



Applied Innovation and Research in
Vocational Education and Training

DIGEST 09

BRINGING THE PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS APPROACH FURTHER

Bringing the Public Private Partnerships approach further

In our series of interventions, we are sharing and enriching existing approaches to make them useful for the introduction and uptake of applied and innovation research in vocational education and training institutes. The Dutch contribution to these series is an interactive training about the Public Private Partnership (PPP)-approach, enriched with the earlier experiences from our AIRinVET-project. This approach, developed in The Netherlands by Katapult over the last 10 years, was presented by Katapult and ISSO and assessed by other partners on usefulness and feasibility in their own context.

In this digest, we first present in brief the presentations about PPP, followed by the feedback from the assessments. We conclude with a next step in the development of the PPP-approach and some key insights that are useful for a EU-wide uptake of the PPP-approach to foster the uptake of applied and innovation research by VET institutions.

The PPP approach

Key in the PPP-approach of Katapult is the collaboration between government, education and industry, each with their own role. PPP's are mostly set up in a specific region and always related to a specific topic, such as H2-transition, advanced manufacturing, IT security, mental health for refugees or sustainable energy for buildings. Aim of the PPPs is to solve real life problems by combined forces to make next steps in the specific field by doing applied research.

The training

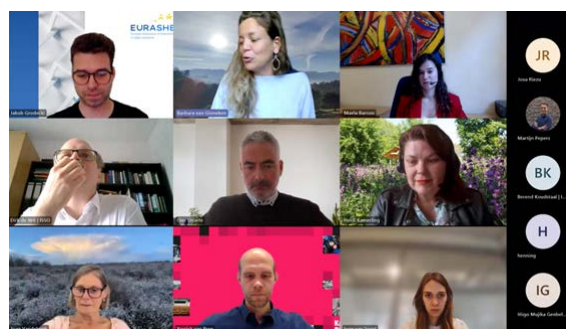
The first day started with an introduction on how to establish a PPP, presented by Yorrick van Bree of Katapult. This presentation, under the title “PPP Approach in the NL: PPPs and Applied Research” consisted of a general introduction in the PPP approach and the models and tools used to guide the development of a PPP. These tools cover all topics that needs attention (see also the circle diagram). A successful PPP needs a good network, good internal communication, good practical activities and good exchange of ideas within the consortium and to others, all guided by good leadership. Yorrick concluded with insights on how the approach is used in other contexts, such as the Community of Practice for Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoPCoves).



Credits: Katapult

To go from theory to practice, the next session was presented by Heidi Kamerling, practor Green and Liveable cities at Yuverta under the title: “Doing Applied Research: Cooperation within a PPP from the VET Perspective”. A key point in her work is making to connection between research and VET and the daily life practice, and to use this research to create curiosity to the world around us. She underlines our earlier finding that we need to be careful with calling our activities research, because research is recognised by different stakeholder groups as something from universities and therefore from outsides their world. She stated that based on her practice it is not about the money, but about a clear broad-based ‘why’ to start a successful PPP. This means also that you need to be aware of the expertise within the PPP you want to establish and that you build the PPP in a way it connects to the needs of the companies you want to collaborate with.

Nevertheless, funding is important as a supporting mean to reach the goals based on the why of the PPP. Therefore, the third part of the intervention was about “Funding Applied and Innovation research withing PPPs: what is important in The Netherlands”, presented by Martijn Pepers (Katapult). In the Netherlands, the common life span of PPPs is four years. This gives time to build a strong collaboration and strong results that are integrated in the daily work life. When in contact with governments to establish proper funding instruments, it is important to underline that in the long run everyone gets an advantage, although it is not good appointable to one group. This means that especially for sustainable and longer lasting PPPs funding should come also from a government or other external source.

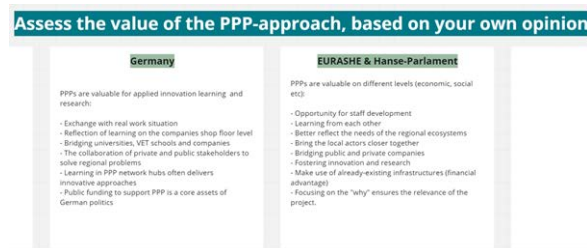


Credits: AIRinVET

Assessing the possibilities of PPPs in other contexts

Based on the presentations about PPPs in the Netherlands, the AIRinVET partners from the other countries assessed the possibilities of setting up PPP's in their own context and to make a presentation with the results for the second day. To guide them, Dirk de Wit (ISSO) prepared the following points to assess and created a Miro-board for them:

- The value of the PPP-approach, based on your own opinion.
- The possibilities of setting up PPPs (the scalability) in your context.
- Supporting and constraining structures, policies etc.
- Needed adaptations of the ecosystem to make the PPPs possible (if any).
- How to handle or denying structures, policies etc. and other constrains.
- Supporting structures, legislation etc. that are not in place in the Netherlands (based on what we have presented).



Credits: AIRinVET

Results of the assessments

The second day started with the presentation of the assessments done by the other regions in AIRinVET: The Basque Country (Spain), Germany and Europe as a whole.

