



# TALENTS INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 1

## European Modular Toolbox

### Guidelines on how to cooperate with companies in the context of fast-track trainings for immigrants and refugees



March 2019

Disclaimer:

*The TALENTS project has been funded with support of the European Commission through the Erasmus+ programme and the German Ministry "Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung". This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.*



## *Co-operation with companies in the context of fast-track trainings for immigrants and refugees*

A common characteristic of the Talents fast-track trainings is the close cooperation with companies. An essential part of the project, therefore, was to build up company relations and maintain good relationships during trainings and after. Ideally, a stable, long-term company network can be established. In the following, we summarise findings on how successful relations to companies work.

### *Identification of branches for fast-track trainings*

The initial success factor for long-term employment after a fast-track training is that branches with a demand for labour force are addressed. In countries with low unemployment rates, there is a demographic need to train employees in areas with a shortage of workers. Even in countries with higher unemployment rates there are usually branches in which employers don't find the right staff. Skills-mismatches could be one of the reasons. Fast-tracks, that bridge gaps between existing and sought-after skills, might therefore also be an option for the native born population that is looking for new professional challenges.

In order to identify relevant branches regular meetings with relevant stakeholders such as labour market services, regional development agencies and training centres could take place. Experiences of these actors as well as regional data and skills development strategies should form the main basis for the selection of relevant branches.

Criteria for the selection of branches for fast-track trainings could be:



- high labour demand in the specific sector
- employment of untrained staff possible
- other training offers for assistance jobs in the sector aren't available
- language requirements in the specific field are low or medium
- vocational skills can be obtained within a short period of time

Once specific branches are selected, additional organisations can be involved, especially branch associations and/or business chambers.

### *The establishment of company relations*

Ideally, company relations are established with employers that were willing to offer internships but also to employ trainees after the fast-track training. One selection criteria should be that companies are looking for staff and have budgets to employ new staff members after the training.

Main activities to find internship placements in companies are:

- Contact and visit companies to present the project. Target groups of these visits are persons on the executive level and decision makers from the human resource departments. Make sure that your staff that contacts the companies can discuss with companies on eye-level.
- During the visits it should be highlighted that companies can make use of the opportunity to get to know potential candidates in the framework of an internship without any costs.
- It can be stressed, that the fast-track training is offered to persons that usually enter jobs without any initial training and, thus, that fast-track participants will be well prepared for work through high-quality training.
- The supporting structure of coaches and teachers during the fast-track trainings and the advantages of this support should be explained.
- Companies should be informed about good and bad experiences from the past to create a basis of trust and honesty.
- The companies should get the feeling that they are the "only ones" – persons addressing companies have to be very well informed about the background of the companies and the business in general.



### *Establishing long-term co-operations with companies*

The aim is to establish long-term cooperations with the companies. Strategies and working methods to deepen the cooperation with companies and to maintain the company network, are, for example:

- to cooperate with the companies in a most reliable, professional and promptly acting way
- to build close personal relationships to the contact persons in the companies that are maintained by regular phone calls or personal visits
- to be in touch with contact persons on the management level and on the working level
- to always keep companies up to date as this reflects professionalism
- to try to get feedback from companies (what has worked out, what has not worked out) - this makes the project authentic
- to make use of “mouth to mouth propaganda” - so companies do advertising for the project and acquire other companies
- to do permanent networking, visit companies from time to time, organise meetings with different companies, involve companies in the further development of the programme and make offers to the company staff, e.g. offer company mentor trainings

All in all, the company relations in the framework of fast-track trainings were very trustful. The companies were open to the project, communication during the training phases was intensive, companies were very flexible and very patient, also with view to problems with the participants. Most companies offered internship places during the second and third fast-track training in the framework of the Talents project. The cooperation with only a few companies stopped, however not because of dissatisfaction, but because the demand for new staff changed.

It was one important and unexpected finding of the Talents project that many companies and other employers in the Talents regions were very open to giving



the best possible support to immigrants and refugees - because they are looking for new employees but also because they see their social duty to help the newly arrived in finding jobs. In many of the participating companies, some staff members were especially motivated to support the new colleagues, to get closely linked to their development in the company and to develop themselves, e.g. in the role of a company mentor for immigrants.

