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Business Plan for ModENet Modular Education Network

1. Introduction

The development of network for the Modular Training Providers ModENet is one of the main aims of the Work Package 2 of the EU Leonardo EMCET-2 project of which Cambridge Professional Development Ltd UK is one of partners.

ModENet covers two related but distinct areas:

1. the EMCET database of information about training modules
2. the ModENet network of enthusiasts for modular training

These are both owned and managed by the ModENet Governing Body which represents the EMCET2 partnership.

EMCET is a database of information about training modules and their owners, which is intended to facilitate the re-use, sale and exchange of training modules. The EMCET database is available through the website, providing a 'shop window' with details of each module (title, subject matter, level, etc), and contact details of the owner who may be contacted by anyone who wants to use the module. Those advertising on the website pay a subscription fee; members will all be some sort of organisation (although some module owners may be an individual acting as a commercial organisation). The EMCET database is open to all.

The ModENet Modular Training Enthusiasts Network provides a variety of services for its members. The members pay a subscription:

- to access a password protected website with documents available for download, discussion forums, etc.
- to receive periodic newsletters and technical information on relevant topics.
- to receive contact details of other members and their interests.

ModENet members may be either an organisation (represented by some of its employees) or individuals, with an interest in modular training.

There are three categories of members:

1. Organisations advertising their training modules on EMCET
2. Individual modular training enthusiasts
3. Organisations employing modular training enthusiasts

2. Products and Services

ModENet is aimed to promote Modular Vocational Education and Training in the partner's country. It will also act as a single shop window to buy and sell modules across various disciplines. Individual trainers can benefit from the network as the network will act as a critical mass and support for them and they can easily use the pre-existing module for their own use. The Network will also act as a first point of reference to set standards for modular education and trainers and help them to provide internationally recognized qualifications.

ModENet will also act a main source for networking of individuals and organizations in the field of VET. In the long run, it is envisioned that ModeNet would be able to influence both national and European VET policy



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2.1 Products

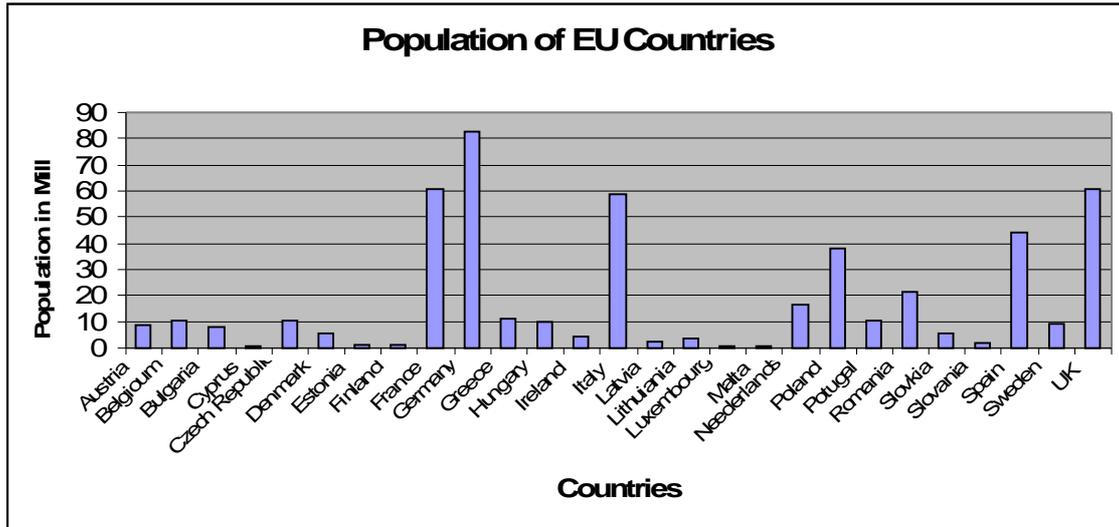
- Network and community of enthusiasts
- It has a chance to become a the preferred “one-stop-shop” for all the people interested in modularisation.
- Sharing expertise for new emerging area from between practitioners from several countries and potentially EU organisations representatives.
- Useful materials/publications which are relevant and available for members.
- Platform offering possibility to do some marketing of individual services, training organisations will have an opportunity to reach wider range of learners.
- Students will have access to materials and experts to discuss their research.
- Development of new projects, ideas, collaborations and discussion forum.
- Influence national and international policy through participation in consultation process of new EU initiatives related to VET and be updated on it.
- Participate in interesting events (conferences, seminars, exhibitions) and be informed about them by the calendar of events and newsletter.
- Collect information from wide range of sources, digest it and distribute it in user friendly format.
- Monitor, reflect and represent the opinions of the membership

