THE RIGHT PROJECT; INCREASING INNOVATION CAPACITY BY CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP

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Introduction

The RIGHT project has concluded, and it is now time to evaluate to what extent the project has managed to reach its objective, to contribute to regional development and

growth in the North Sea Region (Norway, Denmark, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Sweden), by addressing the gap between present-day work force skills, today's systems for education and training, and today's and future needs of firms and industries in the North Sea Region.

More specifically, the purpose of RIGHT has been to address the challenge of bridging the gap between the skills of the workforce and the need from the industry to innovate and raise competitiveness. In the RIGHT project, the focus has been on how to bridge this gap in the emerging and fast changing skills environment of the energy and blue sectors. To this end the project has aimed to enhance regional innovation support capacity, to increase long term innovation levels and to support smart specialization strategies. As the RIGHT project is a transnational project, the objective has also been to increase collaboration and learning between regions.

RIGHT started out by mapping the challenges of the above-mentioned skills gaps in the North Sea Region within the framework of the third (WP3) out of the five work packages that compose the RIGHT project. That is, the skills of local work forces, the design of education curriculums and training systems for present and future needs of an industry in restructuring and smart specialization. WP3 had via desk research, mapping, interviews and collaboration with business and clusters, identified skills gaps evident in several partner regions. Selected SMEs in all partner regions were asked to describe their main challenges that they felt should be addressed in the RIGHT project. These challenges were to:

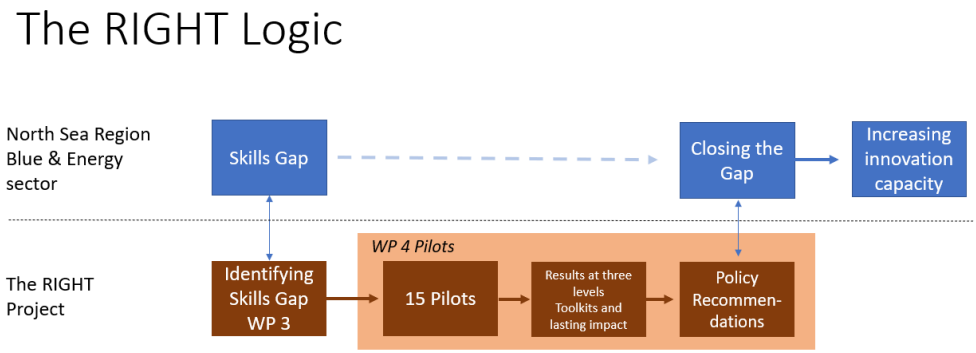
- bridge knowledge gaps, given market and technological developments
- access to credit and funding
- gain new competences and availability of skilled staff
- develop new business models and strategies
- have relevant support mechanisms and regulations.

Based on these skills gap, common themes for cooperation and learning were selected to connect these to the SMEs needs in developing their business and to be future proof. The identified themes were as follows:

- connecting to new networks and value chains
- getting access to new knowledge and competences
- increasing innovation capacities related to markets, technology, products and partners
- financing strategies
- focus on quality and customer needs.

The next step for RIGHT was to address the identified gaps. For this purpose, a total of 15 pilots have been set up and conducted with a transnational perspective in mind, to tackle local expression of these skills gaps. This was done in work package 4. The pilots have led to results that are both local and transitional in its comprehension. One part of the results are policy recommendations that have been communicated in

the pilot projects reports that consist of both local and general recommendations that are relevant and transferable between the RIGHT regions.



In this report (WP5) we will summarize the results and main findings from the project, and the pilots specifically. In so doing, the report will also shed light on the RIGHT projects lasting effects and transnational results.

This introduction has provided an overview of the RIGHT initiative, its inherent pilot projects and the current analysis that is now being undertaken and communicated via this report. The next chapter will present the main immediate results from the pilots. The results are presented from three levels. The level of the individual, the level of the firm and the industry and lastly at the ecosystem level. The third chapter will look at results from the perspective of the main findings generated at the project (instead of pilot) level. Drawing on the results in the pilots we attempt to identify what the most important findings for the RIGHT project are. This is done by focusing on what are the main lasting impact from the project, and on what has been the contribution from working transnationality. The fourth chapter discuss what policy recommendations the pilots have resulted in. Lastly, in the final chapter, we present some concluding remarks.

