**Integrated strategy Initiative for Strengthening the supply of APPrenticeships in TEXtile sector**

**TEXAPP- WP3.2, WP3.3& WP3.4**

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| **TASK** | **3.2 – Company Assessment Tool**  **3.3 – Piloting of the Company Assessment Tool**  **3.4 – Report on piloting of the Company Assessment Tool** |

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| **Work Package:** | WP3.3 – 3.4 |
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**The pilot phase of the Company Assessment Tool**

Following the development of the ‘Standard’ provided by TCoE, BAATPE interviewed in February 2018 ten Bulgarian companies to pilot the Company Assessment Tool (CAT).

Our CAT - based on the ‘Standard’, is designed to allow companies to self-assess their needs and priorities and help them identify any areas where development is required, and apprenticeships will be the key to address these developments.

**Report on piloting of the Company Assessment Tool**

**Aim of the CAT:**

* To gain a better understanding of the needs and priorities of clothing companies who are interested in, or currently involved with apprenticeship training.
* To gain a better understanding on how apprenticeships and a Standard will contribute to meet these needs and priorities.

**Sample group:**

Out of the 10 companies 8 have no previous experience with apprenticeships, while 2 of them have some (little) experience in the field. As regards the size of the companies, 9 of them are SMEs and one of them is a large enterprise (no micro enterprises were interviewed). All of the interviewed companies are from the clothing sector, which represents the major part of the Bulgarian Textile/Clothing industry.

**Methodology:**

The interviews were conducted in February 2018 via telephone and e-mail. The responding persons were either company managers/owners or HR managers.