2.2 Services Offered to the members:

- List of Contacts
- List of interests of members (tool of chasing/monitoring activities, popularity and self declared interest)
- Debate rooms, special interest groups (exchange of experience and best practice)
- Downloadable materials
- Newsletter and bulletins by ModENet, digested documents
- Links to relevant sites
- Platform for papers and feedback facility
- Calendar of events
- Guest experts: editing newsletter, publications
- Helpline, moderation
- Opinion polls
- International comparisons and benchmarking
- Rules of acceptable behaviour, privacy policy
- Endorsement

3.1 Market

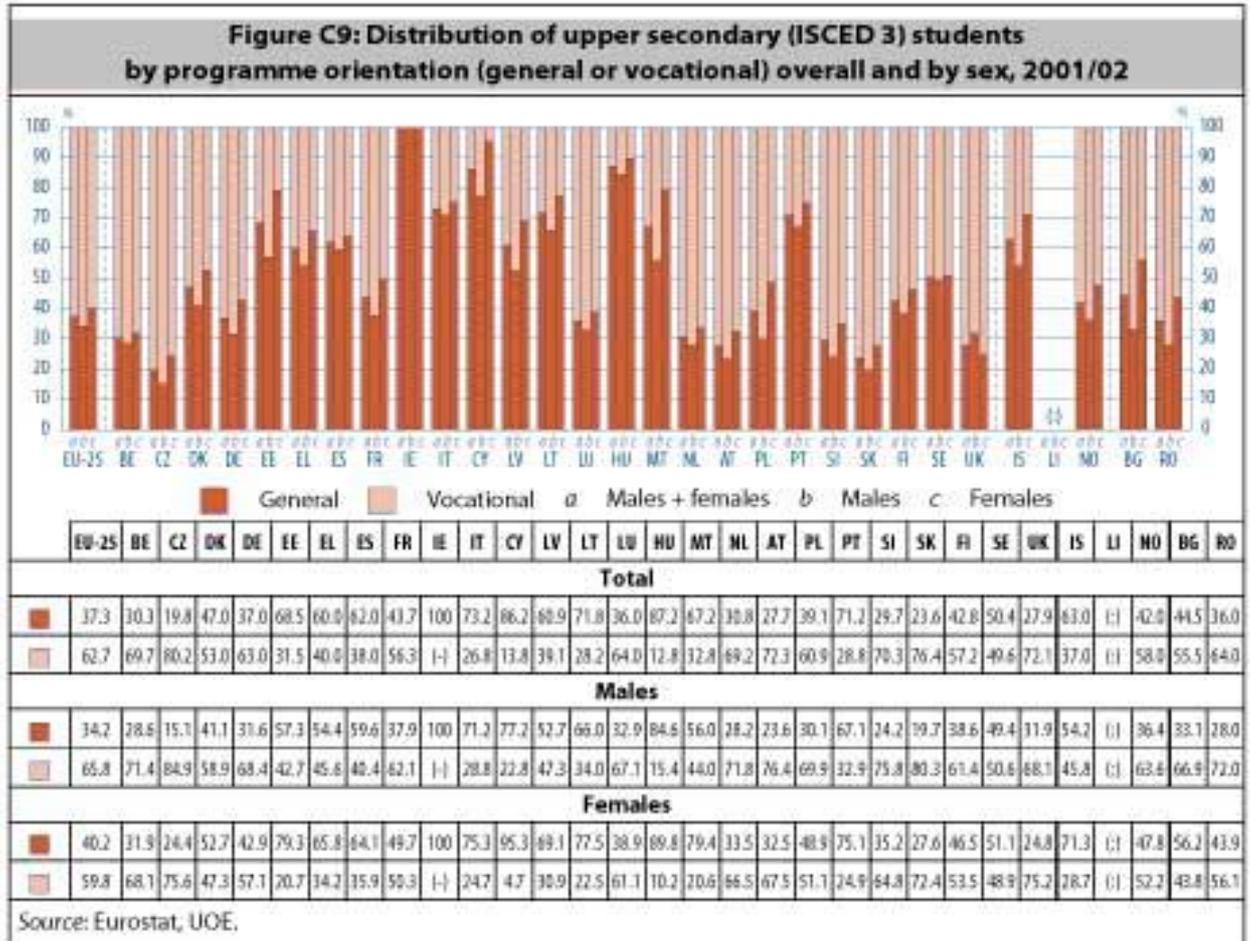
With the expansion of EU and more countries joining the Union, the size of population of EU is expanding. From nearly a third of billion before 2003, it is nearly 487 million and it is expected to grow still further. I brief overview of country wise population of the EU countries is shown in the figure:



Source: EUROPA European Education and Training

The most unusual situation in Europe is that there are more students in vocational education than in general education at upper secondary level (pre-vocational is included with general). This is not the case, however, in 13 countries. In Estonia, Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary, Malta, Portugal and Iceland, a higher proportion of students are enrolled in general education. Exceptionally high participation rates in vocational upper secondary education (more than two-thirds of all students) are found in Belgium, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia and the United Kingdom. Therefore, the number of vocational training providers in these countries would be significantly high. (See figure below)

When participation rates are broken down by sex, this pattern is seen to be particularly marked for young men. Male enrolment rates in vocational streams are universally higher, with almost all countries showing a difference of at least 10 percentage points between the participation of young men compared to women in vocational streams. The situation in Cyprus is especially striking, with over five times as many young men as women enrolled in vocational upper secondary education (although the overall participation rate is still very low compared to enrolment in general education). Only Belgium, Spain, Italy and Sweden show a relatively balanced distribution by sex, with a difference amounting to less than 5 percentage points.

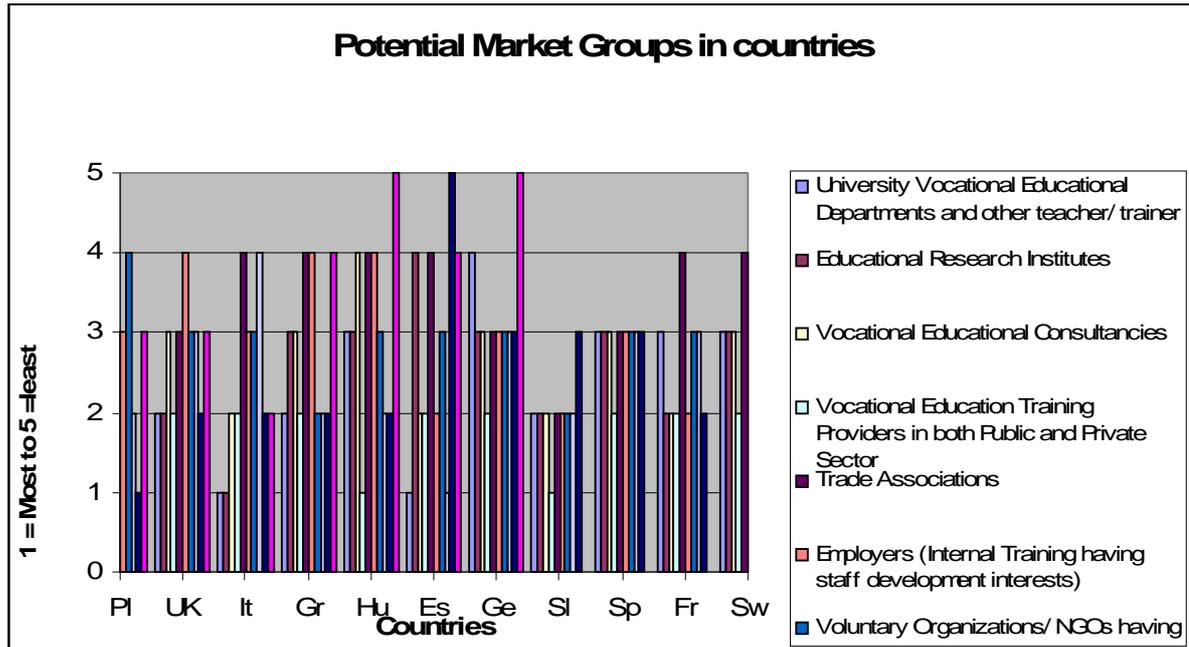


With the expansion of the EU, the scope of expansion of skilled workforce all across Europe is increasing significantly, For instance in UK alone the number of VE/FE colleges is 409 with over 140000 trainers, 4500 VE experts and over 6 Million students. Example from Italy suggest that training organizations and Universities are producing and executing training mainly connected to the productivity context – SMEs , new immigrants and disabled people. New training is taking place for people with low qualifications or jut graduates – looking for first employment – all of them are subject to 120 hours a year of “New apprenticeship training” in a modular setting. At present each provider is preparing his own modular content in the same subject area. In Spain modular training is conducted by universities and no modular trainers exist apart from universities, so there would be a greater scope of involvement of universities in the ModENet. Germany has a potential of growth as vocational training providers exist in both public and private sector. In Austria as of July 2005, there were 20,591 students in Austrian advanced vocational colleges Some 3000 educational and vocational guidance counsellors work within the education system and a further 2800 within AMV (The National Labour Market Administration) in Sweden (Clayton, 2001). Outside Europe, Educational process in VEIs is maintained by around 51 thousand of pedagogical employees, including 25 thousand of training officers. Almost every second director of VEIs and each third deputy director, more than half of teachers of vocational and educational cycle possess respective working qualifications. Most of the training officers possess two and more working professions and have undertaken respective psychological and pedagogical training.



