easily accessible thanks to digitalization, which will raise the competition for going abroad, - No direct contact with the customers to know their real needs and opinions about our products (2 responders), - Lack of proper ICT tools or applications can limit the promotion and sales possibilities, lack of knowledge of modern ICT solutions, risk connected with cyber security, risk of hacker attack, - Face-to-face communication may endorse a stronger trust which is not induced directly in online meetings.	
- A lot of specification are needed face to face phase is still needed. Programming on the place. - Nowadays, messages come from all possible directions and the best companies respond to these messages with facts and evidence and not with their own opinion. - The budget needs to be allocated to the right channels, the right distributors, vendors and partners. - There is no room for hiding in the digital world. - Company product specifications. - Language. - Internationalization is associated with high costs. - Lack of relevant information. - Too much data has become a problem lately. - Too many online providers	Slovenia
Many companies do not know yet where to start and what to do when it comes to digital transformation. Digital transformation is seen by many managers simply as a technological revolution. Key concepts discussed in the focus groups: - Digitalization is a cost-efficient option to expand the company to other markets. - Digitalization allows to handle a lot of relevant information for the business. - There are no limiting factors of digital technologies for the internationalization of the companies. - However, some companies may still perceive that personal relationships are key for the business, in particular for sectors like fashion where the value of the product may have strong components of personal experience. - Companies may modulate the rhythm of the digital change for internal reasons, to adapt to the constrains of the company itself.	Spain
7. How can internationalization benefit the most in implementing digitalization in your opinion?	
Based on participants' answers, there are several specific aspects of the influence of digitalization on sales: - For e-commerce digitalization is a prerequisite condition, faster process of sales and delivers	Greece

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− Online & social media advertising is a great avenue to promote products locally, while managing and monitoring costs at a distance, at the same time local legal, cultural aspects and preference are key to successful e-marketing, − Raising awareness − Minimize space, time and costs − participate to the creation of cultural and social networks Moreover, with the implementation of digitization, internationalization will be faster and more immediate, and training will be provided to the company's employees to gain knowledge on how and how to internationalize. We can summarize the most implementing digitalization benefits as following: • Increase in sales & transactions & market share (almost all, or more than 80% of respondents); • Increased visibility (30% of respondents); • Cost reduction; • Improved competitiveness; • More data and feedback available from the market; Ability to improve the company's service: "the client can reach the company anytime while before the relationship was only based on company's action".	
We can summarize the most implementing digitalization benefits as following: • Increase in sales & transactions & market share (almost all, or more than 80% of respondents); • Increased visibility (30% of respondents); • Cost reduction; • Improved competitiveness; • More data and feedback available from the market; Ability to improve the company's service: "the client can reach the company anytime while before the relationship was only based on company's action".	Italy

4 of 16 responders could not indicate the most important aspects of implementing digitalization in internationalization process. Among other responders, following aspects were mentioned:
 	
1. Digitalization is a **key, the most crucial** aspect of internationalization,
2. Internet knows **no time nor space limits**,
3. Digital internationalization let to gain **the effect of scale** quickly,
4. Digitalization let to **lower costs** of internationalization,
5. Digitalization **fasten the process of internationalization**, especially in reaching customers, in creating and maintaining the relationships with customers, in daily contacts and information exchange between partners, in sharing knowledge on the product among customers. It makes information flow and data analyses faster as well as making decisions.
6. The digitalization **improve the process of communication**, which become more rapid and even live. It let to bridge the gap between companies.
7. Digitalization can **increase sales** without travelling,
8. There are several specific aspects of the influence of digitalization on sales:
  − For e-commerce digitalization is a prerequisite condition,
  − Online tradeshows and exchange platforms are great tools supporting sales,
	Poland

