



# Enablers and disablers of cross-border long-term apprentice mobility

Evidence from country- and  
project-level investigations



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The **European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training** (Cedefop) is the European Union's reference centre for vocational education and training, skills and qualifications. We provide information, research, analyses and evidence on vocational education and training, skills and qualifications for policy-making in the EU Member States.

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# Foreword

Apprenticeships have been a central feature of European vocational education and training (VET) policies since 2010, starting with the Bruges Communiqué and reiterated in 2020 with the Osnabrück Declaration and the Council Recommendation on VET. During these years, specific policy priorities have evolved and now include making cross-border mobility for learning purposes, particularly long-term, a reality also for apprentices.

Long-term apprentice mobility is unarguably the most difficult to organise, compared to mobility in school-based initial VET (IVET) and higher education; this is particularly due to the link between the apprentice and the training companies. As per the Cedefop definition of apprenticeships and the European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships, all apprentices need to have a written agreement with their employers, receive financial compensation from them and be entitled to social protection. Apprentices are part of the workforce of their training companies and also bring productivity gains towards the end of their training. All these aspects are the biggest impediments to cross-border long-term apprentice mobility.

Long-term mobility needs buy-in from the labour market actors (employers, their representatives and trade unions), both in sending and receiving countries. Undeniably, this EU policy priority is ambitious, but it may be achieved in the medium to long term with the support of strategies that take due account of the particularities of this specific form of VET, which blends education and employment.

Cedefop puts a spotlight on different aspects that need to be considered in building any strategy to support this policy priority. Such aspects are related to the national socioeconomic contexts in which apprenticeships function, to the structure of apprenticeships, as well as to the demand for such a policy and the support (financial, non-financial, institutional, regulatory) of the policy in practice. This study shows that there is a long way to go to create the demand, among employers and apprentices and their parents, and that the best way forward is by addressing this policy at sectoral level. In the meanwhile, short-term mobility should not be neglected but used as a stepping stone for the long-term option.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has severely hindered people's mobility, cross-border long-term apprentice mobility is still considered a medium- to long-term priority in VET policy-making.

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# Executive summary

In 2019, Cedefop launched a study on the topic of cross-border long-term mobility of apprentices (CBLTMA) <sup>(1)</sup>. It explored the topic of CBLTMA in the EU to identify the enablers and the disablers for such a policy and recommendations for actions potentially favouring its implementation. CBLTMA is understood, for the purpose of this study, as the period an apprentice spends in a different country in in-company training as part of his/her apprenticeship; it may last a minimum six months, and typically of up to 12, and may be combined, or not, with training at a vocational education and training (VET) provider. It is much more difficult to organise than mobility in school-based VET and higher education (HE), due largely to the nature of the relationship between the apprentice and the training companies; the latter need to be willing to let the apprentice undergo a part of his/her training abroad. CBLTMA needs the buy-in not only of the learners and training providers, but also of the employers to let the apprentices go on mobility and receive them for mobility purposes. The value needs to be clear for them as well. Apprentices, even though in training, are part of their training company workforce and, in many cases, they are covered by contracts, often employment contracts, regulated by employment law. Therefore, design and organisation of CBLTMA should consider not only the education and training part (such as learning objectives during mobility abroad, and their recognition upon return) but also the employment part: the link with the employer and the legal regulations in the sending and receiving countries when it comes to employment of apprentices and social protection rights; and the characteristics of the labour market in terms of skill shortages and size of companies.

The Cedefop study explored the topic of CBLTMA in the EU through desk and field research in six countries <sup>(2)</sup> and three projects which included cross-border long-term mobility of apprentices and apprentice graduates <sup>(3)</sup>. The

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<sup>(1)</sup> The study was conducted between January 2019 and October 2020.

<sup>(2)</sup> Denmark, Ireland, France, Hungary, the Netherlands and Austria.

<sup>(3)</sup> *Apprentices in motion, Euro apprenticeship pilot projects, Travel to farm.*

study also included focus group discussions with EU-level social partners; three sector-based – agriculture, construction, tourism – focus group meetings and one cross-sectoral were held. While the country-level investigations looked at the potential of such policy within these national contexts (as this specific type of mobility was rarely implemented or in the national policy focus <sup>(4)</sup>), the project-level investigations aimed at bringing forward lessons learned from CBLTMA as defined for the purpose of the study; in the absence of this type of mobility, lessons from comparable experiences (long-term mobility of apprenticeship graduates) were considered <sup>(5)</sup>. Discussions with the social partners at the EU level also addressed the potential of the policy.

The study identified the enablers and the disablers for such policy and recommendations for actions that could favour its implementation in the medium to long term. All findings converge towards the same messages in terms of enablers, disablers and solutions. Above all, they showed that CBLTMA is not a priority at the national level, neither among authorities nor social partners <sup>(6)</sup>. According to the number of applications for the Erasmus+ funding, there is a high demand for Erasmus+ VET-learner mobility <sup>(7)</sup>. Though not enough, this is still an important precondition for higher demand for long(er)-term mobility.

The study developed an analytical framework (AF) structured on three levels:

- (a) framework;
- (b) system;
- (c) implementation.

Given the particular nature of apprenticeship, which is at the crossroads between the education and the labour market/employment, the AF includes a framework level. This level was introduced, based on the assumption that this policy is heavily influenced by factors that are outside of the reach and competence of the apprenticeship authorities. These factors, though exogeneous, may trigger either failure or success of the policy and thus need to be considered for the policy to work in practice. The framework level defines the background within which apprenticeships operate and could be

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<sup>(4)</sup> Except for France.

<sup>(5)</sup> The selection of the three projects posed an important challenge, as there were almost no experiences of CBLTMA at the time of the study implementation.

<sup>(6)</sup> This refers to the date when the study findings were collected.

<sup>(7)</sup> This mobility is generally of short duration and apprentices are underrepresented.

considered as wider contextual factors, macro-level factors, or push and pull factors, that can be shaped by national government policies, global economics and historical events. For instance, the framework level includes dimensions, such as overall size of the companies and skills shortages.

The system level includes dimensions related to the design and governance of the national apprenticeship schemes. These dimensions describe the main features of apprenticeships as set in the regulatory frameworks, such as training standards, validation, alternance, type of contract, status, remuneration, that can be of relevance to CBLTMA. Hence, they are partially exogenous and partially endogenous to apprentice mobility. They vary by country or even within countries where different apprenticeship schemes exist and may vary by sectors.

The implementation level includes dimensions related to apprenticeship and learner-mobility policy. These dimensions are applied on the ground to implement apprenticeships and support learner mobility. Apprentices, training providers and employers have a certain amount of control over them and can design/apply them according to their needs. This includes financial and non-financial support for mobility, including programmes, tools and services, guidelines and structures. These dimensions can be shaped by policy-makers and are likely to affect countries' capacity for mobility (for example VET provider capacity). Dimensions on this level are endogenous and can, in many instances, be linked to very specific circumstances, such as personal relationships or resources; examples include VET provider staff links with companies abroad and at local level, and learner preferences.

The system and implementation levels comprise dimensions where the apprenticeship authorities (and generally policy-makers and authorities with competence in the specific field) may intervene to make the policy work in practice through interventions at the macro/systemic level and through interventions directly linked to the policy implementation (for example through financing, guidelines, institutional backing).

The AF was tested in practice during the country-level investigations, offering a valid tool to collect and analyse information, helping identify enablers and disablers at each level.

#### *Framework level*

At the framework level, the country-level investigations showed that two main dimensions need to be considered:

- (a) the overall size and training capacity of companies;
- (b) the skill shortages and migration issues.

### **Overall size and training capacity of companies**

The multinationals or companies with affiliates or business partners in other countries (who are usually larger companies rather than small and micro) are assumed to face fewer obstacles in organising CBLTMA, as these companies may use their facilities (and partners) based abroad to organise intra-company CBLTMA. Coordination and harmonisation of training slots in the sending country and in affiliate company sites in other countries is potentially much easier to achieve. Trust in training quality and expertise abroad (in the affiliate company site) is also higher. In this case, many organisational issues are assumed not to apply because the apprentice is still part of the company workforce (no loss of apprentice remuneration) or be more easily manageable (different occupational safety standards, social and health insurance coverage).

Company size may matter, as larger enterprises have more options to compensate for the loss of apprentice productive work during their stay abroad, using in-company rotation of employees. In contrast, small and micro-companies, especially those operating locally (such as in the construction sector) are more likely not to have all these necessary capacities. Small and micro-enterprises appear to be less structured in terms of encouraging the international mobility of their apprentices. Without external support, it is very complicated for them to organise mobility, especially when the company does not have a human resources department.

Yet, company size by itself is usually not enough to explain the attitude towards CBLTMA: it is the general attitude and strategy of companies towards structured in-company training that play a decisive role. Further, the attitude towards CBLTMA differs across sectors, with some sectors, where mobility is a tradition, that are more open to mobility than others.

### **Skills shortages and migration issues**

Skills shortages are potentially an enabling factor for incoming mobility, as employers are in need of qualified labour and so are more open to attracting and training young people from abroad. However, there are serious concerns about the exploitation of apprentices as cheap labour, devaluing the notion of apprenticeships.

However, skills shortages in the home country might hinder outgoing CBLTMA, as it will result in a loss of their productive work contribution at home. CBLTMA triggers concerns of brain or talent drain from countries with less favourable work conditions to countries with comparatively good



ones; and apprentices in the latter countries may not be interested in a CBLTMA spell in the former countries, afraid of losing the benefits that their home-country conditions offer. The CBLTMA could exacerbate a sense of competition that may exist across countries on attracting or retaining human capital.

At the framework level, the country-level investigations also showed that there is a low or non-existent engagement of sectoral employer organisations when it comes to CBLTMA. On the positive side, the findings show that significant engagement in cross-border trade and labour allocation (such as production sites in other countries) would favour engagement of employers in CBLTMA.

#### *System level*

At the system level, several dimensions, linked to the approach/objective of apprenticeships, duration and alternance, legal aspects, curricula, standards and qualifications highlighted different points of concern.

### **Objective of apprenticeships**

Countries with a systematic approach to apprenticeship <sup>(8)</sup>, which requires a quite structured approach to training and not merely a context for gaining work experience (for example in the form of traineeships), may have concerns over CBLTMA. The more acute ones relate to the suitability of the in-company training offered abroad and the (lack of) experience of some companies in providing suitable learning settings for apprenticeships. Ensuring comparability between levels of training <sup>(9)</sup> within a mobility context across different European approaches to apprenticeships was highlighted as a key objective for the future of CBLTMA, to ensure industry standards are maintained.

### **Duration of apprenticeships and timing of mobility**

The differences that exist across countries in relation to the duration of apprenticeships and type of alternance need to be carefully considered in the design and implementation of the CBLTMA. For example, an obstacle might be the total duration of apprenticeships in the sending country; if this

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<sup>(8)</sup> Where apprenticeship is organised as a system and is not an alternative mode of delivery to school-based VET.

<sup>(9)</sup> The same type of qualification could be referenced to different EQF levels in two different countries.

is not long enough (for example, it only lasts for six months or one year) CBLTMA (which is of minimum six months) is difficult to include.

The timing of the CBLTMA within the overall duration of the apprenticeship training is also a challenge to be considered, particularly for young apprentices (age 15/16 when starting the apprenticeship). Such an apprentice would be too young to go on mobility at the beginning of his/her studies; CBLTMA would usually take place later in the studies. However, apprentices in their later years of training are already generating productivity gains, and CBLTMA therefore represents a cost factor for sending companies.

### **Legal aspects of apprenticeships**

Where apprenticeship is associated with an employment contract, this usually defines the status of the apprentice as an employee, as well as the basic rights and responsibilities of the parties involved. While this level of transparency may be an enabling factor for CBLTMA, as conditions of learning and working that could apply also abroad are clearer, it can also be challenging to find a placement for the apprentice abroad that offers the same conditions. Also, it is more complicated to implement mobility (short- or long-term) as part of a contractual relationship covered by the employment law, as opposed to a simple agreement (not under employment law).

A notable implication is remuneration of the apprentice in cross-border long-term mobility; employers are reluctant to cover apprentice wage or allowance while abroad. In many cases, apprentices go on mobility relatively late during their apprenticeships, when their remuneration levels are relatively high, especially where the wage increases with age. This would probably have a disabling effect for companies: the apprentices are already costly and the company will lose out on the productivity they generate. Available funding to support mobility might not cover all the expenses for companies, failing to cover the loss of productive work, even if employers do not have to pay the apprentice wage while abroad.

On the apprentice side, receiving remuneration from the host company and not from the home company may result in a significant reduction if home company remuneration is higher and there is no means to cover the difference.

### **Curricula, standards and qualifications**

Training standards can differ considerably between host and sending countries (even though these differences may not be significant in some sectors), not least considering the wide array of country-specific requirements regarding training content and training settings for vocational occupations across Europe. This raises concerns over the recognition of the skills acquired by apprentices during their time abroad: lack of comparable training standards and harmonised processes to define learning outcomes or to recognise prior learning creates difficulties in the organisation of CBLTMA.

Learning-outcomes-based and competence-based approaches to apprenticeship curriculum design seem to be favourable preconditions to enable CBLTMA. They allow for greater flexibility in adapting curricula to company needs and to the workplace environment, and they ensure clarity in the structure of curricula.

However, apprenticeship curricula are not always designed with these approaches; when they are, in practice, it is not always easy to translate and explain the national learning outcomes to employers abroad. Further, receiving companies cannot be expected to have sufficient human resources (HR) capacity to oversee the achievement of the specific learning outcomes.

#### *Implementation level*

At the implementation level, strategies and funding, support and continuing initiatives, and employer and apprentice interests can all spotlight weaknesses that need to be addressed.

### **Strategies and funding**

National labour market representatives do not prioritise this policy, as individual employers show little or no interest in sending apprentices abroad or receiving apprentices from abroad for extended periods.

The main source of funding for CBLTMA is the Erasmus+ programme. A notable exception is Denmark with the *Praktik I Udlandet* (PIU) programme, which has national sources of funding and clear guidelines on their scope and use.

### **Support and continuing initiatives**

Companies need organisational support in matching apprentices with in-company placements, dealing with, for example, accommodation, social security and residence permits. While VET providers could support

a system of long-term mobility, they would need clear guidance on how to support and implement CBLTMA in the context of both outgoing and incoming apprentices. VET providers have the additional problem that they also lack time and resources (for example staff); in many countries they do not have overall responsibility for the apprentices, as the companies do. Specialised intermediary organisations could take over the management and organisation of such mobility but the findings show there are few intermediary organisations that could offer such support.

Projects on CBLTMA are extremely rare. Two out of the three projects covered by the study concerned mainly long-term mobility of apprenticeship graduates.

### **Employer interest**

Employers do not want to let apprentices go, particularly when they become productive. Even when financial subsidies are in place that allow the training company to recuperate the apprentice wage obligations during the stay abroad, the company still loses the productive work contribution of its apprentices. Training companies might miss essential information about CBLTMA, such as how they can recoup apprenticeship-related costs, including loss of productivity, during the stay abroad. The benefits might be unclear and often unpredictable.

Employers might not be interested in receiving apprentices that will return home for reasons such as costs associated with additional training for apprentices from abroad, additional time and resources to support logistics arrangements, potential language barriers and concerns about maintaining health and safety and curriculum training standards. Employers may perceive the training of an apprentice who will return to his/her country of origin after a mobility period as a waste of time from their perspective; there is lack of evidence on the benefits for the companies and/or insufficient awareness raising.

### **Apprentice interest**

Reluctance to participate in CBLTMA has been observed among apprentices and, when they are young, their parents. Alongside low motivation and awareness, specific legal issues may arise and apply in case of underage apprentices going to undergo a long period of in-company training abroad. The mobility of such apprentices requires a greater degree of supervision/support and administrative work from the parties involved. Overall, CBLTMA

schemes appear to be better suited to VET students who have reached the legal age of majority.

Apprentices, irrespective of the age, may not want to leave on long-term mobility, or they would prefer short-term mobility for fear of losing the employment opportunity with their home company. Additionally, apprentices often have comparatively poor foreign language skills, which can further hinder mobility.

All these findings from the country-level investigations are consistent and coherent with those coming from the project-level analyses with one notable exception: the assumption that many organisational issues do not apply or are of minor importance in the case of intra-company long-term cross-border mobility (i.e. between big companies with affiliates abroad) is not confirmed. Big companies face the same organisational issues but have the capacity to manage and absorb them, compared to small and micro-companies. Company size, while important, is usually not enough to explain attitudes to CBLTMA; however, it needs to be considered in devising solutions for putting the policy into practice.

Many of the issues that emerged from the country- and project-level investigations also arose during the focus group discussions with the EU-level social partners (Box 1).

**Box 1. Main messages from the focus group discussions with the EU-level social partners (points of concern and barriers)**

- Until national-level affiliates see the potential fit of CBLTMA mobility in their overall strategies, EU-level organisations have little room to promote it. However, at the national level, social partners do not treat CBLTMA as a strategic objective which signals (or is due to) a weak interest among companies.
- Mobility in apprenticeships is more complex and challenging than in school-based VET and higher education due particularly to the nature of the relationship between the apprentice and the companies.
- There is a brain-drain concern among employers in the context of severe skills shortages. Social partners, notably unions, are also concerned about the use of mobility not for training but for regular work purposes abroad and underline the need to avoid this type of abuse.
- The main obstacle for employers (both small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and larger) in letting the apprentice go on long-term mobility abroad is linked to the loss of productive capacity. There are also concerns about the quality

and comparability of the learning experience with an employer abroad, as the type of in-company experiences differ between systems where companies provide structured learning versus systems where apprentices just apply knowledge learned in school at the company.

- CBLTMA is complicated to organise and difficult to argue for, particularly since there is no or limited tradition for companies to let their apprentices go abroad. Benefits are not evident for companies. Stronger arguments are needed for the employers and there should be a balance between the costs and return on investment.
- Even many young people do not want to go on long-term mobility abroad and prefer short-term mobility for fear of losing the employment opportunity with their home company.

Source: Cedefop.

While European social partners were critical regarding the application of the CBLTMA policy in the short term, they also do not exclude that it may work in the medium to long term. In this sense, social partners argue for an incremental approach at the sectoral level and building the evidence. They also expressed their support for short-term mobility of apprentices, which could also work as a stepping stone for long-term mobility of apprentices and graduates. They strongly signal that long-term mobility should not be pursued at the expense of short-term. Box 2 summarises the suggestions for the future, as expressed by the EU-level social partners.

To address the existing obstacles, the policy needs to be underpinned by strategies that foresee incremental changes at the system and implementation levels. It should consider the framework conditions, build the institutional support and cross-border partnerships, build the evidence on benefits, and raise awareness among employers and apprentices. This could make the policy a reality in the medium to long term.

Detailed suggestions for policy-makers on how to make the policy work in the medium to long term are available in Cedefop's policy brief *Cross-border long-term apprentice mobility: making it work: suggestions for national policy-makers* (Cedefop, 2021a), which is based on the findings of the same study.

**Box 2. Main messages from the focus group discussions with the EU-level social partners (suggestions for the future)**

- The CBLTMA policy could be pursued at sectoral level, where strategies may become more concrete and where it is easier to establish contacts between different countries.
- CBLTMA should not be treated as a stand-alone objective but be part of a broader (sectoral) strategy (for example, sector's overall strategy to modernise, attract learners, survive). Employers need to see the benefits on a larger scale.
- (Sectoral) SME networks could be created, where they can join and set up rotation schemes.
- Long-term mobility should not be promoted at the expense of short-term. Short-term mobility could be used as a stepping stone for long-term mobility: set a good experience in short-term mobility, provide evidence and then go to the next level.
- Engage companies that are more involved in mobility to set good experiences and promote them from peer to peer.
- Long-term mobility should be more than an opportunity to develop only soft skills (for which short-term mobility is enough).
- Mobility needs a framework to minimise administrative and bureaucratic work: make sure that certain rules are respected so that apprentices are safe and undergo training while in a company abroad.

*Source:* Cedefop.

## CHAPTER 1.

# Introduction

## 1.1. Background information

Cross-border mobility <sup>(10)</sup> for the purpose of learning is recognised as an increasingly relevant dimension of learning experiences. This applies at different education and training levels and systems, including vocational education and training (VET), with benefits for learners and companies. Based on the assumption that learning mobility can strengthen the future employability of young people, in the last 20 years, a rich policy framework for mobility in initial VET (IVET), along with policy and tools to support it, has been developed (Box 3). Most recently, the European Parliament Resolution of 17 December 2020 on the *Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience* calls on the Commission to expand worthwhile mobility programmes for apprentices. It underlines that increased mobility opportunities can help to expand apprentices' personal, educational and professional networks and make VET more attractive, rather than it being perceived as a second choice. However, the long-term dimension has not been a priority since the beginning, while the policy discourse and the evidence available are mostly about mobility in general.

The package of EU-level measures related to high-quality IVET, including apprenticeships, includes those to stimulate cross-border VET learner mobility, also long-term ones. To create further opportunities specifically for apprentices, the 2016 Commission Communication *Investing in Europe's youth* launched ErasmusPro, an initiative to increase long-term mobility abroad, for vocational education and training learners, including apprentices or recent graduates. The Communication defines long-term mobility as periods of minimum six months among VET learners, including apprentices or recent graduates. However, in the 2019 Erasmus+ programme guide <sup>(11)</sup>,

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<sup>(10)</sup> From one country to another.

<sup>(11)</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/default/files/erasmus-plus-programme-guide-2019\\_en\\_1.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/default/files/erasmus-plus-programme-guide-2019_en_1.pdf)



the minimum threshold for long-term mobility was reduced to three months <sup>(12)</sup>.

**Box 3. EU legislation and policy initiatives in the field of mobility in IVET (selection)**

- 2020 [European Parliament Resolution](#) of 17 December 2020 on the Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (European Parliament, 2020)
- 2017 [Commission progress report on a learning mobility benchmark](#) (European Commission, 2017a)
- 2016 [Investing in Europe's youth](#) (European Commission, 2016)
- 2011 Council Recommendation [Youth on the move](#) promoting learning mobility of young people (Council of the European Union, 2011)
- 2010 [Youth on the move package](#) (European Commission, 2010)
- 2009 [green paper promoting the learning mobility of young people](#) (European Commission, 2009)
- [Council conclusions on youth mobility](#) (Council of the European Union, 2008b)
- 2006 [European quality charter for mobility](#) (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2006)
- 2001 Recommendation of the Parliament and of the Council on [mobility for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers](#) (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2001)
- 2000 Council Resolution concerning an [action plan for mobility](#) (Council of the European Union, 2000)

Source: Cedefop.

In the following years, ErasmusPro was complemented by the pilot projects under *Euro app* (European apprenticeship), spearheaded by the European Parliament with a budget of EUR 4 million specifically to facilitate cross-border long-term mobility in apprenticeships (CBLTMA) <sup>(13)</sup>.

Although complete information and data on long-term apprentice mobility may not be easily accessible and there are several concerns about its quality, preliminary evidence suggests that most mobile VET learners are students in school-based VET <sup>(14)</sup>. Looking only at the Erasmus+ programme,

<sup>(12)</sup> The Cedefop study applied the definition of long-term mobility as specified in the Communication.

<sup>(13)</sup> [www.euroapprenticeship.eu/UserFiles/File/dossier-news/euro-app-enpdf.pdf](http://www.euroapprenticeship.eu/UserFiles/File/dossier-news/euro-app-enpdf.pdf)

<sup>(14)</sup> Exceptions include countries with dual VET systems (Denmark, Germany), where VET at upper secondary level is delivered through apprenticeships by default.

the average duration of VET mobility (apprentices and other VET learners) is around 30 days (European Commission, 2017b). This means that the number of VET learners participating in long-term mobility (defined either as minimum three months or six months) is much smaller than the number of VET learners in short-term mobility. The same applies to apprentices.

However, looking at the number of applications for Erasmus+ mobility funding shows there is high demand for Erasmus+ (short-term) VET learner mobility <sup>(15)</sup>. While not enough, it is an important precondition for higher demand for long(er)-term mobility, both among school-based VET students and apprentices. However, for the latter, it appears that the uptake of long-term mobility is hindered by factors that are inherent to apprenticeships, relative to their contractual nature and organisational or logistical constraints, and companies' motivation and capacity to tackle such challenges. This particularly concerns small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

## 1.2. Study and structure of the comparative analysis

In 2019, Cedefop launched a study of CBLTMA <sup>(16)</sup>. This explored CBLTMA in the EU to identify the enablers and the disablers for such a policy and recommendations for actions potentially favouring its implementation. The study was based on desk and field research in six countries <sup>(17)</sup> and three projects which included cross-border long-term mobility of apprentices and apprentice graduates <sup>(18)</sup>. The study also included focus-group discussions with EU-level social partners: three sector-based focus groups – agriculture, construction, tourism – and one cross-sectoral focus group were organised. The study explored CBLTMA from the perspective of both incoming and outgoing mobility, resulting in this comparative analysis and in a paper for policy-makers *Cross-border long-term apprentice mobility: making it work: suggestions for national policy-makers* (Cedefop, 2021a).