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Keeping in view the mixed composition of countries in terms of size and, the estimated number of VE students and trainers exceed over 1 million in the EU alone. This huge size of training providers in the shape of University researchers, VE/FE College lecturers, trade associations or professional vocational training providers could be linked together through ModENet. Our market research conduct earlier suggests that the most likely members for the ModENet will be the vocational training providers in both public and private sector. All partners in the project have identified it as the most likely area where the probability of finding members will be maximum. Below is the summary of the potentially identified market segments in each country showing the most likely target areas in the partnership countries.



Source: Market Research by CamProf UK 2006

3.2 Customers

Depending upon each country’s priority the potential members of ModENet would fall in one or more of the following sector:

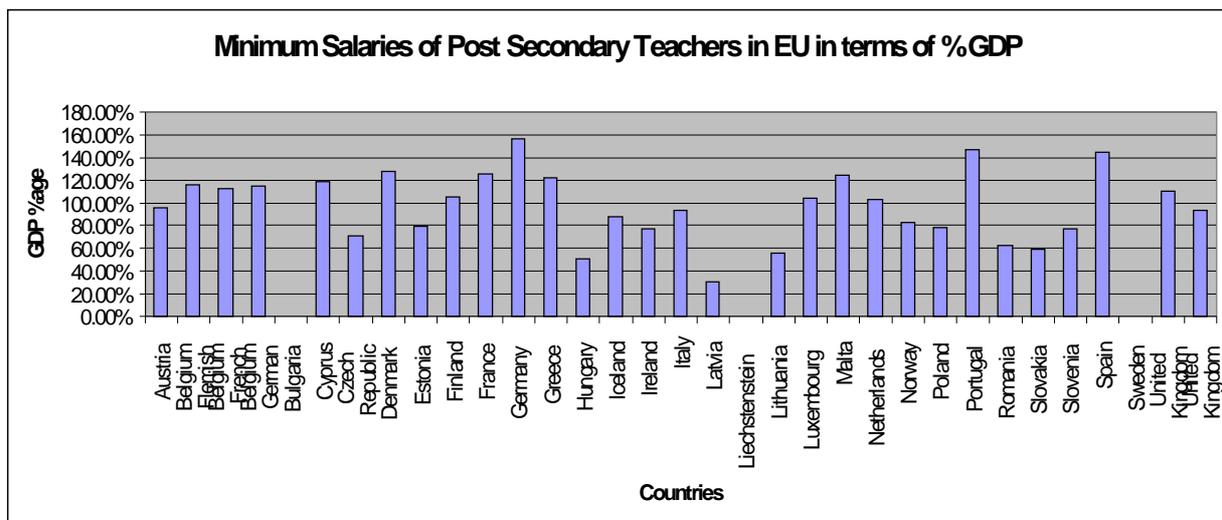
- Vocational Education Training Providers in both Public and Private Sector
- University Vocational Educational Departments and other teacher/ trainer training colleges
- Vocational Educational Consultancies
- Trade Associations
- Professional Institutions
- Networks or Association of Training Providers



3.3 Subscription Rates

In certain countries, teachers' salaries specially in VE sector are low, on average lower than national average wages. A comparison of minimum salaries of teachers in the EU countries in terms of GDP percentage is shown below. This is the case in Latvia and in Bulgaria even after a large increase in 2001; in Lithuania the ratio is about €280 versus €310 for state sector employees. They are also still below average in Slovakia, even after a significant increase in 2002. This implies that the subscription fee for joining the network cannot be same a rule of thumb for all countries. Countries have been divided into two bands. It is therefore suggested that for countries such as UK, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium the membership fee for individual member to join the network will be €30 per annum. For corporate member the fee would be €250 (with access to 5 users)

For the rest of the world the annual membership fee for individual would be €15, whereas corporate membership fee would be €100 (with access to 5 users). As a rule of thumb, it is suggested that the countries having teachers salaries more than 100% GDP such as UK, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Spain etc; could be placed in higher fee paying band whereas countries such as Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Lithuania etc. may be placed in the lower fee paying category. Complete illustration is shown in the graph below:



Source: Eurydice 2001-2002 salary figures in the EU.

