Co-funded by
the European Union

INNOVATION CULTURE FOR SMEs

Methodological Guide for Organisational Users

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CNIPMMR

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DANMAR
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CONTEXT of InC INNOVATION CULTURE CHALLENGE

These Innovation Cultural Challenge was developed in the framework of the project InC (Innovation Culture for Organizational Ambidexterity in SMEs), No.: 2021-1-RO01-KA220-VET-000034674, financed by the EU through the Erasmus+ Programme, Key action 2 (Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training), and implemented by a consortium of 5 organisations in 4 partner countries: CNIPMM Romania - Arad branch and ADES (Romania), DANMAR COMPUTERS SP ZOO (Poland), Asociación Valencia Inno Hub (Spain), and E&D (Portugal).

InC project aimed to provide effective solutions to address the lack of innovation culture by delivering new ideas for SMEs managers to adopt an innovative corporate philosophy, followed by their training on how to implement these, testing whether they can adopt the knowledge learnt and disseminating it.

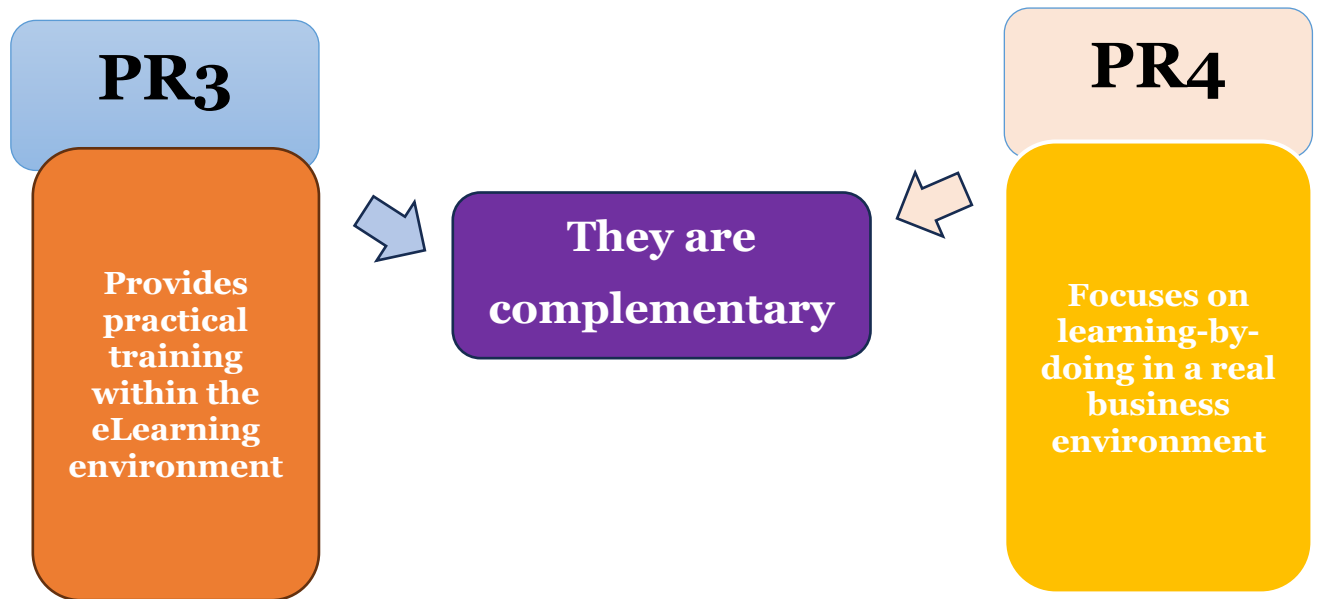This goal has been achieved through the development of the:
1. InC Sensitisation Methodology and Tools
2. InC Innovation Cards
3. InC Competence development program
4. InC Innovation Culture Challenge
5. InC Online Platform

AIM of InC INNOVATION CULTURE CHALLENGE

Building effective ability to implement innovation culture in an organisation as any complex competence requires practical training.