Project outputs

In this chapter, the main results from the pilots will be presented. It is first however worthwhile to again underline that the pilot projects were chosen and designed, based on the gap analysis that constituted the third working package. The material for the project outputs is gathered from reported highlights, partnership meeting as well as the pilot project reports.

Bellow, the chapter will summarize the overall results. In doing so, a logic of three perspectives or levels have been applied throughout, to further structure the below content. The findings are presented from the perspectives of *the individual*, of *the firm*, and of *the ecosystem* on a more structural level. These levels were selected since the pilots have focused on either one or more of these levels.

At the level of the individual

Skills upgrading is part of the thematic focus in all pilots, albeit in different ways. Some correlate primarily to the individual perspective, whilst some also relate to the company perspective. Furthermore, whilst some have applied methods suitable for younger target groups in initial (vocational) education and training, others have

worked for skills upgrading through continuing/adult (vocational) education training and life-long learning initiatives. Regarding the former, gamification has been used as a tool in a couple of pilots. That is, adding a game mechanism in a nongame environment as a learning management tool. The purpose of which is to engage with consumers and students, employers, and partners to foster collaboration and interaction. Below are two examples of how gamification has been used within the pilot projects.

The first example of this can be derived to Antwerp and their pilot project "Port Chances". The project developed a gamified mini assessment (also called port chances) for students between 16-18 years of age that was played on the premise of the participating companies in the port of Antwerp (maritime, logistics and industry). More specifically competence games linked to the activities that take place in the company. The games were also linked to competence profiles of actual jobs within the company. Different commands had to be fulfilled in line with specific competences needed in the participating company. Reportedly, the games resulted in a working concept that was appreciated by the students, the schools, and the companies. The projects managed to present a method that contextualized learning for the students with links to the company and its specific activities. The companies themselves saw value in the closeness of the game/activity to the company's business and the schools appreciated the fact that the project managed to achieve goals that cannot be obtained in a regular classroom. Consequently, applying the games as a method managed to raise awareness among students about necessary competencies, different study fields, future job opportunities on the labor market, company culture and specific job needs. One reported outcome of the pilot project was that elements from the game was successful in getting its users to understand a company and its activities, which motivated a similar gamified setup in a follow up pilot, where an economic card game was used parallel with tailor maid company visits.

A second example is Fife's pilot "race to zero" which aimed to work for reaching zero greenhouse gases within the Blue Economy. In this context, a game application was introduced to high school students between 12-16 years. The game highlights innovation and achieving net zero by focusing on enterprise skills, net zero and renewable energy sources. In addition, the contents of the game underscores awareness about the blue- and energy sectors, about job- and training opportunities, how innovation can be used for the purpose of commercialization as well as sustainable growth and development.

Other pilots have applied more general methods for skills upgrading. Adult education- and training programs have for instance been targeted to fill the gap between education supply and the labor market demand. Antwerpen and the pilot "Tripple E" in one example of this. Within the framework of the pilot, a center for adult education under the authority of Antwerpen provided the adult educations. Here, hybrid learning has been implemented to provide employees with certifications which leads to increased ability to innovate and the opportunity to recruit and retain certain skills. Consequently, adult education not only serves the individual perspective applied in this report, but also the company perspective as the results serve to make companies more competitive. Furthermore, for the same purpose of skills development, different mapping tools have also been applied to create an inventory of competencies, to understand employee's adaptability and motivation and to better analyze necessary competence development needs.

At the level of firm and industry (including internationalization and digitalization)

Skills upgrading could here mean the development of new business models. This can be made possible by developing and/or improving business models, by digitalizing products or automating processes, or find ways to enter the international market. At the outset, business models should therefore be understood in a broader sense as it includes internationalization, digitalization, and partnerships. The latter deserves further elaboration. Partnerships have the potential to be an important ingredient for future business models and development. This since partnerships, for instance between regional actors such as academia and business, can in the long term develop to new ways to support and develop competence mapping, assist in validation matters and subsequently matters concerning education. Even though such a partnership does not necessarily result in value added in strictly economic terms in the short term, it has the potential to create value indirectly in the long term. For that reason, partnerships are included in this definition of business model.