4. The Organisation

4.1 Functions of ModENet (income generating activities shown in bold)

1. Company administration: accounts, tax, legal requirements, Governing Body, implementing strategy & policy, annual reports
2. Maintaining Members details database, eliminating old accounts
3. **Administering subscriptions (sending out reminder letters/receipts, accepting payments, management/statistical reports)**
4. Maintaining ModENet and EMCET websites (keeping up-to-date, clearing off old material, monitoring what goes on)
5. Editor (newsletter, bulletins, papers: both content and graphical appearance)
6. Facilitation (chatrooms, discussions)
7. Links with major organisations/individuals
8. Public relations (attending conferences, publicity, graphical appearance)



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9. Producing publications

10. Running training courses and workshops

11. Running conferences and exhibitions

12. Writing proposals for project funding

13. Being contractor and managing projects, being a partner in projects

14. Offering accreditation and certification services

15. Selling advertising

4.2 Income Generation

In the beginning only activities 3, 10, 11, 13, 15 are possible income generating activities. Activities 3, 9, 14 are medium to long term. It is probable that 15 should be avoided in order not to compromise the ModENet image and brand.

4.3 Staffing

The EMCET website will be maintained by ITeE staff based in Radom and as one of their many duties for the Institute.

The ModENet network will have to be maintained by a Network Facilitator and perhaps a Network Administrator when funding allows. They will need to share the tasks between them. They need to be fluent in English as the ModENet will operate exclusively in English. The Network Administrator is perhaps best located in Radom. The Network Facilitator is perhaps best located in UK.

5 Marketing and Sales Plan

5.1 Marketing strategy

The foremost step to promote the network is by developing its website. All potential members of the network would require one gateway to access all the information about network through the website of the Network. Some of the most important features of website should include information about. A self administrative software such as Moodle could be used to recruit members, to generate reminders, to collect subscription fee from the members etc. Some of the features of website could be:

- Network details (partners, promoters etc ;)
- Membership details (Type of membership; membership criteria, on-line membership form, membership dues)
- What ModENet Offers
- Module details
- Standards of Competence and Qualifications
- Chatroom/ Discussion blogs, virtual meetings
- Votes/questionnaires



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- Publications
- Announcements : Such as Meetings/ Conferences/Classified Adverts/ Job Offers

5.2 Mailing Lists/ Brochures/ Leaflets:

The next step will be to focus on the individuals and the organizations that would be most interested in VET in a particular country. For the purpose of providing initial information about ModENet, a list of contacts of key persons could be prepared by each partner. This list could serve the purpose of information, communication, and to some extent, education about the modular education in the EU. An introductory brochure/ leaflet about the network should be sent out.

5.3 ModENet Publicity & Promotion:

Each partner should spread the word of mouth about the network in all other relevant projects/ activities they are undertaking. The project partners who represent National Agencies can display a poster(s) about the Network in a prominent place in their organization.

Publicity materials such as stationery items (ball pens, pencils), key chains, desk/ wall calendars ModENet could be prepared and distributed for promotion of the network.

5.4 Conferences and Seminars:

Another way of promoting ModENet is by disseminating about the project in the European and International Conferences on Vocational Education. Partners can host regional seminars to promote the network. First seminar is due to be hosted in April 2007 in Paris prior to the project meeting. Each country can conduct similar activity at national level.

5.5 Promotional CDs:

The information about ModENet be prepared in the form of flash presentations on promotional CDs. The presentations in the CDs should contain hyperlink access for uploading directly to the network website.

5.6 Media Coverage:

Each partner should try to promote the events about the network by involving local media. This could be done by sending announcements, news items, and pictures of events to the local news papers / other forms of media.

6 The Corporate Enterprise

6.1 Vision

Vision: ModENet: a self-sustaining community of Modular Vocational Education providers across Europe and the rest of the world, known throughout the VET community, the first



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source of expertise on modular VET, with active participating members.

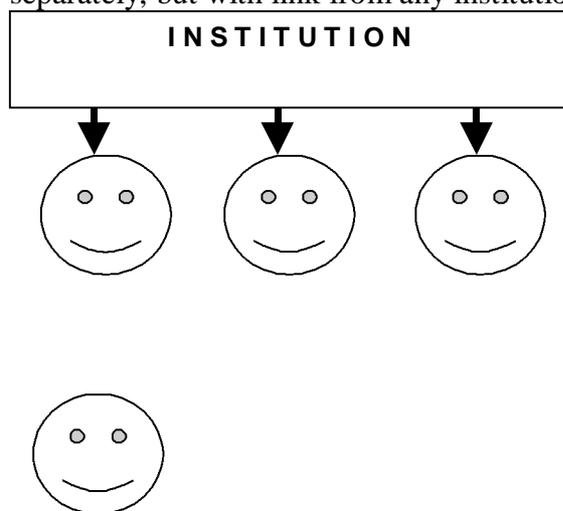
6.2 Mission: ModENet enables individuals within organizations to develop & share best practices & modules, enhance their capability in developing career oriented life-long education.

