

ETeB Project

# eBCM VET

THE eBUSINESS WORKPLACE  
PARADIGM SHIFT IN WORK ENVIRONMENT



Leonardo da Vinci

LEONARDO DA VINCI

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# THE eBUSINESS WORKPLACE PARADIGM SHIFT IN WORK ENVIRONMENT

Today's business is rapidly accelerating in phase and becoming more and more competitive on all fronts. Businesses and customers are becoming more informed and demanding on service and accountability, requiring faster transactions, shorter product "time-to-market", faster inventory and investment cycles. Service response time has become a competitive matter, and as well has higher accuracy in service and product offerings and corporate social responsibility. The main driver for this paradigm shift is automation of business processes and availability of information.

For the individual employee this calls for new skills and knowledge, the change being seen either as an opportunity for advancement or a threat to job security. For eBusiness and the human capital to develop effectively, people and organizations need to be aware of and understand the new work methods and the technical platform and to believe in the potential benefits. Believing there are returns to gain is a motivation to change.

## The eBCM-VET project

The eBusiness Community Model – Vocational Education and Training project, eBCM-VET, has been a collaborative response of four European countries to the multiple challenges office workers and managers are facing when utilizing ICT in business operations and communication. The eBCM-VET addressed these challenges by developing an eBusiness vocational education and training programme, based on the eBusiness Community Model - eBCM, a model which in a holistic way describes all the key elements involved in the paradigm shift towards eBusiness.

The project was carried out with support from the European Community under the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme; it had a two year project period, ending November 2007.

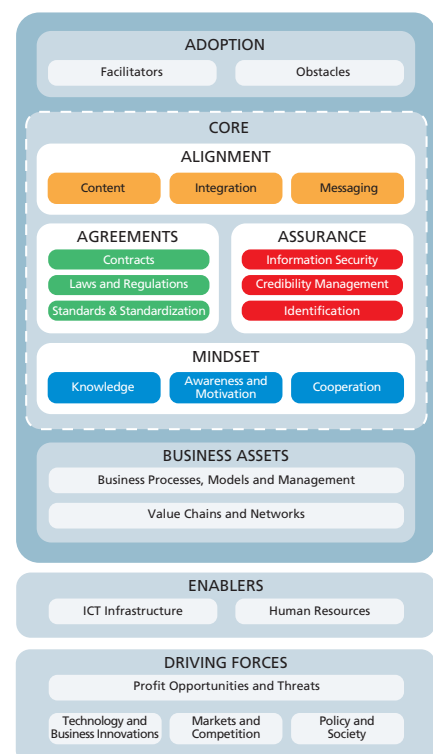
This document presents the purpose and the outcome of the eBCM-VET project, the context in which it was conducted and sets the agenda for utilisation of the project's results.

## The eBCM model

The eBusiness Community Model - eBCM has been developed within the ETeB ETeB, European Network of National Test-beds for eBusiness<sup>1</sup> partnership in another ETeB project supported by the Nordic Innovation Centre, NICE<sup>2</sup> eBCM-Research and Assessment Project [www.ebcm-rap.net](http://www.ebcm-rap.net). The mission of the eBCM Model is to operate as a cross-sectoral and multi-discipline reference point by assisting in the introduction, promotion, justification and implementation of the ICT enabled business practices renewal process. The model is designed to cover all the major elements needed for advancing towards an e-Business, the driving forces, enablers, the necessary business assets, mindset, agreements, assurance mechanism and alignment elements. Last, but not least, the model's design includes the monitoring elements, facilitators and obstacles.

<sup>1</sup> ETeB, European Network of National Test-beds for eBusiness [www.eteb.org](http://www.eteb.org)

<sup>2</sup> eBCM-Research and Assessment Project [www.ebcm-rap.net](http://www.ebcm-rap.net)



## Target objectives and impact of the eBCM-VET

The specific objectives of the eBCM-VET project were to:

- analyze and respond to the need for education and training in the field of eBusiness within target public and private communities;
- design relevant education and training methods and respective materials;
- select and utilize in a pilot project the technique and venue for delivering the knowledge and experience to the target group and;
- recommend ways and venues for continuing utilisation of the project results.

The expected short term impact of the project was raised awareness for what kind of eBusiness vocational training and education is needed for the target group and sectors, and what are the available methods, knowledge and materials for fulfilling that need.

The long term impact of the project was the social and economical benefits from the increased capabilities of the target group in the area of eBusiness, resulting in improved efficiency of business processes and thereby the increased net output of the relevant sectors.

## Project Target Group and User Community

The target group for this pilot project was the individuals working in the value chain of trading and distribution of products and services for business use. These are office workers and managers that in one way or another need to use electronic communication and information processing technology in their work or work related activity.