Indeed, this perspective of the pilots has a strong correlation with the ecosystem perspective covered below. The reason for this is that when considering all the pilot projects, business models aim to create breeding grounds for SMEs and other organizations, promote interaction, create development synergies and lowering barriers for development and investments. Furthermore, the ecosystem perspective shines through by the setup of the project owners of the pilots, as well as the pilots' goal of facilitating beneficial business infrastructures such as networks for different project owner institutions (such as universities, company clusters and governmental agencies). A natural correlation to the ecosystem perspective can also be derived to the internationalization aspect of the pilots, which sometimes are an explicit goal, and sometimes a welcomed effect of the pilot activities.

Sweden has conducted two pilots. "Mind The Gap" which developed a method and a digital tool to support small and medium-sized industrial companies to work more strategically with business development and skills supply. The second pilot, "inventory of competences", focuses on skills inventory that offer companies a competence survey and to train and/or develop existing staff via test- or local learning centers. Indeed, the methods used, and tools created in the respective pilots can be effective measures on its own. However, the project owners for the pilots realized that if the pilots where to be intertwined and working with the tools from a binary symbiotic logic, it would emanate in an even more efficient business model that is transferable. Thus, realizing the complementary approach of helping a company to identify its competence needs based on its business goals, combined with support in the continued work of finding the right competence resulted in a partnership that create favorable synergies.

Further transferability can be derived from Antwerp. As mentioned above, the game mechanism was so successful in the pilot "Port Chances", that it motivated a similar gamified setup in a follow up pilot ("port introduction game + pro/port Academy"), where an economic card game was used parallel with tailor maid company visits.

The game mechanics have been applied to develop a business model that innovates the learning process and how one gets to know a company and its activities. It has

therefore also served to adapt the role of the supervisors in a meaningful way. Too that point, games as a methodological framework in the two pilots mentioned here, has proven to give a pedagogical content. This is in turn cause a reciprocal commitment and enthusiasm for the purpose of the game and in extension the pilot project, hence underscoring its usefulness in this context when developing a business model. Furthermore, the concept of said method and model is arguably universal in its application for the targeted industry, here being professions in ports. For that reason, it is not unfeasible to suggest that the business model as well as the content of the model/game could be transferred to other regions. Not least since the content within the game mechanics is so easily adjustable.

Other pilots have used a more traditional approach to educate and train staff and students to fit the needs of the targeted industries and companies. Pilots have applied different methods to innovate and increase the competitiveness of new and existing staff**.** First, the "RAS" pilot in Norway did this by developing a flexible module-based education to provide participants with higher and multi-level set of skills for necessary technologies. Second, the "Tripple E" pilot in Antwerp used a dual trajectory approach for workers to attain a tailored technical education that resulted in certificates and diplomas valid throughout Europe for specific professions. Lastly the "Green Hydrogen Booster" in Groningen used a proactive method in which the project owners acted as facilitators to define the scope of the project. This was made possible by providing necessary facilities, by creating project support (in terms of hosting events and coordinating innovation activities), and by developing a regional and social economic impact tool. Altogether, this dynamic methodological process managed to increase innovation capacity, strengthening value chains as well as developing new ones, and creating a better coherence between the stakeholders.

At the ecosystem level

Many of the pilots have focused on the upgrading of skills by developing the ecosystem of the blue sector and energy sector. By using the term ecosystem, we refer to the organizations supporting the skill enhancement of the work force, supporting the development of firms, being involved the innovation of the sector etc.

The "Blue Sector" pilot from Fife used a quadruple helix model (an ecosystem approach focusing on four aspects of the surrounding environment of firms: Civil society, academia, other firms in the industry and government) to develop the "system" for skills upgrading and job development. The project owners that make the helix model used a coordinated and cohesive approach to tackle the recruitment challenges for specific sectors and to facilitate funding through collaboration amongst members. By bringing together business, academia, council and politicians, they were reportedly actively trying to find ways to increase innovation and capability for skills development. In part, this was due to established linkages between companies, training providers and academic institutions. In part, it was due to a platform provided by the project owners (the quadruple helix) for the companies and other stakeholders. This platform made it possible for said companies and stakeholders to suggest better ways of working and how the funding processes can be streamlined. An additional platform was also established by the helix members to underscore and strengthen the transnational elements of the pilot, creating connection points with Groningen, Gent, Denmark, Vordingborg and Hamburg.