6.3 Administration Plan

The Network should have a separate website and email address to the administrator, where all the enquires should be sent to. It should be linked to the EMCET.net website as a major sublink.

There will be two types of forms (on line) for getting the passwords and membership in ModENet. The first contact and request for a password will be sent with minimum information (like name, organisation, possibly position, country and email address). More information should be requested later and in principle the online form should be similar to the form suggested by ITeE for the database. For statistical purposes we can ask for information regarded professional interest and expertise, expectations etc. It should be voluntary. Password will be made available when the fee is paid.

Two types of membership (institutional – with many users, and individual) have to be kept separately, but with link from any institutional member to individuals – their staff.

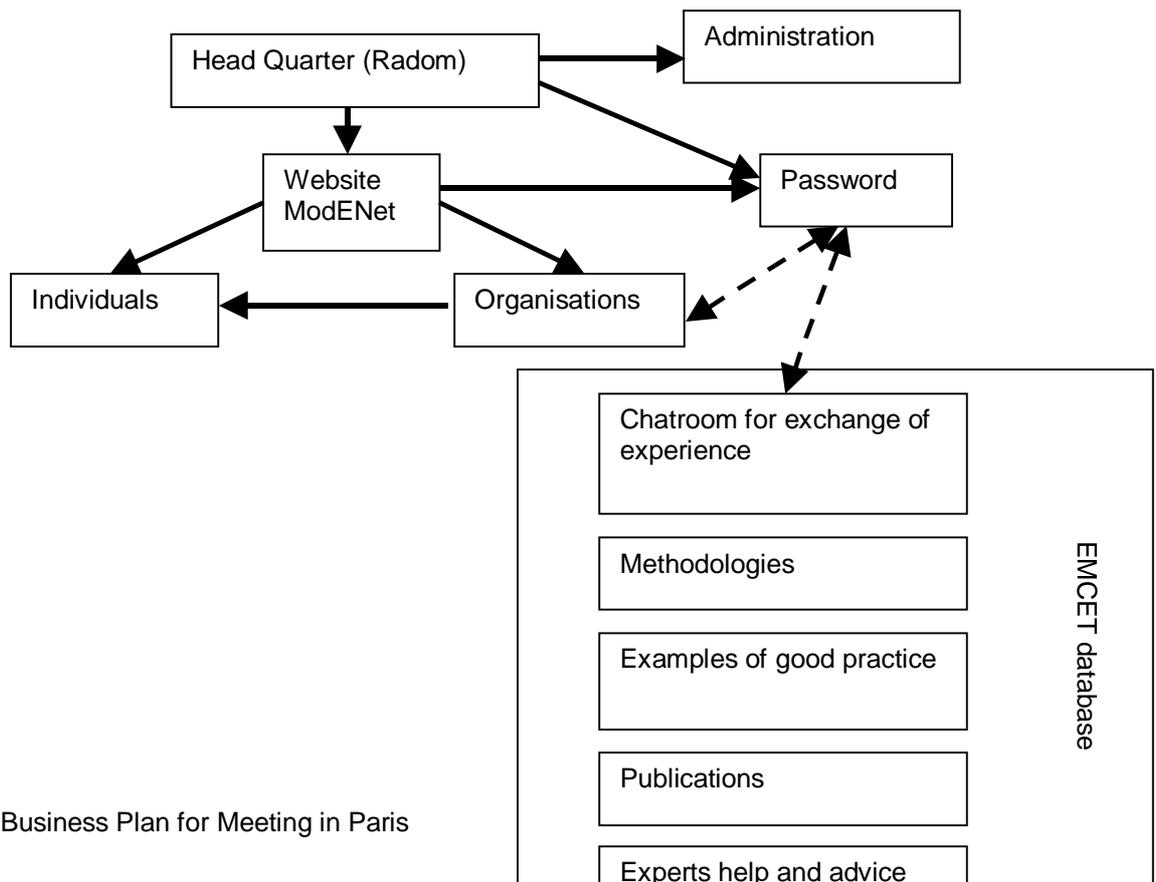


6.4 Headquarter of the network – ITeE.

It would be good to have an external server set up to provide back up of all the files offsite. We are taking into consideration usage of Moodle for administration purposes (some other software to be explored as well).