For an easier understanding of the aim of PR4 - InC Innovation Culture Challenge, please, see the following Infographic:

PR3

Provides practical training within the eLearning environment

They are complementary

PR4

Focuses on learning-by-doing in a real business environment

TARGET GROUP(S) of InC INNOVATION CULTURE CHALLENGE

The InC Innovation Culture Challenge is addressed to the SME managers and it is highly responsive to individual needs of SME managers and their companies.
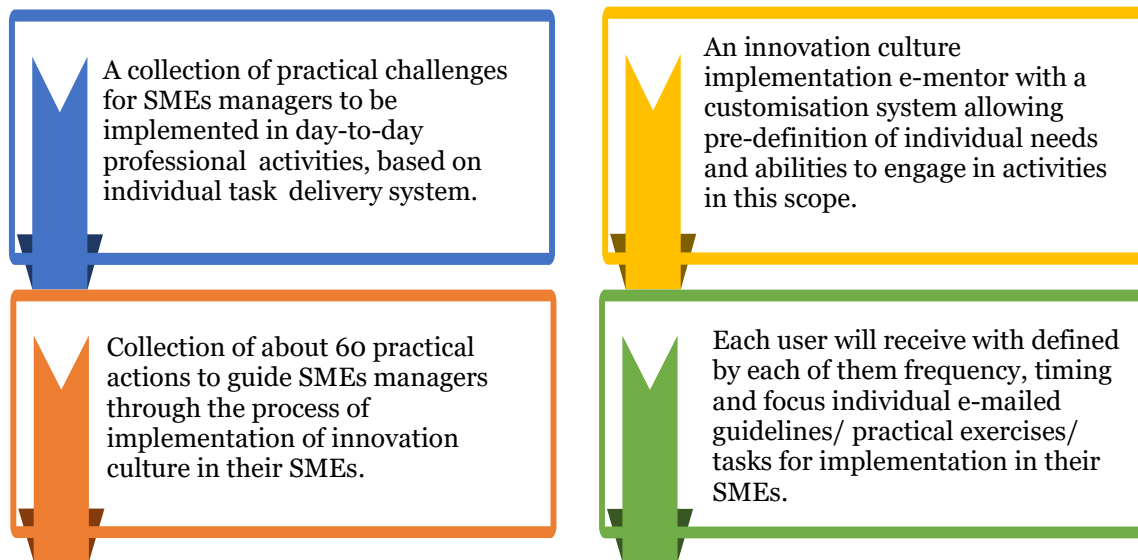
It can also be used by VET institutions/ organisations in their training process or by SME support organisations within their SME support/ consultancy process.

InC INNOVATION CULTURE CHALLENGE DESCRIPTION

This is a customised guide for implementation of innovation culture in the user SME.

The following infographic presents the rationale of the development of innovation culture challenges:

A collection of practical challenges for SMEs managers to be implemented in day-to-day professional activities, based on individual task delivery system.

An innovation culture implementation e-mentor with a customisation system allowing pre-definition of individual needs and abilities to engage in activities in this scope.

Collection of about 60 practical actions to guide SMEs managers through the process of implementation of innovation culture in their SMEs.

Each user will receive with defined by each of them frequency, timing and focus individual e-mailed guidelines/ practical exercises/ tasks for implementation in their SMEs.

The customised Guide contains 60 practical challenges that SME managers can implement in their daily professional activities, 12 challenges for each of the 5 Modules developed within PR3:

1. Designing and leading innovation environment,
2. Building the right team – hiring and positioning of HR for successful engagement in innovation,
3. Fostering innovation through communication,
4. Lean start-up,
5. Digital solutions for fostering innovative culture

Each Challenge includes:

- Diagnosis (+ table with positive and negative aspects to be followed by the manager)
- Actions to be implemented.

