



E-COOL

Interreg Europe



Devon County Council



May 2021

Part I – General information

Project: E-COOL – Entrepreneurial and Intrapreneurial Mindset in Young People through the Dynamisation of Competences, Teaching Methodologies and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Partner organisation: Regional Development Fund on behalf of the Devon County Council

Other partner organizations involved:

Country: United Kingdom

NUTS2 region: Devon

Contact Persons: Jacob Coburn – Senior Economic Development Officer - Skills and Education

Email address: Jacob.coburn@devon.gov.uk

Phone number: 01392 383000

This Plan is endorsed by the Hearts of the South West Careers Hub (that was also involved in the designing period of it).



Part II – Policy context

E-COOL Action Plan for the Devon County Council aims to impact:

Type 1: Implementation of new projects	✓
Type 2: Change in the management of the policy instrument (improved governance)	
Type 3: Change in the strategic focus of the policy instrument (structural change)	
Other improvements not corresponding to types 1-3 (please comment)	

Name of the policy instrument addressed:

Policy Instrument 5: Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Network’s European Structural and Investment Funds

Axis 8 – Thematic Objective 5: Including economic, social, and environmental aspects, promoting the sustainability and quality of employment, and facilitating labour mobility.

Investment Priority 5iii: Self-employment, entrepreneurship and the creation of new businesses, and especially innovative micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.
&

Axis 3 – Thematic Objective 3: Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

Investment Priority 3a: promoting entrepreneurship, by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and supporting the creation of new businesses, among others through business incubators.

The policy instrument selected will be improved thanks to the action included in this regional plan, based on the exchange of experience of E-COOL Project.

Part III – Details of the action envisaged

1. The background

This chapter includes a description of E-COOL lessons learnt by Devon County council that constitute the basis for the design of the Devon Action Plan.

Issue addressed

Devon's economy relies heavily on self-employment and Small businesses. Which is reflected in 18.1% of the working population being self-employed and 41% of the population working for a business with under 50 members of staff. This means that it is vital that the County focuses on strengthening and future proofing the self-employment and SME sectors. To enable this to happen there needs to be a focus on creating policy that enables students and young people to have had positive training and experiences around entrepreneurship. With an overarching aim of developing their understanding of what makes you entrepreneurial and ensures that they feel capable of being successful if they choose to be self-employed or in running their own business in the future.

Another problem that links to the above is that we will attempt to reduce the brain drain we suffer in Devon and the South West of England with young people leaving the county for education or work. This sees a high proportion of our high achieving and motivated young people either going to universities or seeking work in larger cities outside of the county. The knock-on effect of making these decisions early in their lives is that they then choose to spend their most productive work years outside of the county and tends to see them then move back later in life when they are less productive to the local economy. So, we would look to use the policy development to ensure that students develop an awareness of the opportunities available to them within the County to develop their own entrepreneurial understanding and work opportunities through localised delivery and better understanding of local industries and sectors.

Policy Instrument

The policy instrument we will be using is the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Network's European Structural and Investment Funds. Which is consistent with the EUROPE 2020 strategy to achieve smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth by identifying ways to encourage and support entrepreneurship and enterprise. The

HotSW LEP's plan to maximise the conditions for growth and employment opportunities through their place, business, and people themed priorities.

Within this plan is the need to enhance SME competitiveness, in line with Thematic Priority 10. Which aims to invest in education, training, and lifelong learning skills, which will lead to enterprise and business competitiveness being developed through further investment in entrepreneurial activities to create the next generation of SME owners and managers. The Economy of Devon contains a high proportion of micro-businesses and SMEs, as well as high levels of Self-employment. Among many of these businesses there is a need to improve competitiveness and the flow of new ideas. The aim of the programme will be to encourage young people to consider creating their own opportunities for work through the commercialisation of their ideas.

The new project will look to improve the policy instrument, by getting businesses and partners to work closer together to recognise the impact such work can have on the quality of the projects and programmes available. It will also see a stronger steering group developed, with key employers being able to map out the current employment landscape and potential sector needs. So, that young people are given industry relevant information and are able to make better decisions about the futures based of the industries in Devon and beyond.