MOODLE



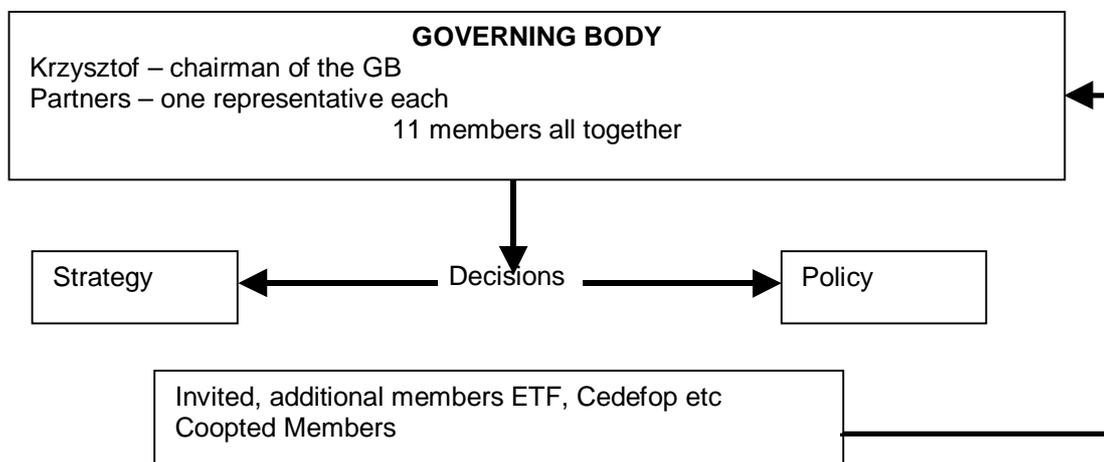


6.5 Membership Options

We can have several options of membership which depend on relationship between the EMCET database and the ModENet network.

1. Full membership allowing members using content of the database, providing information of the modular training offer and update it, benefiting from exchange of expertise between members and using it for professional development.
2. Network only – for those experts who don't represent any training provider and are interested more in theory of modularisation rather than marketing modular training courses.
3. Database only – for these modular training providers who are not interested in exchange of information beyond their training offer.

We think that the most members would be of 1 and 2 option but we can't exclude the last option and we believe that the fee should be lower.



GB will be elected by all the individual members by sending an email in the dedicated time slot. It is going to be responsibility of the administrator to decide how many members the GB should have after the first period when we have 11 of them – partners representatives. The number can be smaller (choice of 5 out of 12) list of candidates plus a short bio should be provided by the administrator.

6.6 Responsibilities of Administrator:

1. Respond to password requests
2. keep the record of members
3. collect data from the members and pass it to the database (or point a new member to provide them online)
4. respond to all queries
5. launch election and send of information to the members
6. collect responses and inform about outcomes
7. organise virtual or “real” meetings of the GB members and events for all the members if required



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8. provide and distribute minutes of meetings and bulletins
9. coordinate communication between the GB members
10. inform about fees (if any) and renewal of membership subscription
11. announce new important material put onto the website / compose a newsletter
12. keep up-to-dated calendar of events

6.7 Responsibilities of the GB

1. annual reporting on progress
2. meetings (virtual or not) 2x a year
3. setting up policy
4. building a plan for the future activities
5. deciding about fees
6. decide about experts invited to join the network or GB (co-opted members)
7. starting discussion and consultations on new “hot topics”
8. planning new projects to support members and improve partnership

6.8 Responsibilities of the members

1. membership is voluntary
2. sharing expertise and experience
3. participating in discussion
4. paying fees
5. providing valuable material and sharing relevant bibliography on the subject
6. being an “ambassador” of the network within non members / potential candidates
7. respecting privacy and roles of ethics

7. Legal structure

7.1 Constitution

Article 1

The name of the network is ModENet Modular Education Network, which is selected through voting from ten names suggested by the partners.

The Network is based in Poland and is an internationally operating association under Polish law, with the motive of self-sustainability.

Where these articles refer to 'the Network ', such reference is to the ModENet.

Article 2

The Head Office of the Network is based at ITeE, Radom in the Poland. A representative of ITeE will also function as chairperson at the first meeting. This can be amended by a majority vote of the Governing Body.

Article 3

The Network is established for an indefinite period of time, commencing on the day of adopting of this document by all partners in the EU Leonardo Project EMCET2.

