INTRODUCTION

Business networks

Creation of business networks and collage of business models in EU and Canada regions is one of outputs of international project implemented under Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliances Program, - Sector Skills Alliances from 2015 untill 2018. The title of this project is „Empowering Regional Development and Innovations" (ERDI).

ERDI is a project based on a multidisciplinary and international network of higher educational institutions in Finland, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Hungary, Slovakia and Canada. The lead partner of the project is the Karelia University of Applied Sciences in Finland.

One of main objectives of the project is to seek solutions problems with declining economic levels, unemployment and migration, especially in rural regions of the EU, through strengthening knowledge, entrepreneurship and bioeconomy cooperation. The ERDI project aims to improve graduates' employability and improve the competitiveness of the regional economy in order to increase revenue in the future. Therefore, as a part of the project consortium, in addition to universities, there are also regional businesses (working life partners, WLPs) in Canada, Finland, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Hungary and Slovakia, which together with universities create regional networks for the exchange of experiences. The partnership and the business networks are described in subchapters of the realized survey.

MISSION OF THE PUBLICATION

This publication named „BUSINESS NETWORKS - COLLAGE OF BUSINESS MODELS - Cases from the ERDI Partner Regions", is the second one, issued in the frame of this project . The first publication was issued under title PERSPECTIVES ON BIOECONOMY - Cases from the ERDI Partner Regions, in 2017 by Karelia UAS, University of Pardubice, ISBN: 978-952-275-245-1).

This publication is one of the outputs of workpackage No. 6, called "Business networks" This workpackage is aimed at strenghtening the link between the higher education, research and private sector. The survey realized in networks of entities in all

partners region shows how the educational institutions share the business models and ideas in their networks and regions. Moreweover, the good examples of bioeconomy business models in the regions shall be transfered between different regions with an aim to empower businesses and improve the employability of higher educational institutions graduates. Also applied research study based on the gathered data shall be implemented into learning material about the business models and possibilities.

The conclusions and especially the recommendations of this publication shall be used in the educational programs so they are tailored to the labour market needs. Students, future employees in businesses, need more comprehensive practical skills for certification of products, services and processes, from submission of application to final processing of documents. Study programs should be enriched by practical skills in communication, motivation and leadership. More attention should be payed to training sessions with business partners in networks to solve conflict situations in future jobs of graduates.

Since the higher educational institutions shall be motivated to launch tailor- made study programs, thus the business oriented networking will result in boosting regional economies.

KNOWLEDGE ALLIANCES MODELS

The well established networks in partners regions guarantee to fullfill to create innovative and systematic participatory networks for co-creation of knowledge and active co-operation in each of the region. The Workpackage No.5 of the project with name "Knowledge alliances models and tools" is developed in close connection with analysis of the Business networks and business models.

It shall support the rise of the level of higher education and its relevance to the labour market needs. It also works as an impulse to the regional economy providing new tools, ideas and deeper understanding with aninternational dimension to the regional development.

Cooperation between higher educational institutions, their pedagogical staff and the working life has impacts to the students and teachers professional development. Professional expertise between educational organisations and WLPs are thus embedded

to the educational organisation´s practises, curricula and working life practises. It shall serve to regional working life andstrengthens the educational organisations' role in regional development and supports the flow of knowledge.

METHODOLOGY OF THE COLLAGE OF BUSINESS MODELS

Key logic of the methodology is based on business value chain model developed by Porter (2001).

A value chain is used to describe the process by which businesses gain raw materials, give a value to them through various processes to create a finished product, and then sell it to their customers. Analysis of the value chain is conducted to identify ways to increase the efficiency of their business activities. The model breaks down the flow of production activities into five categories of primary activities and other support activities (*Figure 1*).

All five primary activities are essential in adding value and creating a competitive advantage.

Support activities facilitate the efficiency of the primary activities in a value chain. Increasing the efficiency of any of the four support activities increases the benefit to at least one of the primary activities. Support activities are normally denoted as overhead costs on a company's income statement (Hansen and Birkinshaw, 2007).