It will also look to use the private sector and LEP project capital together to enable the region to deliver larger projects and bid on larger government funds using the joint capital as match.

Finally, we have developed a very strong steering group for the project from a wide range of partners and we will ensure that the partnerships and learning captured from this project will be feedback to them all. We will also ensure that the group is kept in place going forward, as it has had an invaluable impact and we plan for this to continue.

The contribution of E-COOL project

Through the initial stages of E-COOL we have been fortunate enough to have learnt about and asked questions on a wide variety of good practices that are happening with our new partners. This has enabled us to review and compare our own good practices against a wider pool and through doing so gain a greater understanding of what would be classified as good and what adaptations we could make to our current projects to improve them even more.

The process we have gone through in reviewing best practices with the E-COOL project has highlighted that going forward we should ensure that our decision-making process for such work goes through a wider review and that this will give us a greater understanding of the projects we could look to develop or expand.

Speaking to stakeholder at varying points of the reviewing process has shone a greater light on projects strengths, weaknesses and connections and crossover potential with other projects. This was particularly evident when we had stakeholders review and decided upon the four best practices they would like to progress. As this showed that having stakeholders involved at the initial decision-making stage and then at this stage meant that they asked questions and pointed out strengths and weaknesses that might not have been done by our more direct team. So, going forward this is something we will look to do on other projects.

We have also seen three examples of Good practice that have really stood out to us and have either led to adjustments in projects we currently run. Or ,have led to us adding them to our action plan, as we do not have similar Projects and would like to see them happening in Devon.

The first of these projects is the Serendipity table, which focused on creating community groups that could support each other to bring forward potential new start up ideas. This has seen us look at developing an internal Project around entrepreneurial engagement on a wider community scale. This has led to discussions starting to take place between us and our partners in Groningen looking at sharing best practice and then looking to see if we could also influence the Community Entrepreneurship Pilot (CESP), or Rural Growth Network (RGN).

The second-best practice is the IMC school, which focuses on delivering an Entrepreneurial Sunday school to young people from poor economic communities. This was a Project that really links well with our long-term ambitions within Devon County Council. As, we have a wide-ranging community and are keen to ensure that we support everyone to reach their potential. So, we hope to take advantage of their learning, such as how to draw in local business support, when and how to engage with students and families to get their commitment to the course and how to design and deliver outstanding curriculum that has a real impact on people's lives.

The final best practice that has impacted upon our practice is PIN. Which focused on supporting young people to develop start up ideas that could then be developed within urban areas that requires regeneration. These start-ups are then supported to come to fruition by given them grants. We currently run similar grant schemes; however, we have not focused on intensive support for young people. So, we are looking to do this with the money we are using from COVID recovery funds and will

evaluate its impact on new start-ups and use of Highstreet spaces. If effective this will then be built into future packages of support.

Good practices selected by Devon County Council

1st Good Practice: IMC School

Partner: Groningen University

IMC school focuses on delivering an Entrepreneurial Sunday school to young people from poor economic communities. This was a Project that really links well with our long-term ambitions within Devon County Council. As, we have a wide-ranging community and are keen to ensure that we support everyone to reach their potential. So, we hope to take advantage of their learning, such as how to draw in local business support, when and how to engage with students and families to get their commitment to the course and how to design and deliver outstanding curriculum that has a real impact on people's lives.

2nd Good Practice: The Serendipity Table

Partner: PP8 Groningen University

The Serendipity table, trains local people on how to create community groups that can support each other to bring forward potential new start up ideas. This has seen us look at developing an internal Project around entrepreneurial engagement on a wider community scale. This has led to discussions starting to take place between us and our partners in Groningen looking at sharing best practice and then looking to see if we could also influence the Community Entrepreneurship Pilot (CESP), or Rural Growth Network (RGN).

2. Actions

1. The background

The IMC school focuses on delivering an Entrepreneurial Sunday school to young people from poor economic communities. This is a Project that links well with Devon's long-term ambitions within Devon County Council. As, we have a wide-ranging community and are keen to ensure that we support everyone to reach their potential. So, we hope to take advantage of their learning, such as how to draw in local business support, when and how to engage with students and families to get their commitment to the course and how to design and deliver outstanding curriculum that has a real impact on people's lives. We also see great value in understanding how they have engaged with the private sector and got them to engage with the practical delivery of the project and invest financially in the project.

