NAAGRCY
National Authorities for Apprenticeship:
Companies as Sustainable Partners for Apprenticeship in Greece and Cyprus

WP3: Develop and Adaptation of In-Companies Apprenticeship Procedures

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The Alliance

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NATIONAL AUTHORITIES FOR APPRENTICESHIP: COMPANIES AS SUSTAINABLE PARTNERS FOR APPRENTICESHIP IN GREECE AND CYPRUS (NAAGRCY)

UPGRADING COMPANIES TO QUALITY APPRENTICESHIP VENUES

ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME
Project No. 557308-EPP-1-2014-1-EL-EPPKA3-APPREN
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Introduction

The NAAGRCY project is an initiative of the Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED), aimed at improving the quality of Vocational Education and Training (VET), particularly Apprenticeship, in Greece and Cyprus by closely cooperating with social partners and transferring know-how from Germany, a country with a long tradition and experience in the Dual System of Vocational Education and Training.

The project forms part of a wider action plan implemented by OAED’s General Directorate of Vocational Education and Training, whose specific aim is to upgrade Apprenticeship (2012-2015), within the context of the programme titled “Re-engineering of OAED’s Business Model.”

This Methodological Guide is one of the NAAGRCY project’s key deliverables. It offers a concise description of the necessary conditions to be met by companies in order to become quality learning venues, within the context of the Dual System of Vocational Education and Training.

The project started on 01-10-2014 and was completed on 28-02-2017.
1. The NAAGRCY Project Partners

The NAAGRCY Project was based on transferring good practices, know-how and experience from the German Dual Apprenticeship system with the support of the German Federal Institute of Vocational Education and Training (BIBB).

The Project was carried out by a transnational partnership consisting of the following organizations:

- The **Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED)**, as project leader. OAED is the Greek Public Employment Service, implementing, inter alia, the Dual System of Vocational Education and Training in 51 Apprenticeship Vocational Education Schools (or EPAS) throughout Greece.

- The **Institute of Educational Policy (IEP)**, an executive scientific body supervised by the Greek Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs. IEP conducts studies related to the shaping, constant modernization and optimal implementation of the national educational policy in all types of schools, as well as issues related to primary and secondary education curricula, school textbooks, and other educational tools.

- The **German Federal Institute of Vocational Education and Training (BIBB)**, which is a federal institution established under the Vocational Training Act. BIBB’s tasks include conducting research on VET, developing VET (especially federal training regulations), serving in an advisory capacity and providing services. BIBB is committed to provide expert research-based policy consultancy in national and international VET and develops new and practically oriented VET solutions.

- The **Institute of Small Enterprises of the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants (IME GSEVEE)**, which conducts research studies and diffuses knowledge and information about micro, small and medium-sized enterprises of the secondary and tertiary sectors of the Greek economy.

- The **Labour Institute of the General Confederation of Greek Workers (INE GSEE)**, an institute that is highly active, inter alia, in the areas of scientific research, training, further training, and lifelong learning.

- The **Cyprus Productivity Centre (CPC)**, a state agency with 50 years of experience in the areas of training and productivity, on behalf of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance of Cyprus.

- The **Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI)**, a federation of the local Chambers of Commerce and Industry operating in five large cities in Cyprus.
2. The aims of the NAAGRCY Project

The project mainly aimed to modernize and upgrade Apprenticeship in Greece and Cyprus, based on international good practices. It sought to develop, among other things, a methodology for the effective implementation of in-company training/Apprenticeship, and motivate companies in Greece and Cyprus to actively participate in Vocational Education and Training programmes by offering quality Apprenticeships.

Moreover, the NAAGRCY project aimed to enhance the links between Apprenticeship and the labour market – at first, in sectors with comparative advantage. The project piloted the methodology in two occupational specialties in Greece and two more in Cyprus. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to developing quality Apprenticeships as an effective tool for the smooth transition of young people from Vocational Education and Training to the labour market. It focuses, therefore, on the role and characteristics of companies as quality learning venues for training future skilled workers and qualified company staff members.
3. Apprenticeship and its role in young people’s school-to-work transition

The transition of young people from Initial Vocational Education and Training to the labour market is of particular interest to several bodies and organizations, not only educational ones, which, directly or indirectly, are policy makers in the areas of education and/or employment (e.g. the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education, social partners, local government authorities, employer and worker associations, various other organizations, institutes). Indeed, all these various organizations, which form constituent parts of the “school-to-work transition system”, need valid and well-documented information, so that they can effectively contribute to the improvement of the transition through their policies.