The Basque Country

The assessment for the Basque country was done by TKNIKA, IMH and AFM. Although in the Basque country there is a good environment to work with the PPP approach, two main constraints are identified:

1. **Bureaucracy:** Public procurement policies and strict regulations can hinder the agile implementation of PPP projects. The idea to solve this, is by making the regulations more flexible and remove unnecessary legislation. Also implementing good financial incentives and other regulations, established from an innovation point of view and based on the insights of all needed stakeholders, can help. Most ideal is to have a specific legal framework for PPPs, just as in the Netherlands.
2. **Technical Capacity:** A lack of technical capacity in certain areas may limit the potential of PPPs. This can be solved by strengthening the collaboration and the needed infrastructure between public and private sectors and VET Schools. This collaboration can be extended to international collaboration.

An interesting needed adaptation addressed by the partners from the Basque Country is the request for training of public officials and private partners in the management and coordination of PPP projects.

Germany

The assessment for Germany was done by BHH. They see the PPPs as a valuable mean for innovation due to the relation with the real life situation, learning on the shop floor level and the collaboration between universities, VET schools, companies and both public and private stakeholders. This collaboration stimulates innovation.

Even though the funding of PPPs is well organised, setting up a good PPP is hard because establishing a good and diverse network is difficult. Existing ways of collaboration and their funding don't support long lasting collaboration projects. Also funding regulations can be very strict and not supportive.

To overcome the barriers, a mind shift is proposed: cooperation and collaboration needs to be seen as base for innovation and the results should no longer be calculated with down to earth financial instruments like the ROI of projects themselves. To strengthen the collaboration and cooperation between all stakeholders, effort is needed on good marketing and presence in different areas (Universities, Schools, chambers, companies etc.) to promote the high quality and results out of PPPs.

Do something good and talk about it!

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European perspective

EURASHE and Hanse-Parlament have done the assessment from a European Perspective. They were able to perform the assessment in this way, because they have a clear overview of the Higher education and industries in Europe.

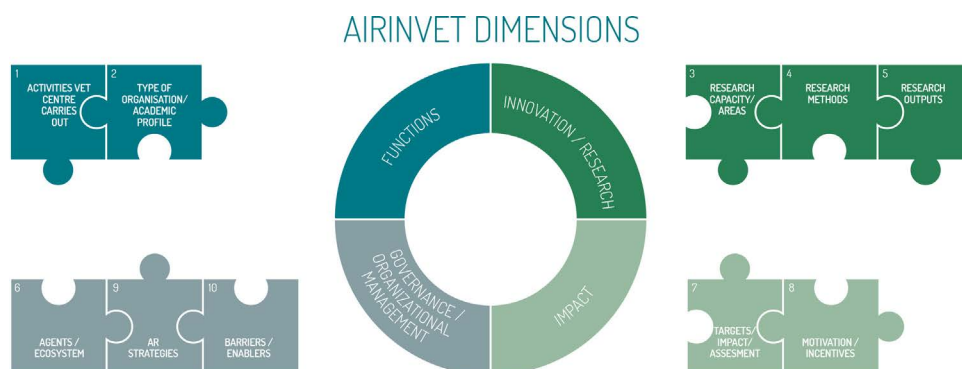
In general, PPPs are very valuable, on different levels. Think about staff development, knowledge exchange and collaboration, bridging public and private companies together and fostering innovation and research. To get this value, focus on the 'why' of the project. For a further uptake of the PPP approach might the lack of awareness about these values be a problem.

As also mentioned in the German assessment, finding good partners can be hard. From a company perspective is intellectual property a main concern, for all partners can the administrative burden be a reason to not participate in PPPs.

To stimulate setting up PPPs a supporting organisation like Katapult is very important, both to establish a PPP culture and to connect the stakeholders. Another need is to have implemented regulations that support the PPPs, when needed on different levels (National, Regional, Local). These supporting regulations should be actively communicated. A third need is to raise the awareness about the value of PPP among stakeholders.

Further development of the PPP-approach

The AIRinVET project runs now for about one and a half year. Based on the insights gathered, Barbara van Ginneken (Katapult) presented a redesign of the PPP dimensions to make it more suitable for the aim of AIRinVET: to use the PPP approach as a mean to stimulate the uptake of Applied and Innovation Research by VET Institutions. This is done by redescribing the dimensions focussed on R&I activities in PPPs, so VET Institutions know where they have to focus on when they start doing R&I activities together with other stakeholders. To foster the uptake, it is of high value that there are places for VET Centres to get the needed knowledge and to share experiences to learn from each other, such as the COPCoves.



Have a clear and broad based why for your PPP.

To conclude this brief overview of the intervention about the PPP-approach, five important insights:

1. Have a clear and broad based 'why' for the establishment of your PPP. What is the motivation? Intended impact?
2. Create awareness of the value of PPPs and about the realised results for all relevant stakeholders. Use this to build broad networks of relevant stakeholders.
3. Funding and legislation should be supportive for longer lasting PPPs with stakeholders from different groups and entities.
4. Have a supporting organisation in place in your context.
5. Offer education to staff of the VET centres on how to set up and run PPPs.