2. Action

There will be three stages to the project:

1. Setting up stage consisting of:

- Engagement with the IMC school.
- Creation of project steering group.
- Planning and development of EI School curriculum, tool kit and resources
- Confirmation of costings and funding.
- Recruitment of the EI tutor.

2. Delivery of the curriculum:

- Term one will see the curriculum delivered to two schools.
- A review of the impact for those learners will be created by the EI tutor and adjustments made to delivery for term 2.
- Term two will see the curriculum delivered to two schools.

3. Report on the project:

- EI tutor and E-COOL lead from Devon County Council will work together to create a report highlighting the effect the project has had on the young people involved.

Partnering with IMC weekend school ([IMC Weekend School | Stichting IMC Weekenschool](#)) and our partners from Hanze university we will create and deliver a term long (12 sessions) curriculum called EI school (entrepreneurship and innovation school). The lessons will take place as an after-school club and will be run by the Entrepreneurial School tutor. The curriculum will focus on using the topics of entrepreneurship and innovation to broaden students' horizons. In doing so, we will hope to develop their understanding of innovation and entrepreneurship, stimulate student's motivation and self-confidence, broaden their perspective, and strengthen their connection with society.

We will also work with the South West Business Council to develop out relationships with local businesses. Especially those that have yet to meet their social financial obligations. So, that we can join the capital available from these businesses with that of the policy instrument, to enable us to afford the pilot and scope out how we would be able to then fund the provision in the future.

We will partner with IMC weekend school ([IMC Weekend School | Stichting IMC Weekenschool](#)) to codesign the curriculum using their extensive 24 years of running such curriculum. The students that will be offered the chance to take part in the EI school will be selected using the IMC schools 'school' weight' system, based on poverty rates and the educational level of parents.

To show the journey travelled students involved will complete a survey (done interactively in the lessons) at the beginning and end of the 12 sessions, to review their understanding of entrepreneurship and innovation, their careers goals and aspirations and their current motivation levels. The curriculum will be delivered four times over the course of 6 months and there will be a review at the end of each term and upon completion of the whole pilot, aiming to review the impact EI school has had.

3. **Players involved**

South West Business Council – The business council will lead on setting up the Devon entrepreneurs of the future business steering group. This groups primary aim on the project will be to review the projects progress and ensure that it is meeting its targets. They will also focus on working with local's businesses to secure the finances needed to run the project once the pilot is complete and seek further finances where possible to expand the offer across the county.

Torrige Multi Agency Trust – The trust runs all the secondary schools within Torrige districts and so they will work with us to identify who in their schools will need the provision. Supply adequate classroom space. Work with the EI tutor to ensure that students are being supported as required to get the best possible experience. Support with the project review at the end of the project.

North Devon Trust – support you provision within the District and so will be a key member on the project steering group and will be part of the project evaluation.

Torrige District Council - Will be a key member on the project steering group and will be part of the project evaluation. Will also work with the Torrige Multi Agency Trust to seek funding for the project to continue and look at how they could weave the project into their strategic planning.

4. Timeframe

There will be three stages to the project:

4. June – November 2021 - setting up stage consisting of:

- Engagement with the IMC school.
- Creation of project steering group.
- Planning and development of EI School curriculum, tool kit and resources
- Confirmation of costings and funding.
- Recruitment of the EI tutor.

5. December 2021 -July 2022 - delivery of the curriculum:

- Term one will see the curriculum delivered to two schools.
- A review of the impact for those learners will be created by the EI tutor and adjustments made to delivery for term 2.
- Term two will see the curriculum delivered to two schools.

6. July- August 2021 - Report on the project:

- EI tutor and E-COOL lead from Devon County Council will work together to create a report highlighting the effect the project has had on the young people involved.
- This report will be presented to the Entrepreneurs of the future, business steering group, with the aim of securing funding for the next academic year and reviewing the opportunity to expand the project to other areas of Devon.

5. Costs

To be decided once first phase of the project has been completed with the IMC School. However, we have calculated that the staffing costs will come in at £32,930.25p.