For the purposes of the study, cross-border long-term mobility of apprentices is understood as the period an apprentice spends abroad in

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<sup>(15)</sup> This mobility is generally of short duration and apprentices are underrepresented.

<sup>(16)</sup> The study was conducted between January 2019 and October 2020.

<sup>(17)</sup> Denmark, Ireland, France, Hungary, the Netherlands and Austria.

<sup>(18)</sup> *Apprentices in motion, Euro apprenticeship pilot projects, Travel to farm.*

in-company training (combined, or not, with training at a VET provider) for a duration of minimum six months, and typically of up to 12 months, as part of his/her apprenticeship training. The apprentice is already in training with a training company in his/her home country.

#### Box 4. What does ‘apprenticeship’ mean?

For the purpose of the study, the following definition was used:

- Apprenticeships are recognised as a specific form of vocational education and training that consists of systematically alternating periods at the workplace and in an education and training institution. The apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives a compensation (wage or allowance) and the employer assumes responsibility for providing the apprentice with training leading to a specific occupation (\*). Apprentices should have the status of apprentice as defined in his or her home country. During the placement abroad s/he should – ideally – have a similar status, hence be under contract or agreement with an employer and receive a compensation.

(\*) Definition based on Cedefop glossary: Cedefop 92011). *Glossary – Quality in education and training*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. [www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4106\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4106_en.pdf)

Source: Cedefop.

The study was organised in four steps:

- (a) the development of an analytical framework (AF), based on desk research and tested during the country-level investigations;
- (b) country-level investigations in six Member States, carried out by national experts (Denmark, Ireland, France, Hungary, the Netherlands and Austria), through desk research and interviews to investigate the enablers and disablers for long-term cross-country mobility along the dimensions identified in the analytical framework. The country-level investigations looked at the potential of the policy within the national contexts (as this specific type of mobility was rarely implemented or in the national policy focus)<sup>(19)</sup>. The list of organisations interviewed is available in Annex 1;
- (c) project-level investigations, carried out on three projects that included cross-border long-term mobility of apprentices and/or apprenticeship graduates (*Apprentices in motion*, two *Euro apprenticeship* pilot projects

<sup>(19)</sup> Except for France.

conducted between 2016 and 2019 and *Travel to farm*) through desk research and interviews to learn lessons from previous experiences of relevance for the topic of the study. The list of organisations interviewed is available in Annex 1;

- (d) discussions with EU social partners in three sectoral focus groups (agriculture, tourism, construction) and one cross-sectoral to understand the degree and nature of their involvement with CBLTMA policies and how it could be enhanced. The list of the EU sectoral and cross-sectoral organisations participating in the focus groups is available in Annex 2.

The six countries (Denmark, Ireland, France, Hungary, the Netherlands and Austria) in this study cover different approaches to apprenticeship: these are types A and B, as defined in the Cedefop study *Apprenticeship schemes in European countries: a cross-nation overview* (Cedefop, 2018). Denmark, Ireland and Austria have apprenticeship schemes that fall under type A (apprenticeship as an education and training system), where apprenticeship is organised as a separate system with specific governance structures, standards, curricula and qualifications. France, Hungary and the Netherlands have apprenticeship schemes that fall under type B (apprenticeship as a type of VET delivery), where apprenticeship and school-based VET are part of the same system governed by common structures, share the same standards and curricula and lead to the same qualifications.

The selection of the three projects posed an important challenge, as there are almost no experiences of CBLTMA. The *Apprentices in motion* (AIM) project supports long-term intra-company mobility of recent apprenticeship graduates, and not of apprentices. The two *Euro apprenticeship* (*Euro app*) pilot projects conducted between 2016 and 2019, while aimed at promoting long-term mobility of both apprentices and apprenticeship graduates, turned out to have reached mainly the latter, as most of the mobility beneficiaries were apprentice graduates (81); only 23 were apprentices. *Travel to farm* (T2F), comes from an organisation which is part of a well-established global network that promotes mobility of apprentices and graduates looking for work experience abroad in the agricultural sector.

The selection of the sectors for the interviews with the representatives of the European-level social partner representatives was decided during the study implementation and after the country-level investigations.

This comparative analysis introduces and discusses the analytical framework (Chapter 2), summarises the main findings of the country-level

investigations (Chapter 3) and of the project-level investigations (Chapter 4), and finishes with conclusions on the way forward and the views of the social partners (Chapter 5).

## CHAPTER 2.

# Analytical framework

Based on desk research, the analytical framework identified three levels and several corresponding dimensions which are believed to have a link, direct or indirect, to apprentice mobility, including long-term mobility. The assumption was that these dimensions can act either as an enabler or disabler of long-duration mobility in apprenticeships. The AF provided the backbone to the country-level investigations and was tested throughout. The relevance of the dimensions included in the AF for the CBLTMA was checked, as well as whether they favour or hamper long-duration mobility in apprenticeships. The AF proved useful in guiding the research and structuring the information. While no dimension seemed irrelevant, some clearly had more significance than others, or made more sense when being discussed together with other dimensions.

Section 2.1 provides an overview of the AF, and Section 2.2 includes the refinement of the framework after its application in practice.

## 2.1. Overview of the analytical framework

The AF identifies several dimensions of relevance for CBLTMA at three levels:

- (a) framework;
- (b) system;
- (c) implementation.

The framework level comprises exogenous dimensions at a macro level that were assumed, before the testing of the AF during the country-level investigations, to be relevant to mobility in apprenticeships. The framework level specifies economic, governmental and sociocultural dimensions affecting demand for, and spending on, cross-border long-term mobility in apprenticeships. These dimensions define the background within which not only CBLTMA, but apprenticeships generally operate and could be considered as wider contextual factors, macro-level factors, or push and pull factors. While they affect implementation, they are beyond the control of

those directly involved (apprentices, employers and learning providers). For instance, the framework level includes dimensions, such as overall size of the companies and skills shortages.

The system level includes dimensions related to the design and governance of the national apprenticeship schemes. These dimensions describe the main features of apprenticeships as set in the regulatory frameworks, such as training standards, validation, alternance, type of contract, status and remuneration, that can be of relevance to CBLTMA. Hence, they are partially exogenous and partially endogenous to apprentice mobility. They vary by country or even within countries where different apprenticeship schemes exist and may vary by sectors.

The implementation level includes dimensions related to apprenticeship and learner-mobility policy. These are applied on the ground to implement apprenticeships and support learner mobility. Apprentices, training providers and employers have a certain amount of control over them and can design/apply them according to their needs. This includes financial and non-financial support for mobility, including programmes, tools and services, guidelines and structures. These dimensions can be shaped by policy-makers and are likely to affect countries' capacity for mobility (such as VET school capacity). Dimensions on this level are endogenous and can, in many instances, be linked to very specific circumstances, such as personal relationships or resources, such as VET provider staff links with companies abroad and at local level, and learner preferences.

Table 1 presents the dimensions corresponding to each of the three levels.

Table 1. **Analytical framework: levels and dimensions**

Level	Dimension
<b>(1) Framework level</b>	1.1 Overall size and training capacity of companies
	1.2 SEOs in the national context
	1.3 SEOs the EU/international context
	1.4 Intra-EU trade
	1.5 Enterprise foreign affiliates
	1.6 International sourcing
	1.7 Intra-EU labour migration (movement of skilled labour)
	1.8 Skill shortages in medium-level occupations (EQF 3-4)
	1.9 Share of job-related non-formal adult education and training sponsored by employers
	1.10 Immigration policy
	1.11 International qualifications
	1.12 Tradition of region and/or sector regarding cross-border VET and/or labour mobility
<b>(2) System level</b>	2.1 Apprenticeship type (according to Cedefop typology)
	2.2 Share of VET students in apprenticeship schemes
	2.3 Apprenticeship function (train-skilled workers in selected occupations or in general; fight unemployment)
	2.4 Governance (strategic, decision-making)
	2.5 Funding of the in-company training
	2.6 Duration of the whole apprenticeship period
	2.7 Duration of the placement in the company
	2.8 Alternance
	2.9 Type of contract
	2.10 Status of apprentices
	2.11 Remuneration
	2.12 Occupational health, safety and social insurance
	2.13 Curriculum/training standards
	2.14 Use of validation
	2.15 Legal basis for apprenticeships and integration of mobility
<b>(3) Implementation level</b>	3.1 Governance (implementation)
	3.2 Age of apprentices at enrolment
	3.3 Employers' attitude towards apprenticeship



Level	Dimension
	3.4 Mobility national strategies or initiatives
	3.5 Long-duration mobility national strategies or initiatives
	3.6 Flexibility of curriculum to include learning from mobility
	3.7 Methodologies and guidelines
	3.8 Authorities promoting LT mobility of apprentices
	3.9 Intermediary organisations and structures (State authorities, labour market (LM) representatives, mobility providers)
	3.10 VET providers
	3.11 Funding of LT mobility
	3.12 Employers' interest in receiving apprentices from abroad on LT mobility
	3.13 Employers' interest in letting apprentices go abroad on LT mobility
	3.14 Apprentices' and their families' interest and availability in doing LT mobility
	3.15 (Pilot) projects of LT mobility of apprentices

*NB:* SEOs: sectoral employers' organisations;  
EQF: European qualifications framework;  
LT: long-term;  
LM: labour market.

*Source:* Cedefop.

## 2.2. Refinement of the analytical framework for future research

The application of the AF in practice showed that the three levels worked well. In Denmark and Hungary the distinction between the system and implementation levels was not so clear-cut, when it came to the dimensions related to the governance and curricula. This difficulty is related to the way the system is designed (very flexible and decentralised in Denmark and very centralised in Hungary).

The dimensions mostly proved to be highly relevant in highlighting important exogenous and endogenous factors that need to be taken into consideration in making CBLTMA policy a reality in the medium to long run. The exceptions were two at the framework level (1.9: share of job-related non-formal adult education and training sponsored by employers; 1.11: international qualifications), one at the system level (2.2: share of VET

students in apprenticeship schemes) and one at the implementation level (3.3: employers' attitude towards apprenticeship).

The practical application (Annex 3) also showed that, when it comes to discussion and analysis, there is a need to cluster the dimensions rather than treating them individually. While there are differences in the way the national experts decided to group the dimensions and name the clusters (Annex 3), the main clusters given in Tables 2, 3 and 4 may be considered for future research and/or analyses.

Table 2. **Clusters of dimensions relative to the framework level**

Cluster: Framework level	Dimension
<b>Overall size and training capacity of companies</b>	1.1 Overall size and training capacity of companies
<b>Representation of business interests/ influence of SEOs</b>	1.2 SEOs in the national context
	1.3 SEOs in the EU/international context
<b>Internationalisation of the economy/ globalisation</b>	1.4 Intra-EU trade
	1.5 Enterprise foreign affiliates
	1.6 International sourcing
	1.12 Tradition of region and/or sector regarding cross-border VET and/or labour mobility
<b>Skills shortages and migration issues</b>	1.8 Skill shortages in medium-level occupations (EQF 3-4)
	1.7 Intra-EU labour migration (movement of skilled labour)
	1.10 Immigration policy

Source: Cedefop.

Table 3. Clusters of dimensions relative to the system level

Cluster: System level	Dimensions
<b>Objective of apprenticeships, governance and funding</b>	2.1 Apprenticeship type
	2.2 Share of VET students in apprenticeship schemes, all other dimensions are covered
	2.3 Apprenticeship function
	2.4 Governance (strategic, decision-making)
	2.5 Funding of the in-company training
	2.15 Legal basis for apprenticeships and integration of mobility
<b>Duration of apprenticeships and alternance</b>	2.6 Duration of the whole apprenticeship period
	2.7 Duration of in-company placements
	2.8 Alternance
<b>Legal aspects of apprenticeships</b>	2.9 Type of contract
	2.10 Status of apprentices
	2.11 Remuneration
	2.12 Occupational health and safety standards and social insurance
<b>Curricula, standards and qualifications</b>	2.13 Curriculum training standard
	3.6 Flexibility of curriculum to include learning from mobility
	2.14 Use of validation

Source: Cedefop.

Table 4. Clusters of dimensions relative to the implementation level

Cluster: Implementation level	Dimensions
<b>Strategies and funding</b>	3.4 Mobility national strategies or initiatives
	3.5 Long duration mobility national strategies or initiatives
	3.11 Funding of LT mobility
	3.8 Authorities promoting LT mobility of apprentices

Cluster: Implementation level	Dimensions
<b>Support and ongoing initiatives</b>	3.7 Methodologies and guidelines
	3.9 Intermediary organisations and structures (State authorities, LM representatives, mobility providers)
	3.10 VET providers
	3.15 (Pilot) projects of LT mobility of apprentices
<b>Employers' interest</b>	3.12 Employers' interest in receiving apprentices from abroad on LT mobility
	3.13 Employers' interest in letting apprentices go abroad on LT mobility
<b>Apprentices' interest</b>	3.2 Age of apprentices at enrolment
	3.14 Apprentices' and their families' interest and availability in doing LT mobility

Source: Cedefop.

The clusters at the framework level include all dimensions except for 1.9 (share of job-related non-formal adult education and training sponsored by employers) and 1.11 (international qualifications). During the country-level investigations, they proved of no or little relevance in the identification of the enablers or disablers for CBLTMA.

While dimension 2.2 (share of VET students in apprenticeship schemes) was not covered during the country investigations, due to the difficulty in some countries in gathering data on the number of apprentices (Cedefop, 2021b), this dimension needs to be factored in, especially when it comes to investing in CBLTMA to estimate the potential for this specific policy demand. Dimension 3.6 (flexibility of curriculum to include learning from mobility) was transferred from the implementation level to the system level, as more relevant for the latter.

The following dimensions are left out:

- (a) dimension 3.3 (employers' attitude towards apprenticeship), as implicitly addressed at the system level under apprenticeship function;
- (b) dimension 3.1 (governance – implementation), as the distinction between governance at system level (which was kept) and governance at implementation level proved not so clear cut.

## CHAPTER 3.

# Country-level findings on mobility enabling and disabling factors

Chapter 3 summarises the enabling and disabling factors for long-term cross-country mobility in apprenticeships identified during the country-level investigations, using the levels and (clusters of) dimensions of the AF.

### 3.1. Enabling and disabling factors: Denmark <sup>(20)</sup>

#### 3.1.1. Framework level

The key enablers at framework level can be summarised as follows:

- (a) (+) overall size and training capacity of companies: Danish SMEs have good training capacity. Every fifth Danish company employs one or more apprentice(s). The dual VET system, where the governance of VET lies firmly with the social partners, supports a strong relationship between company training needs and apprenticeship and, hence, in principle facilitates CBLTMA;
- (b) (+) tradition regarding cross-border VET and/or labour mobility: mobility in VET has a long-standing tradition in Denmark, dating back to the travelling journeyman of the medieval trade guilds. There is a long-standing tradition in the Danish agricultural sector and the hotel and restaurant sector for apprenticeships in other countries. Also, mainly due to shortage of apprenticeship places in Denmark, students training to be animal keepers and specialised cabinetmakers often go abroad to achieve high-quality company-based training and diverse experiences.

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<sup>(20)</sup> Apprenticeships in Denmark adhere to 'type A: apprenticeship as an education and training system', as defined by the Cedefop cross-nation overview on apprenticeships (Cedefop, 2018).

There are no clear disablers at framework level in Denmark, though some dimensions should be regarded as ambiguous. While the framework conditions are generally good, there are factors that impact negatively on CBLTMA, including:

- (a) (+/-) skills shortages in medium-level occupations: skills shortages, particularly in the manufacturing and building and construction sectors could, in principle, be a driver of in-bound mobility of apprentices. All evidence, however, points to employers having a strong preference for hiring already qualified foreign labour and reluctance to take on apprentices from abroad;
- (b) (+/-) enterprise foreign affiliates: many large Danish companies have foreign affiliates, which makes it easier to send apprentices abroad, if the apprentices remain within the administrative and contractual structure of their employer. Due to a lack of comparable training opportunities outside the company structure, this does not have any positive effect on CBLTMA in general;
- (c) (+/-) sectoral employers' organisations in the national, international and European context: the focus on CBLTMA depends on sectoral positions, which may, in turn, be influenced by current trends or historical political positions. In some sectors, the tradition for learning from international experiences is strong, while in others it is weak or non-existent; for instance, students in programmes leading to occupations in industry or construction very rarely go abroad for work-based training. Hence, SEOs cannot be considered supportive to CBLTMA in general.

### 3.1.2. System level

The key enablers at system level can be summarised as follows:

- (a) (+) apprenticeship type, share of VET students in apprenticeship schemes: the dual system requires students to complete significant parts of their education as company-based training. The alternance structure in Danish VET programmes, with relatively long periods of company-based training interspersed by shorter periods of school-based learning, supports CBLTMA, since longer stays abroad can easily be accommodated. Most VET students are apprentices, so VET mobility is effectively apprentice mobility;
- (b) (+) legal basis for apprenticeships and integration of mobility: mobility during apprenticeship is inscribed in Danish VET legislation as a possibility. The Act on VET states that the company-based part of VET programmes

can be wholly or partly based in a company in another country. The political priority given to internationalisation of VET is embodied in the Act on VET, which refers to the opportunity for apprentices to complete part of their apprenticeship abroad. A well-established programme Apprenticeship abroad (*Praktik I Udlandet*, PIU) offers support to apprentices, regardless of whether they are sent by the employer or the VET school, and rewards schools that send VET students without training contracts with an employer in Denmark abroad;

- (c) (+) curriculum/training standard: curricula in Denmark are outcome-based, meaning the content of training is not laid down in detail. This means that individual pathways may vary considerably, and that mobility can be accommodated as long as the objectives are met. Duration of periods at school and in the company, the training objectives for each period are clearly specified in curricula and can serve as guidelines for employers;
- (d) (+) use of validation: the use of validation of learning outcomes at the end of a stay abroad ensures that students' learning progress is kept on track.

Neutral or ambiguous dimensions include:

- (a) (+/-) funding of the in-company training: the funding of in-company training is, in principle, an enabler of mobility, since the reimbursement system allows for placements abroad. However, the fact that employers pay a salary to apprentices may serve to strengthen the employee status of the apprentice; while this may otherwise be positive for future employment opportunities, it may work against mobility;
- (b) (+/-) type of contract; status of apprentices: the existence of a standard contract specifying the duties of the employer and the apprentice, and accompanied by a training plan, clearly enables mobility, since it aids agreement on terms for the apprenticeship with the employer in the receiving country. However, continuation of the contract under the same conditions with an employer abroad is difficult to ensure;
- (c) (+/-) apprenticeship governance: the legal base setting out the requirements for apprenticeship clearly supports mobility, offering a start point for negotiation and for deciding whether an offer from an employer should be considered relevant. Yet, the governance of the VET system, where the main responsibilities lie with the social partners, creates a situation where fluctuations in sectoral labour markets may influence

CBLTMA positively or negatively. Where labour markets are tight, the social partners tend to want to restrain mobility of apprentices.

Key disablers at system level include:

- (a) (-) apprenticeship function: the function of apprenticeship as a source of employment may act against mobility, especially in SMEs where it may be difficult to compensate the absence of an apprentice for a prolonged period;
- (b) (-) remuneration, occupational health, safety and social insurance: the relatively high Danish apprenticeship salary may work against mobility, since it makes it less attractive in economic terms for students to go abroad. However, only paid employment as an apprentice entitles admission to school periods and to the final examination: unpaid stays may be accommodated in the overall training plan but cannot be approved as part of the curriculum contributing to the learning objectives. Occupational health, safety and social insurance are also an issue for Danish apprentices abroad.

### 3.1.3. Implementation level

The Danish business structure is dominated by small SMEs. While these employers train most VET students and have sufficient capacity to train Danish apprentices in their own company, they struggle with managing CBLTMA. Since Danish apprentices are employees and contribute to the daily operation of companies, the employer may find it difficult doing without them for a prolonged period. The SMEs have difficulties with inbound mobility in assessing the potential contribution of an apprentice from another country, and this is often exacerbated by language barriers.

The key enablers at implementation level can be summarised as follows:

- (a) (+) (pilot) projects of CBLTMA: in 1992, the PIU apprenticeship mobility programme was launched to support VET students going abroad for (all or a share of) the company-based part of their education. The duration can range from one month to several years. The programme is well developed and has been operational without interruption ever since, with significant numbers of students taking part. The students can either be sent abroad by the training company (*Udstationering*) or the VET school (*Skoleudsendelse*). Interest in the PIU programme grew steadily following its inception in 1992, and the numbers of students studying abroad is still rising. Yet, growth has been slow and uneven, and CBLTMA is



not a policy priority at present. PIU coordinators work closely with VET providers. This functions as an enabler, since students can address a specific knowledgeable person on campus for support and answers to questions with relevance for mobility. The coordinators work to promote the opportunities for mobility and are constantly kept up to date in the context of the network supported by the Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science;

- (b) (+) age of apprentices at enrolment: the fact that Danish VET students are typically of age when enrolling in a VET programme aids mobility. Older students tend to be more mature, more resilient and more courageous than younger students;
- (c) (+) flexibility of curriculum to include learning from mobility: the outcome-based curriculum, with its extensive opportunities for students, training companies and schools to draw up individual pathways, enables mobility even in cases where foreign companies are not able to provide the exact learning outcomes scheduled for the relevant in-company period;
- (d) (+) VET providers are generally well-prepared to support CBLTMA from their side;
- (e) (+) funding of LT mobility: national sources of funding exist, with clear guidelines on their scope and use.

Some dimensions are more ambiguous:

- (a) (+/-) employer attitudes towards apprenticeships: employers regard apprenticeships as part of their recruitment strategy, and as a way to train their future workforce. While this justifies long-term investment in apprentices, it also often leads to expectations that an apprentice should contribute positively to productivity and growth in the training company;
- (b) (+/-) mobility national strategies or initiatives/long-duration mobility strategies or initiatives: while such initiatives have existed for Danish VET (hence, for apprentices) since the 1980s, the topic is currently not on the Danish policy agenda;
- (c) (+/-) authorities promoting long-term mobility of apprentices, involvement of intermediary organisations and structures: the Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science is responsible for the PIU programme as well as for the DK/USA programme and Erasmus+. The ministry promotes the programme through information meetings for schools at regular intervals, and the coordinator in the ministry is available to answer questions from coordinators in VET schools. The agency also runs a network for PIU co-

ordinators. Yet, national authorities are only lightly involved in promoting mobility, which is largely left to those social partners that have an interest in the topic and to individual VET schools. The result is that the intensity of promotion activities is very uneven across sectors and geographic regions;

- (d) (+/-) methodologies and guidelines: PIU offers easy access to clear guidelines for schools, students, and employers. This supports CBLTMA, since most questions can be answered through a simple internet search. Another project, *Travel to farm* (Section 4.3), uses a more elaborate method where the organisation acts as a combined travel agency and guidance body. This is a strong enabler for CBLTMA in the agricultural sector. Yet, the methodology applied in PIU strongly relies on the ability and initiative of individual students in establishing a contract with an employer in another country and foresees only light guidance and factual assistance from the PIU coordinators. This may deter students from CBLTMA.

Disablers at implementation level were also identified, including:

- (a) (-) employer interest in letting apprentices go abroad on long-term mobility: the expectation that an apprentice should contribute positively to productivity and growth in the training company, while generally very positive for employer attitudes towards apprenticeship, is a potential barrier for CBLTMA: employers expect to maximise an apprentice's capacities throughout the entire programme;
- (b) (-) employer interest in receiving apprentices from abroad on long-term mobility: employers, such as in the manufacturing sector, were observed to be reluctant to receive apprentices from other countries. If they have to fill skills gaps, they tend to look for trained foreign workers rather than apprentices that may return to their home country after completing the training. Companies that would like to host an apprentice do not have easy access to an organisation or agency supporting the matching of apprentices with host companies and dealing with practical issues like accommodation, residence and work permits and social security.

## 3.2. Enabling and disabling factors: Ireland <sup>(21)</sup>

### 3.2.1. Framework level

The main enabling factors at framework level are:

- (a) (+) skills shortages in medium-level occupations (EQF level 3-4): the Irish labour market is facing a skills deficit. Unlocking opportunities for skills development is considered vital and apprenticeships are part of this discourse. The immediate focus is on expanding apprenticeships, attracting higher numbers of apprentices to improve the supply of skilled labour across a wide range of industries, including in medium-level occupations in the construction, electrical engineering and healthcare sectors;
- (b) (+) immigration policy: Ireland is experiencing labour shortages and faces a need to supply the level of skilled workers required to meet the demands of economic growth. The country partly relies on EU and international labour mobility to address the shortfall in the skilled workforce. This can potentially be an enabler for CBLTMA;
- (c) (+) international qualifications are delivered in Ireland and could lay the groundwork for the implementation of CBLTMA. Some international qualifications are mapped to the national framework of qualifications for Ireland (NFQ). In accounting, for example, the Association of Accounting Technician (AAT) level 2 and 3 diplomas correspond to levels 5 and 6 of the NQF in Ireland. NARIC Ireland provides advice on the academic recognition of a foreign qualification by comparing it, where possible, to a major award type and level on the Irish NFQ.

