



A CALL FOR GOOD PRACTICE

IN TRAINING FOR
INTERNATIONALISATION OF
SMES

Deadline for submission: 5 MAY 2017

Email: EEPGoodPractice@etf.europa.eu

BACKGROUND

A key priority of the Small Business Act¹ for Europe is for more small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to trade internationally.

When SMEs operate more internationally, there are positive results in innovation, growth and employment.² This is the case for both SMEs in the European Union (EU) and in those countries preparing to join the EU.

A key challenge for EU pre-accession countries is to ensure that their economies have the capacity to cope with the competitiveness of the EU Single Market (Copenhagen criteria).³ Better performing SMEs able to do business successfully in European and wider international markets are key to this objective. Research underlines that SMEs involved in international cooperation (e.g. through trading or technical cooperation) are a) more innovative, b) more likely to have higher growth in turnover, and c) generate higher employment. All three factors are central to the efforts of ETF partner countries preparing to join the European Union.⁴

Relevant training is essential for SMEs intending to trade or already trading with the EU Single Market.

Furthermore, sharing good practice in training provides both policymakers and training providers with a reference as to what type of training works well and at what cost.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the call are:

- to promote **quality of training** for SMEs already trading, or with potential to trade with or within the EU Single Market;
- to enhance the capacity of the training community **to meet the training needs of SMEs** already trading, or with potential to trade with or within the EU Single Market;
- to encourage policymakers to **improve policy and training support** that responds to the specific needs of SMEs already trading, or with potential to trade with or within the EU Single Market.

¹ European Commission (2018). Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic & Social Committee, Committee of the Regions. Think Small First – a Small Business Act for Europe. COM/2008/0394

² European Commission (2011). Opportunities for the internationalisation of European SMEs. Final Report

³ European Council (1993). Conclusions of the Presidency, 21-22 June 1993.

⁴ European Commission (2010). Internationalisation of European SMEs. Final Report.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THIS CALL?

Training providers who:

- are from one the 35 eligible countries listed below;
- offer training to, or have trained, SMEs that already trade with, or have the potential to trade with or within the EU Single Market. These SMEs may lie outside the 35 eligible countries.

Training providers must be organisations that deliver training. Training providers could include:

- **business support organisations** with a developed training profile e.g. chambers of commerce, SME agencies, regional development agencies, sector organisations;
- **training organisations** e.g. public or private training providers, universities, sector organisations, consultancy and advisory bodies, NGOs;
- **SMEs that provide in-house training** to promote knowledge, competences or skills (e.g. including on-the-job mentoring, peer learning, mentoring, e-learning).

Note that a training programme submitted through this call, and which has already finished, should have been completed no more than 24 months prior to submission (post-training evaluation is included within this time limit).

WHICH COUNTRIES ARE ELIGIBLE?

EUROPEAN UNION

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- France
- Finland
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- The Netherlands
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- United Kingdom

ETF PARTNER COUNTRIES

- Albania
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Kosovo*
- former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Montenegro
- Serbia
- Turkey

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

WHY SHOULD I PARTICIPATE?

Training providers who participate in the call and who are selected as a good practitioner are likely to benefit in a number of ways, including:

- participating in a constructive peer review that will help to identify areas where the **training programme can be improved**;
- opportunities to have your **good practice showcased at international level**;
- the possibility to **enhance your networking through the ETF's community** from the EU 28 Member States, the ETF's 29 partner countries and beyond;
- the possibility of **access to the ETF good practice platform**, participation in events and other initiatives where your training programme may be disseminated.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The ETF will review all applications and will make a first selection of **10 good practices** for peer review.

The selection will be made on the basis:

- **Training content:** The training programme must have a clear and explicit human capital dimension (e.g. training, self-learning, mentoring) that addresses the development of knowledge or skills required by SMEs to trade with the EU Single Market.
- **Quality:** The training programme selected will sufficiently address each of the five good practice dimensions: 1) training needs analysis, 2) training design and delivery , 3) training environment, 4) monitoring, evaluation and improvements and 5) marketing (see application form).
- **Learning value:** The training programme has sufficient learning value or potential learning value to be shared with a wider training community.
- **Geographical coverage:** Insofar as possible, and depending on the number of applications received, the selection will reflect a good balance between applicants from the EU and eligible partner countries (see list above).

An additional selection process may be undertaken at a later date subject to resources available.

PEER REVIEW PROCESS

Each selected application will be invited to participate in an online peer review.

During the online peer review, the training programme will be assessed against a set of criteria that are grouped under five dimensions:

1. Training needs analysis/delivery
3. Training environment
4. Monitoring, evaluation and improvements
5. Marketing

You will find the assessment criteria in Annex 1 of this document.

The peer review panel will be made up of an SME training expert and ETF staff. The purpose of the peer review is to obtain further information on the good practice and to make a thorough assessment of the training programme.

Note that all material used for the peer review will remain confidential. All material made public on the ETF website or platform will be agreed with the training provider beforehand.

The ETF may undertake a site visit to the training provider to verify evidence as a final quality control step.

SCORING METHODOLOGY AND AWARD

The assessment criteria within each of the five dimensions are scored exponentially, i.e. higher scores are assigned to more developed and innovative aspects of training.

The scoring system will be explained in more detail during the information webinar.

The good practice will be written up as a short, easy-to-read, information note and made available on the **ETF good practice platform**.

Training providers meeting the good practice threshold will be awarded the **ETF good practice insignia**.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

The ETF good practice call involves the following steps:

PREPARATION INFORMATION WEBINAR AND Q&A FORUM

For more information about submitting a proposal, the selection and the award procedures, training providers may participate in an information webinar on **28 April 2017 at 10:00-11.00 (CET)**. Please register here: <http://bit.ly/2m0GO9k>

In addition, training providers may also send questions to EEPGoodPractice@etf.europa.eu and/or post questions on the ETF good practice platform: <http://bit.ly/2msX5jB>. The deadline for questions is **3 May 2017, 24.00 (CET)**. All questions will be answered through the good practice platform.

STEP 1 DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

The deadline for submission is **5 May 2017**.

STEP 2 SELECTION AND PEER REVIEW

Following the deadline for submission, applications will be assessed and selected training providers will be invited for an online peer review. Each peer review will last up to two hours. During and after the peer review session, training providers may be required to provide evidence to demonstrate that the training programme meets the demands of the good practice assessment criteria (see Annex 1).

Peer review sessions will take place from May – October 2017. The results of the peer reviews will be communicated to the training provider within two weeks of the peer review.

The ETF may undertake a site visit to the training provider to verify evidence as a final quality control step. They may also contact beneficiaries of the training to verify evidence.

STEP 3 INCLUSION IN THE ETF GOOD PRACTICE DATABASE

The results of the peer review are communicated to the training provider, identifying the strengths and weaknesses as well as recommendations for improvement.

Training programmes that meet the good practice criteria will be included in the ETF good practice database. The ETF will publish a short, easy-read information note about the good practice to encourage exchange and networking. The information note will be shared with the training provider beforehand for approval.

STEP 4 PARTICIPATION IN THE GOOD PRACTITIONERS AND POLICYMAKERS FORUM

The final step is a good practice forum involving those training providers awarded the ETF good practice insignia and the policymakers nominated in their application. The forum is planned for March 2018. The objective of this forum is to determine how policymaking can benefit from the experience, knowledge and know-how of the training providers.

Previous applicants to an ETF good practice call may participate in this call. Those who have received an ETF good practice award in the area of internationalisation of SMEs may also apply but submissions should demonstrate that recommendations from a previous peer review have been addressed.

HOW TO APPLY

Training providers should submit the application in Word format by e-mail to:

EEPGoodPractice@etf.europa.eu

The application can be downloaded from the ETF website.

EXAMPLE

For information, please see the good practice information note of Enterprise Lithuania (Annex 2) which was identified as a good practice in a previous call.

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ANNEX 1: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

DIMENSION 1: TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS (TNA)

Rationale

A training needs analysis (TNA) ensures that the training programme is designed to meet the specific needs of the target group. A first step in a training programme is to define in concrete terms what the training requirements are for those who will follow a training programme. This information can also assist the training provider in monitoring market trends. A training needs analysis involves an examination of skill gaps and weaknesses. Accumulated TNA intelligence can help policymakers address systemic issues for training.

Objective

The objective of this component of the ETF good practice peer review is to determine how well the training needs analysis has been defined as input to the design and execution of a training programme, including the potential for use in wider policy developments.

LEVEL	VALUE	INDICATOR	ASSIGNED SCORE	COMMENTS
1	1	Evidence of proxy-TNA process: data and analysis borrowed from other training environments with risk that training design is less relevant to local market		
	1	TNA tools borrowed and not adapted to local training environment		
2	2	Evidence of TNA is confined to ad hoc or one-off data/ intelligence gathering related to the training provision under review with no defined plans to update TNA knowledge		
	2	Evidence that TNA is driven by actors external to the training environment (e.g. donors)		
3	3	Clearly defined links between the training provider and private sector for identifying training needs		
	3	At least one TNA tool (e.g. survey, focus group) exploited for purposes of training design and delivery		
	3	At least one example that TNA tools and analysis are sensitive to specific target groups (e.g. exporting SMEs)		
4	7	TNA reflects scale of training provision in terms of numbers involved in training and geographical spread		
	7	TNA is core feature of training provider's business or organisation plan		
	7	There is at least one example which convinces peer reviewers of innovation in the TNA process. Innovation involves any aspect which brings real added value to the TNA process		
	7	At least one example of an agreement established between training provider and general industry or sector-specific organisation for training development purposes		
5	10	TNA includes analysis of sector trends (trade, turnover, employment, skills) using primary and secondary data		
	10	Evidence that TNA intelligence from the project has been provided by training provider for wider policy debate e.g. sector-specific, government policies (education, training, employment, enterprise, economic development)		
	10	There is at least one example which convinces peer reviewers of innovative use of technology for TNA process (e.g. e-surveys)		

DIMENSION 2: TRAINING DESIGN AND DELIVERY

Rationale

A well-designed training programme that is customised to the specific training needs of the target groups contributes to meeting the objectives of the training programme and enhances the learning experience.

Objective

The objective of this component of the ETF good practice peer review is to assess how the contents of the training programme, as well as the methods and assessment arrangements, have contributed to the learning outcomes.

LEVEL	VALUE	INDICATOR	ASSIGNED SCORE	COMMENTS
1	1	Curriculum materials directly borrowed from outside training provider environment		
	1	Learning outcomes borrowed from outside training provider environment		
	1	Pedagogic approach mainly relies on one-way communication between trainer and trainees		
	1	No evidence of assessment arrangements for trainees during the training programme		
2	2	Curriculum borrowed and adapted to training needs		
	2	Learning outcomes borrowed and customised to training programme under review		
	2	Assessment arrangements confined to end-of-cycle assessment		
3	3	Curriculum design includes clearly defined learning outcomes set against training needs identified		
	3	Participatory pedagogic approaches involve active learning (e.g. group work, focus groups, apprenticeship placements)		
	3	Evidence of ad hoc assessment arrangements of trainees during training		
4	7	Evidence of innovative approaches to curriculum design (e.g. students engaged in the design process, curriculum peer reviewed by representatives from business world) and how the curriculum is delivered in an innovative way (e.g. role play, quizzes, simulation, case studies, enterprise labs, engagement of external speakers)		
	7	Assessment arrangements for trainees involve a) entry assessment and b) exit assessment		
	7	Evidence of review of learning outcomes and inclusion of trainees in review process		
5	10	Evidence of curriculum revision as a function of analysis of similar training provided by other training organisations providing similar training		
	10	Evidence that curriculum has been customised to meet training requirements of new customers or new demands of existing customers		
	10	Evidence of learning technologies feature in the training design (e.g. e-learning)		
	10	Assessment arrangements for trainees involve a) entry assessment, b) continuous review and c) exit assessment		

DIMENSION 3: TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

Rationale

Establishing an environment conducive to learning is a critical factor in meeting the objectives of a training programme.

Objective

The objective of this component of the ETF good practice peer review is to assess the appropriateness of the training infrastructure and support mechanisms, including expertise of training staff, as essential elements for delivery of training programme under review.

LEVEL	VALUE	INDICATOR	ASSIGNED SCORE	COMMENTS
1	1	Trainer(s) engaged in the training programme have no practical experience in the subject area under review (e.g. marketing, management, exporting)		
	1	Basic technical specifications for delivery of the training programme are available.		
	1	Training plan available that specifies the objectives, learning outcomes, budget, resources, etc.		
2	2	In the 3 years prior to the peer review, at least one trainer engaged in the training programme has actually worked in the subject area under review (e.g. marketing, management, exporting)		
	2	Training programme has a comprehensive check-list of technical specifications for a successful execution of the training programme (e.g. equipment, rooms, internet connection)		
3	3	Evidence that at least one trainer involved in delivery of the training has contributed to the design of the training programme.		
	3	The training provider has a dedicated award/recognition system for those who successfully complete the training		
	3	Technical specifications for the training programme include e-learning options		
4	7	At least one trainer engaged in the training programme is a certified trainer (public or private certification body)		
	7	The training provider tracks latest trends in the training area under peer review (e.g. use of multi-media, virtual learning environment)		
5	10	Evidence that training provider has e-learning facilities to support their training provision.		
	10	At least one trainer engaged in the training programme is a recognised authority for training in the sector (e.g. publications published, awards received).		
	10	Training programme has technical specifications for on-line follow-up with trainees after completion of training		
	10	Area of training programme under review forms part of the organisational strategy of the training provider		

DIMENSION 4: MONITORING, EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENTS

Rationale

Monitoring a training programme allows the training provider to track developments during the training and particularly to ensure that the necessary adjustments and improvements are made to allow for the training objectives to be fully met. Evaluation of a training programme allows the training provider and other stakeholders (e.g. trainees, funding bodies) to determine if the training has been a success or not. Recommendations from the evaluation provide an opportunity to improve the training programme.

Objective

The objective of this component of the ETF good practice peer review is to determine how effective the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) arrangements have been for the training programme with implications for improving the training environment.

LEVEL	VALUE	INDICATOR	ASSIGNED SCORE	COMMENTS
1	1	Evidence of one-off, ad hoc approach to monitoring and evaluation for training project (examples should be provided)		
	1	Training provider is aware of improvement requirements to the training programme but has not introduced change for whatever reason (e.g. lack of resources)		
2	2	Evidence of a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation of the training project (M&E plan, copies of M&E notes, reports etc.) involving trainees and trainers		
	2	Evidence of adjustments or improvements to training following either a) end-of-cycle evaluation or, b) feedback from trainees or trainers if training is still on-going		
3	3	An end-of-cycle evaluation report on training programme is available and recommended improvements to training programme have been introduced		
	3	The training provider has a dedicated M&E function assigned to an individual or team.		
	3	Evidence that good practice identified through an evaluation has been disseminated locally to the wider training community		
4	7	A tracker system is available to follow-up trainees to determine post-training impact for the trainee and/or the business (e.g. surveys) with evidence of adjustment or improvements to the training programme		
	7	Evidence that the training programme has made an impact on the trainee and/or business		
	7	Evidence that good practice identified through an evaluation has been disseminated internationally to the wider training community		
	7	Recommendations from the end-of-cycle, independent evaluation have been shared with policy makers		
5	10	Evidence that recommendations from independent evaluation have been incorporated into wider training developments		
	10	Training provider has a web-based tool to gather anonymous feedback from trainees on a) training programme, b) trainers		
	10	Evidence demonstrating that experience from the training programme has had an impact on public policy		

DIMENSION 5: MARKETING

Rationale

Good training providers ensure that their better training products and services are known to increase greater demand for the training programme. This creates a win-win scenario: the training provider's business expands while individuals, enterprises and other organisations requiring training can more easily access the training they need.

Objective

The objective of this component of the ETF good practice peer review is to determine how effective the training provider is in promoting the training programme.

LEVEL	VALUE	INDICATOR	ASSIGNED SCORE	COMMENTS
1	1	Evidence of ad hoc marketing of the training programme		
2	2	Evidence of at least 2 methods being used to market the training programme		
3	3	The training programme is backed up with a marketing plan		
4	7	Evidence of use of information technology to market the training programme at national level		
	7	Evidence of impact of marketing plan at international level (e.g. new sponsors, customer base extended internationally)		
5	10	Marketing information (leaflets, websites, ...) provides information on the impact of the training (e.g. on the trainee, business, sector)		
	10	Evidence of use of networking and social media for marketing purposes		