Article 4

The Network has an international scope.

Article 5



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The number of members of Governing Body is limited to 11 and representation of participating countries must be guaranteed. Governing body will elect chairperson, secretary and finance secretary midst themselves, in the first instance, for a period of maximum two years.

Article 6

All eligible members from respective countries will elect one representative from their respective country to hold office in governing body for two years.

Article 7

ModENet encourages contacts between modular training providers and the surrounding community or regions, in the area of vocational and further education including but not limited to researchers, university departments, individuals with interest in the areas of vocational and further education. Experts in the field of VE can be nominated by partners as members of governing bodies and they can hold office by election

Article 8

The pioneer members of the Network who are the project partners and their nominated representatives (max three per partner) in the Network (without any cost throughout the life of the Network). These members who are nominated/ invited by partners will enjoy the free membership to the Network for their first year of membership). Additional accessions are only possible after paying a joining fee. All partner members and fee paying members will have unlimited access to the databank of modular courses. All issues of exceptional invitation to the membership/ access to the Network should be presented to the Governing Body of the Network.

Article 9

The amount of the annual members' contribution for the coming year will be determined by a two-thirds majority of the votes of the members present or represented in the Governing Body.

Article 10

- 1 - The Governing Body will hold a meeting at least once a year, which meeting will rotate within the countries of the ModENet Network.
- 2 - At least two-thirds of the participating members of governing body must be present at the annual meeting in order for valid resolutions to be passed.
- 3 - A member is permitted to appoint another member as proxy for the purpose of participating in a vote, provided no other member holds a proxy for more than one other member.
- 4 - Every member is entitled to one vote per proposal. Unless the contrary is stated elsewhere, resolutions will be passed when the number of votes in favour of the resolution exceed the number of votes against the resolution. In the event the votes are tied, a second vote will be held after the possibility for further discussion within the meeting. If the votes are again tied after a second vote, the chairman will have the power to decide the matter.

Article 11

The Governing Body will submit the following to the annual general Meeting in addition to any agreed agendas:



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- 1 - The substantive annual report
- 2 - The financial report of the preceding calendar year and the budget for the following year
- 3 - The programme of future activities
- 4 - Proposals regarding membership

Article 12

The funds of the Network consist of:

- Contribution of members
 - financial support from EU programmes (if any)
 - financial support from sponsors
 - income from services provided
 - donations
 - any other funds than those specified

Article 13

The Governing Body has the sole right to amend the Articles , subject to the following procedures:

- 1 - The written announcement of the meeting and the agenda must state that the General Meeting is called to amend the Articles.
- 2 - The amendment requires a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast by all members.

Article 16

The Governing Body is responsible for the preparation and execution of the activities programme of the Network. In the event of urgent matters the Governing body can pass resolutions outside of General Meetings, as such resolutions have been placed within its powers by or by virtue of the law and/or these Articles.

Article 17

A proposal of dissolution of the Network shall also include how a possible positive balance of finance will be dealt with after settlement.

5. In case of dissolution of the network the Governing body will appoint one or more officers charged with settlement of the Network's funds.

8. Critical Risks and Vulnerabilities

Political:

- Abandonment of the Copenhagen process or its support for Learning Outcomes
- Breakdown of EU move towards integrated single markets.

Socio-Economic:

- Recession and abandonment of investment in training
- Subscriptions too high to attract members

Environmental:



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- All the environmental issues are supporting ModENet so no risks apart from those affecting society as a whole.

Technological:

- New development removes sense of isolation or offers simple affordable solutions to all problems, so that ModENet services are no longer needed.

Other:

- Network Facilitator unable to provide services required.
- Anticipated demand for membership does not appear.
- Effort and therefore costs of maintaining ModENet cannot be covered by income.
- Fraud siphons off funds.
- Members passive

9. Financial Projection over 24 months

Period covered by this statement	
BUDGET	
Expenditure Headings	A
	€
1. Associate salaries	25,000
2. Academic & Secretarial Support	15,000
3. Software Moodle etc	15,000
4. Travel & subsistence	5,000
5. Equipment, consumables & other	5,500
6. Total	65,500
Income Headings	
7. Subscription 2500 EU + 500	82,500
8. Corporate 30	7,500
9. Salary top up	
10. Total	90,000
Net Profit/Loss	24500

It is estimated that the project will earn an income of about 24500 Euros in the first year and the income might increase in subsequent years due to reduction in one off costs in the first year.



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Clayton, P. (2001) Vocational Guidance for Low-Paid Workers in Sweden

Department of Adult and Continuing Education, University of Glasgow