

DIGEST 10

ADAPTING RTOS/UNIVERSITIES APPROACHES AND BUILDING COLLABORATIONS WITH VET CONTEXTS

On the 7th of May, during the International Staff Training Week in Vilnius, organized by EURASHE and VIKO (Vilniaus Kolegija), the project consortium and members of the EURASHE research community of practice had a chance to meet and learn from each other. During the week-long meeting, parts of the session were dedicated to the intervention within the AIRinVET project focused on accelerating applied research, experimental development, and innovation to enhance regional impact effectively by adapting RTOs/universities approaches and building collaborations with VET contexts. This event gathered a predominantly academic audience from the University of Applied Sciences and members of the AIRinVET consortium, fostering a profound understanding of the mutual benefits stemming from collaborations between universities and vocational education and training (VET) centers.

The sessions explored various critical aspects:

- The significance of engaging applied higher education institutions (HEIs) in research activities to boost educational and regional development.
- Essential competencies for researchers, emphasising practical skills for navigating complex research environments.
- Future perspectives and evolving demands in the research sector, particularly regarding local and regional impacts of research.

Participants showed keen interest in the RECAPHE tool, a pivotal resource for self-assessing research competencies. This tool is instrumental in:

- Screening research, development, and innovation (RDI) activities across European professional higher education institutions.
- Developing staff competence profiles for RDI, clarifying the competencies required for effective applied research and innovation.
- Creating targeted training materials and a structured curriculum for PHE research and innovation professionals, including modular online micro-learning units designed to enhance specific competencies.

Furthermore, the [RECAPHE](#) project compiles significant insights and policy recommendations into a comprehensive report. This report outlines the structured list of RDI skills and provides a concise description of the RECAPHE course modules, offering strategic guidance on strengthening the distinct profile of RDI research at institutional, regional, national, and European levels.

In conclusion, professional higher education institutions (PHE) play an increasingly important role in enhancing European competitiveness and innovation capacity, especially at the regional level, where PHE institutions act as connectors and crucial links between regional SMEs, regional organisations, and society. In addition, applied research activities have an important role in developing students' skills including their innovative thinking and entrepreneurship and contribute thus to further economic growth and jobs within the regions.

Due to their practice-oriented approach and specific characteristics, applied RDI and regional activities often do not fit the same metric as the research and innovation activities done at the more traditional universities. Therefore, there is a need to support further development and enhancement of the PHE institution staff's capacity to engage in applied research activities, link these to teaching, and develop relevant ways to engage students and staff in these activities.

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