It is noteworthy that OECD considers upgraded Apprenticeships to be among the main features of a “school-to-work transition system”. More specifically, according to OECD, the main ingredients of a “school-to-work transition system” are the following:

- A healthy economy
- Well-organised pathways that connect initial education with work and further study
- Widespread opportunities to combine workplace experience with education
- Tightly-knit safety nets for those at risk
- Good information and guidance
- Effective institutions and practices.1

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4. The outcomes of the NAAGRCY project

The NAACGCRY project is expected to contribute to the development of common European and national strategies for Apprenticeship. Furthermore, its investigation of good practices is going to help develop relevant mechanisms for improving the ability of Vocational Education and Training to respond to the changing demands of the labour market. By further developing these good practices, the attractiveness of Vocational Education and Training in Greece and Cyprus will also be enhanced. Besides, the project will also help companies invest in their human resources and enhance their involvement in Apprenticeship programmes. This will be achieved by providing specific guidelines and a methodology about the development of in-company training (on-the-job training) regulations, the cooperation of Vocational Education schools and companies, the (further) training of in-company trainers, the conditions of VET provision by companies, and the apprentice examination and certification procedures. Indeed, one of the NAAGRCY project’s key deliverables is the development of a methodological framework that can help companies become quality Apprenticeship venues.

The project identified the need to set up Apprenticeship support networks as an organisational and institutional frame for sustainable links between apprentices and companies, as well as between companies and Apprenticeship Vocational Schools. This Methodological Guide is potentially a cornerstone of such a frame. The NAAGRCY project piloted and analysed the different aspects in the selected occupational specialties: Car Mechanics and Cooks, in Greece; Car Mechanics and Hairdressers, in Cyprus.
5. Quality assurance factors for Apprenticeship

The main quality assurance factors for Apprenticeship are the following:

- A specific institutional framework that provides for an Apprenticeship Agreement signed between the apprentice and the company, regulates the apprentice’s remuneration and social insurance, and determines the mutual rights and obligations of both the apprentice and the company.
- Precisely formulated in-company training specifications (In-company Training Plan), accounting for a significant proportion of the overall training process (>50%).
- Upgrading of companies to quality Apprenticeship venues.
- Application of specific procedures for the assessment and certification of the apprentices’ learning outcomes.
- Close cooperation between the competent ministries, companies, educational/training bodies and social partners, namely all the Apprenticeship stakeholders.
- Constant update of the quality assurance factors for Apprenticeship at the local and national level.
6. Concise Methodological Guide for upgrading companies to quality Apprenticeship venues

The implementation of the NAAGRCY project was based on five different dimensions for quality Apprenticeship venues ("Work Packages"). Each single dimension has been elaborated by research activities, expert consultations and piloting with national and local VET stakeholders. This Methodological Guide compiles the main conditions to be met by companies, so that they can ensure the quality of their contribution to the training process within the Dual System of Vocational Education and Training. The Guide formulates specific quality standards/criteria, specifications and methodological recommendations, as summarised below.

6.1. Checking the suitability of a company as an Apprenticeship venue

Each company participating in an Apprenticeship scheme must provide its apprentices with appropriate, accurate and complete training in their chosen field of study. It is thus reasonable that the company must possess the appropriate mechanical equipment, tools, devices etc., as well as appropriately organized processes of product construction/manufacturing or service provision, which are relevant to the teaching of all the subjects in a specific field of study/specialty, and consistent with the education/training regulations. Apprenticeship Intermediary Networks (see para. 7 below) or the Chambers could check the company’s suitability.
6.2. In-company training specifications (In-company Training Plan) for each specialty

The in-company training specifications describe all the essential knowledge, skills and competences (learning outcomes) to be acquired by the apprentice during in-company training for a given vocation. Falling into separate thematic units, the learning outcomes are directly related to the respective occupational profile as well as to the respective subjects of the curriculum. The specifications must be jointly decided upon with the social partners and companies’ representative organisations, and approved by the competent ministries.

Since in-company training is based on these specifications, it is important that their daily observance is monitored by the in-company trainer using the “Log Book”. Further, the teaching of all the necessary subjects must be ensured in each company or, if not possible, by means of a network of cooperating companies or “virtual companies” at training centres.