Some dimensions were found to be neutral or ambiguous:

- (a) (+/-) the overall size and training capacity of companies was highlighted by all interviewees as being a disabler for CBLTM for SMEs. Large numbers of SMEs with limited resource capacity cannot be expected to agree to apprentices participating in periods of long-term mobility (LTM). They also have limited resources to support receiving apprentices. However, the Generation apprenticeship initiative, expanding the offer of apprenticeships to a wider range of sectors, is an opportunity to expand CBLTMA in sectors not traditionally involved in apprenticeships;

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<sup>(21)</sup> Apprenticeships in Ireland adhere to 'type A', as defined by Cedefop (Cedefop, 2018).

- (b) (+/-) intra-EU labour migration (movement of skilled labour): there is a long historical tradition of movement of Irish workers inward and outward. Ireland has historically been a net exporter of labour but more recent trends show that Ireland has now become a net importer. However, these recent trends have not yet translated into specific mobility policies in VET.

### 3.2.2. System level

The apprenticeship system is currently being upscaled and improved, and new apprenticeship programmes in new sectors are being launched through the Generation apprenticeship initiative. However, there is currently no policy support for CBLTMA.

Key enablers at system level are:

- (a) (+) apprenticeship function: apprenticeships are seen as a long-term investment in skilled workers, which would justify further investments through CBLTMA. Provision is extending to new sectors, in addition to the traditional craft-based apprenticeships covering 26 occupations;
- (b) (+) use of validation: validation of non-formal and informal learning (known as recognition of prior learning (RPL) in Ireland) to shorten apprenticeship duration has been in practice for some time, particularly following the economic crisis. During this time, RPL was used to support redundant apprentices who could apply to have trade-related work experience or formal training recognised as part of their apprenticeship, thus enabling them to complete the apprenticeship. At present, registered apprentices can apply for phase and/or time exemptions in recognition of formal qualifications or trade-related work experience. Schemes already in place can potentially be exploited for mobility.

Neutral or ambiguous dimensions include:

- (a) (+/-) alternance: Ireland works with an intricate model of alternance based on a seven-phase structure in the traditional craft apprenticeship model. This may limit opportunities for apprentices to be away from the workplace for additional periods other than as currently required. However, the new Generation apprenticeship initiative aims to offer more flexibility in the alternance model to suit employers as well as learners;
- (b) (+/-) curriculum/training standards: curricula of traditional apprenticeships are complex and do not have much flexibility to accommodate long periods of absence. The new Generation apprenticeship scheme allows

for more flexibility in learning methods (for example blended and online learning) to further facilitate participation in apprenticeships.

Disabling factors on system level include:

- (a) (-) health and safety standards: there are concerns that the necessary standards for the health and safety of apprentices cannot be maintained during mobility; variations in standards between countries are regarded as a barrier to apprentice mobility;
- (b) (-) funding: a major obstacle to the future expansion of CBLTMA in non-traditional sectors for apprenticeships is the cost for employers who are required to pay a salary and subsistence to apprentices even when they are participating in off-the-job phases of the apprenticeship; this is not the case for the crafts sector (traditional for apprenticeships) where the government covers the cost of the apprentice wage during the off-the-job training periods. Employers are unlikely to allow for apprentices to participate in CBLTMA if required to foot the bill;
- (c) (-) legal basis for apprenticeships and integration of mobility: the legal framework for apprenticeships in Ireland is complex and does not cover CBLTMA. It allows for a certain flexibility but rather with a view to responding flexibly to employers' needs; as such, it is unlikely to support CBLTMA.

### 3.2.3. Implementation level

Despite the generally conducive environment, there is no significant cross-border mobility of apprentices in Ireland. National strategies or initiatives for long-term mobility in apprenticeships do not currently exist in Ireland. Given the focus on apprenticeship expansion and labour shortages, the notion of introducing CBLTMA does not feature in the current policy discourse, and there is very little experience with it.

A few enabling factors were identified:

- (a) (+) age of apprentices at enrolment: apprenticeships are open to persons of all age groups above the statutory school leaving age (16 years old). Current cohorts of Irish apprentices are aged between 20 and 40 years old, which means they are mature enough to cope with the experience of going abroad for a longer period of time and there are no legal issues. While it is possible for adult apprentices to have family and other commitments that may limit their interest in participating in CBLTMA in apprenticeships,

the observed cohorts of Irish apprentices reveal that the 20 to 40 age group seems suitable for long phases of professional mobility;

- (b) (+) VET providers: VET providers are seen as an asset in Ireland, as they are generally considered supportive of policy developments relating to mobility; they are willing to engage in CBLTMA in terms of developing learning opportunities for both outgoing and incoming apprentices acting in the capacity of validating learning outcomes and being involved in language support. Some implementation guidance along with clarification on resource levels to support VET providers would be needed to expand the CBLTMA offer. In the context of Erasmus+ key action 1, Irish VET providers have shown high interest in mobility opportunities supporting the professional development of staff and have been engaging in mobility projects with a view to establishing European partners to participate in future mobility opportunities for both learners (including apprentices) and practitioners. This is expected to create favourable conditions for CBLTMA opportunities in the future.

Disabling factors related to the implementation level include:

- (a) (-) national strategies for mobility in VET and/or CBLTMA: there are currently no such strategies and little interest in key area 1 of the Erasmus+ programme. This limits opportunities to gain experience of CBLTM in apprenticeships that could be exploited to promote the topic further or upscale initiatives;
- (b) (-) employers' interest in letting apprentices go abroad on LT mobility: in the current economic climate, and with imminent labour shortages, employers will not take favourably to losing apprentices to long periods of mobility. Employers are likely to perceive periods of CBLTMA as far too disruptive to the organisational structure and strategic direction of the company. They also fear that apprentices participating in LTM will not return or will be poached by a competitor; this is because CBLTMA usually takes place mid-apprenticeship, when learners are growing into valuable and productive employees.

### 3.3. Enabling and disabling factors: France <sup>(22)</sup>

#### 3.3.1. Framework level

The main enabling factors at framework level are:

- (a) (+) intra-EU trade, enterprise foreign affiliates, international sourcing: in recent years, the French government pushed to increase the degree of internationalisation of French firms. Over the course of 2017 and the first quarter of 2018, the French Prime Minister announced a new strategy to increase international exports. This policy push towards internationalisation has led to a discussion on effective strategies to prepare the education and training system to acquire the relevant skills, including through international mobility;
- (b) (+) sectoral employers' organisations in the national context: employer and employee federations are organised in professional branches/sectors in which they can conclude joint collective agreements. These branches develop vocational training strategies in line with employment trends and take initiatives in vocational qualifications, through the joint bodies in which they participate. Employer organisations in certain sectors – construction and public works, automotive, and crafts sectors – are highly involved in supporting apprenticeships and promoting international mobility for apprentices. The social partners in the construction and public works sector have set a target of 1 000 persons engaged in European mobility by 2020. The participation of sectoral bodies in existing EU or international networks enables them to develop mobility programmes in partnership with counterparts from other countries. Existing contacts help build relationships of trust between host and sending organisations and share knowledge about the specific apprenticeship-related context, content and requirements in their respective countries.

Ambiguous dimensions include:

- (a) (+/-) tradition of region and/or sector regarding cross-border VET and/or labour mobility: there is a strong tradition of cross-border VET and/or labour mobility in border regions, for example in Alsace-Lorraine (with Germany) or in Occitania (with Spain), between local business units. Such existing cross-border mobility should be fertile ground for enhanced

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<sup>(22)</sup> Apprenticeships in France adhere to 'type B', as defined by Cedefop (Cedefop, 2018).

CBLTMA. However, it is important to ensure that any programme benefits both sides. In the case of Germany, it is noted that young French apprentices are recruited to fill open apprenticeship positions in Germany and then have the possibility to be hired on permanent contracts, while few German apprentices are sent to France.

Disabling factors at framework level include:

- (a) (-) migration policy: to enter apprenticeship training, non-EU nationals, whether minors or adults, must have a work permit. Either this is included in their residence permit, or it must be requested from the French administration (for example for those who have a student residence permit). Apprenticeship is reserved for those already present on the French territory and is not accessible to recently arrived migrants. Foreign candidates for apprenticeship must be able to prove that they have already completed one year of study in France as a student before becoming an apprentice. This criterion has been a difficulty in the context of CBLTMA pilot projects for young apprentices from other EU countries that have non-EU nationality. Alternative solutions have been implemented, such as signing an internship agreement; however, these do not appear to be satisfactory.

### 3.3.2. System level

In France, strong policy support and recent VET reforms that specifically address CBLTMA ensure favourable conditions at system level:

- (a) (+) share of VET students in apprenticeship schemes and apprenticeship function: France currently has a low share of apprentices, compared to other countries. Apprenticeships are proven to function successfully in terms of labour market integration. Over the last three years, the French Government has issued a series of policy initiatives and reforms to increase the number of apprentices;
- (b) (+) legal basis for apprenticeships and integration of mobility: VET mobility is encouraged explicitly in French legislation. The Law on the liberty of choosing one's career, which came into force in September 2018, aims to remove obstacles to long-term European mobility for apprentices. Reforms to the Labour Code (in March 2018) and to the VET system (in September 2018) include measures that support the mobility of apprentices and trainees in apprenticeship training schemes. One section in the Labour Code is dedicated to international and European mobility of



apprentices. The new law facilitates longer mobility periods and simplifies processes for short mobility periods: the period abroad may vary from six months to maximum one year. The duration of apprenticeship contracts may also now be adjusted, considering the skills acquired during the mobility period abroad. This is possible through an agreement between the training provider, the French employer and the apprentice. In January 2019, the Ministry of Education issued a decree concerning the professional diplomas the apprentices' training centre (*centre pour la formation des apprentis*, CFA) can award. It sets out in the Education Code's general regulations for all the professional diplomas allowing for transnational mobility during the period of study, both within and outside the EU, whether in training institutions or in the workplace;

- (c) (+) curriculum/training standards: the new law also allows for more flexibility regarding the content of apprenticeship training abroad. The French apprenticeship curriculum now allows for discretionary and flexible adaptation to accommodate learning outcomes from mobility arrangements lasting six months or more. The provisions of the Labour Code that define the content of training for apprenticeships no longer apply during the period of mobility abroad. It is now possible to broaden the content of the training received abroad: the principle of work-study alternation inherent in the apprenticeship contract no longer applies. This means that the training abroad can be offered at a workplace or at a school, depending on what is commonplace in the host country. It is also possible to acquire additional learning outcomes that are not part of the curriculum related to the qualification pathway;
- (d) (+) contract, occupational health, safety and social insurance, remuneration: French apprentices are employees and receive a salary from the employer. However, an apprenticeship contract is both a training and an employment contract. The variety in the status of apprentices from one country to another can be a major obstacle to CBLTMA. However, under the new law, during periods of mobility abroad, French employers are not legally responsible for apprentice remuneration or for ensuring suitable working conditions in line with the law. The host employer or training provider is now solely responsible for compliance with legal regulations, such as apprentice working time, health and safety, remuneration, and weekly leave, in accordance with the legal and contractual provisions of the country concerned.

A few factors are neutral or ambiguous, as, despite the policy push, there are practical issues with the implementation:

- (a) (+/-) use of validation: learning outcomes from mobility can be accommodated and recognised in the French system. Yet, prior to mobility, the apprentice training centre must contact the authorities abroad responsible for issuing the diploma or certification to ensure that all or part of a set of skills can be assessed abroad as part of mobility and identify under what conditions this assessment is possible.

No disabling factors were identified at system level.

### 3.3.3. Implementation level

French cross-border VET mobility is well developed compared to most other EU Member States. France includes VET mobility as a target of learner mobility under the ET 2020 strategy, noting the role of school partnerships both inside and outside Erasmus+. To this end, the French government's objective is for 15 000 young people to spend periods of training abroad by 2022. This government's mobility target encompasses both short- and long-term mobility of apprentices.

This generally positive attitude to CBLTMA ensures enabling factors:

- (a) (+) authorities promoting LT mobility of apprentices: the French bodies promoting and implementing the long-term cross-border mobility of apprentices are the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education, and the Erasmus+ agency France Education/Formation. All of them seek to promote and disseminate widely the benefits of the Erasmus+ programme for VET learners and apprentices;
- (b) (+) mobility national strategies or initiatives/long duration mobility national strategies or initiatives: France is one of a few countries with strong political support for and commitment to CBLTMA. The government is aiming to generalise Erasmus and extend it to apprenticeships, with a special focus on long-term mobility. The government is also looking to develop Erasmus Pro so that apprentices could benefit from that programme as much as possible. France has also developed binational secondary school-leaving certificates with Germany, Spain and Italy;
- (c) (+) (pilot) projects in LT mobility of apprentices: France has a long tradition of VET mobility combined with a raft of existing mobility programmes for apprentices: these include the long-standing programmes of the *Compagnons du devoir*, the French automobile industry and construction

- sector, and a series of initiatives by the Ministry of National Education within the Franco-German exchange and cooperation framework;
- (d) (+) intermediary organisations and structures: in France there are specific agencies dedicated to cross-border mobility in VET, which include the Franco-German agency Pro-Tandem and the Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO/OFAJ), offering exchanges between France and Germany. Sectoral networks have historically been among the actors most involved in promoting mobility of apprentices, along with networks linked to the development of apprenticeships like the chambers of commerce and industry, Chamber of Trades and Crafts, or the *Compagnons du devoir*. The last of these is the national vocational training provider (and crafts guild) for 30 manual/crafts trades; it has overseen these for the past nine centuries and runs a number of apprenticeship mobility programmes;
- (e) (+) methodologies and guidelines: toolkits have already been published by the Ministry of Labour, for companies and apprentice training centres. The Erasmus+ agency, in partnership with the *Association Nationale pour la Formation Automobile et la Mobilité* (ANFA) (automotive industry), has published a skills reference framework for European and international mobility coordinators in apprentice training centres. A *vade mecum* (handbook/guide) for professional diplomas in national education has been published by the Ministry of National Education for the attention of training institutions: *Implementation of mobility for certification purposes in Europe in professional diplomas*;
- (f) (+) funding of LT mobility: France strongly encourages the use of EU funding (Erasmus+) and complements this with national funding instruments. Specific funding is provided by the Franco-German Youth Office or Pro-Tandem exchanges, while regional funding differs from one region to another. For example, the FGYO/OFAJ is an international organisation working for Franco-German cooperation, which has enabled nearly 9 million young people from Germany and France to participate in 320 000 exchange programmes since 1963. Its annual budget is EUR 24.7 million;
- (g) (+) VET providers: some apprenticeship training centres have developed a high level of expertise in mobility, especially those which have participated in pilot projects on the long-term cross-border mobility of apprentices. A new law from September 2018 establishes new requirements for CFAs to create better conditions for mobility. They must:

- (i) encourage the national and international mobility of apprentices by appointing dedicated staff, which may include a mobility advisor;
- (ii) mobilise local resources at national level and make use of European Union programmes at international level;
- (iii) provide information where appropriate on mobility periods in the content of the training.

Some dimensions can be considered neutral/ambiguous, including:

- (a) (+/-) apprentices' and their families' interest and availability in LT mobility: there is a generally positive view of apprenticeship mobility in French society and apprentices' work and life experiences abroad are valued. There is an understanding that the value of mobility goes beyond the experience of one person alone, as an apprentice returning from mobility can share the acquired skills (technical, language and social skills) with others. Yet the numbers of students undertaking long-duration mobility are still small;
- (b) (+/-) employer interest in CBLTMA: interest seems to vary strongly across sectors. While some sectors (for example the construction, automotive and crafts sector) push strongly for mobility, others seem to be less interested. In the active sectors, companies are aware that they will be able to benefit upon the apprentice's return from specific working methods and know-how acquired during the stay abroad. In others, the absence of the apprentice is mainly seen as a disadvantage, or it is feared that the apprentice will not return due to an attractive job offer abroad. The option of developing reciprocal circular-type exchange arrangements between two countries is currently the subject of debate.

No disabling factors were identified at implementation level.

## 3.4. Enabling and disabling factors: Hungary <sup>(23)</sup>

### 3.4.1. Framework level

Among the different dimensions of the analytical framework, only one key enabling factor at framework level could be identified for Hungary, with the others acting as key disabling factors:

- (a) (+) enterprise foreign affiliates: the presence of international companies and their corporate and labour culture is assumed to have a positive effect on CBLTMA in Hungary. International corporations also create an opportunity independently of domestic mobility programmes for apprentices to study on the premises of mother companies or with affiliates located in different foreign countries. This is mainly possible in the cases of automotive and engineering companies that operate affiliates in Hungary;
- (b) (-) overall size and training capacity of companies: most SMEs do not have appropriate capacity in terms of personal and material resources to receive apprentices. Even administrative tasks relating to apprentice training pose problems for SMEs. This view is unanimously shared by all the stakeholders interviewed;
- (c) (-) skills shortages in medium-level occupations and intra-EU labour migration for skilled labour: skills shortages are a chronic issue in Hungary that hamper both incoming and outgoing mobility. The issue of chronic labour shortage cannot be resolved by incoming apprentices, as companies are seeking to hire experienced employees for long-term periods. A challenge to that, however, is that Hungary is not a target destination country for skilled migrants from elsewhere in the EU;
- (d) (-) tradition regarding cross-border VET and/or labour mobility: Hungary has no tradition and culture of mobility with the purpose of learning and employment; this includes VET. Domestic companies are afraid that apprentices participating in mobility will stay abroad and not return to Hungary because labour conditions and salaries are better in most other European countries.

### 3.4.2. System level

At system level, most factors in Hungary appear to impede rather than facilitate CBLTMA. The main disabling factors are as follows:

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<sup>(23)</sup> Apprenticeships in Hungary adhere to 'type B', as defined by Cedefop (Cedefop, 2018).

- (a) (-) legal basis for apprenticeships and integration of mobility: mobility is not at all mentioned in the Act CLXXXVII of 2011 on Vocational Education and Training, and other laws do not contain any provisions or recommendations on mobility. The legal status of apprentices participating in outgoing mobility is also unclear. Mobility-related financing is also unclear and very complicated. There is no standard regulation or framework on how to manage mobility of apprentices with an apprenticeship training contract. These legal uncertainties mean Hungarian employers are generally not interested in CBLTMA, whether for incoming or outgoing apprentices;
- (b) (-) curriculum/training standard and use of validation: VET curricula are very rigid and over-regulated: qualification standards are subject-centred and difficult to interpret even for Hungarian companies. This makes it even more difficult to validate and recognise learning outcomes acquired abroad from in-company training and therefore clearly hinders the mobility of apprentices. Act CLXXXVII of 2011 on VET does not contain any provisions to support VET schools in the validation of learning outcomes acquired abroad. Instead, VET schools would be responsible for overseeing this, so the validation of learning outcomes from mobility involves different (not standardised) methodologies;
- (c) (-) type of contract; status of apprentices: there is a special situation in Hungary whereby apprentices have student status, not employee. Apprenticeship training contracts are not covered by the Labour Code; they are a formal agreement between the apprentices and the companies regulated by Act CLXXXVII of 2011 on vocational education and training. Apprenticeship training contracts hinder mobility because such contracts stipulate very precise conditions for both the employers and the apprentices. Employer consent is needed for apprentices to go abroad; employers, however, tend to be reluctant about CBLTMA, mainly because they cannot terminate apprenticeship training contracts when the apprentices are abroad and also because they are obliged to remunerate their apprentices during the mobility period.

#### 3.4.3. Implementation level

Given the highly centralised nature of the VET system in Hungary, implementation of mobility programmes has no clear lines of organisation and is voluntary. Although not directly relating to any of the analytical framework's dimensions, one key enabling factor is the Erasmus+ national agency, which has been very active in promoting mobility. However, the foundation does

not have the resources to make enough of an impact; mobility programmes are still not well-known enough to the public.

The following dimensions may be considered as neutral, as they cannot be considered either enablers or disablers:

- (a) (+/-) funding of LT mobility: CBLTMA programmes are financed by Erasmus+ grants awarded to successful applicants. There are no other central financing resources available. If the financial resources provided by Erasmus+ are not enough, apprentices participating in the mobility programmes must provide supplementary funds;
- (b) (+/-) (pilot) projects of CBLTMA: the ErasmusPro pilot project Good practices. Cooperation between VET institutions and companies was implemented in the school year 2016/17 in Hungary. Krúdy commercial, catering and tourism secondary school in Szeged took part in this pilot project between August 2016 and January 2018. However, the project has had limited impact;
- (c) (+/-) role and capacity of VET providers in implementing mobility: VET schools generally do not have ad hoc staff who could provide additional human capacity for the preparation and submission of applications for grants for mobility programmes and/or the implementation of such programmes. However, some VET schools have supportive staff with motivation to engage students in mobility.

Key disabling factors appear to be quite numerous:

- (a) (-) age of apprentices at enrolment: apprentices aged 14 to 17 in three-year dual VET are deemed not entirely suitable for participation in CBLTMA, either vocationally or socially, due to their young age. They are generally not sufficiently prepared to lead their lives independently, leave their families and live abroad in unfamiliar conditions;
- (b) (-) (long-term) mobility national strategies or initiatives: in Hungary mobility is not embedded in the VET system: there are no overarching strategies or initiatives regarding the mobility of VET learners, including apprentices. Mobility initiatives tend to be developed by individual VET schools, if there are enough apprentices wishing to participate in them;
- (c) (-) governance of apprenticeship implementation: employers' organisations and trade unions have no role in mobility and the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry rarely deals with this topic. Mobility is left up to VET schools and apprentices with the consent of companies which tend to be reluctant to endorse outgoing mobility because of contractual

clauses preventing termination and ensuring continued remuneration during the mobility period;

- (d) (-) apprentices' and their families' interest in long-term mobility: there is no tradition of cross-border VET in Hungary, resulting in a culture that does not promote mobility (which goes hand-in-hand with low internationalisation of SMEs, level of foreign language skills lower than EU average). Inevitably, this is reflected in the fact that no great interest is expressed by apprentices and employers, even for short-term mobility programmes which are easier to implement since it is less complicated to withdraw apprentices from the domestic VET system for a period of three to six weeks;
- (e) (-) employer interest in letting apprentices go abroad on long-term mobility; in receiving apprentices from abroad on long-term mobility: Hungarian employers are generally not interested in letting apprentices go abroad for a long period, due to the lack of favourable legal conditions and of incentives. They also usually have no interest in receiving apprentices from abroad; this is especially the case for SMEs: as an example, because of critical labour shortages, SMEs generally struggle to find a person within the organisation who will be responsible for providing practical training to apprentices. In a small organisation, it can be difficult to find in-company trainers who have the necessary skills, expertise and time for such training.

### 3.5. Enabling and disabling factors: the Netherlands <sup>(24)</sup>

#### 3.5.1. Framework level

The Dutch economy has historically been open to international trade. As such, the Netherlands has generally favourable framework level conditions for the long-term cross-border mobility of apprentices; several enabling factors have been identified in this regard:

- (a) (+) intra-EU trade, enterprise foreign affiliates, international sourcing or 'the internationalisation of the Dutch economy': the Dutch economy is characterised by a heavy reliance on exports and a growing number

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<sup>(24)</sup> Apprenticeships in the Netherlands adhere to 'type B', as defined by Cedefop (Cedefop, 2018).



of companies that have relationships abroad. The Netherlands is the second largest exporting country of agricultural products in the world. Other sectors that can be considered as highly internationalised include transport and manufacturing. Stakeholders argue that this is due to a long-standing tradition on internationalisation, mobility and exchange;

- (b) (+) sectoral employers' organisations in the national context: the influential position of the SEO in policy-making that could be used to stimulate the international mobility of apprentices. National employer organisations support VET student mobility in general terms but would only consider international mobility for apprentices or workers if such a demand from employers exists;
- (c) (+) share of job-related non-formal adult education and training sponsored by employers (employees with upper secondary and post-secondary education level): some apprenticeships are offered at higher EQF levels (3-4) and are used for lifelong learning.

Several dimensions can, nevertheless, be regarded as ambiguous:

- (a) (+/-) skill shortages in medium-level occupations (EQF level 3-4) can be considered both as a potential enabler and a disabler. Shortages on the labour market have a disabling effect, as employers do not want to run the risk of losing their apprentices when they move abroad. Shortages could be an enabler because apprenticeships could be used as an instrument to recruit and train personnel from abroad. However, this is not happening in practice;
- (b) (+/-) tradition of region and/or sector regarding cross-border VET and/or labour mobility: in the more internationally oriented sectors and in the regions bordering Belgium and Germany, such traditions exist and could be exploited to promote VET and apprenticeship mobility. But not all such economic sectors score high in mobility.

There is a significant disabler at framework level:

- (a) (-) overall size and training capacity of companies: the share of SMEs in offering employment is rather high compared to the EU average. While Dutch SMEs have a good training capacity on average, they face greater difficulties arranging for CBLTMA than large multinational companies.

### 3.5.2. System level

During the field research, no clear enablers for CBLTMA were identified at system level. While VET pathways are generally well able to accommodate mobility (six months or more), this is less the case for apprenticeship schemes and long-term mobility.

Disabling factors at system level include:

- (a) (-) legal basis for apprenticeships and integration of mobility: this is regarded as insufficient in the context of apprenticeship;
- (b) (-) type of contract, status of apprentices, remuneration, occupational health, safety and social insurance: labour conditions for apprentices differ between countries. Social partners expect lower salaries for apprentices in other countries and potentially unfavourable working conditions, which would be a disincentive;
- (c) (-) curriculum/training standards, use of validation: comparability of qualifications and the possibilities of validation of learning outcomes are another important disabler. Alignment of qualifications in VET is still not as good as in higher education. Lack of transparency makes it difficult to validate learning outcomes that were obtained outside the Netherlands.

### 3.5.3. Implementation level

In 2018, 7.4% of Dutch VET graduates had a learning experience abroad, either for study exchange or for a work placement <sup>(25)</sup>. While this is a small share, it is still one percentage point above the 6% EU benchmark on outward mobility. However, almost all internationally mobile students followed the school-based pathway (BOL). Also, the majority of mobility opportunities abroad were shorter than six months; long-term cross-border mobility for apprentices is practically non-existent in the Netherlands. Therefore, at implementation level, no enablers were identified but some dimensions have potential to become an enabler:

- (a) (+/-) intermediary organisations and structures (State authorities, LM representatives, mobility providers), VET providers: none of these groups are currently involved in CBLTMA, yet they have a lot of experience with short-term mobility, hence a lot of know-how and capacity that could be exploited for CBLTMA. They are also becoming increasingly flexible in applying the VET curriculum for the apprenticeship-based pathway;

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<sup>(25)</sup> [https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/nuffic/viz/VET-mobility-1\\_VET-students-abroad/Graph](https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/nuffic/viz/VET-mobility-1_VET-students-abroad/Graph)

(b) (+/-) apprentices' and their families' interest and availability in doing LT mobility: there is interest in mobility from VET students in school-based pathways for acquiring specific competences but not many apprentices seem to have the ambition to go abroad. It is believed by most stakeholders that apprentices are mainly focused on acquiring work experience in their close surroundings to begin with; while this hypothesis has not been tested, it may have to do with the average age of apprentices. Also, this might be a matter of circular reasoning: as mobility is not common in apprenticeships, students who have the ambition to go abroad tend to not opt for the apprenticeship pathway, but rather for the school-based pathway.

Disablers at implementation level in the Netherlands include:

- (a) (-) employer interest in letting apprentices go abroad on LT mobility: the most important disabler for employers is the loss of labour force associated with the long-term mobility of apprentices. The benefit for employers from mobility – the development of specific skills – can already be achieved through short-term mobility of employees. Mobility also involves a risk of a loss of investment, if the apprentice does not return to the company;
- (b) (-) funding of LT mobility: currently, there is funding support for apprentices, such as the Erasmus+ programme. However, funding for employers might still be an issue when they do not receive compensation for lost revenue;
- (c) (-) age of apprentices at enrolment: age seems to be an important disabler for students: when compared to higher education students, most of the VET students are relatively young. Being just over 18 years of age can still be considered too young for long-term mobility, although apprentices are on average older than students in the school-based pathway. This is because a considerable number of adult workers develop themselves via an apprenticeship. Age also plays a role for this group, as they often have other responsibilities, such as having a family, that stand in the way of mobility;
- (d) (-) alternance: VET providers are dealing with the traditional four-plus-one-day model that is most commonly used. Most opportunities to enable mobility are in the work-based part of the programme, where the cooperation of employers is essential. The school-based part of the programme, with mandatory courses in the Dutch VET curriculum (maths,

Dutch language), does not leave enough space for long-term mobility, which is seen as a disabler.

### 3.6. Enabling and disabling factors: Austria <sup>(26)</sup>

#### 3.6.1. Framework level

The main enabling factors on framework level are:

- (a) (+) intra-EU trade, enterprise foreign affiliates, international sourcing: significant engagement in international (and regional and/or cross-border) trade and labour allocation (production sites in other countries) act as an enabler. This is especially so for large companies and those that have a lot of trade links with and business in other countries (multinationals); this activity demands language skills, intercultural learning and occupational experience in different work settings and production sites, supporting CBLTMA. Multinationals use their own facilities abroad to organise intra-company CBLTMA, so the apprentice does not have to leave the company. Coordination and harmonisation of training slots in Austria and in the affiliate company site in another country is much easier to achieve. Trust in training quality and expertise abroad (in the affiliate company site) is also higher. It should be noted, however, that more than the size of the companies, some sectors may be more appropriate for CBLTMA, like tourism, construction or on-site assembly;
- (b) (+) skills shortages in medium-level occupations: skills shortages in Austria are basically an enabling factor for incoming mobility due to future employment options of incoming apprentices, yet they might impact negatively on outgoing mobility.

Some dimensions were found to be neutral or ambiguous:

- (a) (+/-) overall size and training capacity of companies: company size and training culture are potential enablers/disablers for cross-border mobility in apprenticeships. Larger enterprises have more options to compensate for the loss of productive work of apprentices during their stay abroad by in-company rotation of employees. Larger companies also have

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<sup>(26)</sup> Apprenticeships in Austria adhere to 'type A: apprenticeship as an education and training system', as defined by Cedefop (Cedefop, 2018).

greater potential to incorporate CBLTMA in their overall training concept, as they have more options to disentangle training from the inflow of incoming orders. They also tend to employ full-time trainers and training managers who oversee apprenticeship training and can also coordinate related mobility. About half (47%) of all training companies in Austria have only one apprentice; only 7% of all training companies have more than 10 apprentices. Having smaller numbers of apprentices may act as a potential disabler. Long-term mobility means that the apprentice will not be present in the training company for six months or more and therefore cannot contribute to productive work. Desk research shows that cost-benefit considerations influence the interest of companies to invest in longer-term mobility of their apprentices: costs must be clearly outweighed by attractive learning opportunities. Yet, company size by itself is usually not the decisive factor: it is the general attitude and strategy of companies towards structured in-company training that plays a decisive role. It may make sense to distinguish conceptually between companies whose approach is situated learning that occurs in an ad hoc and informal way along with its orders from customers/clients, as opposed to those with a systematic, strategic and structured learning approach. The latter case systematically and more easily offers time windows/options for apprenticeship mobility;

- (b) (+/-) sectoral employers' organisations (SEOs) in the national/international context: SEOs are strongly involved in the apprenticeship system in Austria and well represented internationally. At present, SEOs do not include CBLTMA in their agenda and do not actively advocate for CBLTMA. Hence, while Austrian SEOs would theoretically be in a good position to promote and facilitate CBLTMA, they currently do not do so.

Disabling factors at framework level include:

- (a) (-) migration policy: immigration policies set the scene for cross-border mobility. This is especially true for third-country CB(LT)MA. Currently, strict criteria exist in Austria that, in effect, make it impossible to organise incoming mobility of third-country national apprentices to Austria. Such policies might affect the mindset of young people and reduce their interest in international skills and relations.

### 3.6.2. System level

The general set-up of the system is generally seen as conducive to CBLTMA, but practical problems arise. These include a lack of comparability of training regulations and learning outcomes with apprenticeship systems/schemes abroad, difficulties in adapting contractual arrangements, and the young age of apprentices. There is also currently no policy support for the topic.

Consequently, there are many potentially enabling factors at system level which are neutralised through practical issues:

- (a) (+/-) legal basis for apprenticeships and integration of mobility: international mobility in Austrian apprenticeship training is legally based in the Vocational training Act (*Berufsausbildungsgesetz*, BAG). In principle, the legal basis also allows longer-term mobility of up to six months (per year). Financial-support programmes and institutional-support facilities, through international young worker exchange (*Internationaler Fachkräfteaustausch*, IFA), have been set up for this purpose. In practice, however, CBLTMA has so far not played a role: mobility is almost exclusively limited to stays abroad of up to six weeks. Austria does not have a coherent national strategy for CBLTMA. No efforts to develop such a strategy seem to be on the horizon;
- (b) (+/-) apprenticeship type, apprenticeship function, curriculum training standard; use of validation and share of VET students in apprenticeship schemes: generally, the curriculum in Austria allows for enough flexibility to integrate mobility periods but to ensure validation of the mobility period, training structure, regulation and learning outcomes need to be comparable. Type A apprenticeships (as per Cedefop, 2018) cannot be found in many other countries, hence the choice is limited. The large differences in IVET and apprenticeship systems between home and host countries entail higher informational and organisational costs;
- (c) (+/-) type of contract; status of apprentices; remuneration; occupational health and safety standards and social insurance: in the Austrian setting, the apprenticeship contract defines the status of the apprentice as an employee. At the same time, it also defines the training content that must be delivered. It clearly defines the basic rights and responsibilities of the actors involved, as well as the occupational focus of the training. This transparency may be seen as an enabling factor for CBLTMA. However, it is challenging to find a placement for the apprentice abroad that offers the same conditions.

Disabling factors at system level include:

- (a) (-) apprenticeship governance; funding of in-company training; duration of the whole apprenticeship period; duration of in-company placements and alternance: to incorporate CBLTMA in a usually three-year apprenticeship training setting – as is the case in Austria – is a challenge. CBLTMA would usually take place in the third year of training. Yet apprentices in their third year of training already generate productivity gains, so CBLTMA represents a cost factor for sending companies. Also, in the third training year, apprentices will prepare themselves for the final apprenticeship exam and may not have time for and interest in engaging in CBLTMA;
- (b) (-) use of validation: opportunities for validation are very limited in Austria. This is a clear disabler for CBLTMA.

### 3.6.3. Implementation level

Despite the generally conducive environment, there is no significant number of cross-border mobility of apprentices in Austria. Mobility programmes are numerous, but when apprentices take part in mobility, it is usually short-term (two to six weeks); in-company programmes are a notable exception.

No clear enabling factors were identified. One dimension was considered to be neutral/ambiguous:

- (a) (+/-) flexibility of curriculum to include learning from mobility: curricula are, in theory, flexible and the training regulations foresee the possibility of learning abroad. In practice, however, there are issues with the recognition of learning outcomes. This becomes even more critical in relation to CBLTMA: a stay abroad for six months or more entails that a significant number of skills and competences will be acquired during that period, which should be in line with the curriculum. Possible deficits cannot easily be compensated. Among all parties involved, this raises the expectation that the learning outcomes acquired during mobility would be recognised at home as part of the training pathway. Yet, in Austria, there is no simple and transparent system in place for recognising competences acquired abroad nor are there cross-border agreements on the skills and competences to be acquired in the context of CBLTMA.

If there is no possibility that learning outcomes of the long-term stay abroad will be recognised in Austria, apprentices and training companies face tremendous disincentives: apprentices will lose at least half a year of study progress and probably will have trouble returning to the regular

timing and alternance of company training and part-time vocational schooling. Training companies face similar problems related to the cost of the half-year stay abroad.

Disabling factors related to the implementation level include:

- (a) (-) role and capacity of VET providers in implementing mobility: the conceptual design of Austria's apprenticeship training, with about 20% of total training time devoted to obligatory part-time vocational school-based training, may be a hindering factor for CBLTMA, as it leaves almost no space and scope for conducting CBLTMA during school-based sessions. Time windows for CBLTMA are either during school holidays or as part of the blocked (release) alternance model, essentially at times scheduled for in-company training. Like the in-company training, schooling has to be organised and harmonised: it has to be ensured that apprentices can participate in the relevant school-based part of apprenticeship training in the country visited. This comes with several questions:
  - (i) what are the relevant learning outcomes and are they being taught in the host country during the mobility period?
  - (ii) what is the language of instruction?
  - (iii) how will learning progress be assessed and recognised at home? The better that assessment methods for competences learned in both countries correspond, the higher the trust in the assessment and the easier the formal recognition of learning abroad;
- (b) (-) age of apprentices (at enrolment): Austrian apprentices are comparatively young (15 to 16) so parents are often reluctant to send them abroad. There may be a greater need for safety regulations;
- (c) (-) employer perspective (employer attitude towards apprenticeship and interest in inward and outgoing CBLTMA): CBLTMA will usually take place at the end of the second or in the third training year. After two to three years of training, the apprentice is already productive and staying abroad represents a relevant cost factor for companies. Although financial subsidies are in place that allow the training company to recuperate apprenticeship wage obligations during the stay abroad, the company still loses the productive work contribution of its apprentices while they are away;
- (d) (-) apprentices and their families' interest in CBLTMA: from the point of view of apprentices, factors that hinder CBLTMA are:
  - (i) proximity of CBLTMA period to final exam;



- (ii) parents being hesitant to let them go abroad for a longer time period at such young age;
- (iii) apprentices' own low interest in CBLTMA due to their age (potential homesickness, peer group lack of interest);
- (iv) if they are still minors, special regulations for travelling as well as safety and health protection rules;
- (v) financial subsidies available to them might be too low to maintain acceptable living standards;
- (e) (-) national strategy/initiatives and pilot projects for CBLTMA; governance of apprenticeship implementation: there is no national strategy for CBLTMA in Austria. Focus is on encouraging short-term mobility;
- (f) (-) funding of long-term mobility: there is no special funding with respect to CBLTMA in Austria;
- (g) (-) methodologies and guidelines; authorities promoting CBLTMA; involvement of intermediary organisations and structures: Austria has a well-known and highly respected intermediary body (IFA) that promotes, informs and supports short-term mobility. Methodologies and guidelines for short-term mobility are available at IFA. Supporting CBLTMA is beyond the IFA's current capacity, and there are limited financial resources and weak institutional support in that respect.

## 3.7. Cross-country findings

### 3.7.1. Framework level

All dimensions linked to the internationalisation of the economy/globalisation seem to act as enablers to CBLTMA. There is a wide agreement across all countries under study that significant engagement in international (and regional and/or cross-border) trade and labour allocation (production sites in other countries), as well as international activities and engagement of companies (in trade, by having affiliates abroad) would favour such a policy. In this context, the multinationals or companies with affiliates or business partners in other countries (who are usually larger companies rather than small and micro ) are assumed to face less obstacles in organising CBLTMA, as these companies may use their facilities (and partners) abroad to organise intra-company CBLTMA. Coordination and harmonisation of training slots in the sending country and in affiliate company sites in another country is

potentially much easier to achieve. Trust in training quality and expertise abroad (in the affiliate company site) is also higher. In this case, many organisational issues (such as no loss of apprentice remuneration) are assumed not to apply because the apprentice is still part of the company workforce, or they may be more easily manageable (such as different occupational safety standards, social and health insurance coverage).

Company size may matter as larger enterprises have more options to compensate for the loss of productive work of apprentices during their stay abroad by in-company rotation of employees. Larger companies also have greater potential to incorporate CBLTMA in their overall training concept as they have more options to disentangle training from the inflow of incoming orders. They tend to employ full-time trainers and training managers who oversee apprenticeship training; these can also coordinate related outgoing and incoming mobility and have the necessary language skills to follow up a host apprentice.

In contrast, small and micro-companies, especially those operating locally are more likely not to have all these necessary capacities. They appear to be less structured in terms of encouraging the international mobility of their apprentices. Without external support, organising mobility is complex, especially when the company does not have a human resources department. The apprentice provides flexibility and capacity in terms of human resources (HR) adjustment, so companies may be reluctant to send their apprentices abroad because they need them to work and contribute productively to the business at home. This difficulty of releasing apprentices to go abroad is more acute for small and micro-companies but it is also valid for larger ones. For all companies, irrespective of size, departure of the young person as part of CBLTMA leads to a discontinuity in this supply of workforce but the larger companies may be able to manage this absence better. On the incoming mobility side, employers are not willing to invest in employees who are likely to return to their country and therefore will be of little added value. Further, there are difficulties in assessing the potential contribution of an apprentice from another country.

Yet, company size by itself is usually not enough: it is the general attitude and strategy of companies towards structured in-company training that play a decisive role. The attitude towards CBLTMA also differs across sectors, with some sectors more open to mobility in general than others and where mobility is a tradition.

Skills shortages may influence CBLTMA but distinguishing between incoming and outgoing mobility is crucial. Skills shortages are potentially an enabling factor for incoming mobility, where employers are in need of qualified labour and are more prepared to attract and train young people from abroad. However, there are serious concerns about the exploitation of apprentices as cheap labour and devaluing the notion of apprenticeships. For the outgoing dimension, skills shortages might be a hindering factor as CBLTMA will result in a loss of their productive work contribution at home. This may trigger concerns of brain drain or talent drain from countries with less favourable work conditions to countries with comparatively good ones; and apprentices in the latter countries may not be interested in the former countries and lose the benefits that the home country conditions offer. CBLTMA could exacerbate a sense of competition that may exist across countries.

Traditions of labour mobility exist in border regions that could be an enabler for CBLTMA but there tends to be one-way migration: from more attractive regions in terms of employments to less attractive ones.

The country-level investigations also showed that there is rather low engagement of SEOs when it comes to CBLTMA.

### 3.7.2. System level

The large variety of apprenticeship systems and schemes across Europe significantly constrains CBLTMA, as it raises trust concerns and entails higher information and organisation costs.

Differences in the apprenticeship type and function raise concerns for those countries with a systematic approach to apprenticeship <sup>(27)</sup> (Denmark, Ireland, Austria) <sup>(28)</sup>, in relation to the suitability of in-company training offers abroad. Companies may have experience in providing suitable learning settings for apprenticeships (which require a quite structured approach to training in these countries) and not merely a context for gaining work experience (for example in the form of traineeships). Ensuring comparability between levels of training <sup>(29)</sup> within a mobility context across different

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<sup>(27)</sup> Apprenticeship is organised as a system and it is not an alternative mode of delivery to school-based VET.

<sup>(28)</sup> The same concern was also raised by the Netherlands.

<sup>(29)</sup> The same qualification could be referenced to different EQF levels in two different countries.

European approaches to apprenticeships was highlighted as a key objective for the future of CBLTMA, to ensure industry standards are maintained.

Differences in apprenticeship duration, alternance, curricula, standards and qualifications need to be carefully considered in the design and implementation of CBLTMA. One obstacle might be the total duration of apprenticeships in the sending country; if this is not long enough (only lasts for six months or a year) CBLTMA of minimum six months is difficult to incorporate.

The timing of the CBLTMA within the overall duration of the apprenticeship training is also a challenge particularly, when it comes to the young apprentices (aged 15 to 16 when starting the apprenticeship). Such students would be too young to go on mobility at the beginning of studies, so CBLTMA would usually take place later. Yet, apprentices in their advanced years of training already generate productivity gains, so CBLTMA represents a cost factor for sending companies.

The type of alternation between school-based and in-company training seems to be another sensitive issue, if it cannot be flexibly adapted. In some countries, employers require that apprentices spend three to four days per week in the workplace throughout the duration of their apprenticeship, which leaves little space for long-term mobility.

Training standards can differ considerably between host and sending countries (even though they may not be significant in some sectors); there is a wide array of country-specific requirements for training content and settings for vocational occupations across Europe. This difference raises concerns over the recognition of the skills acquired by apprentices during their time abroad. As such, the lack of comparable training standards across countries and of harmonised processes to define learning outcomes or to recognise prior learning create difficulties in the organisation of CBLTMA.

Learning outcomes-based and competence-based approaches to apprenticeship curriculum design seem to be favourable preconditions to enable CBLTMA. They allow for greater flexibility in adapting curricula to company needs and to the workplace environment, and they ensure clarity in the structure of curricula. However, apprenticeship curricula are not always designed with these approaches; when they are, it is not always easy to translate and explain the national learning outcomes to employers abroad. Receiving companies cannot be expected to have sufficient HR capacity to oversee the achievement of the specific learning outcomes.

Difficulties may also arise in the legal aspects of apprenticeships, especially where apprentice status, the nature of the apprenticeship contract, and the social security coverage differ. It might not always be easy to understand the nature of apprentice status, as this is often associated with lack of clarity within the country itself (Cedefop, 2021c) <sup>(30)</sup>. Employee status, for example, might pose a problem during the mobility in relation to the responsibility of the sending employer over the apprentice while abroad; or, in relation to the impossibility for employers to suspend apprenticeship contracts when the apprentices are abroad.

Where apprenticeship is associated with an employment contract, this usually defines the status of the apprentice as an employee, the training content that has to be delivered, and the basic rights and responsibilities of the actors involved. While this level of transparency may be an enabling factor for CBLTMA, it can also be challenging to find a placement for the apprentice abroad that offers the same conditions. Also, it is more complicated to implement mobility (short- or long-term) as part of a wage-based contractual relationship, as opposed to a simple agreement (not under employment law).

One implication is the remuneration of the apprentice in cross-border long-term mobility: employers are reluctant to cover their apprentices' wages or allowances while they are abroad. In many cases, apprentices go on mobility relatively late during their apprenticeships, when their remuneration levels are relatively high, if wages increase by age. This would probably have a disabling effect for companies: apprentices are already costly and the company will lose out on the productivity they generate. Available funding to support mobility might not cover all the expenses for companies, particularly not the loss of productive work, even if employers do not have to pay the apprentices' wage while abroad.

On the apprentice side, remuneration from host company instead of the home company may be reduced if the remuneration paid by the home company is higher and there is no financial support to cover the difference.

However, while regulations and standards in public social and health insurance vary considerably across Europe, there is no indication that these differences play any role in facilitating or hindering CBLTMA. However,

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<sup>(30)</sup> Across EU countries an apprentice may be a learner (but not a regular one), an employee (but not always a regular one), both a learner (when at school) and an employee (when at the workplace), or s/he may actually have an apprentice status (Cedefop, 2021c).

the presence of multi-country agreements is perceived as an enabler for employers.

The same logic applies in principle to regulations for safety and health as well as for overtime/shift work. However, apprenticeships often involve minors and regulations in this field are usually more restrictive and differences apply at the sector level.

The extent of national differences in training standards and of administrative and financial burdens arising from various contractual and legal obligations may explain why employers, especially in SMEs, usually tend to be reluctant to engage in either incoming or outgoing CBLTMA.

### **3.7.3. Implementation level**

Only in France is CBLTMA a policy priority. This cannot really be said even of Denmark, where a programme was launched in 1992 to support VET students (who are mostly all apprentices) abroad and where there are national sources of funding, and clear guidelines on scope and use. In the Netherlands and Austria, there is experience with short-term mobility which could be exploited for the purpose of long-term mobility. The former may explain why many countries belonging to group-B apprenticeship type, according to Cedefop classification (Cedefop, 2018) may not address CBLTMA as a policy priority. In the Netherlands, IVET learners can choose to study either in the school-based pathway or in an apprenticeship option, and may change the pathways during their studies. Since participation in mobility is considerably higher among the former group of learners, it may be the case that the apprenticeship pathway may attract young people that might not be as interested in CBLTMA as their peers in full-time school-based IVET. This might be a matter of circular reasoning: as mobility is not common in apprenticeships, students who have the ambition to go abroad tend to not opt for the apprenticeship pathway, but rather for the school-based pathway. Apprentices also often have comparatively poor foreign language skills, which can further hinder mobility. As not all apprentices are interested and have the capability to go on CBLTMA, there is no need to formally include CBLTMA in training regulations or make it an obligatory component.

Labour market representatives at the national level do not push for such a policy priority, as employers show little or no interest in sending apprentices abroad or receiving apprentices from abroad for a long period of

time. Analysis of the cross-country findings at the framework level (Section 3.7.1) already indicated several factors that may hinder companies' interest in CBLTMA; the implementation level findings reinforce these. Employers do not want to let apprentices go, particularly when they become productive. Although financial subsidies are in place that allow the training company to recuperate apprenticeship wage obligations during the stay abroad, the company still loses the productive work contribution. Training companies might still lack essential information about options for CBLTMA, especially showing how they can recoup apprenticeship-related costs, including loss of productivity, for a stay abroad. The long-term benefits might be unclear (and often unpredictable). Cost-benefit analyses are not carried out to understand the conditions under which CBLTMA may bring benefits to the sending companies and over what time frame. The same applies to the host companies. Reasons why employers might not be interested in receiving apprentices (that will return home) are likely to be due to the costs associated with additional training, additional time and resources to support logistical arrangements, potential language barriers and concerns about maintaining health and safety and curriculum training standards. Employers may perceive the training of an apprentice who will return home after a mobility period as a waste of time from their perspective, which is, once more, linked to the lack of evidence on benefits for the companies and/or insufficient awareness raising.

Companies need organisational support in, for example, matching apprentices with in-company placements, dealing with accommodation, social security and residence permits. However, the findings show that intermediary organisations that could offer such support, are the exception rather than the rule. While VET providers could support a system of CBLTMA, they would need clear guidance on how to support and implement it in the context of both outgoing and incoming apprentices. A positive example in this sense is the Danish Agency for Science and Higher Education and Research, which is responsible for the PIU programme and which offers easy access to clear guidelines for schools, students, and employers. VET providers have the additional problem that they also lack time and resources (for example staff), and in many countries they do not have the main responsibility for the apprentices. Companies often have this responsibility, as in Austria where apprentices spend only 20% of total training time on obligatory part-time vocational school-based training.

The main source of funding is the Erasmus+ programme; a notable exception is Denmark with the PIU programme, which has national sources of funding and clear guidelines on their scope and use.

Besides low interest in CBLTMA from companies, the country-level investigations seem to indicate that apprentice interest is also low. However, it appears that an apprentice who has already experienced short-term mobility as part of training will be more inclined to opt for long-term mobility.

Reluctance to participate in CBLTMA has been observed among younger apprentices and their parents. Besides low motivation and low awareness, specific legal issues may arise for mobile underage students, a greater degree of supervision/support and administrative work required from the parties involved. A paradox, however, can be observed in relation to the ideal target group of CBLTMA. While older apprentices seem to be more prepared to undertake CBLTMA, they are those who earn higher wages, which employers typically (but not in all countries) need to cover during mobility. CBLTMA schemes generally appear to be better suited to VET students who have reached the legal age of majority or are in their early twenties. The long-term mobility that exists today is part of post-apprenticeship pathways, as the project-level investigations show in Chapter 4.

Apprentices, irrespective of the age, may not want to leave on long-term mobility, or they would prefer short-term mobility for fear of losing the employment opportunity with their home company. Additionally, they often have comparatively poor foreign language skills, which can further hinder mobility.

Significant support, outreach and information and promotional work is necessary for both companies and apprentices (and their families):

- (a) on the company side: formalising the framework, convincing companies of the benefits of CBLTMA, setting up an appropriate system for the recognition of learning outcomes in mobility;
- (b) the apprentice must also be supported in areas such as housing, social insurance, and transport.



## CHAPTER 4.

# Project-level findings: lessons learned

Chapter 4 summarises the main findings of the project-level investigations. Three projects were selected for the purpose of collecting evidence on how CBLTMA works in practice and drawing lessons. Each of the three projects showcases a different instance of long-term mobility in practice:

- (a) *Apprentices in motion* (AIM) piloted mobility of apprenticeship graduates organised by big companies in their affiliates abroad (intra-company mobility);
- (b) *Euro apprenticeship* (Euro app) pilot projects conducted between 2016 and 2019 bring evidence on how VET providers cooperated and organised CBLTMA of apprentices and apprenticeship graduates;
- (c) *Travel to farm* (T2F) is a unique example of how a Danish intermediary organisation facilitates mobility in the agricultural sector as part of an international network of similar organisations.

Mobility in the framework of AIM and T2F include only periods of in-company placements abroad, while the mobility organised under Euro app pilot projects included alternation between a VET provider and a company in the host country. Mobility under AIM and Euro app projects concerned mostly graduates. T2F supports mobility among both apprentices and graduates. However, it is not evident which of the two groups benefit most from the services provided by T2F.

### 4.1. *Apprentices in motion: intra-company mobility of apprenticeship graduates*

Section 4.1.1 provides general information on the project, Sections 4.1.2 to 4.1.12 are based on the results of the project-level investigations that focused on the outgoing mobility opportunities for apprenticeship graduates

from Engie and Solvay France to their subsidiaries abroad in the United Kingdom (Engie), Germany and Portugal (Solvay).

#### 4.1.1. Presentation of the project

The *Apprentices in motion* project aimed to experiment with transnational long-term intra-company mobility of recent apprenticeship graduates by involving big companies with subsidiaries in other countries. The project was coordinated by the European Business Network for Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility (CSR Europe), together with four companies (ENGIE, Solvay, Nestlé and General Electric (GE)), as well as with two national partners:

- (a) FACE (Fondation Agir Contre l' Exclusion, Foundation acting against exclusion, France);
- (b) *Fondazione Sodalitas* (Italy).

The French foundation FACE aims to fight against all forms of exclusion, discrimination and poverty, with the support of a network of 6 000 companies. The Italian foundation *Sodalitas* promotes social responsibility of businesses and their involvement in sustainable growth. AIM was selected and funded by the European Commission as a pilot project, with a grant of EUR 381 121 <sup>(31)</sup>.

Its objective was to develop an alternative to the model of apprenticeship mobility organised by VET providers. Instead, the partners aimed at testing the capacity of the large companies to accept the tasks related to the implementation of CBLTMA by letting them take care of the practical and organisational aspects of such mobility (administrative procedures, accommodation, banking). The four big companies participating in the project aimed at testing the feasibility of long-term intra-company apprenticeship mobility, to learn and exchange from each other, as well as harmonise and simplify its procedures.

The project set out to implement a six-month mobility programme for a total of 25 apprenticeship graduates from four companies, located both in France and Italy (ENGIE, Solvay, Nestlé and GE) over the two-year duration (2017-19). However, out of the 25 long-term mobility exercises planned over the two years of the project's lifecycle, only six could be organised (Table 5). A seventh, put in place, was interrupted after two weeks. The others planned did not take place at all.

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<sup>(31)</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/biblio/documents/2019/WD%20IV-PP\\_PA\\_web.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/biblio/documents/2019/WD%20IV-PP_PA_web.pdf)

The project targeted post-apprentices; apprenticeship graduates at baccalaureate +2 and baccalaureate +3 levels (EQF 5 and 6), as per Table 5. The choice of selecting post-apprentices was made for greater simplicity: to avoid problems linked to the school calendar and the disparity in apprentice status from one country to another. It was a choice to avoid dealing with the complexity linked to the heterogeneity of the apprenticeship schemes between European countries. The assumption was also that, as it was already complicated for a company alone to organise mobility, and by involving an apprentice training centre (CFA), organisation would have been further complicated. The decision to involve graduates was also determined by the fact that it was not legally or administratively possible for students to leave their studies for such a long period of time. As the project had difficulties attaining the target number of apprentice graduates, an additional focus was placed on evaluating the demand for apprenticeship mobility among the company practitioners (HR managers, line managers), as well as the company apprentices. A survey was organised in this regard (Annex 4 contains information on the results of the survey).

#### 4.1.2. Partnership

CSR was responsible for the overall management of AIM, including its financial aspects and methodological guidelines. In France (country of origin of all the mobility opportunities analysed for the purpose of the project investigations), FACE (the French national coordinator) coordinated AIM at the national level. FACE was involved in line with its general objective to fight social and economic exclusion by engaging a network of 6 000 companies of all sizes. Some of the largest French companies are part of FACE's network. To identify companies interested in the project, FACE circulated a call for participation among large companies in the FACE foundation network in France, targeting groups with subsidiaries in other European countries. This stage lasted longer than expected at about a year. It required communication with the top management of the companies, and then down to the level of operational management. Union representatives were not involved in this process.

The European coordinator (CSR) and the French national coordinator (FACE) made the decision to let the companies take care of the practical and organisational aspects of CBLTMA (administrative procedures, accommodation, banking), testing their capacity to take over all the tasks related to the implementation of CBLTMA. The companies oversaw the

recruitment of mobility beneficiaries, were responsible for supporting them in settling down abroad, and for identifying the subsidiary abroad to act as host for the mobility beneficiaries.

Table 5. **Overview of apprentice graduates involved in AIM**

Company	Age	Graduation	Country of origin	Country of destination	Duration	Occupation during the mobility
<b>Nestlé</b>	21	Technical high school	Italy	Malta	2 weeks	Chemical technician
<b>Nestlé</b>	21	Bangkok transit system (BTS): systems maintenance	France	UK	6 months	Operator on bottling line
<b>ENGIE</b>	22	Durban University of Technology (DUT): marketing method	France	UK	9 months	Commercial assistant
<b>ENGIE</b>	21	BTS customer: relation and negotiation	France	UK	9 months	Internal project manager
<b>Solvay</b>	21	Bachelor degree: technical and analytics	France	Germany	6 months	Chemical technician
<b>Solvay</b>	22	Master degree 1: HR (2018)	France	Portugal	8 months	Admin and payroll technician
<b>GE (not completed)</b>	23	BTS assistant manager	France	Austria	3 months	Assistant manager

Source: Cedefop.

In relation to the utility of a national coordinator, the two companies interviewed (ENGIE and Solvay) had different opinions. One of the companies considered the appointment of a national coordinator as having limited utility, mostly focused on explaining and following up the results expected. The second company highlighted that FACE was especially useful at the

beginning, especially since it helped to answer questions about the legal and administrative framework in which mobility exercises were to take place.

No education institution was involved in the project to reduce complexity. From the point of view of ENGIE, 'there was no place for an education institution in the arrangement, since the point was to offer employment to a recent graduate, not to complete some type of mandatory internship before obtaining a diploma'. According to FACE, a link with an education institution could, however, have been beneficial in terms of social integration and links between peers.

#### 4.1.3. Attracting and selecting participants

One of the main challenges faced by the companies was that the demand for mobility was lower than anticipated. This was noted among the company affiliates abroad as well as the apprenticeship graduates (target group).

The companies involved had difficulties engaging the operational management level to identify potential participants. It therefore appeared more difficult than anticipated to find the adequate candidates fulfilling the requirements for mobility and corresponding to the profiles sought by the receiving companies (affiliates abroad). The main reasons identified were: low knowledge of foreign languages, candidates still relatively young on average, skills gap with offered position or lack of interest or motivation for long-term mobility abroad. This last reason may be linked to the apprentices' need for more information about the benefits of the mobility in terms of professional skills for their future careers. For example, ENGIE reported that although the usefulness of CBLTM was widely recognised within the company, finding candidates with a satisfactory level of English and who were willing to go abroad to take on a temporary position proved to be complicated. It was also relatively complicated for ENGIE to find foreign subsidiaries willing to finance the CBLTM of graduates for a six-to-nine-month period. In the end, there was the need for a management intervention (to liaise with the subsidiaries abroad) for the mobility to take place.

Solvay pointed out that the motivation among the young apprentices involved was very high, since they understood the value of an international experience for their future careers. It was also not difficult to convince the receiving organisation (subsidiaries abroad), given their interest in having someone from a different country who could bring something different to the table in terms of language, culture and background.

Candidates were selected through interviews conducted over the phone by the project coordinator from the HR department in each company. Candidates were interviewed on their level of motivation and their language skills. The candidates selected showed motivation to improve their English skills and to discover new professional and cultural experiences. Then, the selected candidates were assessed on their level of English to determine if they needed any linguistic support. For ENGIE, one of the two candidates benefited from English courses during their mobility period.

#### 4.1.4. Relationship between sending and receiving institutions

After the selection of the beneficiaries, it was necessary to identify managers within the subsidiaries abroad who were willing to act as tutors and to take in a recent graduate for a six- to nine-month period.

For ENGIE, the human resources unit in France <sup>(32)</sup> made a request to the HR unit in the United Kingdom to take in two graduates to participate in the programme. After that, no contact was maintained between the sending and receiving subsidiaries: once the graduate integrated into the receiving plant, there was hardly any liaison between the host subsidiary (United Kingdom) and the sending one (France). No resources or time had been planned for this, causing a lack of follow-up from the sending company.

#### 4.1.5. Organising the mobility

The tasks related to the administrative procedures, linked to the differences in national legal frameworks, were deemed particularly time-consuming. The project revealed how complex it is for companies to deal with these aspects, which are not part of their core business. The running of apprenticeship mobility was directly competing with daily business agenda.

When organising the mobility exercises, many significant challenges emerged as to how to deal with contracts, taxation, healthcare and social security, and with the companies not having a full picture of the entire process.

In some cases, the apprenticeship graduates had to solve several challenges by themselves (for example opening bank accounts) because companies were not fully aware of what was under their responsibility.

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<sup>(32)</sup> The interviewee defined herself as the go-between, between the sending and the receiving entity.

The main difficulties identified for addressing legal and logistical elements were (ranked from most difficult to least):

- (a) contractual items and legal issues;
- (b) setting up insurance and healthcare access;
- (c) setting up social security;
- (d) finding accommodation;
- (e) support with banking;
- (f) youth and cultural integration.

**Box 5. Opinions on the labour intensity of organising mobility, evidence from the AIM project**

- The interviewee from the French subsidiary's HR department for ENGIE reported that it was difficult to estimate how much time she had dedicated to this project. She estimated that it had been necessary for her to dedicate a day per week for six months to organise the mobility before it started.
- The interviewee from Solvay was not able to give an estimation in terms of human resources required, but stated that the process was time-consuming and that it would require a full-time employee.

*Source:* Cedefop.

#### **4.1.6. Contract and remuneration**

The placements considered in the four cases analysed under the project-level investigations varied from six to nine months and were based on short-term full-time work contracts with the receiving subsidiary. In the example of the company ENGIE, the contracts implemented were in English and the remuneration was the UK minimum wage depending on the age. This led to differences in salary between the two graduates.

The interviewee from Solvay said that the apprentices received a salary from the receiving company, while the EU funding assigned them a monthly allowance. The contract was made according to the receiving country's law and issues concerning social contributions were solved thanks to regulations establishing reciprocity between the countries involved.

#### **4.1.7. Non-financial support, accommodation**

For the two exercises organised by ENGIE, the unit in the United Kingdom was asked to help the graduates to find housing. The UK unit decided to pay an external consultant to take care of all the logistical aspects (accommodation, the internet, etc.). The option to include something like a buddy was considered, but finally it was not formally included into the contract.

The interviewee from Solvay pointed out that apprentices received language training and an accommodation allowance, both provided by Solvay.

All the graduates benefited from an integration day: this included visit and presentation of the team, as usually done to accommodate a new employee.

Providing support for social and cultural integration, as a complement to professional integration, did not appear to be usual for the companies involved in AIM, although differences were noted depending on the corporate culture of each country. Few activities specifically concerning social integration were arranged for the beneficiaries. However, depending on the country and the corporate culture, apprentices were able to participate in after-work or extra-professional moments with their colleagues.

#### **4.1.8. Training plan, pedagogical issues**

Each company defined some objectives prior to each mobility, but there was no training plan formalised specifying the learning outcomes before the mobility. There were no education objectives, in the sense that the relationship was professional and mediated by a labour contract. However, the graduates were appointed to a position in which they could be useful and feel at ease according to their CVs.

Solvay indicated that there was no training plan behind the exercises they organised. However, the interviewee from Solvay also pointed out that they had tried to place the graduates in positions related to their diplomas.

#### **4.1.9. Learning outcomes assessment**

Monthly calls had initially been planned between the tutors of the sending and receiving companies to assess progress, but in practice they have not taken place. Only a few emails were exchanged between the beneficiaries and the sending company to follow up on their integration at the workplace. This reveals a clear lack of communication between the tutor in the receiving company and the sending company.



A final interview was conducted by the national coordinator (FACE) with each young person to carry out an evaluation at the end of their mobility and enable them to give their feedback. Managers of the hosting company also helped the employees to write CVs in English or letter of recommendation when necessary.

One of the follow-up calls that Solvay had with their graduates (the second and final one, which took place two months before the end of the mobility) was focused on assessing if the objectives of the mobility had been accomplished.

#### **4.1.10. Lessons learned from the AIM project**

##### *4.1.10.1. Internal processes and recruitment of young people*

The project demonstrated the needs for simplified and tailored processes, to enable closer communication between HR headquarters and HR in subsidiaries within big international companies. The lack of communication between the company and its subsidiaries made it difficult to get confirmation from the hosting company, after interested graduates had been identified.

The recruitment of participants proved difficult because companies looked for a perfect match between a vacant position and a young applicant's professional profile. The project's self-assessment report recognises that some cooperation with education stakeholders and public institutions may have been helpful in reaching the targeted young people better. However, the problem remains of the high-level time investment required in identifying and following up, perceived as a sacrifice by companies oriented towards the search for maximum profit. The benefits seem not to outweigh the cost.

##### **4.1.11. Promotion of long-term mobility among young people**

It is necessary to make the actors more aware of the benefits of CBLTMA. One key conclusion relates to the impact mobility can have on the future career of apprentices, resulting from the acquisition of transversal or employability skills. Some dedicated skills and career impact evaluation tools might make more obvious the benefits in terms of skills development.

##### **4.1.12. Administrative and legal issues**

Companies have been confronted with the complexity linked to differences in administrative procedures and national regulatory frameworks around CBLTMA, which is not their core business. The difficulties encountered

had to be dealt on a case-by-case basis, making it difficult to streamline the process for the companies. Companies need a clearer and simpler framework in terms of legal procedures. They also express a strong need for support from VET providers or other organisations in managing mobility processes. As an alternative, companies need to hire partners to handle the logistical aspects (housing, bank accounts, energy, internet), as some companies actually did.

#### 4.1.13. Financial issues

From the perspective of ENGIE, companies only accept apprentices (or interns), provided they do not have to remunerate them; it would otherwise be impossible to organise long-term mobility on a large scale if companies were to remunerate apprentices (or interns) for six months, without subsidy from the EU, the State or any other organisation. Contractual obligations are additional hurdles for companies to engage in long-term mobility.

From Solvay's point of view, the financial case for long-term mobility is not so complicated to make. Companies can benefit from a better reputation and higher worker satisfaction, which can lead to attracting and retaining more talent.

## 4.2. *Euro apprenticeship* pilot projects: mobility showcase from VET providers

Section 4.2.1 provides general information on the project, Sections 4.2.2 to 4.2.8 are based on the results of the project-level investigations that focused on the mobility exercises organised between France and Hungary.

### 4.2.1. Presentation of the project

Under the scope of *Euro app*, the study investigated two pilot projects conducted between 2016 and 2019. The aim of the two pilot projects was to develop CBLTMA for apprentices, by testing various mobility schemes for apprentices to be trained in another EU country for 6 to 12 months, in order to identify the main obstacles and to value the benefits of the CBLTMA.

(a) *Euro app* pilot projects were run by a consortium of 36 VET providers in 12 different EU countries, coordinated by the association *Compagnons du devoir et du tour de France* (a French vocational training provider and craft guild). The countries involved were Belgium, Czechia, Denmark,

Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Finland. Tables 6 and 7 provide an overview of the number of beneficiaries by country of origin and country of destination.

Table 6. **Countries of origin**

<b>France</b>	12
<b>Spain</b>	6
<b>Italy</b>	3
<b>Czechia</b>	1
<b>Finland</b>	1

Source: Cedefop.

Table 7. **Countries of destination**

<b>France</b>	11
<b>Hungary</b>	4
<b>Italy</b>	4
<b>Czechia</b>	2
<b>Finland</b>	1
<b>Spain</b>	1

Source: Cedefop.

**Box 6. Data on overall participation in the *Euro app* pilot projects**

A total of 104 mobility exercises for apprentices and apprentice graduates, lasting from six up to 12 months, were organised between August 2016 and September 2018.

All those organised within the framework of the Euro app pilot projects involved a French partner and a foreign partner: the partners from the nine other participating countries did not organise exercises between themselves.

Fifty-eight were outgoing mobility exercises of young people leaving France for another European country; the first three destination countries were: Hungary (13), Italy (12) and Finland (9).

Forty-six exercises concerned young people from other European countries hosted in France, the first three countries of origin being: Italy (12), Hungary (9) and Spain (9).

Source: Cedefop.

The sectors the most represented (from the most represented to the least) were:

- (a) hotel and catering: for occupations like waiter (12), cook/chef (11);
- (b) bakery and pastry: for occupations like pastry maker (17), baker (4);
- (c) fitting and finishing occupations in the building industry: joiner (15), painter/decorator (5).

The other sectors concerned were metallurgy (boilermaker, metalworker, mechanic, welder), construction (stonemason, surveyor, roofer), hairdressing, trade and tourism.

Most of the beneficiaries were apprentice graduates (81); only 23 (less than a quarter) were apprentices. For the 23 young people in the latter group, the distribution of trades corresponds to that indicated for all the beneficiaries, with bakery-pastry and waiter most represented.

#### 4.2.2. Participation data linked to mobility organised between France and Hungary

Twenty-two mobility exercises from three to six months and more than six months (Tables 8 and 9) were organised between France and Hungary:

- (a) nine from Hungary to France, all of which concerned graduates;
- (b) 13 from France to Hungary, nine of which concerned graduates and four younger under apprentice status, of which only two went on long-term mobility.

Table 8. **Data on the duration of apprentice mobility exercises between France and Hungary**

Duration	Outgoing mobility (from FR to HU)	Incoming mobility (from HU to FR)
<b>Number of exercises of three to six months</b>	2	0
<b>Number of exercises of more than six months</b>	21	0

Source: Cedefop.

Table 9. **Data on the duration of graduate mobility exercises between France and Hungary**

Duration	Outgoing mobility (from FR to HU)	Incoming mobility (from HU to FR)
<b>Number of exercises of three to six months</b>	4	0
<b>Number of exercises of more than six months</b>	9	9

Source: Cedefop.

**Box 7. Age of participants in the *Euro app* pilot projects**

Participants ranged in age from 17 to 22 years old. Long-term mobility has raised questions around young people's maturity, especially for a 16-year-old, for example, who might find it challenging to go abroad alone to follow training, without friends or family. The appropriate minimum age for this type of experience would be 17 or 18 years. Organising mobility for young adults (aged 18 or over) greatly alleviates administrative problems.

Source: Cedefop.

**4.2.3. Partnerships, roles and responsibilities**

The professionals interviewed from the VET providers that took part in the *Euro app* pilot projects in France and Hungary stress the importance of having previously established a relationship of trust with the provider in the sending or host country. Each of the French CFAs that took part relied on longer-standing historical partnerships with their partners in other European countries.

- The exercises organised between France and Hungary mainly concerned:
- (a) in France, the CFA *Maisons familiales et rurales de Vendée* (CFA MFR Vendée, rural-community vocational school, located in Vendée);
  - (b) in Hungary, the *Kgy Szeged* VET provider, which groups together several upper secondary schools for different fields of training: mechanics, construction, food/catering, commerce.

The two VET providers have more than 15 years' experience of cooperation, developed within the framework of Erasmus+ projects as short mobility. The coordinator of the French VET provider speaks of a 'solid basis of friendship and fraternity' as a necessary condition for cooperation: she knows she can count on her Hungarian counterpart to find ad hoc solutions together, while respecting each of the national legal frameworks.

It should be noted that the person in charge of coordinating the project within *Kgy Szeged* was fluent in French, which was an important factor in facilitating communication, especially with the young people hosted in Szeged.

Table 10 indicates the roles and responsibilities of the VET providers in the sending and host countries.

Table 10. **Procedures and steps**

<b>Sending country</b> carried out by the training centre of apprentices in France and the vocational high school in Hungary	<b>Host country</b> carried out by the training centre of apprentices in France and the vocational high school in Hungary
<b>Visits to the training centre and companies in the host country (project start-up)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and group briefings targeting the potential beneficiaries, carried out by the project coordinator within each vocational training centre</li> <li>• Interviews of individuals and selection of the beneficiaries</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of a personalised training programme: in cooperation between the two project coordinators, in the sending country and in the host country: taking into account the young person's background and goals, and the position offered by the host company</li> <li>• Preparation for departure, administrative procedures</li> <li>• Weekly exchanges with the partner in the host country</li> <li>• Remote monitoring with the young person and the tutor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search for the host company</li> <li>• Establishment of a personalised training programme: in cooperation between the two project coordinators, in the sending country and in the host country: taking into account the young person's background and goals, and the position offered by the host company</li> <li>• Administrative procedures, registration at the training institution</li> <li>• Preparation of the contract: drawing up of the contract based on the consortium's model, signature with the host company</li> <li>• Search for a home</li> <li>• Weekly exchanges with the partner in the sending country</li> <li>• Follow-up in companies</li> <li>• Organisation of visits and social integration events</li> <li>• Assistance in case of need (e.g. health problems)</li> <li>• Organisation of learning outcomes assessment: registration for examinations (FR) or examination organised with the Chamber of Commerce and establishment of a certificate of learning outcomes (HU)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for the return and valorisation of international experience: as required within the framework of Erasmus Pro, assessment specific to the pilot project, Europass handover event</li> </ul>	

Source: Cedefop.

Distance-monitoring by the VET provider in the sending country was a challenge, as the young beneficiary did not always take the time to keep in touch with the coordinator.

#### **4.2.4. Status of, and responsibility for, beneficiaries during mobility**

Legally, the Hungarian beneficiary of mobility coming to France remained under the responsibility of the team of the Hungarian VET provider, and vice versa.

A training agreement template was provided by the consortium in two versions (English and French): *Inter-institutional cooperation agreement to train apprentices in a combined work/training scheme in a European country different from their home country*. This agreement was established and signed between the sending VET provider, the host provider and/or the host firm, and the apprentice. The purpose of this agreement was to define the relationships among the parties involved regarding the organisation of the learning course and training period for the beneficiary at the VET provider and the company in the host country.

It included information on:

- (a) shared and specific obligations of each party;
- (b) standards and obligations applicable for social insurance and security;
- (c) health and safety;
- (d) the responsibilities and insurances applicable;
- (e) training period: start and end dates;
- (f) monitoring in the host country;
- (g) remuneration, benefits and coverage of costs;
- (h) reporting and assessment at the end of the training period.