6. Funding sources

- South West Business Council
- Devon Recovery Funding
- Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Network's European Structural and Investment Funds

ACTION 2

1. The background

The IMC school model has a focus on working closely with local businesses to generate real business contacts between students and the private sector. This is then enhanced by getting these businesses to also invest financially in the project.

We see great value in understanding how they have engaged with the private sector and through doing so managed to get local businesses to offer their time to the project. Getting businesses to commit their time to help with the practical delivery of the project is something we would like to mirror within Devon, not just on this project but across other areas of work. The reason for this being that it helps to bring the curriculum to life and gets the students to gain motivation and confidence from these interactions, giving them the belief that they can go on to be the entrepreneurs of the future.

We are also keen on how they have gotten businesses to invest financially in the project. This is important for Devon, as there is only a finite amount of money available to invest in entrepreneurship, so we would like to try and develop the funds available in this key area of skills development needed in Devon. If we can do this successfully in increasing business investment, we feel that this could lead to us being able to trial and deliver more projects across Devon and have a way of ensuring that businesses are able to play a key role in developing our young people.

2. Action

- Work with business related organizations such as the Chambers, federation for small businesses and South West Business Council to create an

Entrepreneurs of the future business group.

- Establish key new businesses and sectors required within the region over the coming decade, as a focus for the group.
- Create a Grants/pilot activity scheme fund, which aims to develop pilot activity to support young people in developing Entrepreneurial skills and ideas.
- Create an application and evaluation framework for the above scheme.
- Run a grant scheme activity for local providers to bid for.

To ensure that we can deliver a wide range of activity to support young people to develop their Entrepreneurial skills there is a need to develop a large financial package. Having seen the IMC project presentation it became clear that we are not currently adequately working with local businesses to leverage both financial and physical support. So, this action will see us look to develop an Entrepreneurs of the future business steering group.

The Entrepreneurs of the future business steering group would have the primary aim of working with the local businesses to pin point ways of supporting young people to gain the entrepreneurial skills need for the future. This will see them focuses on projects, finances, and skills. With the board meeting on a quarterly basis to review progress towards the agreed outcomes.

The project itself will seek find the funding to get action 1 up and operational within stage two of E-COOL and to gain financial, support from businesses and educational support to look to roll the project out to other Districts of Devon the following academic year.

The group will also focus on how it can work with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Network's European Structural and Investment Funds to ensure the impact of this fund is as far reaching as possible. This will see the primary focus on both coming together to review how to join funds and ensure that finances are reviewed and evaluated to ensure the funds are spent effectively.

3. Players involved

- All Devons Chambers - Devon & Plymouth Chamber of Commerce was set up more than 200 years ago to serve, promote, help and be the voice of business. They currently have an extensive network of businesses that they can reach

out to too be a part of the steering group and they will be part of the steering group and seek further members from their own membership.

- Devons Federation for small businesses – work with small businesses and the self-employed to make sure their voices are heard both regionally and nationally. They currently have an extensive network of businesses that they can reach out to too be a part of the steering group and they will be part of the steering group and seek further members from their own membership.
- South West Business - Working in collaboration with the Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Local Economic Partnerships and complementing the services offered by these and other key representative organisations within the region. They currently have an extensive network of businesses that they can reach out to too be a part of the steering group and they will be part of the steering group and seek further members from their own membership.

4. Timeframe

- June – July 2021 - Work with business related organizations such as the Chambers, federation for small businesses and South West Business Council to create an Entrepreneurs of the future business group.
- July – August 2021 - Establish key new businesses and sectors required within the region over the coming decade, as a focus for the group.
- August – January 2022 - Create a Grants/pilot activity scheme fund, which aims to develop pilot activity to support young people in developing Entrepreneurial skills and ideas.
- November – January 2022 Create an application and evaluation framework for the above scheme.
- March – May 2022 - Run a grant scheme activity for local providers to bid for.

5. Costs

There will be no funding cost for this action. However, we would look to raise £250,000 from the businesses involved in the steering group.

6. Funding sources

Looking to get local businesses to use their social investment funds (which they can claim back through tax reductions) towards developing the Entrepreneurial and Innovation Skills Grant.

Name: Keri Denton

Date: 26/08/2021

Signature:

