DELIVERABLE D.T2.2.5

Two-wave piloting of the BSO toolbox
acc. to snowball mechanism

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1. Introduction

This report summarizes the first and second wave of BSO capacity building, that was jointly developed and implemented by all project partners following the defined snowball-mechanism and the concepts for both implementation waves.

After each session of both waves, WP leader Biz-Up and the organizers have asked the participants for feedback. The gathered findings and lessons learnt have also be summarized in this report.

Deliverable D.T2.2.5 as defined in the Boost4BSO application form: 'This summary report describes the two-wave procedure of testing the BSO toolbox with PP, AP and external BSOs acc. to the snowball mechanism from T2.1.1'.

Accordingly this report is based on the deliverables D.T2.1.1 – creation of the downstreaming model, D.T2.1.2 – conceptual and organizational preparation, and D.T2.2.1-D.T2.2.4 – implementation and feedback of wave 1+2, and written in conjunction with the output factsheet O.T2.2

2. Capacity building wave 1

2.1. Concept and framework

The first wave of Boost4BSO capacity building took place from November 2020 until January 2021. The first wave was divided into 7 training sessions and these were held online via MS Teams.

The 1st wave of the Boost4BSO capacity building was only accessible for Boost4BSO project partners, it was intended to be a peer-to-peer knowledge exchange within the partnership. In addition, there was the possibility that other staff members of the 8 PPs participate in the first wave. In total, 24 staff members of all PPs participated. Beyond that, staff members of intermediaries, which are closely connected to PPs, have also joined the online trainings of wave 1. In addition, some partners invited external experts for their session. In total, 10 people of the external experts' institutions participated in the respective sessions. In average 25 people participated in each of the 7 online-sessions of wave 1.

2.2. Implementation

We implemented the first training session on the 19th of November 2020 and completed the first wave of Boost4BSO capacity building with the 7th session on the 28th of January 2021.

The selected PPs were responsible for their own session and its content and could decide on their own (partly in consultation with the LP) in which way they wanted to implement the training. Some decided to focus more on theory, others implemented some interactive training methods.

The following topics were covered in the wave 1 online courses:

1. I4.0 support process – maturity assessment models
2. General knowledge about I4.0 technologies
3. Business implications and organizational impacts of I4.0
4. I4.0 support process – service innovation methodology
5. I4.0 relevant network and ecosystem management, e.g. financing models for I4.0

6. Best practice exchange – joint use cases elaboration
7. Out of the box topics – how to deal with complex situations in digital transformation

A more detailed description about the content of each session can be found in D.T.2.2.1.

2.3. Feedback and lessons learnt

At the end of each session of wave 1, we asked the participants to fill in an online questionnaire. Thanks to this feedback we were able to continuously improve and adapt the concept of the capacity building. After some research, we decided to use FORMS (part of MS Office 365) as a tool for collecting feedback from the participants. After the third session the WP leader has communicated the intermediate feedback to the PPs in order to react quickly on the PPs suggestions for improvement.

Here are some selected suggestions for improvement that we've received as answers to the open questions:

- *More interactive sessions/ activities (participants should test something, adding an exercise, etc.)*
- *Training should be more professional and look like a training and not like a project meeting*
- *Some sessions went too much into technical details.*
- *More hands-on experience details rather than theory.*
- *Missing the "toolbox" that should be produced by Boost4BSO. If during the wave 2 we're going to train other BSOs on the use of the "toolbox", we have to get to know it ourselves.*
- *Some inputs were to academical. We should focus a more practical approach.*

In addition, we have also received a lot of positive feedback from our participants:

- *This is a very useful session.*
- *I was happy that the training was connected to the tools in the competence pack and toolbox*
- *The exchange via conceptboard was very useful*
- *Business model remodelling was very illustrative and practical! It was a good way to visualise the theory*
- *Both topics were very interesting to me in the context of Industry 4.0*
- *Thank you.*
- *Great job!*

We've analysed and discussed the feedback from the first wave very intensively, in order to be able to optimally design the Boost4BSO capacity building wave 2.

A more detailed description about the feedback and lessons learnt of wave 1 can be found in D.T.2.2.2.

3. Capacity building wave 2

3.1. Concept and framework

The second wave of Boost4BSO capacity building took place from April 2021 until June 2021. The second wave was divided into 4 online training sessions and 1 local workshop in native language.

The project partners have invited their associated partners as well as max. 5 additional BSOs from their region/country. The partnership faced a trade-off: On the one hand, we wanted to spread the Boost4BSO toolbox to as many BSO as possible, but on the other hand we had to define a max. number of participants.