**Main findings and action points:**

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| **Assessment Tool**  **Survey Questions** | **Main Findings** | | **Action Points and Impact** | |
| Q1.Do you have to meet any legal requirements to ensure a safe working environment for your employees? | * All of the interviewed companies replied that they have to meet legal requirements. This shows the overall understanding and awareness of the need to abide by certain rules in terms of health and safety. | | * Evidently, the companies are aware of the health and safety regulations. Therefore, the key point in this regard is to make sure that they adhere to the respective legislation. | |
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| Q2. Do you respond quickly to recruit the right person when a job vacancy occurs? | * Among the companies with no experience with apprenticeships, the number of “Yes” and “No” answers were equal. Both companies with experience responded with “Yes”. * In general, the answers are split, showing that still a large part are not able to respond quickly in the recruitment process. * Partly, this can be explained by the growing lack of workforce for the industry. | | * In order to be more successful in the recruitment process, companies will have to be more flexible and to act quickly. This will include actions such as development of a recruitment strategy, training of HR staff and good advertisement of the companies as attractive employers. | |
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| Q3. Do you have a company succession plan to ensure you have the right person in the right job role? | * Half of the companies replied that they have no succession plan. This indicates a general lack HR capacity. To some extent this could be explained by the unavailability of workforce for the industry, which forces employers to recruit any person willing to work for them, without the need to have a selection process; * Another reason for the high percentage of “No” answers is the fact that a big part of the companies are family-owned companies where jobs are given based on family relations or personal contacts. | | * Since all companies, interested to engage with apprenticeships, should have a plan for progression and succession, they need to develop capacities and tools in this regard within their HR strategy. | |
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| Q4. Is there a plan to attract new young people into the company moving forward? | * Most of the companies claim to have a plan to attract young people. This results from the urgent need to develop new employees for the sector, following the rapid ageing of the current workforce in the industry. The companies have no other chance to survive unless they attract younger people. | | * The companies should work more closely with local professional schools in order to promote the jobs their offer and to explain to the young people that they can offer good opportunities for professional realization. * The companies should also advertise themselves better among the local societies in order to escape from the low image they have currently. * Also, there is need to be more flexible and to adapt to the new realities in the labour market having in mind the different expectations of the new generation. | |
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| Q5. Would your company benefit from the supply of trained young people? | * Almost all companies (90%) answered positively, which shows once again the dramatic need of trained young workforce for the industry. * This need is further exacerbated by the high average age of the workforce in most companies. | | * It is of vital importance that companies take their part of the responsibility for training young people, to engage more actively and to invest resources in this field. They should realize that they must be an active side in this process. | |
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| Q6. Do you have people in your company who can provide training and prepare a training programme? | * 6 out of 10 companies answered that they have no people able to provide training and prepare training programmes. This speaks for the big eat deficit of trainers. * It should also be put in question as to what extent the companies that answered with “Yes” indeed have such people whose skills really match the standard. | | * The companies need to mobilise as soon as possible and to start training their own trainers in order to be prepared to engage with apprenticeships. | |
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| Q7. Do you have an induction programme for new employees? | * 8 out of 10 companies answered positively. Their induction programmes, however, vary from basic 2-week training to full training which might take up to several months. | | * All companies need to have a structured induction and follow up Company Learning Plan in place, which is an essential feature of good apprenticeship recruitment and training. | |
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| Q8. Do you have priority areas in your company?   * Production management * Commercial technician * Financial technician * Human resources technician * Hygiene and safety technician * Manager * Operational technician:   a) Seamstress  b) Stamping technician  c) Winding Technician | | The 2 areas with highest priority are:   * Seamstress * Production management   The areas with no or very limited responses were:   * Hygiene and safety technician * Manager * Stamping technician * Winding Technician * Financial technician   And in the middle range:   * Human resources technician | | * Evidently, the trainings should be directed towards operators (seamstresses) and production management; * Also, attention should be paid to HR specialists who will be of importance for the future management of apprenticeships programmes; |
| Q9. Do you have priority training areas?   * Leadership * Production management * Selling and trading techniques * Quality * Behavioural skills * Business | Marketing * Financial analysis and management * Strategic management of human resources * Tools for continuous improvement * Health and safety at work * Management * Market research and selection * Organization and professional effectiveness * Commercial management and sales * Logistics * Maintenance * Accounting * International negotiation * Foreign Language * Instruments to support international trade * Market studies * Coaching * Environment | Energy * Project management * Office productivity * Data base * CAD * Graphic design * Multimedia and web design * Law (Commercial, Labour, Quality, Environment ...) * Audit * Electricity * Secretariat * Systems Administration * Software Engineering and Programming * Internet * Electronics * Electromechanical | | The most important training areas in descending order are:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Training area** | **‘+’ replies** | | * **Production management** | 9 | | * **Quality** | 8 | | * **Organization and professional effectiveness** | 7 | | * **Environment | Energy** | 5 | | * **Audit** | 5 | | * Strategic management of human resources | 4 | | * Health and safety at work | 3 | | * CAD | 3 | | * Electromechanical | 3 | | * Leadership | 2 | | * Tools for continuous improvement | 2 | | * Commercial management and sales | 2 | | * Maintenance | 2 | | * Foreign Language | 2 | | * Electricity | 2 | | * Behavioural skills | 1 | | * Business | Marketing | 1 | | * Financial analysis and management | 1 | | * Management | 1 | | * Logistics | 1 | | * Office productivity | 1 | | * Selling and trading techniques | 0 | | * Market research and selection | 0 | | * Accounting | 0 | | * International negotiation | 0 | | * Instruments to support international trade | 0 | | * Market studies | 0 | | * Coaching | 0 | | * Project management | 0 | | * Data base | 0 | | * Graphic design | 0 | | * Multimedia and web design | 0 | | * Law (Commercial, Labour, Quality, Environment ...) | 0 | | * Secretariat | 0 | | * Systems Administration | 0 | | * Software Engineering and Programming | 0 | | * Internet | 0 | | * Electronics | 0 |   As seen from the responses, the most needs are in production, organization and quality matters. Also, due to the high pressure for environmental and social audits in the last yeara, some companies put focus on this. | | |