− New opportunities arise with the horizon of a digital platform, − Online & social media advertising is a great avenue to promote products locally, while managing and monitoring costs at a distance, at the same time local legal, cultural aspects and preference are key to successful e-marketing, − local digital agencies are more effective due to this aspect.	
It is already in work. We cannot grow without the best and committed staff. We live digitalisation from day to day. International talent search is a prerogative. In the best brands, the public relations department is part of the customer relations department and solves their problems as we are internationally oriented all the communication is on-line. E-commerce companies are more active internationally than traditional companies. Access to training and counselling services is provided. Digital skills can help to develop a competitive edge. Can help increase revenue. Allow businesses to build customer relationships in globalized word. Reducing distance and entry-related costs. Information ordering.	Slovenia
Those companies still reluctant to digital transformation should keep in mind that the introduction of digital technologies in our socio-economic model improves efficiency, provides flexibility and optimizes resources. Likewise, one of the great advantages of digitization lies in the elimination of physical borders, a fact that directly affects internationalization strategies. The potential for accessing new markets, in real time and at lower costs, is growing at high rates. In a context like this, companies must consider the possibility, not fictitious, of being digitalized or disappearing. As one of the participants in the focus group said, a company may decide not to enter new markets, but this does not prevent others to enter his market using the powerful digital tools. Other conclusion of both focus groups was that in the digital sphere, unlike in the physical one, the digital and international markets are not only a possibility of growth, they are a need, as we live with a global industry. This transformation is therefore a great challenge for companies and specifically for SMEs, which constitute 99% of the total of businesses in Spain. They need to face the digital challenge through a diagnosis of their technological strengths and weaknesses. Only in this way will they be able to take full advantage of all the benefits that accompany the digital revolution. Key ideas arisen from the focus groups: - The question, as drafted in the form, was not well understood by the participants in	Spain

the focus groups. It was assumed that it meant how internationalization can get benefits from digitalization.

- Most participants indicated that this question has a close relationship with the quality of the product and the particular economic sector. Sectors like fashion can get a huge advantage, whereas other sectors do not have many opportunities for internationalization (even when digitalization may be certainly advantageous for them in their local markets).

- In some sectors, digitalization is not separable from internationalization. They are two joint concepts of the globalization of a company. This is for instance the case in many fashion companies.

- Digitalization is inherent in some global markets (like the marketplaces) and they are more efficient and effective than other kind of markets for many products. Positioning products in these global platforms may be a strategy to follow by certain companies to take full advantages of digitalization.

- At the moment, there are companies that use digitalization and others which do not. Therefore, the first step seems to be strategic. Digitalization must be seen as a strategic advantage in the culture of the company to benefit from the rest of advantages it offers.

8. Which digital skills and competences are needed to support internationalization in your opinion?	
Digital skills discussed by responders can be divided into several parts: − Knowledge of communication tools, − Communicating through different digital platforms and devices, − Using websites, video conference tools like Skype, Microsoft Teams and Zoom platforms, − Skill of preparing digital presentations, power point, videos, films and marketing materials, − Knowledge of search engines, − Ability to create content in local language and fitting cultural preferences, − Planning of online media, − Social media skills.	Greece
It has been difficult to catalogue what are the digital skills and competences being able to support internationalization. Most of the attendees are again concentrated on hard and technical skills by neglecting the relevance of human dimension. Among the other, a commonplace for all is related to **the web-marketing** (mentioned as the first aspect in half of the answers), **trend analysis such as "Google Analytics"** or **social media strategy and marketplace management.** Secondly, the ability of management to the knowledge transfer and to sustain customer knowledge strategy and digital campaign across all levels and areas within/externally to the company, and the management of budget compliance (since "digitalization of high levels is somehow expensive") were mentioned. Another participant instead indicated as the only answer **the knowledge of the culture and customs of the foreign country**, indicating how a strategy/skills/tool can be	Italy

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effective in one context and totally ineffective in another. The main aspect has been further mentioned a second time by another company that talked **cross-cultural communication and *cross-cultural adaption***	

1. **General digital skills** such as:
  – ability to online work,
  – technical efficiency,
  – Computer / Smartphone savvies,
  – Artificial intelligence
  – knowledge on cyber security
  – Coding and/or no-code approach,
  – Digital payments and banking systems,
2. Digital skills related to **online communication** with market:
  – Knowledge of communication tools,
  – Communicating through different digital platforms and devices,
  – Daily use of E-mails, word, excel spreadsheets,
  – Using websites, video conference tools like Skype, Microsoft Teams and Zoom platforms,
  – Skill of preparing digital presentations, power point, videos, films and marketing materials,
  – Usage of language and translation based tools,
3. Digital skills aiming to **gain and create information** online:
  – Knowledge of search engines,
  – Searching for information on the internet, networks and websites,
  – Ability to find right channels to target the right segment of the market in the given country,
  – Online data acquisition and use of online marketplaces,
  – Ability to create content in local language and fitting cultural preferences,
4. Digital skills related to **the use of digital tools**:
  – knowledge of building and delivering digital tools,
  – Ability to build user-friendly systems,
  – ability to build www pages, online shops, internet communicators,
  – Understanding and implementing web-based or software based solutions for business processes,
  – Social media savvy in particular on platforms that are in use in target markets,
  – Planning of online media,
  – Social media skills.
	Poland

Graphic design / Web development/ Photography. Programming. Information Literacy. Media Literacy. ICT Literacy. Information and communication technology competence. Critical and creative thinking.	Slovenia

Search Engine Optimization –SEO.

Personal and social competence.

Ethical behaviour.

Intercultural understanding.

High-level information management skills and well-developed communication skills.

Creativity, social intelligence and ICT expertise as the competencies of the future.

Key skills	Spain
1. How to get access to relevant information. 2. How to communicate and collaborate (also digitally). 3. Creation of digital content for branding and positioning purposes (web pages, social networks,…). 4. How to handle security issues not to be sabotaged. 5. Troubleshooting. Be able to solve problems that may relate to different realities. 6. Mastering the use of digital media (for marketing purposes, but also for operational ones). 7. When selling online, mastering the sale platforms and be able to position the product. **Knowledge about:** • Preparation and management of a digital marketing plan adapted to each market that is intended to be reached. • Development of customer addressed strategies with digital media. • Elaboration of a strategic plan for different channels (including the digital ones). • Forms of payment (including international payments). • Supply management and logistics (including digital Logistics).	

Factors which affect internationalisation, from the most (1) to the least important (8)	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain
Market growth potential.	Aver. = 4,6 Min = 1 Max = 8	Aver. = 6 Min = 8 Max = 1	Aver. = 2,5 Min = 1 Max = 6	3

	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain
The social and cultural peculiarities of that market.	Aver. = 3,6 Min = 1 Max = 7	Aver. = 5,83 Min = 8 Max = 4	Aver. = 5,2 Min = 1 Max = 8	6,5
The production costs.	Aver. = 4,3 Min = 1 Max = 7	Aver. = 4,83 Min = 8 Max = 1	Aver. = 4,5 Min = 2 Max = 8	6,5
The degree of competition in the company's home market.	Aver. = 4,6 Min = 2 Max = 7	Aver. = 4,5 Min = 7 Max = 1	Aver. = 4,4 Min = 1 Max = 8	4
The size of the company.	Aver. = 4,8 Min = 1 Max = 8	Aver. = 4,16 Min = 8 Max = 1	Aver. = 6,2 Min = 3 Max = 8	6,5
The capacities of the company itself in terms of personnel, competitive capacities, management, organization, etc.	Aver. = 4,2 Min = 1 Max = 7	Aver. = 3,83 Min = 7 Max = 2	Aver. = 3,3 Min = 1 Max = 7	1
The possession of valuable intangible assets such as brands, patents, know-how, etc.	Aver. = 4,4 Min = 1 Max = 6	Aver. = 3,66 Min = 6 Max = 1	Aver. = 4,2 Min = 2 Max = 8	6,5
The objectives that the company wishes to achieve with its internationalization.	Aver. = 5 Min = 3 Max = 8	Aver. = 3,16 Min = 4 Max =2	Aver. = 5 Min = 1 Max = 8	2

Skills and competences needed to become international, from the most (1) to the least important (10)	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain
Communication skills adapted to different markets.	Aver. = 4,6 Min = 1	Aver. = 7,33 Min = 10	Aver. = 2,9 Min = 1	4

	Max = 8	Max = 2	Max = 10	
Digital skills (social networks, web, internet).	Aver. = 4,3 Min =1 Max = 8	Aver. = 6,5 Min = 8 Max = 2	Aver. = 5,1 Min = 1 Max = 10	5
Analyzing fashion trends bringing the different countries together.	Aver. = 5 Min = 1 Max = 9	Aver. = 6,16 Min = 8 Max = 1	Aver. = 5,6 Min = 3 Max = 10	8
Ability to develop a strategy and innovate adapted to a different countries.	Aver. = 3,8 Min = 1 Max = 7	Aver. = 6 Min = 10 Max = 1	Aver. = 2,9 Min = 1 Max = 6	3
Knowledge of foreign trade processes (logistics, distribution, payment systems, legal aspects.	Aver. = 5,2 Min = 1 Max = 10	Aver. = 5,83 Min = 10 Max = 4	Aver. = 5,7 Min = 1 Max = 10	1,5
Knowledge of the target market and the application of communication techniques in a focused way.	Aver. = 4,4 Min = 1 Max = 10	Aver. = 5,66 Min = 10 Max = 1	Aver. = 4,4 Min = 1 Max = 9	1,5
Be ahead of the rest of the market competition.	Aver. = 4,5 Min = 1 Max = 8	Aver. = 5,33 Min = 9 Max = 1	Aver. = 7,1 Min = 4 Max = 10	8,5
Brand image of the company communicated clearly in all its commercial aspects.	Aver. = 5,2 Min = 2 Max = 8	Aver. = 5,16 Min = 7 Max = 3	Aver. = 5,9 Min = 3 Max = 9	6,5
Integration of responsible, sustainable company policy in all its processes.	Aver. = 4,4 Min = 1 Max = 7	Aver. = 4 Min = 8 Max = 1	Aver. = 7,3 Min = 3 Max = 10	8
Elaboration and control of regulations during communication processes.	Aver. = 5	Aver. = 4,66	Aver. = 8,2	8