In the Boost4BSO capacity wave 2 we also decided to introduce a gamification approach, which was drafted by PP4 MESAP. During the pandemic, many online trainings were launched – thanks to the gamification approach we were able to increase the attractiveness of our trainings, and to establish a commitment of the participants to attend all 4 trainings.

The participants were divided into 4 groups. These groups stayed the same in all online events. Each event had a dowry of 50 points to be awarded to the teams, according to their performances during the events. At the end of the last online session, the winning team was awarded.

Finally, local sessions were organized by each project partner, in order to discuss with their local BSOs about regional characteristics of digital transformation aspects, needs and fears of SME and lessons learnt from previous SME support with best/worst practices.

3.2. Implementation

The partnership implemented the first training session on the 15th April 2021 and completed the 4th online event of wave 2 Boost4BSO capacity building on the 6th May 2021. The 5th event - a local workshop in native language - took place on different dates depending on the country.

The 4 online Events were more or less structured the same way.

At the beginning of an online event the LP or the responsible PP gave a short Introduction, followed by an input from the PP or an external expert. After a short break and the introduction of the Use Case the teams were split up into their groups. After the group sessions the participants were asked for a short presentation of what they elaborated, followed by a debriefing from the hosts or external expert. After each session the participants received the link to our online questionnaire. Finally, after each session, the ranking of the groups was communicated as well as the current point of all teams.

The following topics were covered in the online courses of the second wave:

- I4.0 opportunity assessment
- Understanding I4.0 technology implications
- Understanding I4.0 business implications
- Design of I4.0 transformation roadmap

The last session was implemented locally, mainly in a face-to-face setting with a focus on the recap of the 4 online trainings, knowledge exchange, experience exchange incl. best/worst practices.

The deliverable D.T.2.2.3. contains a more detailed description about the content of each online session as well as about the local workshops in native language.

3.3. Feedback and lessons learnt

At the end of each session of wave 2, we asked the participants to fill in an online questionnaire. Exactly like in the fist wave of Boost4BSO capacity building, we decided to use FORMS (part of MS Office 365) as a tool for collecting feedback from the participants also in the second wave.

Here are selected suggestions for improvement that we received as answers to the open questions:

- *There were many tools presented, it would be nice to have a summary of Boost4BSO toolbox.*
- *Maybe the exercise was a little bit too difficult, but in the end, we worked it out anyway.*
- *Longer break between plenary session and work groups would be needed.*
- *business cases should be anticipated to participants.*
- *presenters should improve their English.*

In addition, we have also received a lot of positive feedback:

- *Thank you.*
- *Great session.*
- *Good group-work.*
- *you did a very good job! thank you for organisation and leading through this afternoon*
- *thank you for invitation*

Additionally, to the feedback from the participants, we asked our PPs some questions regarding the training:

Due to the circumstances, we successfully leveraged the format of the trainings. The duration of each training was just fine. If it was longer, it could have been difficult to follow. One extra session, or half a session, as an introduction into of the entire program and its goals would maybe be useful for the participants, in order to get "the big picture".

The gamification approach was successful and beneficial for the overall atmosphere and motivation. Content – it is proven that Use cases and interactive tools should be used in this kind of knowledge transfers, with as many tips & tricks as possible, and not too much theoretical lessons.

A more detailed description about the feedback and lessons learnt can be found in D.T.2.2.4.

4. Summary

The aim of the first wave of Boost4BSO capacity building was to start a "practice run" within the project consortium, to find out what exactly provides the most added value in terms of training methods and content for the BSOs participating in wave 2 of Boost4BSO capacity building.

Based on the feedback and lessons learnt from wave 1, we were able to optimally adapt the concept for Boost4BSO capacity building wave 2 to achieve the highest added value for the participating BSOs.

The main aim of the second wave of Boost4BSO capacity building was to train the associated and external BSOs on

- how to apply the tools of the Boost4BSO capacity building toolbox,
- how to support the local SME during their digital transformation process and to bring added value to the SME

Therefore, the second wave of capacity building was implemented with knowledge transfer about the tools, facilitated by experts, and interactive testing and discussion of the Boost4BSO tools in 4 online sessions.

By implementing the gamification approach in wave 2, we were able to create a great group dynamic amongst the participants. The idea was that the participants elaborate certain tasks with their team members and as a result they should feel committed to participate in all online training courses. This concept has worked and all in all 36 associated and external BSOs (clusters, innovation agencies, incubators/accelerators, sectoral agencies, interest groups, etc.) from Austria, Germany, Poland, Italy, Croatia and Slovenia participated in the 4 online + local sessions of the second wave of capacity building, together with the 8 project partners.

Thanks to the lively participation in the survey of wave 2, we received further suggestions for improvement and a lot of positive feedback and comments, which will referred to in the rollout guideline (D.T2.3.2).