One annex contained further details on educational aspects: goals for the training period at the host company, goals pursued at the host VET provider, main tasks assigned to the beneficiary of mobility, the combined work/training scheme, the modalities to assess and validate the mobility period, the host company's obligations.

Another annex specified the remuneration, benefits, coverage of expenses and the working conditions. The remuneration of the beneficiary of mobility was dependent on his/her status in the host country and on the type of contract s/he signed in the host country: apprenticeship contract, professional training contract, internship contract. The specificities linked to the status of young people in each country needed ad hoc solutions.

### Hungary to France

The young Hungarians, welcomed in France, had the status of employees and were paid according to the conditions applicable in France, depending on their age and level of qualification. The Hungarian partner underlined the multiplicity of administrative obstacles in France, for example for obtaining residence permits, and allowances which necessitate increased support from the VET provider and from the host company.

### France to Hungary

The young people from France, who were welcomed in Hungary, were registered as guest apprentices with student status in the Hungarian VET provider, which enabled them to have a student card (entitling them to discounts), to have a school certificate and then to be integrated in the companies that hosted them, without the companies having to pay them. Graduates signed a local internship contract, while apprentices signed a training agreement.

The French beneficiaries of mobility, not having an employee status in Hungary, did not benefit from Hungarian social security. This, plus the limitations of the European health insurance card, could have raised concerns in the event of serious health issues.

Most of the French young graduates that undertook mobility in Hungary were registered at the public employment service (*Pôle emploi*) in France to benefit from French status and enable them to benefit from social security cover during their stay abroad. Apprentices still studying for a degree taking part in *Euro app* pilot projects were not entitled to that status but the VET provider used subscription to a complementary health cover abroad to reinforce social protection.

In Hungary, young Europeans enrolled in secondary vocational schools have to pay for their training costs (around EUR 2 000 per school year): the funding of the pilot projects made it possible to cover this expenditure.

#### 4.2.5. Human resources: cost and time

The time required appears to be longer for the preparation and follow-up of the student in the host country, for incoming participants. While it is difficult to estimate this time precisely, the organisation of an incoming mobility could represent three to four weeks of work according to the interviewees. However, this estimate includes pooled activities corresponding to the reception of a group of young people arriving at the same time.



The preparation and accompaniment are particularly time-consuming: it is necessary to ensure a welcome, to accompany the young people to the pharmacy, for example, to show them where the doctor is, to go to the immigration office to obtain papers, to ensure follow-up in companies, and to organise visits.

#### **4.2.6. Financial and non-financial support**

In terms of non-financial support, language courses were organised during or before the mobility. The support provided in the host country corresponds to a set of activities to ensure that the young person is not isolated but is socially integrated.

In terms of financial support, it differed in the two countries, as follows.

##### **Hungary to France**

The apprentices get their salary from the French employer as employees, while the Hungarian side provided a grant of EUR 22 per day for 90 days, plus travel costs.

##### **France to Hungary**

Beneficiaries received a grant from the pilot project: EUR 22 per day plus travel costs.

Different funding modalities have been combined for individual mobility: grants funded within the framework of the project; Erasmus+ grants for additional beneficiaries with the agreement of the Erasmus+ agency; and funding from the French public employment service (*Assedics*) for young people registered as jobseekers before their departure.

#### **4.2.7. Attracting and involving participants: individuals and companies**

##### *4.2.7.1. Individuals*

The recruitment of candidates for long mobility was one of the difficulties encountered during the project and afterwards. The project has not demonstrated the existence of a strong demand for CBLTMA among the potential pool of beneficiaries. Several factors were identified related to this low demand: lack of English language skills, lack of motivation for mobility, preference to continue studying without interruption or to look for a job

(considering that, in most of the cases, CBLTMA extends the duration of the training path).

### Box 8. Young French participation in long-term mobility in Hungary

According to the French CFAs, *Compagnons du devoir* and CFA MFR Vendée, the motivations expressed by the young people were:

- living an international experience;
- discovering a new culture;
- improving their foreign language skills;
- getting out of the comfort zone;
- developing new professional skills, for example the management of the breakfast service for a young waiter in the catering industry.

Source: Cedefop.

#### Approach to promotion: Hungary to France

In Hungary, the Kgy Szeged VET provider, which has been active in the Erasmus+ programme for the last 15 years, promotes long-term mobility at annual events and through a range of communication media and channels (social networks, Erasmus+ posters). Seven out of the nine young Hungarians who participated in the pilot project had already had the experience of a short mobility.

#### Approach to promotion and selection: France to Hungary

In France, the CFA MFR Vendée gave a presentation of the possibilities of long-term mobility, linked to the pilot project, to all the groups in their last year of training in January. The selection was then organised as follows:

- (a) submission of an application by the prospective candidates: CV, covering letter, letter from the apprentice master;
- (b) interview;
- (c) selection.

The selection process was fluid: the number of candidates remained limited at the end of the school year (in June) with CBLTMA departures from September onwards. There were instances when some well-positioned candidates would withdraw and favour looking directly for a job instead.

#### 4.2.7.2. Companies

The Hungarian VET provider relied on the companies with which it had been working locally for a long time, within the framework of the Erasmus+ project or more broadly with students during their internships. It also carried out ad hoc searches for partners, according to the new profiles of the French young people selected for mobility.

The French VET provider relied on its network of local companies.

In both cases, it was necessary to look for companies with in-house skills to communicate in English with the young people coming from abroad; this considerably complicated the search for suitable companies.

#### 4.2.7.3. Training-related aspects

##### **Hungary to France**

The nine Hungarian youths were hosted in France with the status of employees, all of them for a period of 9 to 12 months. This status is also linked to the opportunity given to the beneficiaries of mobility to prepare for a French diploma; all nine young Hungarian participants prepared for the French certificate of professional competence (*certificat d'aptitude professionnelle*, CAP), EQF level 4, which is delivered by the Ministry of Education.

The curriculum followed in France was adapted by the French VET provider: the off-the job part of the curriculum focused on vocational subjects, as the general ones were too complicated in language terms for the Hungarian apprentices. The Hungarian coordinator translated the Hungarian baccalaureate curriculum to inform the French partner on the contents corresponding to the general subjects already completed by the Hungarian apprentices.

The pedagogical team in the host VET provider were required to adapt their teaching methods so that they took into account the specific needs of the Hungarian apprentices, mostly linked to their limited French language skills and their personalised timetable (no courses on general subjects).

Also, it was sometimes necessary to provide specific support to the beneficiaries of the mobility so that they fully understood all the obligations linked to their employee status in France. Because of their frame of reference, where apprentices are under school status in Hungary, they did not always anticipate the same level of expectation from employers.

### France to Hungary

Among the 13 young people who went from France to Hungary, nine were postgraduates and four apprentices. All undertook a long-term mobility of 6 to 12 months.

A training plan was worked out, by occupation, prior to the organisation of the first exercises, in partnership between the French CFA and the Hungarian IVET establishment. The general principle was to adapt the training in Hungary, so that it did not focus on the achievements linked to the French diplomas, and to enable new complementary skills to be developed. This training plan had been adapted by the Hungarian partner and individualised according to the profile and objectives of each participant.

Between the first and the second year of the project, the Hungarian VET provider changed the alternance arrangements for the young people hosted. The Hungarian regime of one week in the company and one week at the provider was changed to a regime of two weeks in the company and one week at the VET provider.

Although the young people from France were administratively assigned to a class within the Hungarian IVET establishment, they had a personal training schedule. It was not possible for them to participate in the courses given in Hungarian. The personal training programmes included Hungarian language courses, English language courses, and a set of practical work, the last of these conducted in Hungarian but handled by trainers who also spoke English.

The in-company training programmes were designed to develop specific know-how in the Hungarian context, with the choice not to target skills already acquired by the participants during their training in France. For example, for the young people who were training in catering, the mobility beneficiary would learn how to cook soup, which is specific to and important in Hungarian culinary culture. In each company, they also prepared a French meal for their Hungarian colleagues, offering mutual transfer of know-how in terms of cooking techniques, preparation and presentation.

One difficulty noted is linked to the lack of development of an integrated approach to in-company training in Hungary. As a result, the establishment of a training programme to be assessed and validated by the French apprenticeship mentor was often complicated and sometimes did not allow a sufficiently in-depth exchange, according to the French VET provider. However, in the case of a Hungarian company, with which cooperation had been established for a long time, this in-depth dialogue was facilitated

by the sharing of a certain implicit expectation on the part of the French side concerning the responsibilities of companies in the context of an apprenticeship training path.

#### 4.2.7.4. *Recognition/validation of learning outcomes*

##### **Hungary to France**

The young Hungarians hosted in France – all graduates in Hungary and hosted in France as apprentices – were all registered to prepare for a French diploma from the French national education: a certificate of professional competence (CAP, EQF level 4).

Difficulties were encountered in allowing them to be exempted from examinations for certain general subjects (such as French, history, geography), because of the cumbersome, costly, and time-consuming ENIC-NARIC <sup>(33)</sup> recognition procedures for this purpose.

Short-term mobility is recognised in Hungary, as it corresponds to the obligation to complete a summer internship. But long-term mobility poses a problem with regard to the recognition of theoretical subjects in the Hungarian curriculum, which cannot be validated in Hungary if they have been completed abroad.

##### **France to Hungary**

Validation of learning outcomes for the young people hosted in Hungary (graduates as well as apprentices) was possible through the VET provider in Szeged working with the local chamber of commerce and industry to enable a certificate to be issued. This certificate, which is bilingual, was awarded upon the completion of a final examination (in English). It proved the completion of a company-based vocational training course: the duration of the mobility, the skills acquired and the results of their assessment, including the final assessment in the company, were detailed in the annex to the certificate. These learning outcomes were also issued in Europass.

For young apprentices preparing for a French national education diploma, such proof of learning outcomes was not automatically taken into account in the award of the diploma. This is because the proof issued by the Hungarian partner would not fit into the French certification framework, unless explicitly

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<sup>(33)</sup> ENIC stands for European network of information centres; NARIC stands for national academic recognition information centre.

aligned with a skills block corresponding to a French diploma certification unit; this process requires an agreement signed between a CFA and a foreign partner (company or VET provider), including the following elements:

- (a) training activities;
- (b) skills to be acquired;
- (c) learning outcomes to be assessed;
- (d) evaluation procedures;
- (e) procedures for the communication of the results.

The proof issued in Hungary in the case of *Euro app* did not correspond to this requirement; it only indicated the skills acquired by the participants.

#### **4.2.8. Lessons learned from *Euro app* pilot projects**

##### *4.2.8.1. Apprentice mobility versus graduate mobility*

The project has largely favoured the participation of graduates rather than apprentices for the purpose of long-term mobility abroad. This choice was made particularly for reasons of ease of organisation: as these young people are not preparing for a diploma, it is possible to get around the difficulty linked to the recognition of learning outcomes abroad within the framework of a national diploma. This type of postgraduate mobility is generally organised at the end of the apprenticeship, before the young person enters the labour market.

##### *4.2.8.2. Heterogeneity of apprentice status*

Hungarian beneficiaries hosted in France as employees had to cope with all the French legal requirements and many administrative issues, while French beneficiaries hosted in Hungary as students did not benefit from social security. The management of health problems, when the beneficiary is not covered by the health system in the host country, has emerged as a real concern, particularly in serious cases requiring medical intervention.

##### *4.2.8.3. Validation of learning outcomes*

An important part of the project's results focuses on the difficulties encountered regarding the validation of learning outcomes abroad, and the solutions developed around it. ECVET (European credit system for vocational education and training) credits were not used because they were considered too complex.

#### 4.2.8.4. *High administrative costs*

The organisation of long-term mobility requires significant investments in human resources and has a significant financial cost.

#### 4.2.8.5. *Low interest among companies and young people*

The recruitment of companies willing to take on apprentices and trainees has been problematic.

#### 4.2.8.6. *Language barriers*

Language also poses a significant practical problem in terms of communication. For example, it is very difficult for Hungarian apprentices who do not speak French to be welcomed in France, as few people in company teams speak English; the reverse applies for French apprentices welcomed in Hungary. The online linguistic support (OLS) course platform of the Erasmus+ programme has proved to be unsuitable for the public concerned.

### 4.3. *Travel to farm: sectoral mobility showcase based on international partnerships*

*Travel to farm* is not a project, but a Danish non-profit self-governing organisation, founded in 1912, with the purpose of creating and facilitating exchange programmes for students, skilled workers or other interested parties in the agricultural sector. Section 4.3 provides an overview of how T2F works, as part of an international partnership.

#### 4.3.1. **Long-term mobility in the agricultural sector**

There is a strong tradition in Danish VET of cross-country mobility in the agricultural sector. Many students arrange a placement with an employer abroad without consulting an intermediary organisation like T2F, and data about the duration of these placements are not collected centrally, even though such data are meant to be kept by VET providers. T2F facilitates mobility of at least three months' duration, and sometimes up to a year. According to T2F, for work-based mobility abroad, the longer the duration, the more beneficial the exercise is, with respect to achieving learning and personal growth. A factor peculiar to agriculture is the seasonal nature of work: the longer the placement, the more the beneficiaries of mobility get

to experience a whole season of growth and work through the diverse tasks from sowing to harvesting. During the season, there may also be periods with fewer tasks, which allow the beneficiaries to take some time off to experience more of the culture in the country they are visiting. Longer stay also means that the beneficiaries have the possibility to bond with their hosts and earn their trust so that they can try some of the other tasks at the farm, gain more independence in performing their tasks and be trusted with expensive machinery. Beneficiaries of short-term mobility in agriculture do not get the same exposure; they may not get to use machinery like combine harvesters, and some farmers may be less interested in investing time in their training, as they are only at the farm for a short while. As one interviewed farmer answered: 'They spend the first three months just being confused', meaning that the beneficiary would need to stay long-term at the farm to make a significant contribution to its activities and to gain real experience with the tasks and procedures.

In the agriculture sector, it is very common for employees to move from farm to farm to find work. This culture may influence the way students in agriculture think about mobility. T2F staff have noticed that agricultural students are more mobile than, for instance, students of horticulture, who also belong to their target group. One representative from T2F believes that this is a mindset that has been developed from the tradition of agricultural training in Denmark for the last 100 years.

#### **4.3.2. Mobility in and out of Denmark supported by T2F**

T2F annually helps approximately 130 Danish youths travel abroad and receives approximately 60 foreign students, graduates, and young persons who want to pursue an education in agriculture or horticulture and look to add in-company training in Denmark to their education pathway.

T2F reports to have received fewer applications from foreign candidates for placements in Denmark in the last 5 to 10 years compared to before: this is especially the case for candidates from European countries. Currently, most incoming apprentices are from Asian countries. Among sending countries in Europe, Austria currently provides the largest share of VET students for placement in Denmark through T2F.

T2F and European partners have worked on new ways to increase mobility within Europe since 1995. However, it has been noticed by T2F that young Danish apprentices in programmes leading to occupations in agriculture



(and possibly young Europeans more generally) prefer travelling to Australia, the United States of America, or Canada; farms and plantations in these countries are often large and use big machinery, which, according to T2F, is a large motivational factor among the apprentices. According to T2F staff, European agricultural students lack insight into how agriculture and farming is undertaken in different European countries, so they are not sure what to expect if they take a placement in a European country. Conversely, the learners appear to have a clearer picture of how agriculture and farming work in Australia, USA, and Canada. This is a self-reinforcing process, since most potentially mobile apprentices get their knowledge from peers who have already experienced a placement abroad. This is reflected by the numbers: T2F annually assists approximately 130 Danish apprentices in going abroad for work experience. Of these, only around 10 choose to go to another European country, while the remaining 120 go outside Europe. Ireland is the most preferred European destination for Danish apprentices <sup>(34)</sup>.

#### Box 9. **Mobility for students versus graduates, evidence from T2F**

T2F arranges long-term placements abroad for both students in apprenticeship programmes and for graduates from such programmes. Most of the graduates wanting to travel abroad from Denmark for a work-based learning experience are recent graduates who did not manage to travel abroad during their studies but still want to have that experience.

Due to legal constraints in Denmark, it is not possible to arrange mobility for inbound graduates. According to a Departmental Order which has been in force since 2019 <sup>(35)</sup>, persons in work-based training in Denmark should be between 18 and 30 years old; should document that they have taken a language test; the work-based training should be part of an education programme; and should not exceed 12 months. Persons who have already graduated their VET programme are qualified and must be employed on standard terms, in accordance with the collective agreement of the sector.

From an administrative and practical point of view, there is little difference in arranging mobility for apprentices versus graduates. However, T2F has recorded that employers tend to prefer having graduates in work-based training, since they are fully qualified, and the employer is under no formal obligation to assist their learning

<sup>(34)</sup> Exact numbers for the last five years were not provided by T2F.

<sup>(35)</sup> *Bekendtgørelse om meddelelse af opholds- og arbejdstilladelse til praktikanter og volontører*: [www.retsinformation.dk/eli/ta/2019/1406](http://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/ta/2019/1406)

towards a specific set of outcomes. Also, the graduates tend to be older and more experienced than apprentices.

T2F generally does not have trouble finding hosts for mobile learners in Denmark or abroad, whether they are apprentices or graduates. T2F and its partners engage in conversations with both host employers and mobile learners to match the expectations of both parties. The conversation with the host employer aims to help the host gain an understanding of the apprentice's experience and capabilities, so that the tasks match them. Graduates may be a little easier to place, as they have more freedom to choose what they want to experience or learn during the placement abroad, but the difference is negligible.

Source: Cedefop.

### 4.3.3. Governance

#### 4.3.3.1. Overall governance of T2F

T2F was created by a diverse group of organisations having affiliation with the agricultural and horticultural sector, but not including social partners<sup>(36)</sup>. The founding organisations are members of T2F, and representatives from these organisations constitute the governing board. They are:

- (a) Danish Agricultural and Food Council (*Landbrug & Fødevarer*), a sectoral interest group/lobby organisation for the agricultural and food sectors;
- (b) the Young Farmers' Club (*LandboUngdom*), a youth organisation for young farmers;
- (c) the Danish association of agronomists (*Dansk Agronomforening*), a social and professional forum for people with a higher education in agriculture;
- (d) Danish Horticulture (*Dansk Gartneri*), a sectoral interest organisation/lobby organisation for the horticultural sector;
- (e) the association of agricultural colleges in Denmark (*Danske Landbrugsskoler*)<sup>(37)</sup>.

<sup>(36)</sup> The employers' association in the sector is GLS-A (*Gartneri-, land- og skovbrugets arbejdsgivere*). Their trade union counterpart is 3F (*Fagligt Fælles Forbund*).

<sup>(37)</sup> Links to member organisations:  
<https://landboungdom.dk/> (in Danish)  
<https://danskgartneri.dk/english>  
<http://danskelandbrugsskoler.dk/> (in Danish)  
<https://agricultureandfood.dk/>  
[www.ja.dk/english/](http://www.ja.dk/english/)

The main roles and responsibilities of the governing board are:

- (a) the board follows up on the operation of T2F and decides on the membership fees. The board meets twice a year, but the chair is in contact with T2F management between meetings;
- (b) board members help promote the activities of T2F in their respective organisations and networks;
- (c) board members act as liaison between T2F staff and policy-makers, helping T2F staff navigate the political framework, taking note of relevant policy developments and their ramifications for mobility.

The day-to-day operations of T2F are carried out by a small secretariat with two regular employees (programme coordinators) and two interns. One of the programme coordinators is responsible for incoming mobility, the other for outgoing.

#### 4.3.3.2. *The role of international partnerships*

T2F is a member of the GrowAbroad World Alliance, an international organisation for international internships for agricultural students <sup>(38)</sup>. As a result, T2F has 40 partner organisations in 30 countries around the world. Table 11 shows the partner countries ranked according to the volume of Danish agricultural students going to the country.

**Table 11. T2F partner countries, according to the volume of Danish apprentices or graduates sent**

Country	National partner	The organisation offers...
Australia	2workinOz	Short-term crop cultivation programmes in Western Australia. The programmes last from three to six months.
	International Rural Exchange (IRE) Australia	Programmes for up to 12 months in most agricultural fields, such as crop cultivation, dairy cattle, beef cattle and pig production.
Canada	International Rural Exchange Canada	Programmes lasting 4 to 12 months in primarily crop cultivation, but also dairy and beef cattle.

<sup>(38)</sup> GrowAbroad, 2020.

Country	National partner	The organisation offers...
<b>New Zealand</b>	Rural Exchange New Zealand (REnz)	Programmes with primarily sheep production, dairy cattle and crop production, the latter being especially seed production. Duration is between four to six months.
<b>United States of America</b>	Communicating for Agriculture Education Programmes (CAEP)	Programmes with dairy and beef cattle, crop production and horses. A duration of 6 to 12 months, usually 7 to 10 months.
	OHIO, Ohio State University	Programmes with dairy cattle, pig production and crop production, but also a limited possibility of programmes regarding combine harvesters.
	Minnesota Agricultural Student Trainee Programme (MAST), University of Minnesota	Placements in enterprises in a broad range of subsectors in agriculture. The programmes can be combined with a semester at the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Science at the University of Minnesota. Duration of 6 to 12 months, typically 7 to 10 months.
	Experience International (EI)	Programmes with dairy and beef cattle, crop production, horses, pig production, forestry, ecology and wine production. Typically, they have a duration of 8 to 10 months.
<b>The Netherlands</b>	Agency for Agricultural Exchange and Study tours (SUSP)	Programmes with dairy cattle and dairy goats, pig production, crop and vegetable production, and horticulture. The duration is usually of three to six months.
<b>Ireland</b>	Euipeople	Programmes with dairy cattle, mixed farm with dairy and beef cattle or dairy cattle and sheep, sheep production and horses. The duration is 3 to 12 months, but there are also possibilities for a 24-month programme.
<b>Norway</b>	Atlantis Exchange	Programmes at smaller farms with the possibility of working with dairy cattle and dairy goats, sheep, crop, vegetable and fruit production, as well as combination farms with livestock and crop production. The programmes usually last three to six months.
<b>Germany</b>	<i>Deutsche Bauernverband</i> (DBV)	Programmes of crop production, dairy cattle, pigs and poultry production. The programmes last three to six months, but a programme lasting more than three months requires the applicant to be enrolled in an agricultural education.

Source: Cedefop.

More sporadically, apprentices go to France, Japan, Iceland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

The exchanges within the alliance are regulated by the GrowAbroad code of practice, which builds on the following principles (GrowAbroad World Alliance, 2020):

- (a) principle 1: compliance with laws and treaties: exchange programmes shall respect all applicable laws of the country in which they occur, and international treaties and agreements to which the country is a signatory;
- (b) principle 2: rights and responsibilities: programme participants' rights and responsibilities shall be clearly defined and documented;
- (c) principle 3: screening: participants shall be screened for participation in the exchange. Participants shall be screened in the home country by a qualified organisation or individual with a good reputation;
- (d) principle 4: training plans: individualised training plans shall be written, implemented, monitored, and evaluated. The objectives of each participant's programme, and the means of achieving them, shall be clearly stated...;
- (e) principle 5: intercultural exchange: programme participants shall be actively involved in intercultural activities throughout their programme abroad;
- (f) principle 6: programme support: international exchange-trainee programmes shall provide the support necessary to assure optimal learning and exchange opportunities for participants;
- (g) principle 7: monitoring and assessment: monitoring and evaluation shall be conducted to assess:
  - (i) the quality of participants' training and intercultural experience;
  - (ii) the effectiveness of the exchange programme;
  - (iii) the impact of the exchange on participants.'

The role of the partners includes: matching students with employers, providing ad hoc assistance in case of misunderstandings and conflicts, arranging cultural events for apprentices. On its side, the tasks of T2F include:

- (a) awareness raising: T2F is active in raising awareness of the opportunities inherent in mobility in apprenticeships. They visit all the Danish VET providers in the sector each year, presenting opportunities and testimonies from former beneficiaries. The apprentice is either directed to T2F by their VET provider, or they go to the T2F website. In either case, s/he first chooses the field of the mobility and the desired destination country.

After the selection has been made, the website offers general information that the apprentice can peruse before applying;

- (b) screening: based on the application, CV and personal biography, T2F staff assess if the apprentice is within the age bracket accepted by the partner organisation <sup>(39)</sup>, and whether the English language level of the person is sufficient for travel. The latter is usually the case, but if not, s/he is advised to improve his/her linguistic ability. If testimonies from the VET provider or former employers are provided, T2F assists in translating these documents into English;
- (c) dialogue with apprentice: the main purpose of the dialogue, which usually takes place over the phone, is to ensure that the apprentice is motivated, ready to travel and understands the conditions of the placement, and to make a final check of spoken English;
- (d) practical travel assistance: once it is decided that the apprentice will travel and a placement is found, T2F assists in organising the travel. Flights and insurance are paid by the apprentice, but T2F has price agreements with a travel agency specialised in travel for young people. The insurance is an extended travel insurance covering medical assistance, travel back to Denmark in case of serious illness, accidents or illness in the family, liability insurance and lost luggage;
- (e) pre-departure meeting: T2F hosts a meeting for all apprentices travelling within a time slot. At the meeting, they receive information about practical details. They have the opportunity to raise last-minute questions and concerns and to meet peers.