The topics tackled by the 60 practical challenges are, as follows:

- Module 1 - Innovation Culture Mindset
    - Is my culture truly an innovative one?

- o Do you have a clear and well communicated company vision?
- o Do you show your personal commitment to innovation?
- o Are you and other executives encouraging collaboration?
- o Do you empower your team to innovate?
- o Do you foster innovation efforts?
- o Do you celebrate and reward innovation?
- o Do you support learning and continuous improvement?
- o Do your employees have the autonomy to innovate?
- o Do you realistically support customer orientation?
- o How is your company dealing with failures?
- o Do you help integration of new team members into an innovation culture?

- Module 2 - Building the right team - hiring and positioning of HR for successful engagement in innovation
    - o How Can SMEs Build Teams that Embrace Innovation and Risk-Taking?
    - o What Strategies Enable SMEs to Recruit and Retain Innovative Talent?
    - o How Can SMEs Foster a Collaborative Team Culture that Supports Innovation?
    - o What Are the Best Practices for Team Diversity in SMEs to Drive Innovation?
    - o How Do SMEs Develop Leadership Capabilities that Foster an Innovation-Focused Team?
    - o How Can SMEs Ensure Effective Knowledge Sharing and Transfer within Their Teams?
    - o What Strategies Enable SMEs to Identify and Nurture Emerging Leaders within Their Teams for Innovation
    - o How Can SMEs Create a Culture of Continuous Learning and Development within Their Teams?

- o What Approaches Help SMEs Build Multidisciplinary Teams for Holistic Innovation?
- o How Can SMEs Ensure Alignment of Team Goals with Innovation Objectives?
- o What Strategies Enable SMEs to Foster Intrapreneurship and Entrepreneurial Thinking Within Their Teams?
- o How Can SMEs Leverage Technology to Optimize Team Collaboration and Innovation Processes?

- Module 3 - Fostering Innovation through Communication
  - o Do you communicate openly within your organisation?
  - o Is your team effective enough to foster innovation through collaboration?
  - o Do you have a good relationship with your customers?
  - o How well do you communicate innovation to your employees?
  - o Do your employees have the right mindset to embrace innovation?
  - o Is your leadership style the right one for encouraging and fostering innovation?
  - o Is out of the box thinking a value within your company?
  - o Is your team aware of the cognitive biases that could blind them to new opportunities?
  - o Is the message you send to your stakeholders the right one to best communicate innovation?
  - o Do you collaborate with others to increase chances to access innovation?
  - o Are you prepared to promote your innovation on social media?
  - o How do you communicate sustainable innovation to your stakeholders?

- Module 4 - LEAN Startup
  - o Optimizing Resource Allocation for Innovation Efficiency
  - o Enhancing Customer Involvement in Product Development

- o Accelerating Market Entry for SME Innovation
- o Balancing Innovation and Risk in SMEs
- o Maximizing the Value of Data
- o Enhancing Technology Integration in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)
- o Optimizing Team Dynamics
- o Innovation Expansion and Scaling
- o Sustainability Integration
- o Regulatory compliance
- o Preserving Intellectual Property
- o Leveraging Feedback Mechanisms for Organizational Excellence

- Module 5 - Digital solutions for fostering innovative culture
    - o Do you encourage cross-functional collaboration?
    - o Do you actively encourage idea sharing across the organization?
    - o Do you have adequate digital collaboration tools for seamless innovation?
    - o Do you adequately recognize and reward innovation efforts?
    - o Do you actively encourage interdisciplinary collaborations for innovation?
    - o Do you promote cross-pollination of ideas?
    - o Do you practice transparent communication about innovation strategies?
    - o Do you effectively manage innovation projects?
    - o Do you provide a platform for cross-generational idea sharing?
    - o Do you utilize data-driven insights to drive innovation?
    - o Do your employees have time to innovate?
    - o Do you track innovation metrics and progress effectively?