The target sectors were companies operating business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-government (B2G), i.e. import, export, manufacturing, warehousing, sourcing and distribution companies.

The final and potential users of the results are the office workers and managers that are faced with a working environment calling for skills beyond their present knowledge and capabilities, perceived or real. The results of the project will be transferable to office workers and managers in other commercial and governmental sectors, being e.g. insurance, banking, travel and tourism, business and governmental service.

## Partners

The partner group has been represented by organisations and consortiums that are, through their national networks, well positioned to reach out to the target group and sectors, academia and training organisations. They all have vocational education and training and/or the advancement of eBusiness as a priority area in their operations. The eBCM-VET partners are:

Country	Partner
Estonia	EITS, Estonian Information Technology Society
Finland	TIEKE, Information Society Development Centre
Iceland	VR, Commercial Workers Union of Reykjavik
Iceland	IST, Icelandic Standards
Romania	CCIR, The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania
Denmark	HK, Union of Commercial and Clerical Employees in Denmark (silent partner)

## Project results

The eBCM-VET had three main work packages. Those were: WP01 – Need analysis; WP02 – Education and training programme (design); and WP03 – Pilot education and training.

### **NEED ANALYSIS** *WP01*

The first assignment in the project was to carry out analysis of the need for vocational training in eBusiness with the selected target group. The framework of the analysis was defined on the basis of the nature of jobs and projects of the target group and in line with the core layers and key elements of the eBusiness Community Model, eBCM.

The method used in the analysis was a two-stage approach, first secondary research on available reports and information on current status, development and future trends on eBusiness for the respective target groups and then a primary research which was done in focus groups, one for managers and one for staff. The secondary research was done parallel in all the participating countries, the primary research was first done in Iceland and then in the other countries, who then could benefit from the experience gained in the Icelandic pilot. A consulting company was contracted to design, administer and process the research findings into a need analysis report.

The main findings of the need analysis were divided into two categories, i.e. topics of interest to the selected target group and preferred method of training. In all countries it was evident that there is a strong need amongst both managers and staff to have an overall view and understanding about eBusiness, to understand the nature of eBusiness and to be able to position oneself in the “big picture”, with respect to role and responsibilities. The method of training differs somewhat between countries, but most people prefer to be educated and trained in their own working environment with reference to their individual experiences and tasks.

### **EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMME** *WP02*

The second assignment of the project was to take the findings of the need analysis and process them into an education and training programme, suitable to the needs and requirements of the target group, yet always keeping in mind the future and potential users of the programme.

From the need analysis twelve study elements were derived, eleven “Learning Objects” (LO) and a chapter on “Continuous Learning” which can be considered as supportive to all the LOs.

#### **LO/01 - GENERAL INTRODUCTION OF eBUSINESS**

The Internet as a fundamental platform of worldwide eBusiness has emerged both as the world’s major distribution channel for goods and services and as its platform for international cooperation between business partners.

#### **LO/02 - CHANGE MANAGEMENT**

Changes can be either expected or unexpected but nowadays change is a permanent phenomenon.

Change management itself should contain thoughtful evaluation, planning, sensitive implementation, monitoring and consultation and above all involvement of the people affected by the changes.

#### **LO/03 - TIMING TO ENTER eBUSINESS**

Timing of entry into a new eBusiness area is a crucial issue to business managers. Entering an area too early, as well as entering an area too late may lead to failure.

## LO/04 - INFRASTRUCTURE

eBusiness infrastructure is a set of interconnected structural elements that openly supports eBusiness in the community. Infrastructure provides organising structure and support for individual eBusiness systems and organisations doing eBusiness.

## LO/05 - LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Laws and regulations are necessary in a B2B environment to avoid “unfair commercial practice”. B2B e-marketplaces are subject to general rules of fairness enshrined in national laws and commercial practices.

## LO/06 - THE NECESSITY TO SYNCHRONISE

One of the characteristics of eBusiness is networking, as one target of electronic tools is to ease communication between the parties in business. Networking demands harmonisation and standards are a key success factor.

## LO/07 - CONTRACTS

Business communication and relationships have changed with the emergence of the Internet, new business and communication applications.

## LO/08 - SECURITY

Establishing the necessary trust and confidence between business partners is to a very large extent a subjective issue affected by the reputation and image of the organisations or enterprises in question. Understanding of possible threats and common tools to ensure ICT security is important in order to have stable eBusiness environment.

## LO/09 - THE VALUE AND MANAGEMENT OF GOOD DATA

An effective business relationship depends on good documentation and efficient transfer of information. Data needs to be specified, initiated, and created, maintained, transferred, stored and processed.

