

## Catalonia: The role of regional authorities in supporting whole-school approaches to entrepreneurship and innovation in VET (Spain)

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Today [INCUVET](#) wants to put you on track of the [“Programme to promote and support entrepreneurship in VET Schools”](#), a smart move by the Department for Education in Catalonia (Spain). The decree ENS/2096/2015 published in 2015 contains all the details we’re just about to dissect right now. Gloves and scalpel, please.

The goal is to guide and support Catalanian VET schools in the design and implementation of methodological strategies for the development of entrepreneurial competences and the creation of business/self-employment among students. Achieving such an ambitious goal would not be possible without the active involvement of teachers. Thus, the scheme aims at creating the conditions to increase teachers’ confidence and enlarge their repertoire of classroom methods and techniques to promote entrepreneurship. Not an easy road, but the journey may be more pleasant if challenges ahead are tackled from a whole-school perspective.

At present more than 40 VET schools distributed all over Catalonia have successfully met the criteria to join the scheme. Last eight schools were selected according to their previous experience in Entrepreneurship Education, business support services provided by the school, their links with local companies, the number of VET programmes that will be involved in the scheme and the Quality Assurance System in place.

Schools are not expected to work in isolation. So while the process to consolidate an organizational structure to plan, promote and monitor a sound entrepreneurship education strategy has to be done individually, all schools form part of a network where they exchange and share knowledge and impressions on progress. Schools get together five times a year. These meetings are attended by two school representatives, normally a specialist teacher in entrepreneurship/career guidance and a technical subject teacher. The agenda is structured in 3 different sections. Session kicks off with an expert keynote followed by a check on progress and exchange of experiences.

Attending network meetings is just one of the school duties that are clearly outlined in the document. Besides, schools need to commit to providing CPD opportunities for staff, reporting on progress to the Department of Education and appointing an Entrepreneurship Coordinator (a teaching staff member) and a Monitoring Coordinator (Senior Management Team). The role and duties of entrepreneurship coordinators at VET schools in another Spanish region have been previously outlined [here](#).

This collaborative effort is steered by the regional DG VET (Department for Education) that provides individual school guidance, teacher training seminars and teaching resources. It also hosts a final event, a gathering of all schools to showcase progress and set goals for next year.

Last but not least, credits are awarded to participant teachers in recognition for their involvement and participation at network meetings and their year-long effort to coordinate

actions at school. The scheme envisages a reduction in the teaching workload for the appointed Entrepreneurship Coordinators freeing up time for strategic planning, design and experimentation of new methods. An entrepreneurial school kitemark is currently being developed to identify and recognize the work undertaken by schools involved in the scheme.

Now, this whole-school perspective is further enriched by [InnovaFP](#), a programme for innovation and knowledge transfer at VET Schools. By bringing together VET schools and local SMEs and institutions this approach paves the way to strengthening cooperation on a diverse array of joint innovation projects. Benefits include upskilling for teachers involved and improved employability of students. Schools establish more and better links with the local employer community and local SMEs see their innovation potential increased by having access to state-of-the-art knowledge, human capital and equipment found in VET schools.

To sum it up, the two approaches described here represent an interesting mix of top-down and bottom-up approaches. Schools have plenty of leeway to devise and implement an entrepreneurship school policy best suited to their local needs with the help of the rest of schools in the network and other local actors (eg. local SMEs) At the same time, sensible policymaking creates an enabling scenario striking a right balance between school support and school accountability.

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## Links

[Entrepreneurship Coordinators at Specialist VET Schools in Galicia \(Spain\)](#)

[Programa de foment i suport de l'emprenedoria en els ensenyaments professionals](#) (Programme to support and promote entrepreneurship in VET Schools)

[InnovaFP, Programa de innovació i transferència del coneixement](#) (Programme for Innovation and Knowledge Transfer in VET)