6.3. Trained staff as in-company trainers

An in-company trainer must have good knowledge of the company’s object and business processes, as well as the developments in the respective industry. S/he must also be aware of the institutional framework and the characteristics of the Apprenticeship System of Vocational Education. As explained below, the trainer’s pedagogical training and in-depth knowledge of the respective specialty’s in-company training specifications emerge as necessary conditions of good quality in-company training. Naturally, the trainer must display a spirit of cooperation with the school’s teaching staff and be actively involved in systematically monitoring the apprentice’s educational and training progress.

6.3.1. The role of the in-company trainer

The training of in-company trainers is a key factor in enhancing the quality and attractiveness of Vocational Education and Training. Indeed, the specialised staff assuming the role of in-company trainers can have a decisive contribution to the whole process. They are responsible for most of the duties and tasks involved in the vocational training of apprentices. Their involvement in in-company training is of particular importance to both the company and society at large, and they also have a significant part to play in shaping the overall perception of work-based learning. Therefore, the vocational pedagogical training of in-company trainers constitutes a key condition for quality Apprenticeship.

Besides, trainers must fulfill a number of specific pedagogical and teaching conditions, including the structuring of the company-based learning process, the apprentices’ motivation, and the assessment of their performance.
6.3.2. Investigation of in-company trainers’ further training needs

Questionnaire- and Focus-Group-based research led to identifying the further training needs of in-company trainers. It was found that training needs were similar in the cases of both Greece and Cyprus and also echoed the concerns of in-company trainers in Germany. The results of this explorative analysis were synthesised in a further training seminar plan.

As part of the NAAGRCY project, two further training seminars for in-company trainers were held on a pilot basis at two OAED Apprenticeship Vocational Schools (the EPAS of Moschato/Attica, and the EPAS of Argolis). The seminars’ findings helped draw significant conclusions about the possibility and conditions of the improvement of the trainers’ knowledge, competences, skills and attitudes as a way to help them carry out their work more effectively.

The main training needs identified by the Questionnaire-based research are the following:

- New training techniques
- Contingency management techniques and methods
- Tools and techniques aimed at motivating apprentices and arousing their interest
- Progress evaluation methods
Furthermore, the Focus-Group-based research stressed the following needs as the most important ones:

6.3.3. Model of further training for in-company trainers

Based on the above, but also taking into account the relevant experience from the German Dual System of Vocational Education and Training, the following model of further training for in-company trainers is proposed. The model is focused on the central modules of the current German programme of training for trainers (“My role as trainer”, “Planning in-company training”, “Implement/carry out in-company training”, “Dealing with apprentices”, “Motivate apprentices”), yet it also proposes further subjects, which emerged during the investigation of further training needs conducted within the context of the NAAGRCY project.
## Further training programme for in-company trainers

**Suggested subjects of professional pedagogical skills development for trainers**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Module/Unit</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Competences</th>
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</table>
| My role as trainer | • Tasks  
• Functions  
• Responsibility  
• Self-management, organization | The trainer can describe his/her role and designate and specify his/her responsibilities and functions. |
| Planning in-company training | Reflection on the training objectives  
• Principles of planning the training  
• Creation of the in-company training plan, based on the training regulation (and the school curricular) in coordination with the coordinator/school  
• Selection of suitable apprenticeships for training  
• Checking and adjusting the In-company Training Plan | The trainer can analyse and create the individual in-company training plan, taking into consideration the training objective, curriculum foundations and characteristics of jobs in the company. S/he can adapt the In-company Training Plan to the circumstances/facilities in operation and implement it. |
| Implementing/carrying out in-company training | a. Carrying out training  
• Creation of learning and working tasks  
• Planning training units  
• Formulate learning objectives  
• Selection of suitable methods (e.g. four-step method, six-phase model, didactic discussion) | The trainer can plan, conduct and control learning tasks and activities professionally and with regard to target groups at the workplace. S/he can deduct further steps, give feedback and also accept it. |
| | b. Check and Feedback  
• Assessment tools for training objectives  
• Evaluation/assessment of the achievement of learning objectives  
• Knowledge of the importance of feedback (give and take)  
• Communication technologies | |
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<tr>
<th>Module/Unit</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Competences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with apprentices</td>
<td><strong>Apprentices</strong></td>
<td>The trainer knows the developmental levels of young people and their typical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Development phases and typical behaviours of adolescents</td>
<td>behaviours. S/he can reflect on his/her own behaviour, appropriately adapt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reflection on one’s own behaviour and leadership style</td>
<td>his/her own leadership style to the situation, and deal with difficult</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge of leadership styles</td>
<td>situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Deal with difficult situations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Avoid conflicts or lead to a good end</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating apprentices</td>
<td><strong>Motivation</strong></td>
<td>The trainer uses motivational techniques to motivate apprentices appropriately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Motivation techniques: possibilities and forms of promoting motivation</td>
<td>S/he recognizes the importance of his/her own behaviour. S/he can appropri-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge of the significance of one’s own behaviour (as a teacher),</td>
<td>ately adapt his/her behaviour to the situation, and speak in a motivating</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>being a role model</td>
<td>way with the apprentices.</td>
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**7. Establishment of Apprenticeship Intermediary Networks between enterprises and VET schools**