Another example, on an ecosystem-level, is that of RIF Gas 2.0, which was a public-private partnership for future-proof vocational education. The pilot created connectedness through public-private partnerships and contributed to the ambitions of sustainable energy generation in the North of the Netherlands. One important cluster for the pilot project was the "Energy College" (a cooperation between seven existing institutions for vocational education, more than fifty companies and the government in the north of the Netherlands). The "Energy College" wanted to establish itself as the place where MBO (middelbaar beroepsonderwijs, or middle-level applied education) energy education is developed, shared, and disseminated, so that students and professionals could increase their knowledge and skills online and offline. The main goal of RIF Gas 2.0 was to develop energy education for MBO students and incumbent staff through public-private cooperation and to share this knowledge widely to promote the energy transition.

Via this network of agents and via the pilot project's ambitions, the main goals were articulated as retaining inflow from students, increase knowledge and skills for students, teachers and companies as well as realizing an active business community. Two conclusions of the project relevant for this report are: Firstly, the cultural differences between companies and educational institutes. Companies often have short-term needs, while educational institutions work with a long-term planning. While a program such as Gas 2.0 has the potential to help improve these relations, it by definition runs into them as relevant challenges to deal with, before such improvement can be achieved. Secondly, the pilot project reported a complexity in bringing seven institutions for secondary vocational education together and creating support whilst simultaneously setting up an effective working organization.

Other pilots have communicated transferability and internationalization as a main goal. The purpose of IBOSS in Groningen for instance was to support SMEs to internationalize and to give insights of the challenges whilst offering practical advice and knowledge. Place-based organizations were involved that focuses on business and community support in various ways in Groningen. The organizations connected networks of other local organizations with similar agendas for innovation and who had similar needs in their projects. Too this, educational institutions were introduced to the projects, in which students were involved to work with them. IBOSS acted as an additional service that focused on creating a functional internationalization ecosystem by connecting and facilitating intermediaries, students and SMEs in the region.

Aggregated findings

In this chapter, the above results and perspectives discussed are analyzed. For this purpose, the lasting impacts from the pilot projects results will be outlined and main contributions will be discussed. In addition, the chapter will cover how the results can benefit from the transnational dimension of the projects.

Lasting impact

With regards to how the results and activities from the pilot projects can gain momentum and live on after the projects been concluded, lasting impact can be reached in different ways. By building structures (infrastructures) that remains in function after the project, by introducing new working methods or processes that are

implemented in ordinary operations among partners, or by introducing cooperative structures and collaboration that remain after the project is finished.

Toolkits

The toolkits in the pilot projects and how they are packaged for the intended users/ stakeholder, can create a foundation and infrastructure that remain in function after the project's conclusion. One aspect of this is the pilot projects measures and activities that supports innovation. To this, the definition of innovation in this report comprises of both the mindset of the recipients of project inputs, as well as useful new technologies that has emanated from the projects.

One pilot that has supported an innovative mindset via the project's activities can be derived from "Mind the Gap" in Skåne. The activities gave stakeholders (mainly SMEs but also local, regional, national, and international business support organizations) a foundation and a context to work from that contributed to their understanding of what competencies that were needed and thus should be prioritized to be innovative and competitive. Similarly, several companies that have used Mind the Gap have expressed that through the structure and systematics of the method, it became clear what competencies to focus on. The companies have applied the toolkit to create new robust business models to develop strategic action plans. These have in turn provided management teams with insight how to strategically work with business development. Furthermore, stakeholders have enjoyed an extended understanding and susceptibility of unexpected impacts and results. All in all, the toolkits and the business models that has been built from it, creates greater precision in the endeavor of developing competent staff.