	Min = 1 Max = 8	Min = 9 Max = 2	Min = 2 Max = 10	

Digital skills and competences needed to support internationalization, from the most (1) to the least important (5)	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain
Setting short and medium term objectives and their subsequent achievement.	Aver. = 3,6 Min = 2 Max = 5	Aver. = 5,33 Min = 4 Max = 2	Aver. = 2,8 Min = 1 Max = 5	1,5
Determination of language and communication globally.	Aver. = 3,5 Min = 1 Max = 5	Aver. = 3,66 Min = 5 Max = 2	Aver. = 3,2 Min = 1 Max = 5	1,5
Creation, organization and management of multimedia content adapted to the different markets.	Aver. = 2,8 Min = 1 Max = 5	Aver. = 3,16 Min = 5 Max = 1	Aver. = 2,4 Min = 1 Max = 4	3,5
Knowledge of audiovisual content creation. Online media planning and international dissemination.	Aver. = 2,5 Min = 1 Max = 5	Aver. = 3 Min = 5 Max = 1	Aver. = 3,9 Min = 1 Max = 5	5
Creation of campaigns by location (international), due to the difference in language in each community	Aver. = 3 Min = 1 Max = 5	Aver. = 2,5 Min = 4 Max = 1	Aver. = 2,9 Min = 1 Max = 5	3,5

SKILLS TO DEVELOP FOR DIGITAL INTERNATIONALIZATION

Skills for internationalization
Cultural awareness: − the knowledge of host countries (these skills are useful for the "real" context and "digital" one). − cultural awareness − Understanding of local cultures and of local markets − Intercultural understanding − cross-cultural communication − cross-cultural adaption
Marketing/communication skills: − marketing strategy − market segmentation − communication (also cross-cultural) − foreign language skills − cooperation skills − negotiation skills − sales skills
Logistics and legal knowledge: − payment and revenues management (e.g. e-commerce has been mentioned) − logistics management − knowledge on international business rules, techniques and customs − knowledge on international finance − knowledge on commercial law − skills to prepare documents in international business
Skills in digital internationalization
Technical and general digital skills: − Ability to online work − Technical efficiency − Computer/ Smartphone savvies − Artificial intelligence − knowledge on cyber security − Coding and/or no-code approach − Knowledge of search engines − Search Engine Optimization –SEO
Digital communication skills: − Knowledge of communication tools − Communicating through different digital platforms and devices − Daily use of E-mails, word, excel spreadsheets,

- Using websites, video conference tools like Skype, Microsoft Teams and Zoom platforms,
- Skill of preparing digital presentations, power point, videos, films and marketing materials,
- Usage of language and translation based tools

The use of digital tools:

- Knowledge of building and delivering digital tools,
- Ability to build user-friendly systems,
- Ability to build www pages, online shops, internet communicators,
- Understanding and implementing web-based or software based solutions for business processes,
- Graphic design / Web development/ Photography
- Programming

Digital marketing:

- Ability to create content in local language and fitting cultural preferences
- Social media savvy in particular on platforms that are in use in target markets,
- Planning of online media
- Social media skills
- Digital campaign across all levels and areas within/externally to the company

Online market research

- Google Analytics
- Searching for information on the internet, networks and websites
- Ability to find right channels to target the right segment of the market in the given country
- Online data acquisition and use of online marketplaces
- Information Literacy.

1.2 Training Programme

The present section illustrates the structure, the content and learning methodologies of the BIG training program.