## LO/10 - eBUSINESS IMPLEMENTATION

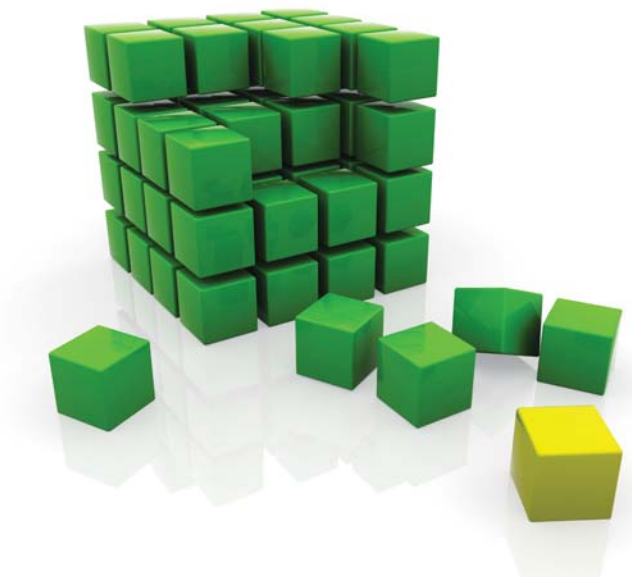
Utilisation of information and communication technology (ICT) can support businesses in reaching their objective, but if not properly implemented, it may turn to be a bottleneck...

## LO/11 - ICT “SURVIVAL” KNOWLEDGE

companies there is need for documentation and understanding of simple procedures to resume work and system operability. This calls for a general description of ICT systems, the critical functional elements and actions recommended in case of an error (a check-list).

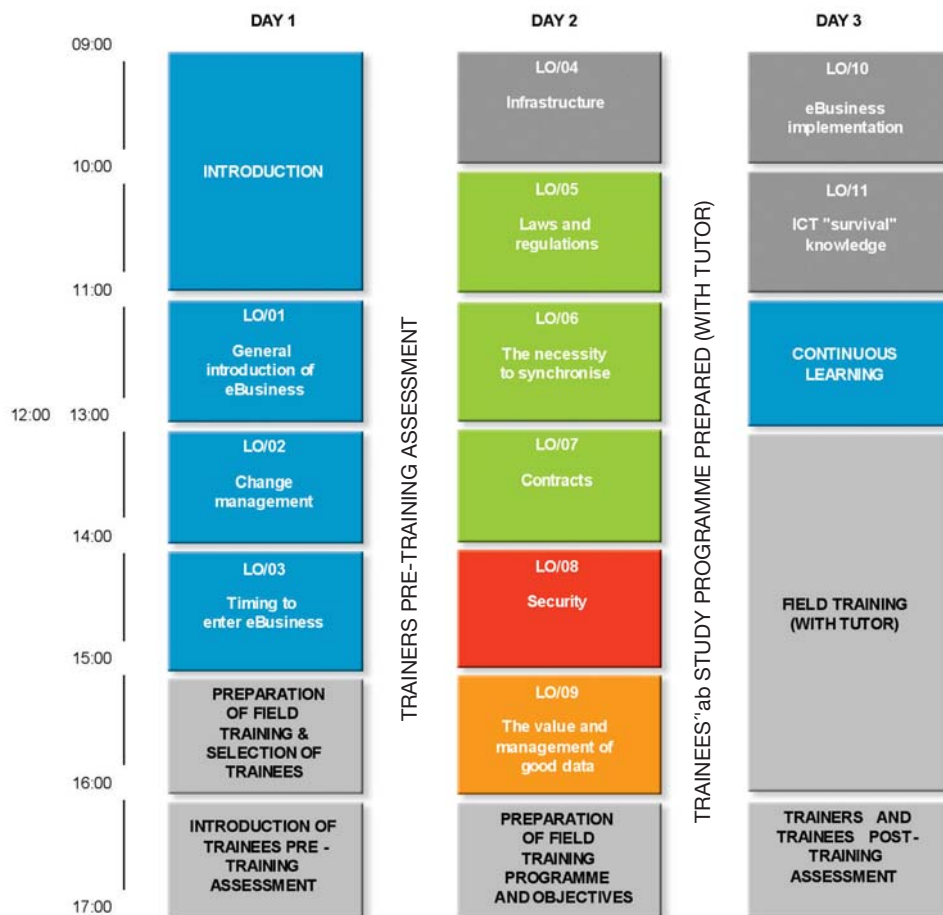
## CONTINUOUS LEARNING

eBusiness is a “moving target” where new working methods, technology and operational practices are developed. There is need for guidance about how to maintain one’s knowledge and understanding of eBusiness aspects.