As has been stated in the previous chapter, other RIGHT regions have also applied the toolkit from "Mind the Gap". It is therefore feasible that the impacts and value chains[1] created in Skåne region, can be lasting in the future, as well as applicable to other regions. Indeed, this is the case when considering the common challenges that was communicated in the trans-national report from WP3, in which "gain new competences and availability of skilled staff" and "develop new busines and strategies" were listed among others. Today, the toolkit is available in Swedish, English, Norwegian and Danish (and an early version in Dutch).

New working methods or processes that are implemented in ordinary operations among partners

There are other examples where pilot projects arguably have created lasting effects thanks to the applied toolkits, created within the project's methodological framework. The "triple E" project in Antwerp with its dual approach method serves as a good representation. This since the trainees in the project have reportedly received proper guidance to where potential work is given their specific profile and interests. As a result, SMEs receive strong candidate employees that are able to train themselves, in close cooperation with the adult education institution and thus good collaborations are created with partner SMEs. Simultaneously, the students enjoy a professional and individual way of learning that leads to favorable matchmakings with collaborating SMEs. Therefore, the lasting impact is derived to the methods binary effects of SMEs being satisfied with the trajectory of the candidate recruits, at the same time as the students gains confidence about their talents, skills, and competences. In this instance the method has enabled the project to send personnel to the trajectory that need upskilling, reskilling, and specializations. In addition, the candidate students get

[1] Value chains should here be understood as a process in which upskilling matters are validated and its relevance underscored in future regional strategy work.

important training and the potential of being hired, hence 'filling the gap'. Consequently, the toolkit provided a method that presented a genuine representation of the work environment and realistic insight to the job in that the methods used brings the practice in the school and the school in the practice.

Introduction of cooperative structures and collaboration that remain after the project is finished

Equally as important, the results from the "Triple E" pilot have underscored the importance of partnership. Indeed, partnerships can serve as an additional lasting effect since they can create structures for continued as well as new future collaborations. The project owners communicated the importance of:

- strengthen existing collaborations (with sectors, enterprises, labor market regulators, public centers for social welfare).
- search new collaborations (with sectors, enterprises, labor market regulators, public centers for social welfare).
- work closely together with industrial training centers in relation to
  - innovations
  - the use of infrastructure
  - the connection with the labor market
- work within the frame of adult education with an eye for innovation.
- further expand infrastructure.
- make further progression in the mapping of companies, workplace and internship in function of the matching process.

Considering the above points, it is feasible to suggest that partnerships have the potential of fostering a foundation and network to work from and in turn enhance the probability of lasting effects. Antwerp is again an example of this where new regional partnerships have formed with organizations they generally do not work with. The project owners of the three pilots communicated in the partnership meetings that as a result from the RIGHT project, they will search new opportunities with new partners. What is more, the project owners have due to the pilot projects deepened their cooperation, that in turn can result in new value chains and additional collaborations in the future. Against this backdrop, the lessons from RIGHT have shown that there are potential new exchanges to be made that one might not think existed at the outset. As a result, the Antwerp project owners will continue to investigate new collaborations with organizations that can complement each other and in extension, present future possibilities.

Another example of established partnerships can be found in the Norwegian pilots, "Strategic HR as a tool for transitioning to new markets" in Alver municipality and "Recirculating aquaculture systems" in Vestland county council. During one of the partnerships meetings for RIGHT, Vestland municipality stated that the collaboration with Alver municipality have developed new perspectives and gained new knowledge. As an effect, a new business model will be tested and included in their smart specialization strategy in order to develop and use career guidance centers and business actors with a focus towards a green and sustainable future.

Other pilots have created new business models that instead underscored the innovative technological developments that can streamline production processes. The "RAS" pilot in Vestland for instance was able to use new technologies that would

benefit their seafood industry and increases the output due to lower fish deaths and less health problems.

The toolkits

Mind the Gap

What is the purpose of the toolkit?

The purpose of "Mind the Gap" is to give companies concrete methods and tools, so that they can develop skills of their staff or recruit new ones more accurately. With two workshops – digital or analogously – the companies can outline what development they want to achieve and what skills they need to get there. It is a digital tool that clarifies and connects the company's business strategy with the need for the right skills – in the short and long term.