Training programme aims to reach companies strategic objectives as came to light with Focus; those objectives should lead to a proper and sustainable plan of the international and digital presence, referring to a modern and meticulous framework of methodology and contents.

The training offer is configured as a "three-dimensional" didactic model, a learning process in "3D", in which the fundamental Dimensions of professional action, coinciding with Context, Role, Person, have constituted the Drivers for the development of the entire didactic system and the relative training response which in turn is divided into the 3 dimensions of learning (COGNITIVE - learning by thinking; OPERATIVE - learning by doing; BEHAVIOURAL - learning by acting).

In particular:

- **the context**: it integrates learning related to (exogenous and endogenous) logistical, cultural, legal factors, etc., which condition, influence and frame the processes of international business development in the intercultural field;

- **the role**: it deals with the development of skills toward a digital mindset that must be furnished also with digital operation skills and digital communication skills, being appropriate to the digital transformation of sales process;

- **the person**: it concerns behavioural qualities as relational, negotiation, communicative, problem solving; all of them are relevant to transform technical and theoretical knowledge in excellent professional performances.

Hereafter there is a table of connection among skills and knowledge needs as emerges during Focus group sessions and their conversion in training programme.

Table 1. Connection among needs and training

Skills for internationalization	Training Modules
Cultural awareness − the knowledge of host countries (these skills are useful for the "real" context and "digital" one). − cultural awareness − Understanding of local cultures and of local markets − Intercultural understanding − cross-cultural communication − cross-cultural adaption	**Driver 1: Context** **Module 1: Cultural awareness** **Unit 1 – Cultural differences and Intercultural Competence in International Marketing**
Marketing/communication skills: − marketing strategy − market segmentation − communication (also cross-cultural), − foreign language skills	**Driver 1: Context** **Module 2: International Marketing and sales** **Unit 1 – Introduction to International marketing and Sales in International market**

− cooperation skills − negotiation skills − sales skills	**Unit 2 – Inside sales and selling remotely**
Logistics and legal knowledge: − payment and revenues management (e.g. e-commerce has been mentioned) − logistics management − knowledge on international business rules, techniques and customs − knowledge on international finance − knowledge on commercial law − skills to prepare documents in international business	**Unit 3 – Payment, logistic and legal knowledge**
Skills in digital internationalization	
Digital marketing − Ability to create content in local language and fitting cultural preferences − Social media savvy in particular on platforms that are in use in target markets, − Planning of online media − Social media skills − Digital campaign across all levels and areas within/externally to the company − Knowledge of search engines − Search Engine Optimization –SEO	**Driver 2: Role** **Module 3: International digital marketing** **Unit 1: Web design and content development for international market** **Unit 2: SEO and SEM** **Unit 3: Social media marketing** **Unit 4: eCommerce & International Marketplace**
Online market research − Google Analytics − Searching for information on the internet, networks and websites − Ability to find right channels to target the right segment of the market in the given country − Online data acquisition and use of online marketplaces − Information Literacy.	**Driver 2: Role** **Module 4: Data Driven Marketing** **Unit 1: Online market research** **Unit 2: Data Analytics**
The use of digital tools: − Knowledge of building and delivering digital tools, − Ability to build user-friendly systems, − Ability to build www pages, online shops, internet communicators, − Understanding and implementing web-based or software based solutions for	**Driver 2: Role** **Module 5: Technology and productivity** **Unit 1: Must have and new opportunity with Artificial intelligence and deep learning**

business processes, − Graphic design / Web development/ Photography − Programming	
Technical and general digital skills − Ability to online work − Technical efficiency − Computer/ Smartphone savvies − Artificial intelligence − Knowledge on cyber security − Coding and/or no-code approach	
Digital communication skills − Knowledge of communication tools − Communicating through different digital platforms and devices − Daily use of E-mails, word, excel spreadsheets, − Using websites, video conference tools like Skype, Microsoft Teams and Zoom platforms, − Skill of preparing digital presentations, power point, videos, films and marketing materials, − Usage of language and translation based tools	**Driver 3: Person** **Module 6: Digital communication** **Unit 1: Cross cultural communication** **Unit 2: Online Communication and tools**

Hereafter the table with detailed training programme and its didactic drivers and modules

Table 2. Program content in detail: Driver and modules

Driver 1	**Contest**
Description	• *legal aspects, i.e. management of all regulatory and fiscal practices, customs formalities, regulations and contractual rules for online sales on foreign markets* • *logistics channels, i.e. ways in which products sold are distributed on the target market and delivered to the final consumer* • *commercial media, i.e. set of digital sales channels used to allow final consumers to obtain products* • *marketing and communication channels, i.e. the tools a company uses to promote, advertise and inform its target market of its brands and/or its products* • *organizational aspects, i.e. the internal organisation structure to govern a new online market, in terms of skills and profiles involved* • *the knowledge of host countries (these skills are useful for the "real" context and "digital" one)* • *Understanding of local cultures and of local markets* • *Intercultural understanding*

Module 1	***Cultural Awareness***
Unit 1.1	Cultural differences *and Intercultural Competence in International Marketing*
Module 2	***International Marketing and sales***
Unit 2.1	Introduction to International marketing and Sales in International market
Unit 2.2	*Inside sales and selling remotely*
Unit 2.3	*Payment, logistic and legal knowledge*
Driver 2	**Role**
Description	• *Be aware of digital transformation challenges in the company;* • *Change and update the management style through a digital point of view;* • *Ability to manage new operations connected to a digital approach;* • *Development of the social collaboration process;* • *Capacity to use digital tools for being more effective;* • *Team management with digital tools;* • *Monitor web marketing campaigns to maximizes results;* • *Effective use of web marketing tools: SEO, SEM, email marketing, social media and mobile;* • *How to become the most authoritative voice in the market niche and convert customers into supporters of the Brand through Blogging, Social Networks and advanced Marketing;* • *Models to sell directly online in western and eastern markets, planning the required strategies, timelines and investments in a consistent and realistic way;* • *Methods and techniques to position themselves on Google, Yandex (Russia), Baidu (China) and Naver (Korea) to intercept the demand and be evaluated sooner (and better!) than competitors.*
Module 3	***International digital marketing***
Unit 3.1	Web design and content development for international market
Unit 3.2	SEO and SEM
Unit 3.3	Social media marketing
Unit 3.4	eCommerce & International Marketplace
Module 4	***Data Driven Marketing***
Unit 4.1	Online market research
Unit 4.2	Data Analytics
Module 5	***Technology and productivity***
Unit 5.1	*Must have and new opportunities with Artificial intelligence and deep learning*
Driver 3	**Person**
Description	*methods and techniques to personalize conversations; speed of reaction and information sharing; create new collaboration channels for customer care and sales; strengthen relationships with partners and suppliers; new creative and communication ideas; create personalized communication for the customer.*

Module 6	Digital Communication
Unit 6.1	Cross-cultural communication
Unit 6.2	Online Communication and tools

The following tables summarize the references to the modules, the learning outcomes, the hours, the topics, methodologies and the learning material

Table Specific structure of the training program and Teaching methodologies

	Expectations	**Explanation**
1	Title of the module	
2	Short description of the content	
3	Expected learning outcomes	
4	Length of the module	… hours (class, e-learning, SMEs check-up/movie education)
5	Learning topics	
6	Learning materials	
7	Learning methods	class, e-learning, SMEs check-up, movie education???

More in depth, under the methodological point of view, the training program is designed using the following teaching methodologies:

- Face-to-face sessions
  The workers will have to attend a certain number of face-to-face sessions at the premises of the training organization/company. There they will be able to have a face-to-face contact with an expert and ask all kind of questions.

  … hrs per module (total …)

- E learning (using the OER and learning environment)
  There will be an e-learning platform where all OERs will be uploaded and all the workers will have access to it. There the courses will be structured in the form of modules and the trainees will have to pass all the topics in each module in order to finalise the course.

  … hrs per module (10 mins per pill + FIM / total …)

- Company Check-ups (work-based learning)
  The workers will be given a real practice case to analyse in their own companies

  … working days (total … hrs)

- Movie education (Action learning)
  This activity that is based on the "Movie Education" methodological model and the creation of short didactic films which will enable workers to learn the techniques to elaborate a narrative text to use in the design, scripting and interpretation of sketch-coms to stage and interpret typical situations of

Conversational Digital Marketing relationships, to establish direct relationships with potential customers, in order to:

- adapt interpersonal digital communication techniques to different socio-economic contexts
- adapt the techniques of bidirectional communication between user and brand to different international contexts
- apply problem solving and decision-making techniques to solve problems deriving from the heterogeneity of customer expectations/needs
- customize the language and the communicative and relational style to the specificities of the single countries and the sensibilities of customers

… days (total … hrs)