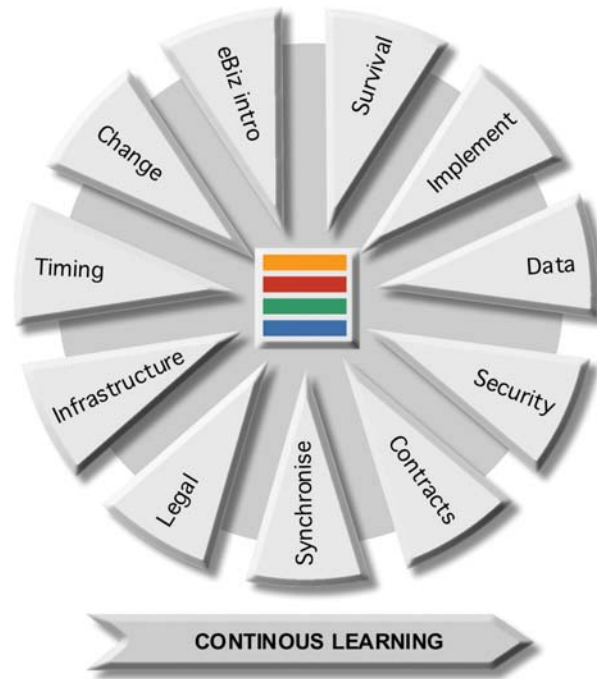


Taking into consideration managers' and staffs' preference to be trained in own working environment, a "train-the-trainers" approach was confirmed as a training method. This method is based on a concept where a person with hands-on experience within the target sector becomes a personal trainer of individuals or small groups of people, commonly working in the same company as the trainer.

In the project a course was designed for individuals who have the necessary skills, interest and experience in their working environment and are willing to become trainers of their colleagues in the matters of eBusiness. The course includes sessions for introduction, each of the LOs, preparation of field training, selection of employees for training and their assessment, preparation of field training programmes for individual employees and the actual training and post training assessment. The trainer's course is designed to take 3 days in total, but it is expected that the courses will vary, depending on the circumstances in each case.



As a part of the training methodology, a web based "eBCM Training Tool" was designed as an aid to trainers in field training. The tool serves as a "gateway" to all the necessary training material, including text, slides and links to related websites. The training tool and material is available in English and all project languages on the project's website [www.ebcm-vet.net](http://www.ebcm-vet.net)



eBCM Training Tool

### ***PILOT EDUCATION AND TRAINING WP03***

The third and final step in the project was to conduct a pilot where the education and training programme was put to its test. The pilot was conducted in two countries, Estonia and Iceland. Courses were designed, companies approached and employees, candidate trainers, recruited for the training. The design and implementation of the courses was somewhat different in the two countries, but the material, approach and target objectives the same.

The outcome of the pilot was in general quite successful, both with respect to material and method. The trainers reported that the course and their own field training exercises had been enlightening to them and their student trainees in the area of eBusiness. It had given them an overview and insight into the big picture, and what was even more important an opportunity to have a dialogue with colleagues about their company matters, how things were done and how they could be improved. As should be expected, for those with years of experience in the field of ICT and eBusiness, the course was considered too elementary, not adding to their prior knowledge.

## **Utilisation of project results**

After the pilot implementation the project results have been introduced to stakeholder communities, first in an international conference in Bucharest 18. October 2007 and then at introductory meetings in the participating countries. The overall perception received is that the material carries a valuable content to the target and potential users and that the method of delivering the content is quite appropriate.

What is needed is to select a venue for hosting the deliverables of the project, develop the material and web presence to a stage of public distribution, select a sustainable education and training platform and promote the course to stakeholder and VET communities in partners' and other European countries.

The eBCM-VET project team will follow up on the project findings and jointly explore opportunities to make this happen.

## ETeB and the eBusiness Community Model, eBCM

The vision for the European Network of National Test-beds for eBusiness, ETeB, is a network of fully operational national eBusiness economies serving as a model to facilitate eBusiness in Europe and globally. The overall objective is to research, develop, demonstrate and implement a common model and benchmark, the eBusiness Community Model (eBCM), for the eBusiness Economy through collaboration between stakeholders and public and private partnership. Once eBusiness is realized within one economic community, the experience documented, both failures and successes, there exists a model; an experience which can and should be used for other communities to learn from and build on. The completed eBCM describes what a fully operational eBusiness economy is and as such becomes an actual benchmark for eBusiness development. For more detail information see ETeB's website [www.eteb.org](http://www.eteb.org).

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