| Q10. Do you have training plans in place for;   1. Managers? 2. Production staff? 3. Others? | * Only 1 company has a training plan for managers; * 4 companies have a training plan for production staff; * 1 company mentioned to have a training plan for “Others”, meaning administrative staff. | | * The answers confirm the need to put most focus on training of production staff, including both operators and middle management; | |
| Q11. Is there a strong company commitment to training and skills development? | * Most companies replied with “Yes”, indicating their will to engage in apprenticeships and professional training. * Yet, 3 companies replied with “No”, which means that this tendency is not valid for the whole industry, since some companies don’t see long future for themselves. | | * It is of crucial importance that the companies engage seriously and commit themselves to trainings. They should recognize this as strategic investment for their future survival or development. | |
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| Q12. Are the company training needs and priorities for skilled staff being met currently? | * 9 out of 10 companies answered negatively. This confirms the fact that the industry faces a serious skills deficit. * This is to a large extent explained by the high rate of emigration to countries with higher wages, as well as by the competition of sectors paying higher wages and “stealing” the workforce from the T&C industry. | | * The companies should develop and follow their own strategies for skills development within the enterprise and invest resources in this direction; * They should also cooperate with professional schools in order to adapt the curricula to the real needs of the industry. | |
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| Q13. Do you plan for time off work to allow for training and skills development? | * 60% of the companies show readiness to allow time off for trainings and skills development. However, other 40% say they don’t have such plans. | | * The companies should realize that, if they want to develop professional skills among their workforce, it is mandatory to sacrifice some time and organize extra-work trainings for their employees. | |
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| Q14. Do you have people in the company that could support a new apprentice? For example, a supervisor/ charge-hand/mentor? | * 60% of the companies replied that they have such people in-house. These are mostly supervisors who will be responsible for future trainings. | | * The Standard needs to ensure that all participating companies must provide at least a supervisor who must be trained and is responsible for the day to day support and monitoring of the apprentice. | |
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| Q15. Would your company benefit from having staff trained to support apprentices to be successful? | * All of the companies answered positively, which is proof of the general need to have trainers in-house. | | * The companies should act in order to train their own trainers who will then take over the task to lead the apprenticeships programmes within the enterprise. | |
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| Q16. Would your company benefit from having a ‘Standard’ / Framework that would provide a structure for an apprenticeship training plan? | * Only one company replied that it would not benefit from a “Standard”. The answers indicate the current need for most companies to have written rules or instructions since they lack experience on the matter. | | * Such a “Standard” should be the basis on which companies will further build on. | |
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| Q17. Are you acquainted with the legal stipulations regulating the provision of apprenticeships? | * 9 out of 10 companies replied with “No” to this question. This is another sign of the little experience companies have with apprenticeship and the limited knowledge on the matter. * The only “Yes” answer comes from a company that says to have some experience with apprenticeships. | | * An information campaign is needed in order to acquaint companies with the basic legal requirements in force in the country in regard of running in-house apprenticeships. | |
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| Q18. Do you possess the necessary facilities and equipment to provide adequate training? | * 80% of the companies answered that they have the necessary facilities and equipment. * However, the understanding of this in the different companies is different, i.e. this should be taken as their individual/subjective opinion, not necessarily based on objective facts. | | * The answers indicate the general readiness of companies in terms of facilities and equipment. Yet, they should be further informed about this through real examples, best practices, etc. | |
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| **Summary of main findings:**  **Risk ratings:**  **Low – requires little or further support or attention**  **Medium – some support needed to help improve consistency or structure**  **High – important need for intervention and/or additional advice and support to improve**   * 90% of the companies say they would benefit from a “Standard” providing a structure of a training plan (**Low** risk) * 80% of the companies possess the facilities and equipment necessary for providing trainings (**Low** risk) * 60% of the companies possess people in-house that can support apprentices (**Low** risk) * 90% would benefit from the supply of trained young people (**Low** risk) * The majority of companies have an induction programme (**Low** risk) * Half of the companies have a succession plan to ensure they have the right person on the right job (**Medium** risk) * Half of the companies respond quickly in the recruitment process (**Medium** risk) * 40% (nearly the half) of companies reply they don’t plan time off for trainings and skills development (**Medium to High** risk) * 30% answered they don’t have strong commitment for trainings and skills development (**High** risk) * Only one company is acquainted with the legal obligations regarding the provision of apprenticeships (**High** risk) * In 90% of the companies the needs for trainings and skills are not met currently (**High** risk) |