The establishment of Apprenticeship Intermediary Networks has two main aims: firstly, to enhance the participation of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Apprenticeship programmes in Greece and Cyprus through the provision and implementation of specific activities and services; secondly, to offer specific services and support enterprises/companies already participating in Apprenticeship programmes in order to eliminate/overcome barriers to their long-lasting participation. In fact, these networks build on the development of similar practices in countries with effective Apprenticeship systems, notably Germany.
7.1. The necessity of the intervention

The establishment of the Apprenticeship Intermediary Networks aims to resolve the following problems in the Greek and Cypriot Apprenticeship systems:

• Ineffective identification of labour market needs (at the local and national level), which are often related to the lack of necessary specialties and updated curricula.
• Limited role of social partners in the decision-making process.
• Ineffective cooperation between all the stakeholders (e.g. providers of Vocational Education and Training, public employment services, competent ministries, social partners).
• Lack of awareness and sufficient information regarding the advantages of the participation of SMEs.
• Lack of effective cooperations between companies in providing Apprenticeship placements.
• Limited participation of all the stakeholders in the development of school-based and work-based learning curricula.
• Lack of necessary incentives for SMEs, which could further motivate their participation in Apprenticeship programmes.
The successful operation of the Apprenticeship Intermediary Networks is closely related to the active participation and cooperation between all the Apprenticeship stakeholders, namely:

- Competent ministries
- Public providers of the Dual System of Vocational Education and Training (in Greece, OAED for EPAS schools, and the Ministry of Education for the EPAL [Vocational Lyceum] Apprenticeship Grade; in Cyprus, the Ministry of Education and Culture for the New Modern Apprenticeship System)
- Public Employment Services
- Social partners (representing employers and employees)
- Chambers
- Companies
- Local authorities (Municipalities and Regions)
- Providers of Vocational Education and Training (EPAS, EPAL, IEK [Vocational Training Institutes], in Greece; Technical Schools [Core Apprenticeship level], in Cyprus)
- Research institutes and universities.

The aforementioned bodies and organizations can be differentiated according to the specific features of the Greek and Cypriot Apprenticeship systems.

It is suggested that the Apprenticeship Intermediary Networks should operate at the regional level, and their operation and coordination should be the responsibility of a steering committee comprising representatives of the parties involved in each country’s Apprenticeship governance. The “Apprenticeship Office” will be the administrative and executive organ of the Apprenticeship Intermediary Networks. Depending on the necessary infrastructure, this Office could operate within the existing structures of the public providers of Apprenticeship, Public Employment Services, Social Partners or Chambers. The financial and non-financial support of these intermediary mechanisms is a prerequisite for their operational effectiveness. Therefore, a commonly accepted system of financing and support must be implemented, comprising all the stakeholders. The Networks could be financed through a combination of public and private resources, particularly from the organizations, bodies and companies involved.
7.3. Suggested services of the Apprenticeship Intermediary Networks

Communication and provision of necessary information
The Apprenticeship Intermediary Networks will be responsible for providing the necessary information regarding issues of SME participation, such as labour issues, Apprenticeship Agreement, institutional framework, infrastructure and quality assurance, work-based learning, learning outcomes and obligations of apprentices.

Incentivisation of companies
The Apprenticeship Intermediary Networks will propose specific (mainly non-financial) incentives to the relevant bodies, aiming to enhance the participation of companies (e.g. customized business support, “Erasmus” for entrepreneurs, awards, prioritization in other programmes of Active Labour Market Policies).