Where can the toolkit be found?

The toolkit can be accessed via Skåne region's website and can be applied in two ways. Either by the companies doing the workshops themselves, or, alternatively by hiring a process leader to conduct the workshop.

Who is responsible for the toolkit?

Skåne region and UIC Syd.

RAS

What is the purpose of the toolkit?
The purpose of the toolkit **short and flexible education** was to meet SMEs need for training and education for further implementation and use of new and green technology. The tool aimed to develop short courses that are flexible so that SMEs with a high production rate and low member of staff, should be able to participate in training in combination with work.

By mapping the SMEs need for competencies, and further research what kind of flexibility SMEs are in need of the toolkit ensures at tailor-made training programme.

Where can the toolkit be found?

The toolkit can be accessed via Vestland County Council, Vestland higher vocational college – curriculum and organisation of training.

Who is responsible for the toolkit?

Vestland County Council, Vestland higher vocational college

Skill Mill

What is the purpose of the toolkit?
Address the knowledge gap between present-day local work force skills and the future needs of firms and industries in the North Sea Region and make local companies aware of need for upskilling in order to provide service for the offshore wind production industry in the Port of Klintholm as well as future possible offshore wind production areas. Thus, the tool's purpose is to assist companies in identifying potential training providers.

Where can the toolkit be found?

The training providers as well training categories can be found online at the Global Wind Organization's website (https://www.globalwindsafety.org/). Global Wind Organisation is an independent, globally present organisation that develops safety and training standards for employees working on and around onshore and offshore wind turbines

Who is responsible for the toolkit?

The Global Wind Organization

Marine Training

What is the purpose of the toolkit?

Mapping of training opportunities in the blue and energy sector in the RIGHT partner regions.

By collecting these trainings on a single platform, people who are interested in working in the blue and energy sector or are already working in one of these sectors and want to expand their knowledge can find the courses that suit their needs. In addition, the collection of many courses on a single platform allows for easy evaluation of the skills gap in the sector.

Where can the toolkit be found?

There is a searchable catalogue that can be accessed via the Marinetraining platform: Advanced search | Marinetraining

Besides the catalogue on Marinetraining.eu, UGent also developed an interactive map that gives an overview of the existing courses in the RIGHT partner regions: StoryMap.

Who is responsible for the toolkit?

Ghent University, MarineTraining

Transnationality

This section will discuss the benefits from working in a transnational project and how the results will benefit from the transnational dimension of the pilot projects.

Networking and exchange of knowledge

One reoccurring discussion point in the partnership meetings have been how the regions can learn from one another and spread their respective models and knowledge to the partner regions. Partnerships for innovation and up-skilling that outlive the pilot projects is one natural cornerstone in these discussions.

As has been stated above, the transnational report of WP3 outlined common challenges that offer opportunities for learning and cooperation. These are:

- Bridge knowledge gaps, given market and technological developments
- Access to credit and funding
- Gain new competences and availability of skilled staff
- Develop new business models and strategies
- Have relevant support mechanisms and regulations.

To provide an example concerning the above points, research was made against the backdrop of the Groningen pilot projects, i.e., the green hydrogen booster, iBoss and

RIF Gas 2.0. More specifically, the research explored the concept of value chains, the apparent acceleration of value chain development for hydrogen in Groningen and other energy related Interreg projects. The research presented a schematic overview of a value chain that not only consist of production, infrastructure, applications, and consumers SMEs, but also value chain included R&D as well as upskilling. Furthermore, said schematic overview of a developing hydrogen value chain provided insight into the phases of the energy transition – and the need for public and public-private stimulation of the (various segments of) hydrogen markets in multiple ways. The description of the projects shows that coalitions of collaborations can be developed and be of great importance in making progress in the energy transition in two important ways.

First, market demand and feasible business models are necessary to achieve necessary innovations and to be able to scale them. Second, with consideration to transnationality and the importance of networks and exchange of knowledge, the shared resource of the North Sea provides its members with an opportunity to pool resources in the development of hydrogen sector and its value chain. Not every region needs to build all necessary resources by itself. R&D opportunities for instance at EnTranCe are available to international partners today. Other regions can profit from recent ‘early mover’ advantages of a region such as Groningen. Such ‘early movers’, in turn, will benefit from a larger (international) scale and resulting faster development of the hydrogen value chain. International matchmaking between companies and other stakeholders therefore have the potential to be very helpful for this purposes.