Attracting and involving participants and companies are at the heart of T2F's management approach. As T2F is part of the GrowAbroad World Alliance, they are not involved in the recruitment of companies or apprentices abroad. Instead, their partner organisations from GrowAbroad attend to these tasks, as well as advising T2F and Danish participants on rules and regulations in the partner country where companies and organisations are being recruited. The partner organisations in the World Alliance meet once a year to exchange knowledge and techniques in creating mobility in agriculture. During the annual meeting, organisations discuss creating

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<sup>(39)</sup> The age bracket differs from country to country. Most countries only accept mobile learners above age 18 but some (for example Ireland) accept younger learners.

mobility possibilities for Generation Z, recruitment and screening or work safety.

Many of T2F's partners have been involved in the GrowAbroad World Alliance for many decades and some have also been partners with T2F prior to this. The organisations are used to working with each other and all the organisations involved have adopted a common code of practice, covering the principles and quality criteria exchange programmes. Occasionally, T2F will be contacted by organisations outside the Alliance. If it is an organisation they are not used to working with, they will engage in talks with them and typically use their network in the Alliance to check the organisation credentials. If one of the Alliance members can speak positively of the new organisation, T2F is happy to work with them. T2F have also occasionally asked the Danish embassies to check the credentials of new prospective partner organisations.

If the new partner organisation is unknown to the Alliance members but has attractive mobility offers, T2F will typically launch a pilot mobility programme with the new partner organisation.

#### **4.3.4. Reaching out for host companies**

The agricultural sector is characterised by a significant amount of family companies: farms belong to families who live on them. Therefore, in the communication between partners, hosts are often referred to as host families. Hosts abroad are recruited by T2F's partner organisations in the GrowAbroad World Alliance. In Denmark, many of the hosts are repeaters, in that they have also previously hosted apprentices via T2F. Some hosts primarily use T2F when attracting apprentices, and sometimes host two to three apprentices from abroad at the same time. Other host families are second generation hosts and have grown up with their parents taking in foreign apprentices and are used to the international feeling at the farms. Other hosts have previously travelled with T2F and have chosen to take in apprentices once they have started their own farms.

When recruiting new hosts, T2F favours the word-of-mouth method; hosts already within its network recommend possible new hosts (for example a neighbouring farm or an old school friend that could be interested in hosting foreign apprentices and willing to take on the extra challenges this entails). By having new hosts recommended by experienced hosts, the new hosts will have an idea of what to expect of the exercise and of how T2F works. T2F

also regularly attend both local and national agricultural markets to recruit both potential hosts and apprentices. Within the agricultural sector, T2F feels that it has a great visibility and a positive image among potential hosts; it therefore has more difficulties in attracting potential apprentices from abroad than finding hosts in Denmark. They have considered advertising abroad the training possibilities Denmark has to offer. However, within the World Alliance, it is typically up to a given organisation to recruit participants in their home country to travel abroad.

#### Box 10. **Sectoral impact on reaching out for hosts, evidence from T2F**

An interviewed representative from a Danish agricultural VET provider stated that close personal relationships between employers and staff are crucial in the agriculture sector. As most farms are one-person businesses, agencies like T2F need very broad networks of possible hosts and contacts abroad to be able to have a wide offer of placements. The agriculture sector differs from other sectors, where VET providers may send multiple apprentices to the same host company, while agencies in agriculture have to talk to individual farmers in order to organise each placement of an individual mobile learner.

Source: Cedefop.

#### 4.3.4.1. *Pull factors for host companies*

Danish hosts are required by the collective agreement in the agriculture sector to pay the same wage to a foreign apprentice as they would pay a Danish apprentice. This removes situations where hosts are only interested in taking on foreign apprentices to use as cheap labour. In principle, foreign apprentices are therefore no cheaper than Danish apprentices: they may even cost more, since the host has to offer lodging and may need to use more effort introducing the apprentice to Danish ways of farming (or horticulture). It is the experience of T2F that the main motivational factor for hosts is curiosity and interest in experiencing cultural exchanges with the foreign apprentices they receive. One host interviewed highlighted the rewards that come with seeing young apprentices develop mentally and professionally through the tasks they perform during their mobility. It is a cultural experience not only for the apprentice, but also for all members of the host family. The interviewed



host also explained that having foreign apprentices helps his daughters have stronger English and German skills.

In the experience of T2F, however, the role of interpersonal relationships between hosts and apprentices has decreased in recent years, as farms have been getting bigger and one farm may employ more than one apprentice at the same time. It has also been increasingly common that apprentices are responsible for their own subsistence, though it is still required for hosts to provide accommodation.

T2F works to make it as easy as possible for hosts to welcome foreign apprentices, taking care of many organisational and practical aspects. Hosts are required to help apprentices apply for a tax card, set up a bank account and register for taxes and the national register of persons. T2F will help fill out the paperwork, but it is up to the employer to ensure that their apprentices send in the relevant documentation. It can sometimes be easier for hosts to go through T2F than to recruit apprentices themselves. In recent years, there has been a general shortage of agriculture students, so incoming mobility has served to meet the demand for apprentices. Similarly, foreign apprentices may be more willing to train during weekends and holiday periods than Danish apprentices who tend to favour going back home to see their friends and families. Foreign apprentices are often not used to the five-week minimum vacation period, and the 37-hour working week in Denmark is not the norm in most other European countries; they may be seen as generous by most foreign apprentices who will find that they have plenty of free time to see the country.

#### **4.3.5. Reaching out for apprentices**

T2F's international partners are responsible for recruiting foreign apprentices or graduates for mobility opportunities in Denmark. T2F is also responsible for recruiting apprentices or graduates in Denmark for mobility opportunities abroad.

Apprentices in Denmark have the possibility to travel and set up an in-company placement abroad on their own. Some receive help from their VET providers in setting up placements with employers, but apprentices can also decide to travel using T2F as a kind of travel agent. The advantage of the latter option is that T2F will help the apprentices with all the administrative tasks of finding a host, seeking a visa, and taking out the right insurance cover; this may prove challenging even for apprentices who are over 18

years old, which is the case for most mobile apprentices from Denmark. T2F also helps apprentices by ensuring that health and safety checks at the farm have been conducted by T2F's partner organisation in the foreign country. The partner also assists apprentices in case of any problems during the mobility period, such as finding a different host if the original one pulls out of the agreement for any reason.

Every year T2F visit each VET provider offering agricultural studies to inform students about mobility opportunities, underlining that longer mobility is preferable for a students' professional and personal development. They are often accompanied by an apprentice who has previously travelled with T2F and can share his/her experiences with the students. They also attend agricultural fairs where they talk with potential hosts, apprentices and their families about mobility opportunities. T2F also strive to be present on social media (Facebook and Instagram). T2F staff stress that they are dependent on the VET providers' efforts in encouraging students to make use of the mobility opportunities. They often find that word of mouth among students at the schools is the most efficient way to reach and motivate them to engage with mobility opportunities.

Sometimes, half of a class will travel abroad because they have motivated each other to go. It has also been observed that this crosses over to the destinations the students are interested in. Many students have travelled to Australia and this has had a self-reinforcing effect; these are the experiences that the students hear about and therefore they too want to travel to Australia. Conversely, fewer students travel to European destinations, which in turn means other students do not know as much about apprentices' experiences in other European countries, eventually making European destinations less attractive.

#### 4.3.5.1. *Pull factors for apprentices*

Motivational factors among apprentices are very diversified and have to do with the destination. From T2F's experience, it is especially the tasks and training activities offered that will motivate apprentices to engage in mobility. The most prominent motivation among apprentices, prior to a placement, is that they may get to work with large and complicated equipment, such as advanced combine harvesters and get work experience on larger farmland than they have experienced at home. After finishing the apprenticeship, most apprentices, however, highlight that personal development was the best thing about the in-company placement abroad. Another benefit for Danish

students is the Danish employers' reimbursement system (*Arbejdsgivernes Uddannelsesbidrag*, AUB), through which, students undertaking mobility abroad, can be reimbursed for any lost income if the placement abroad takes place while they are employed by a Danish employer as part of their apprenticeship programme. Students in in-company training in Ireland, for example, can be reimbursed for the wage they would have received if they had stayed with the Danish employer. The EUR 100 allowance the apprentice is paid by the Irish host, however, will be deducted from the wage reimbursement.

Another main factor facilitating the cross-border mobility of Danish apprentices is the PIU programme, which was established in 1992. The programme provides financial support to apprentices, regardless of whether they are sent by the employer or the VET provider and reimburse the Danish host/employer if the student already has an apprenticeship contract with a Danish employer. If the Danish apprentice already has a contract with a Danish employer, and wants to go abroad for a part of the in-company training, the Danish employer will cover the apprentice's travel expenses and the difference between the contractual Danish apprenticeship salary and the wage or allowance that the apprentice receives from the host abroad. The Danish employer's expenses will, in turn, be compensated by the PIU programme; this regime applies to all mobility across the entire Danish VET system.

Other pull factors relate to a curiosity for experiencing agriculture abroad, an interest in developing one's skills, improving one's English skills, and having an intercultural experience. Some apprentices also see mobility as bettering their employability prospects.

For apprentices or graduates travelling to Denmark, wage may be a motivational factor depending on where the apprentices come from, as a Danish apprentice's salary can be very high compared to the standard salary in some countries. However, T2F screens potential apprentices or graduates beforehand to learn more about their motivations and makes sure they have a genuine interest in agriculture; in their experience, if apprentices' or graduates' only motivation for mobility is financial, this will not lead to a successful experience abroad.

A significant barrier for some students, is their lack of confidence in their foreign language skills, which makes them think they would not be capable of living and working abroad and would be unable to make a success of the opportunity. Despite that, several of the T2F and school staff interviewed,

highlighted that students actually only need basic foreign language skills to undertake a long-term mobility abroad, which most of them are deemed to already have. T2F nevertheless identifies the teaching of foreign languages in lower-secondary school as the main system-level barrier for long-term cross-border mobility.

#### **4.3.6. Employment relationship between host and participants**

Employment relationships depend on the legislation in the receiving country. It is the partner organisation in the receiving country that has the responsibility to ensure that the employment relationship abides by the national legislation and regulations. In some countries, mobility beneficiaries sign a formal employment contract with the host; in others they sign a more informal placement advice, which summaries where they will be working, expected duties and time period. In the placement advice contracts, the beneficiaries sign and testify that they are willing to come and work on the given farm for a given period. The hosts sign and testify that they are willing to have the beneficiaries come and work on their farm.

Apprentices coming to Denmark are required to have a regular employment contract with their host in order to get a work permit. They receive a standard apprentice salary of DKK 11 444 (EUR 1 536), the same amount as a Danish apprentice, from which they pay taxes. Employers are also required to provide lodging, but they are not required to do so for free: they may charge a monthly rent of up to DKK 2 000 (EUR 268), including electricity and heating. Depending on the individual host, apprentices will either have to cook their own meals, or some meals will be provided.

#### **4.3.7. Costs of organising mobility**

T2F was asked to estimate the administrative cost of organising a single mobility. The answer is not clear-cut, but an indication of the cost is the fees paid by the individual students. Irrespective of the duration of the mobility, the fees are as follows:

- (a) within Europe: EUR 520;
- (b) overseas except Australia: EUR 1 027;
- (c) Australia: EUR 624 or EUR 1027 depending on which Australian organiser students choose to travel with.

The fee covers assistance with the application to the partner abroad, language screening, translation of references from school and/or former

employers, participation in pre-departure meeting and assistance with booking flights and obtaining insurance cover. Fees and services are transparent to students and schools, as they are detailed on the T2F website (*Travel to Farm*).

The real cost (financial and non-financial) of organising a single mobility may vary considerably from these figures.

First, some activities targeting a wider audience, such as the awareness-raising and the info-meetings for students about to travel are absolutely vital to the organisation of mobility.

Second, the time (and hence costs) directly required per mobility is variable, depending not only on the needs and abilities of the individual apprentice but also on the receiving country. Outside Europe, a visa is required for some of the countries (for example Australia and the United States) and even though the fee for going to these destinations is higher to cater for this extra cost, the time and cost of the application procedure varies considerably.

Third, if the host first selected by a partner abroad does not accept the student application, or if there is a conflict between employer and apprentice, more applications or a replacement may be needed, requiring more assistance from T2F.

Finally, according to interviews with T2F staff, the readiness of individual students significantly influences the time spent on each mobility.

Even though there is a catalogue of services and prices, organising the individual mobility is a hand-held process where a per-mobility cost is difficult to estimate beyond the standard fee paid by students.

#### **4.3.8. Training-related aspects of the mobility**

Most Danish apprentices travelling with T2F combine in-company training abroad with in-company training in a Danish company. Danish students have a training plan which specifies learning objectives and learning outcomes for both school and in-company parts of the apprenticeship.

The training plan is formulated by the VET provider. T2F is not involved in drafting it nor in its implementation. It includes several learning objectives that the apprentices are expected to achieve during their mobility.

If a Danish apprentice is already contracted by a Danish employer for the apprenticeship, it is still possible for the apprentice to include a placement abroad, as part of the total in-company training period. If the Danish employer accepts sending the apprentice abroad, it is still their responsibility to ensure

that, in the end, the student has achieved the learning outcomes specified in the training plan.

Experience shows that the training plan is rarely revisited during the in-company training period abroad. At the start there is a dialogue between the host and the mobile Danish apprentice, sometimes facilitated by T2F, about the expected learning objectives that should be addressed in the training. According to T2F and the students interviewed, mobile Danish apprentices often get to work on a variety of tasks, going beyond those listed in their training plans. One representative from an agricultural school in Denmark stated that the learning objectives, described in the training plan, are often quite loosely formulated. However, the process for formulating the training plan differs between the various agricultural VET providers. Some base their training plans on the overall learning objectives set in the national executive order on agricultural education; one VET provider has set up a dedicated team (called a learning unit) for each mobile apprentice going abroad. The team is composed of a guidance counsellor from the VET provider, the host abroad, and others that may be involved in the mobility. It is the learning unit that draws up the individual training plans for the mobile apprentices.

#### **4.3.9. Recognition upon return**

The results of the in-company training abroad will be recognised by the provider, either prior to beginning the training or after returning to the school. Recognition is typically based on a description of the tasks undertaken/to be undertaken by the student during the in-company training abroad and in accordance with the learning outcomes specified in the training plan. Formal recognition is undertaken by the VET provider's student guidance council, though procedures may vary between the different providers, as they have not been formalised at national level.

#### **4.3.10. Lessons learnt from T2F**

A number of lessons about how to support long-term mobility can be drawn from the T2F case study.

##### *4.3.10.1. Sectoral approach to mobility*

T2F was established by stakeholders in the agriculture sector; the stakeholders are members of the organisation and, at the same time, form part of the T2F governing board. Mobility is mainly organised within the

sector: the apprentices come from agricultural colleges and the employers are farmers or horticultural gardeners. This approach has been successful for the 108 years that T2F has existed, in the sense that T2F has consistently managed to attract students and employers to participate in apprenticeship mobility. Further, the engagement of the agricultural organisations in the board provides a channel of communication into policy-making, with relevance to the mobility of apprentices in the agriculture sector.

#### 4.3.10.2. *Tradition for long-term mobility among VET providers*

In Denmark there is a long-term appreciation for and tradition of long-term mobility for agricultural apprentices. They are often encouraged to travel to learn, not only by T2F but also by their families, VET providers, and current and future employers. Having completed a period of learning mobility abroad is seen by employers as a positive sign that the apprentice can work independently, is mature enough to handle certain responsibilities and dedicated to their work. To motivate apprentices to undertake learning in a company abroad, VET providers need to invest time at an early stage from the moment they first enrol. A representative from an agricultural VET provider highlighted the importance for VET providers to make long-term cross-border mobility part of their strategy and regularly discuss ways to promote it, for instance by organising small visits to agricultural providers abroad as part of the curriculum in the students' first year.

#### 4.3.10.3. *Partnership with similar agencies in receiving and sending countries*

In the case of T2F, the membership of the GrowAbroad Alliance provides a common set of principles for mobility, which are recognised and implemented by all partners. These shared principles serve as a basis for mutual trust, which is a significant enabler of successful mobility, since sending and receiving agencies do not need to monitor or control the activities of each other. The case shows that sending and receiving countries do not need to establish mutually recognised principles for each individual partnership.

#### 4.3.10.4. *Funding mix*

T2F is funded in part by the members (stakeholders) through an annual membership fee, and in part by the mobile young people that pay for the services provided. The payment by the beneficiary is calculated on the

basis of a price list of services, which ensures transparency. Even when the beneficiaries choose the full package of services, the amount remains affordable to them, since they receive a salary during their in-company training abroad. At the same time, the existence of the fee ensures that only committed and motivated youths undertake in-company training abroad.

#### 4.3.10.5. *Dedicated funding scheme at system level*

In Denmark, mobility is supported by the PIU programme, which reimburses some of the costs for apprentices, as well as employers. The regulatory instruments are well-g geared to mobility, requiring that host employers pay a salary to mobile apprentices. This ensures that their subsistence and accommodation costs are taken care of without placing the financial burden on the Danish employer or the VET provider.

#### 4.3.10.6. *The Danish long-standing tradition for mobility*

Mobility in VET has, for a long time, been supported at a system level in Denmark. The education system is geared to facilitating long-term practical periods, and an international outlook has long been supported by VET providers. As T2F and others have managed to arrange mobility for many decades in the agricultural sector, a tradition for mobility has emerged, which has implied that apprentices are encouraged to undertake mobility not only by VET providers and organisations like T2F, but also by their employers and families, who acknowledge the benefits of undertaking in-company training abroad.

#### 4.3.10.7. *Flexibility in the duration and learning objectives*

The alternance structure, characterised by relatively long unbroken in-company periods, opens up opportunities for timing of mobility, combining the needs of the apprentice and the host company and – where relevant – the sending employer. This is supported by the outcome-based curricula that provide flexibility in cases where the tasks available for apprentices in the host company do not match perfectly with the in-company learning objectives specified in the curriculum.



## 4.4. Cross-project findings

While the three projects under investigation showcase different instances of long-term mobility of apprentices and apprenticeship graduates for the purpose of in-company training abroad <sup>(40)</sup>, there is coherence and consistency in terms of the main messages coming out of these investigations. These messages are consistent and coherent with those coming from the country-level analyses at all levels (Section 3.7), with one notable exception. The assumption that many organisational issues do not apply or are of minor importance in the case of intra-company long-term cross-border mobility (between big companies with affiliates abroad) is not confirmed: the big companies in the AIM project found the organisation of the intra-company mobility of graduates burdensome. They also prefer graduates over apprentices, to reduce the level of complexity and they stress the importance of benefitting from support from an intermediary organisation or a VET provider.

At the framework level, the main findings and assumptions of the country-level analyses were confirmed. Company size by itself is usually not enough to explain low interest of companies in incoming or outgoing apprentice mobility, and interest varies by sectors; some sectors are more open to mobility (in general) than others where mobility is a tradition.

The project findings confirm that the heterogeneity of the apprenticeship systems and schemes across Europe constrains CBLTMA significantly. The difference between countries in training content, and how employers approach training (training settings at the employers), raises trust issues on the part of the actors in the sending country (particularly when the sending employer remains responsible for the training of the apprentice in mobility abroad). This difference also impacts negatively on the recognition of the learning outcomes achieved abroad. This is one of the main reasons why mobility of apprenticeship graduates is preferred. The bigger problem, however, in relation to the heterogeneity of the apprenticeship systems and schemes, is posed by the differences in the apprentice status from one country to another. In countries where the apprentice has only a student status (as the apprentice on mobility takes the status of the host country),

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<sup>(40)</sup> Except for T2F, which favours both long-term and short-term mobility, the other two projects under investigation aimed at testing cross-border long-term mobility of apprentices and apprenticeship graduates.

issues related to health and safety at work arise, as the apprentice is not covered by the social protection in the host country. The project findings also confirmed that employers (even large companies) are reluctant to cover the apprentice wage or allowance while they are abroad; the difference in remuneration levels between countries is an obstacle to be considered and, to the extent possible, mitigated.

At the implementation level, mobility is organised by a handful of actors with already established cooperation; this apparent closed circuit makes difficult the efforts of scaling up and showing benefits on a larger scale.

The reluctance of companies and learners to participate in mobility has been confirmed, although in the agricultural sector both companies and apprentices or graduates seem to be more open towards cross-border mobility due to a tradition of mobility in the sector. Language barriers on both sides are a major issue.

The project-level investigations showed that apprentices who benefitted from short-term mobility are more inclined to undertake a long-term one, indicating the importance of building evidence and showing the benefits. Peer-to-peer information campaigns can trigger apprentice interest. Mobility of apprenticeship graduates works better, not least because they are of age, but also because they are no longer studying for a qualification or a diploma which avoids issues of matching the learning abroad with the curriculum and final qualification requirements (for example assessment) in the home country. The problem of status will also no longer apply, though national legislation on labour migration in the host country (for example in Denmark), may impose restrictions on how the graduates would benefit from a work experience as part of a mobility scheme.

It is confirmed that companies (irrespective of size) need organisational support in, for example, matching apprentices with in-company placements, dealing with accommodation, social security and residence permits.

The project investigations also showed that organising long-term mobility implies a high amount of work, both in the sending and the receiving country, which the companies (irrespective of size) are not willing to take on. The role of intermediary organisations (ideally at the sectoral level) and of the VET providers turns out to be essential, as are strong and tested partnerships across borders between them.

## CHAPTER 5.

# Conclusions: suggestions for the way forward

Country- and project-level investigations, as well as the discussions with the EU-level social partners, converged on the same messages, in terms of enablers, disablers and solutions. They showed that CBLTMA is not a priority at the national levels, both among authorities and social partners <sup>(41)</sup>. However, as the EU-level social partners expressed it, because it is not needed or because the current obstacles are too many, this does not mean that it would never work in the medium to long term. To address the obstacles, policy needs to be underpinned by strategies that foresee incremental changes at the system and implementation levels, while considering the framework conditions, building the institutional support and cross-border partnerships, building the evidence on benefits, and raising awareness among employers and apprentices. This would probably make the policy a reality in the medium to long term.

The enablers and disablers at the framework, system and implantation levels also point to several solutions for the way forward that could be part of a coherent strategy to make the policy work in the medium to long run. The suggestions for the way forward in the medium and long term, indicated below, relate strictly to the CBLTMA: they are meant to aid apprentices to undergo a lengthy period of in-company training abroad as part of their apprenticeship training, while remaining linked to an employer in their home country. While such extensive interventions may also give a boost to short-term mobility of apprentices and of apprenticeship graduates, they are not as essential as for the CBLTMA.

At the framework level, there is little scope for a direct intervention, as this level contains exogenous dimensions to the policy. However, the analysis of the dimensions at this level points to a couple of interventions that, while not eliminating the obstacles at this level, may tackle them and make the policy

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<sup>(41)</sup> This refers to the date when the study findings were published.

objectives more realistic. Considering the findings at the framework level, the strategy for making the CBLTMA work could include:

- (a) encouraging sectoral approaches, supported by national intermediary organisations that act as intermediary between the apprentices, the VET providers and the companies in the sending country and also work in partnerships with similar organisations in the receiving country. Such intermediary organisations need to be supported by the actors in the sector (who provide a channel of communication into policy-making, with relevance to the mobility) and work in cross-border networks. This type of approach has proven sustainable and successful;
- (b) nesting CBLTMA in a (sectoral) strategy, rather than having it as a standalone objective. Sectoral strategies linked to tackling the problem of skills shortages or attractiveness of a profession, its update, development and alignment to sectoral (international) qualifications, may include mobility as a way to pursue such objectives;
- (c) addressing company concerns over loss of productive work, brain drain and abuses, especially to increase the involvement of SMEs in CBLTMA through establishment of training alliances/networks (ideally at the sectoral level). The aim would be to have a rotation of apprentices within a network of companies. This, in turn, would allow for the incorporation of CBLTMA in their overall training design. A portfolio approach would support that option both to document the sequencing of training tasks (what was the content of training, what were the learning outcomes, where and when was training provided) and facilitate the recognition of learning outcomes. In practice, such a solution has not been tested, therefore there is also the concern that this reciprocity may be difficult to arrange, since comparability is difficult, as is finding enough apprenticeship spots with the exact same job requirements.

At the system level, the fundamental and far-reaching condition, which goes beyond the purpose of ensuring CBLTMA, is improving the comparability of training standards across countries, as well as of the processes to define the learning outcomes, particularly for the in-company part of the apprenticeship training. The issue of comparability of training standards does not apply to all sectors. Linked to this, the training companies, irrespective of the countries, need to apply a structured approach to training and not merely a context for gaining work experience. This objective could be linked to the broader efforts that countries make in improving the quality and effectiveness of

apprenticeships, spearheaded by the European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships.