Conducting dissemination and publicity campaigns
As evidenced in various international studies, participation in an Apprenticeship programme may have considerable benefits for a company. More often than not, however, these benefits are not self-evident or obvious to companies. Publicity campaigns can offer adequate and relevant information to companies and, therefore, enhance the participation of SMEs in Apprenticeship programmes. This can be achieved through the use of both traditional (e.g. leaflets, conferences) and more modern channels of publicity and dissemination (e.g. social media, websites, “Apprenticeship Week”).
Administrative and operational support for participating companies

The Apprenticeship Intermediary Networks will act as support centres for participating companies in a wide range of issues, including administrative and operational ones (e.g. institutional framework, Apprenticeship Agreement, bureaucracy issues, other company management obligations). Moreover, the Apprenticeship Intermediary Networks will record and evaluate the views and proposals of the companies involved, with regard to the effectiveness and problems of the system.

Definition of prerequisites for the participation of companies in Apprenticeship programmes

The Apprenticeship Intermediary Networks will be responsible for defining company participation criteria with the contribution of all the parties involved. These criteria will be consistent with the particular characteristics of each occupation and the relevant training needs, as determined in the VET school curricula. The procedure of criteria definition aims to identify work-based learning needs and deficiencies, in order to develop forms of cooperation between SMEs and networks of companies that will reduce the possibility of excluding companies on account of their size.
**Registration of companies and determination of the necessary Apprenticeship placements**

The Apprenticeship Intermediary Networks will also be responsible for evaluating the suitability of companies to act as training venues. Both employer representatives and Vocational Education and Training schools will be involved in the evaluation procedure. On completion of this procedure, it will be clarified whether a company can provide the totality of the work-based learning content or only specific parts of the training programme. A register of participating companies will thus be created, including all the necessary information about each company and, more specifically, about its possible participation in specific Apprenticeship programmes.

**Forms of cooperation between companies for providing Apprenticeship placements**

Given that a large number of SMEs cannot cover the totality of the work-based learning content of an Apprenticeship programme, the Apprenticeship Intermediary Networks will be responsible for informing and supporting the cooperation between companies, so that they can offer quality Apprenticeship placements (e.g. rotation principle). Cooperation between companies can be based on relevant good practices from other countries (e.g. “Training Consortium model”, “Training Association model”).
Within the context of the NAAGRCY project, this Methodological Guide was piloted in three OAED Apprenticeship EPAS; more specifically, in the EPAS of Moschato (Attica), Aghii Anargiri (Attica) and Argolis, in the occupational specialties of Car Mechanics and Cooks. The pilot implementation findings highlighted a number of undoubted benefits for apprentices, Apprenticeship schools, companies, and the institution of Apprenticeship itself.

More particularly, the companies cooperating with the aforementioned schools were informed about the Methodology proposed within the context of the NAAGRCY project, and about the aim of its implementation, namely the upgrading of companies to quality Apprenticeship venues. The advantages and possible difficulties in implementing the methodology were discussed; the importance of in-company training specifications was made clear, and the companies received specific instructions about completing the Log Book. Moreover, training seminars for in-company trainers were organised (“training the trainers”), involving representatives of the companies themselves, as well as teaching staff from the OAED EPAS and Career Offices.

In Cyprus, the proposed methodology was piloted on a smaller scale in the occupational specialties of Car Mechanics and Hairdressers.

Through the piloting of the NAAGRCY methodology in both Greece and Cyprus, the relations between the Schools and the employers were strengthened, thus further enhancing their cooperation. Moreover, the employers realised the role of their participation in a learning community, which increased their interest in the content and benefits of Apprenticeship.

The attainment of the programme’s main aim, namely the aim of upgrading the Apprenticeship systems in Greece and Cyprus, was also supported by the commitment of the parties involved (i.e. the schools’ teaching staff and in-company trainers) to improve the quality of Vocational Education and Training programmes. Finally, it was established that it is necessary to maintain and further diffuse this good practice to the totality of occupational specialties where the Dual System of Vocational Education and Training is applied.
“Apprenticeship: Systematic, long-term alternating periods at the workplace and in an educational institution or training centre. The apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration (wage or allowance). The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation.” (CEDEFOP, 2008)

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