On another note, the Covid-19 pandemic has indeed complicated the pilot projects’ range and above-mentioned opportunities above. Yet still, there are several points of interest worth mentioning for the pilot projects transnationality which will be elaborated on below.

Addressing local problems by using knowledge and inspiration from each other

The first point of interest has already been mentioned above to some extent, namely the synergies created from established partnerships between regions. For instance, the partnership meetings report that there have been exchanges between Ghent University in Belgium with their marine training platform, and Bergen in Norway (pilot project unspecified). Here, the training platform was useful in the Norwegian project in preparing its stakeholders (students) so that everyone would be on similar levels. The exchange has reportedly been instrumental for the Norwegian partners in finding a similar platform or solution for the Norwegian context. The opposite has also been true. The Fife project in Scotland have gained interest in the Norwegian curriculum and educational setup and how it might be applied in Scotland.

A second point of interest is the toolkits that have been adopted to other regions, or alternatively have characteristics that are easily modified. With regards to the former, "Mind the Gap" has been exported to several partner regions. The internationalization aspect is apparent as the toolkits in the pilot project have been requested by external parties, information have spread to several networks, clusters, industries, governmental institutions and RIGHT partner regions. Concerning the latter, gamification attains beneficial attributes that are mendable, depending on the users' needs. The gamified toolkits in Antwerp illustrates this well. With regards to "Port introduction game + port Pro/Port Academy", the project owners have communicated that the concept is universal in its application. Moreover, that the professions they work on are universal and exist in every industry and international port. Against this

backdrop, the program concepts can not only be transferred outside regional border, but the content transfer is also a real possibility.

Actively collaborating in addressing problems locally and transnationally

A final point of interest is the continued will and goal to participate in EU-projects in the future, to attain new contacts and learn new perspectives. By creating toolkits and developing business models that a transferable, a greater potential is reachable since the foundation for education and up-skilling programs is broadened exponentially. A foundation that can benefit individuals as well as companies and provide perspectives that are harder to attain locally or regionally.

Policy recommendations

In this section, we present one further aspect of the pilot projects findings, i.e., the resulting policy recommendations from the different pilots for how to best serve future interests. They should therefore not be understood as recommendations from this specific report or the fifth working package. Rather, they should be read and understood as recommendations that are based on the results from the pilot projects. The recommendations have been aggregated to study which aspects that reoccur and – to the furthest extent possible – convey to whom the recommendations target as well as how the recommendations have evolved from the pilot projects. What can be stated at the outset is that the policy recommendations aim to increase innovation capacity through policy.

- **Gamification – Continue the learning by doing mentality**

  Gamification as a method have reportedly been efficient in creating a beneficial symbiosis between education and the workplace. Not least since teachers reportedly actively engage to inform students on professions and – together with the companies – convey necessary skillsets for the workplace. The gamified methods serve as a tool to bridge the gap between education and workplace. The relationship between students, teachers and companies is important to uphold for the future. The gamified methods are therefore recommended in future projects and other educational centers that considers the needs of the teachers as well as the necessities on the work floor. Benefits that are underlined is the opportunity to conduct actual work-related activities and make real life decisions that shed light on the working environment, and what profiles that are needed for the positions. Gamification as a methodological framework presents flexible toolkits depending on assigned goals and presents opportunities to create greater authenticity around the working environment for the target groups.

- **New methods for promoting technical education, training, and work**

  This is important to change the discourse around the targeted technical jobs that previously in certain cases have suffered a stigma of being lower education for "not so good jobs". Measures for such a purpose could be to focus on the innovative and problem-solving features of the technical profiles that employers demand and to offer opportunities for professionalization of existing personnel to retain them. Furthermore, the pivotal role of technical professionals with the right skills should be stressed for implementing the European Green Deal and new industrial

strategy and thus regenerating the European economy, societies and environment.