In addition, and more strictly linked to the specific policy of CBLTMA, strategies to make it work in the medium to long term could include:

- (a) linking the status of apprentices to entitlements to remuneration and social security covering health and safety at work (where applicable). In countries where the apprentice has only student status, a social coverage scheme for the apprentice in mobility needs to be created at the national and/or EU level;
- (b) aiding mobility at system level, with a funding scheme which reimburses some of the costs for students, including the differences in remuneration (where it applies), as well as employers to make up for their loss of production while the apprentice is abroad. It is important to ensure that such costs are taken care of, without placing the financial burden on the employer or the VET provider;
- (c) investing in language training at the beginning of the apprenticeships would address a major constraint of why apprentices are reluctant to undertake cross-border mobility (both short- and long-term).

One issue with no apparent solution is related to the timing of the long-term mobility period. It appears that the better period is when the apprentices are more mature and more advanced in their studies (towards the end of their studies), but this is also when they become productive and when employers are more reluctant to let them go abroad for prolonged periods of time. The establishment of training alliances/networks, a solution tackling concerns over loss of productive work proposed at the framework level, could be an option for mobility to take place in the final years of apprentice studies. As an alternative, system-level funding could also foresee compensation for loss of productive work (even though difficult to estimate).

At implementation level, the bigger question mark is in relation to the need for such a policy among employers and apprentices. For the time being, there is little information available in this respect. Research on the general need for CBLTMA is necessary, and also by sector. It is unarguable, however, that more evidence on benefits and better communication, from peer to peer, are necessary. Building evidence on benefits and raising awareness, both among companies and apprentices, as well as their parents, could start from scaling up existing experiences. Using short-term mobility and mobility of apprenticeship graduates could also prepare the

ground for the more ambitious aim of making CBLTMA work; starting small, for example, by promoting regional CB mobility (internationalisation on a small scale). A regional approach to CBLTMA, and also the combination of short-term apprentice mobility with long-term mobility of apprenticeship graduates, might result in a snowball effect, reaching a critical mass; the more companies and apprentices participate in CBLTMA, the more potential actors are informed about it and its positive outcomes, hence the more will probably participate.

CBLTMA cannot exist in the absence of an institutional backing that, besides promotion among companies and apprentices, also provides organisational support. The involvement of VET providers and of intermediary organisations that have the human and financial capacity to provide support to both apprentices and companies is of crucial importance. Of equally crucial importance is for these actors to work in international networks. Finally, they need clear guidance on how to support and implement CBLTMA in the context of both outgoing and incoming apprentices, and clearer and simpler frameworks and procedures, particularly if the interventions at the system level are not applied or until they are applied.

# Abbreviations/Acronyms

<b>AAT</b>	Association of Accounting Technicians
<b>AF</b>	analytical framework
<b>AIM</b>	apprentices in motion
<b>ANFA</b>	<i>Association Nationale pour la Formation Automobile et la Mobilité</i> [automotive industry]
<b>AUB</b>	<i>Arbejdsgivernes Uddannelsesbidrag</i> [Danish employers' reimbursement system]
<b>BAG</b>	<i>Berufsausbildungsgesetz</i> [Vocational Training Act]
<b>BOL</b>	school-based programmes
<b>BTS</b>	Bangkok transit system
<b>CAP</b>	<i>certificat d'aptitude professionnelle</i> [French certificate of professional competence]
<b>CBLTMA</b>	cross-border long-term mobility of apprentices
<b>CFA</b>	<i>centre pour la formation des apprentis</i> [apprentices' training centre]
<b>CFA MFR</b>	<i>centre pour la formation des apprentis maisons familiales et rurales de Vendée</i> [rural-community vocational school located in Vendée]
<b>CV</b>	curriculum vitae
<b>DKK</b>	Danish Krone
<b>EAM</b>	Euro app mobility
<b>ECVET</b>	European credit system for vocational education and training
<b>ENIC</b>	European network of information centres
<b>EQF</b>	European qualifications framework
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>Euro app</b>	Euro apprenticeship programme
<b>FACE</b>	<i>Fondation Agir Contre l' Exclusion</i> [Foundation Acting Against Exclusion]
<b>FGYO</b>	Franco-German Youth Office
<b>GE</b>	general electric
<b>HE</b>	higher education
<b>HR</b>	human resources

<b>IFA</b>	<i>Internationaler Fachkräfteaustausch</i> [International Young Workers Exchange]
<b>IVET</b>	initial vocational education and training
<b>LM</b>	labour market
<b>LT</b>	long-term
<b>LTM</b>	long-term mobility
<b>LTMA</b>	long-term mobility of apprentices
<b>NARIC</b>	national academic recognition information centre
<b>NFQ</b>	national framework of qualifications
<b>NQF</b>	national qualifications framework
<b>OLS</b>	online linguistic support
<b>PIU</b>	<i>Praktik / Udlandet</i> [apprenticeship abroad]
<b>RPL</b>	recognition of prior learning
<b>SEO</b>	sectoral employers' organisation
<b>SMEs</b>	small and medium-sized enterprises
<b>T2F</b>	Travel to farm
<b>VET</b>	vocational education and training

## Country codes

<b>AT</b>	Austria
<b>DK</b>	Denmark
<b>FR</b>	France
<b>HU</b>	Hungary
<b>IE</b>	Ireland
<b>NL</b>	Netherlands
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>USA</b>	United States of America



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EAM. *Euro app mobility*.

[www.euroappmobility.eu/en-gb](http://www.euroappmobility.eu/en-gb)

T2F. *Travel to farm*.

[www.t2f.dk/](http://www.t2f.dk/)

## ANNEX 1.

# Organisations consulted during the country- and project-level investigations

## A1.1. Country-level investigations

### A1.1.1. Interview partners (Denmark)

- Ministry of Higher Education and Science
- Ministry of Education
- FH (*Fagbevægelsens Hovedorganisation*, Danish Trade Union Confederation)
- HK Denmark
- *Dansk Industri* (The Confederation of Danish Industry)
- *Praktik I Udlandet* (PIU) Secretariat
- Aarhus Tech
- Next Education Copenhagen
- *Hotel-og Restaurantskole*
- *Roskilde Tekniske Skole*
- *Erhvervsskolernes Elevorganisation* (EEO, vocational colleges' student association)

### A1.1.2. Interview partners (Ireland)

- SOLAS
- Education and training boards Ireland
- Léargas
- Connection Trade Union Ireland
- Construction Industry Federation (CIF)
- Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC)
- Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI)
- Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU)
- Higher Education Authority (HEA)

### A1.1.3. Interview partners (France)

- *Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la Jeunesse* (Ministry of National Education and Youth)
- *Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, la Recherche et l'Innovation* (Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation)
- *Regional Directorate for Nouvelle-Aquitaine* (Ministry of Agriculture)
- *Ministère du Travail, de la Formation professionnelle et du Dialogue social* (Ministry of Labour Employment, Vocational Training and Social Dialogue)
- Agency Eras+ France/Education and training
- *Association Nationale pour la Formation Automobile* (National Association for Automotive Training)
- *Atlas Opérateur de compétences* (skills operator of financial and consulting services)
- *Comité de concertation et de coordination de l'apprentissage du bâtiment et des travaux publics* (CCCA BTP) (Committee for cooperation and coordination of the apprenticeship in the building and public works trade)
- *Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail* (French Democratic Confederation of Labour)
- *Réseau national des Chambres des métiers et de l'artisanat* (CMA France national network of Chambers of Trades and Crafts, ex Assemblée Permanente des Chambres des Métiers et de l'Artisanat (APCMA))
- *Réseau régional des Chambres des métiers et de l'artisanat* (CRMA Nouvelle-Aquitaine regional network of Chambers of Trades and Crafts, ex APCMA)
- *Réseau régional des Chambres des métiers et de l'artisanat* (CRMA Rhône Alpes regional network of Chambers of Trades and Crafts, ex APCMA)
- *Union des industries et métiers de la métallurgie* (UIMM, union of metalworking industries and trades)
- *Association française pour la réflexion et l'échange sur la formation* (AFREF, French Association for Reflection and Exchange on Training)
- *Association des Compagnons du devoir et du Tour de France* (Association Companions of Duty and Tour de France)
- *Fédération Nationale des Associations Régionales de Directeurs de Centres de Formation d'Apprentis* (FNADIR, National Federation of Regional Associations of Managers of Apprenticeship Training Centres)
- *Syndicat national des organismes de formation* (SYNOFDES, national union of training organisations)

- *Association nationale des apprentis de France* (ANAF, National Association of Apprentices of France)
- *Fondation Innovation pour les apprentissage* (FIPA, Innovation for Learning Foundation)
- *Fondation Agir contre l'exclusion* (FACE, Foundation Acting against exclusion)

#### **A1.1.4. Interview partners (Hungary)**

- Ministry of Innovation and Technology, Department of Vocational and Adult Education Development
- Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- German-Hungarian Chamber of Industry and Commerce
- National Association of Entrepreneurs and Employers (MGYOSZ)
- Tempus Public Foundation (Erasmus+ national agency)
- ECVET expert
- ECVET and Erasmus+ expert
- St Lawrence Vocational Grammar and Training School of Catering and Tourism of the Eger Training Centre; ECVET expert
- Krúdy Gyula Vocational Grammar and Training School of Catering and Commerce of the Szeged Vocational Training Centre

#### **A1.1.5. Interview partners (Netherlands)**

- Christian National Trade Union Federation (labour union)
- Erasmus+
- Federation of Dutch Trade Unions (labour union)
- VET Student Organisation (JOB) (students representative organisation)
- Netherlands Association of VET colleges
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Social Welfare and Employment
- Nuffic
- ROC Tilburg
- Foundation for Cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and Labour Market (SBB) (VET-industry cooperation organisation)
- Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (VNO-NCW)
- Wellant

### A1.1.6. Interview partners (Austria)

- IFA
- *Wirtschaftskammer Österreich* (Austrian Economic Chamber)
- Federation of Austrian Industries (IV)
- Chamber of Labour
- Chamber of Labour of Upper Austria
- Economic Chamber of Upper Austria
- *Bildung Freude Inklusiv* (bfi) of Upper Austria
- Federal Ministry of Digital and Economic Affairs
- Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research
- University of Klagenfurt
- training companies
- part-time vocational schools

## A1.2. Project-level investigations

### A1.2.1. Travel to farm

Table 12. Travel to farm

Name of organisation/ role in apprenticeship	Stakeholder group/title
Travel to farm	Programme coordinator
Travel to farm	Programme coordinator
Travel to farm	Chair of the governing board
Student	Travelled to Ireland for three months with T2F, as part of her apprenticeship in Denmark
Student	Travelled to Ireland for three months with T2F, as part of her apprenticeship in Denmark
Host	Host in Ireland
Bygholm agricultural school	Agricultural college, international coordinator
Host	Host in Denmark
Student	Used T2F to organise a 14-week in-company placement with a Danish host

Source: Cedefop.

### A1.2.2. Apprentices in motion

- European Business Network for Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility – European project coordinator
- FACE – national project coordinator
- two companies involved

### A1.2.3. Euro app pilot projects

- *Compagnons du devoir* (national coordination)
- *CFA des Maisons familiales et rurales de Vendée* (France)
- Kgy Szeged – *Szegedi SZC Krudy Gyula Kereskedelmi, Vendéglátóipari és Turisztikai Szakgimnáziuma és Szakközépiskolája* (Hungary)



ANNEX 2.

# List of EU-level social partners involved in the focus group discussions

## A2.1. Tourism sector

- European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT)
- Swedish Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union (HRF) Sweden (EFFAT member organisation)
- Hotels, Restaurants, Cafés and Pubs Association (HOTREC)
- Swedish Hospitality Industry (VISITA Sweden) (HOTREC member association)

## A2.2. Construction sector

- European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (FBWW)
- European Builders Confederation (EBC)
- European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC)
- International Union of Painting Contractors (UNIEP)

## A2.3. Agriculture sector

- Employers' Group of Professional Agricultural Organisations (GEOPA-COPA)
- European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT)
- European Livestock and Meat Trades Union

## A2.4. Cross-sectoral organisations

- European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CESI)
- European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE)
- Eurochambres (represented by International Young Workers Exchange (IFA))
- European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC, represented by the National Federation of Education in Portugal)
- SME United (represented by CMA France)
- Business Europe

## ANNEX 3.

# Observations on the use of the analytical framework during the country research

### A3.1. Denmark

The Danish national experts used the following clusters at the framework level:

- (a) representation of business interests: 1.2 SEOs at national level; 1.3 SEOs in the European or international context;
- (b) internationalisation of the economy: 1.4 intra-EU trade; 1.5 enterprise foreign affiliates; 1.6 international sourcing;
- (c) migration: 1.7 intra-EU labour migration for skilled workers; 1.10 immigration policy.

At system level, the following clusters were used:

- (a) objective of apprenticeships: 2.1 apprenticeship type; 2.3 apprenticeship function;
- (b) duration of apprenticeships: 2.6 duration of the whole apprenticeship period; 2.7 duration of in-company placements; 2.8 alternance;
- (c) legal aspects of apprenticeships: 2.9 type of contract; 2.10 status of apprentices; 2.11 remuneration; 2.12 occupational health and safety standards and social insurance;
- (d) standards and qualifications: 2.13 curriculum training standard; 2.14 use of validation.

The following are the clusters at implementation level:

- (a) development of the CBLTMA offer: 3.4 and 3.5 (long-term) mobility national strategies or initiatives; 3.15 pilot projects for (long-term) mobility;
- (b) strategic actors involved in CBLTMA: 3.8 authorities promoting long-term mobility of apprentices; 3.9 involvement of intermediary organisations and structures;

- (c) support for CBLTMA among the target groups: 3.12 employers' interest in receiving apprentices from abroad on long-term mobility; 3.13. employers' interest in letting apprentices go abroad on long-term mobility; 3.14 apprentices and their families' interest in long-term mobility.

The differentiation between the system and implementation levels was considered not to be always obvious, especially in relation to governance (dimension 2.4: apprenticeship governance; dimension 3.1: governance of apprenticeship implementation). This is because governance of apprenticeships in Denmark is mostly decentralised and flexible – like the curricula – and a multitude of stakeholders at different levels, such as VET schools in charge of implementation.

## A3.2. Ireland

While no dimension seemed irrelevant, some dimensions had more significance than others, or made more sense when being discussed together with other dimensions. The following dimensions were clustered and discussed together (per level):

(a) framework level:

- (i) dimensions 1.2 and 1.3 SEOs in the national, international and European context;
- (ii) dimensions 1.4. intra-EU trade; 1.5 enterprise foreign affiliates; 1.6 international sourcing;
- (iii) dimensions 1.7. intra-EU labour migration for skilled labour; 1.8. skills shortages in medium-level occupations; 1.10 immigration policy;

(b) system level:

- (i) dimensions 2.1 apprenticeship type and 2.3 apprenticeship function;
- (ii) dimensions 2.4 apprenticeship governance; 2.5 funding of the in-company training; 2.6 duration of the whole apprenticeship period; 2.7 duration of in-company placements; 2.8 alternance;
- (iii) dimensions 2.9 type of contract; 2.10 status of apprentices; 2.11 remuneration; 2.12 occupational health and safety standards and social insurance;
- (iv) dimensions 2.13 curriculum training standard; 2.14 use of validation;

(c) implementation level:

- (i) dimensions 3.4 and 3.5 ((long-term) mobility national strategies or initiatives);
- (ii) dimensions 3.8 authorities promoting long-term mobility of apprentices; 3.9 involvement of intermediary organisations and structures;
- (iii) dimensions 3.12 employers' interest in receiving apprentices from abroad on long-term mobility; 3.13 employers' interest in letting apprentices go abroad on long-term mobility; 3.14 apprentices and their families' interest in long-term mobility.

### A3.3. France

All dimensions were addressed, apart from 1.9 (share of job-related non-formal adult education and training sponsored by employers (employees with upper secondary and post-secondary education level)), where no information was given. The dimensions were mostly discussed one by one, clustering was restricted to the following:

- (a) framework level: the dimensions related to internationalisation in the French economy were discussed together (1.4 intra-EU trade; 1.5 enterprise foreign affiliates; 1.6 international sourcing);
- (b) system level: the dimensions related to legal aspects and working conditions were discussed together (2.9 type of contract; 2.10 status of apprentices; 2.11 remuneration; 2.12 occupational health and safety standards and social insurance);
- (c) implementation level: the dimensions 3.4 and 3.5 ((long-term) mobility national strategies or initiatives) and 3.15 (pilot projects for (long-term) mobility) were discussed together. Dimensions 3.8 (authorities promoting long-term mobility of apprentices) and 3.9 (involvement of intermediary organisations and structures) were also combined.

### A3.4. Hungary

The national experts used clusters; several dimensions were logically clustered together, other groupings reflect the specificities of the Hungarian context. The national experts created the following clusters:

At framework level:

- (a) representation of business interests: 1.2 SEOs at national level; 1.3 SEOs in the European or international context;
- (b) internationalisation of the economy: 1.4 intra-EU trade; 1.5 enterprise foreign affiliates; 1.6 international sourcing;
- (c) labour migration: 1.7 intra-EU labour migration for skilled workers; 1.8 skills shortages in medium-level occupations; 1.10 immigration policy.

At system level:

- (a) objective of apprenticeships: 2.1 apprenticeship type; 2.3 apprenticeship function;
- (b) comprehensive description of the apprenticeship system: 2.4 apprenticeship governance; 2.5 funding of the in-company training; 2.6 duration of the whole apprenticeship period; 2.7 duration of in-company placements; 2.8 alternance;
- (c) legal aspects of apprenticeships: 2.9 type of contract; 2.10 status of apprentices; 2.11 remuneration; 2.12 occupational health and safety standards and social insurance;
- (d) standards and qualifications: 2.13 curriculum training standard; 2.14 use of validation.

At implementation level:

- (a) development of the CBLTMA offer: 3.4 and 3.5 (long-term) mobility national strategies or initiatives; 3.15 pilot projects for (long-term) mobility;
- (b) strategic actors involved in CBLTMA: 3.8 authorities promoting long-term mobility of apprentices; 3.9 involvement of intermediary organisations and structures;
- (c) support for CBLTMA among the target groups: 3.12 employers' interest in receiving apprentices from abroad on long-term mobility; 3.13. employers' interest in letting apprentices go abroad on long-term mobility; 3.14 apprentices and their families' interest in long-term mobility.

Overlaps could be observed between the system and implementation levels, mainly because the system of governance of apprenticeships and curricula are highly centralised in Hungary with limited room for adaptation at the implementation level.

## A3.5. The Netherlands

Clusters were built, with one notable example on system level, where nine dimensions (2.4-2.12) were discussed together, under the headline Apprenticeship characteristics. Further examples include:

- (a) at framework level: the role of sectoral employer organisations in the Netherlands (1.2, 1.3); the role of internationalisation in the Dutch economy (1.4, 1.5, 1.6) and labour migration and skills shortages (1.7, 1.8, 1.10);
- (b) at system level: apprenticeship type, share of students, and function (2.1, 2.2 and 2.3); apprenticeship characteristics (2.4 until 2.12), curriculum training standard and use of validation (2.13 and 2.14);
- (c) at implementation level: apprenticeship governance and policy (3.1 and 3.5), and employers' interest and apprentices' and their families' interest (3.12, 3.13, 3.14).

## A3.6. Austria

The Austrian researchers have clustered many dimensions, which resulted in four clusters for the framework level:

- (a) overall size and training capacity of companies (dimension 1.1);
- (b) globalisation/internationalisation (1.4 intra-EU trade; 1.5 enterprise foreign affiliates; 1.6 international sourcing; 1.12 tradition regarding cross-border mobility VET and/or labour mobility);
- (c) skills shortages and migration issues (1.7 intra-EU labour migration for skilled labour; 1.8 skills shortages in medium-level occupations; 1.10 immigration policy);
- (d) influence of SEOs (1.2 and 1.3 sectoral employers' organisations in the national, international and European context).

For the system level, four clusters were used as well:

- (a) education and training system (2.1 apprenticeship type, 2.3 apprenticeship function, 2.13 curriculum training standard; 2.14 use of validation and 2.2 share of VET-students in apprenticeship schemes);
- (b) 2.15 legal basis for apprenticeships and integration of mobility;
- (c) contract and social security (2.9 type of contract; 2.10 status of apprentices; 2.11 remuneration; 2.12 occupational health and safety standards and social insurance);

(d) governance and funding (2.4 apprenticeship governance; 2.5 funding of in-company training; 2.6 duration of the whole apprenticeship period; 2.7 duration of in-company placements and 2.8 alternance).

The dimensions at implementation level were only partly clustered:

- (a) 3.4 national strategy/initiatives and 3.15 pilot projects for CBLTMA; 3.1 governance of apprenticeship implementation;
- (b) 3.7 methodologies and guidelines; 3.8 authorities promoting CBLTMA; 3.9 involvement of intermediary organisations and structures;
- (c) employers' perspective (3.3 employers' attitude towards apprenticeship; 3.12 and 3.13 employers' interest in inward and outgoing CBLTMA) and 3.14 apprentices' and their families' interest in CBLTMA.

Four dimensions at the implementation level (3.11 funding of mobility, 3.2 age of apprentices, 3.6 flexibility of curriculum, 3.10 role and capacity of VET providers) were analysed individually.



ANNEX 4.

# Results of the survey conducted to analyse the demand for cross-border long-term mobility of apprenticeship graduates (AIM project)

As the AIM project had difficulties reaching the target number of apprentices, an additional focus was put on evaluating the demand for apprenticeship mobility among the company practitioners (HR managers, line managers), as well as company apprentices.

Among preliminary input, observed by the companies involved in the project:

- (a) it appeared that the managers did not know what to expect from CBLTMA given that this was new for them;
- (b) many apprentices and graduates perceived long-term mobility as an interruption to their careers or studies.

## A4.1. Company answers

The survey was distributed among the four pilot companies, as well as others, and in total collected 52 responses from company practitioners across 13 countries.

### *General views on mobility*

Some 93% of the companies' respondents said they would be interested to engage in CBLTMA. The option for apprentices to do cross-border exchanges within the same company emerged as the preferred option

(79%), while 56% indicated that they would also be interested in exchanges with apprentices from other companies.

Over 67% of the respondents indicated that in the next three years they will either investigate options for partnerships to realise mobility or start working on their own programmes.

### *Benefits expected*

The main reasons to send young learners abroad were:

- (a) supporting young people's career development (87%);
- (b) developing further the skills of future workforce (63%);
- (c) better employer branding (46%);
- (d) company loyalty (31%);
- (e) identification of future talents (30%).

This underlines that apprenticeship mobility is mostly perceived as linked to the social responsibility of the enterprise, more than providing direct benefits like company loyalty or building a talent pipeline.

Some 90% of the HR and line managers expressed they would give preferential treatment in hiring to a candidate with a mobility background.

Among the main reasons:

- (a) soft skills (67%);
- (b) the ability to bring in new knowledge into the company (65%);
- (c) the mastering of foreign languages (56%).

### *Duration*

The majority of respondents declared to prefer CBLTMA:

- (a) six months or more (42%);
- (b) followed by three to six months (35%);
- (c) one to three months (15%).

One of the main reasons pointed out is the productivity of the learners that only attain a certain level after six months.

Planning the placement ahead also appeared to be an important factor: most respondents indicated they would need three to six months ahead to plan a mobility placement.

### *Obstacles*

Some 52% of the respondents said that the main obstacle for sending young learners abroad is time constraint, as developing CBLTMA is perceived as requiring too much additional time. Further, 44% noted that it would be difficult to find a replacement for the sent worker and 42% that other youth employment actions may have higher benefits.

## A4.2. Apprentice answers

The survey collected 44 answers from apprentices across 13 countries within the four participating companies.

### *Motivation for LTMA*

The survey showed that there was a contrast between a theoretical interest expressed for CBLTMA, and the actual will and motivation to go abroad.

Some 80% of the respondents expressed a general interest in working in a foreign country, with the following expectations:

- (a) benefits of career development (57%);
- (b) increased language skills (57%);
- (c) taking up on new challenges (55%).

Even if four out of five learners expressed a theoretical interest to go abroad for a mobility placement, in the context of the pilot project, a gap appeared between this interest and the actual intent to enrol in a LTMA scheme.

The top three reasons for not going abroad expressed were:

- (a) not wanting to lose connections with family and friends (63%);
- (b) expected low pay level (50%);
- (c) rather work near current location (25%).

The preferred duration of the mobility placement was six months or more; this was considered as a minimum by the companies so that the productivity levels of the learners reached a satisfactory level.



## Enablers and disablers of cross-border long-term apprentice mobility

### Evidence from country- and project-level investigations

Cross-border long-term mobility of apprentices (CBLTMA) is understood as the period an apprentice spends abroad in in-company training (potentially combined with training at a VET provider) for a duration of minimum six months, and typically of up to 12 months, as part of his/her apprenticeship training. It is more difficult to organise than mobility in school-based VET and higher education, largely due to the nature of the relationship between the apprentice and the training companies; the latter must be willing to let the apprentice undergo a part of his/her training abroad.

By considering the specificities of apprenticeships, this publication presents considerations on the enablers and disablers of CBLTMA and shows what would need to be considered to make CBLTMA work in the medium to long term.



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