- **Clarify the financial blueprint**

  This is probably the most reoccurring recommendation. What is emphasized for future projects is to do financial analysis' in the beginning the pilot projects development to in part clarify the financial implications of the pilot projects, in part to simply implementations of project activities. Examples for future actions could thus be that the educational body receive extra finances and/or personnel for the guidance and support of the students (intake, individual progress, workplace learning etc.). The students could in turn benefit from greater clarity regarding compensations for workplace learning. Too this, a simplification of the funding process is expressed, that is based on the pilot projects stage and maturity.

- **Attain greater educational focus**

  Concerning education, there are several recommendations put forth. Firstly, there is a communicated need to better connect research with local economic and environmental circumstances. Too this, academic institutions can improve its awareness of the local labor markets as well as emerging and new trends within them. Second, to create a "knowledge transfer hub", in which data resources can be shared with others to improve and streamline future research endeavors. Third, to put greater emphasis on circular economies, more educational focus is recommended through curriculums of excellence and through the establishment of related networks. Regarding the latter, a "Young workforce activity" is proposed that could work bottom up to promote entrepreneurial skills into the curriculum. Lastly, actions for better collaborations between employers, pupils, education, and community is demanded.

- **Clear methodological and procedural communication**

  Communication is key when working in projects with several actors and stakeholders. Their needs, priorities and timeframes do not seldom differ. One recommended input is therefore to recognize this fact and try to find ways to collectively deal and help progression in future projects where project owners have different benchmarks.

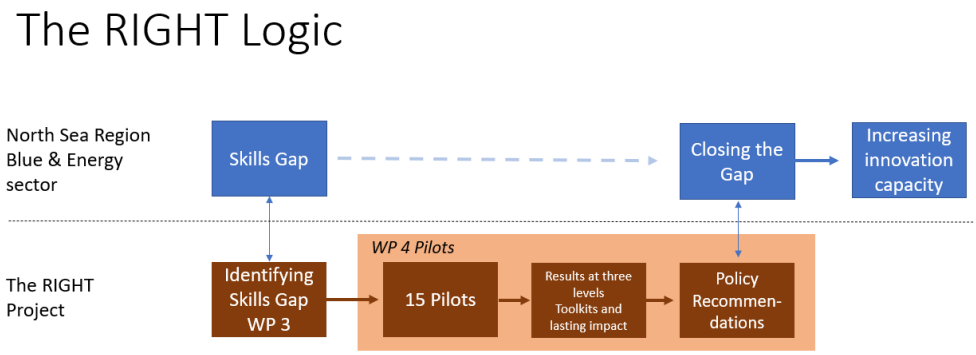
  Notwithstanding applied method for future projects, transparent communication is promoted when working with adult education. Specifically, its legal frameworks and inherent strengths and opportunities to the pilot projects stakeholders (learners, participating companies, market regulators, public administrations etc.) for the project to reach its full potential.

- **Evaluation of project members**

  One last recommendation that has been transferred, is the value in evaluating the collaborations between projects inherent members as well as the activities precision in reaching the projects assigned goals. This could then serve as the basis for potential "follow-up services" than can potentially be necessary for upskilling or internationalization.

Concluding remarks

This report has evaluated to what extent the pilot projects have contributed to regional growth in the North Sea Region and its goal of helping the work force in the RIGHT regions to bridge the gap between skills, knowledge, and future needs. One inherent and critical aspect for that purpose has been to develop new business models, apply newly developed methods, and with its tools improve regional innovation support capacity.



Additionally, the purpose of this report and WP5 has been to describe on an aggregated level the outcome of this endeavor. Indeed, positive outcomes of different character have been outlined at the level of the individual, the firm and on an ecosystem level. Methods with its inherent tools have been tested, real work-related activities have been conducted and partnerships have been created. This has resulted in the lasting effects and transferability discussed above. Against this backdrop, reported policy recommendations have been presented to outline what measures that should be taken for future endeavors. For now, the material that have been observed and conveyed here, argue for a positive net effect. The pilot projects that have emanated from the gap analysis, have in a real way provided circumstances with proven- or potential for, outputs in the form of increased innovation capacity. The RIGHT project has consequently built a good foundation to build on henceforth.