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HOW TO USE GUIDE



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GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF THE MODULES

OBJECTIVE: This document will provide information on the use of the modules for trainers and entrepreneurs, prepared as part of the project BICforSMEs.

How to use guide

GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF THE MODULES



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1 BACKGROUND

You are very welcome to this guide on how to use the tools and materials developed as part of the BIC for SME Project.

The idea behind the BIC for SME project is to provide a training programme, including useful tools and materials, for both prospective and early-stage entrepreneurs, and for small and micro enterprises which are interested in boosting their innovation activity. Furthermore, it is designed to support those organisations, professional trainers, mentors and coaches, etc., which provide innovation and other supports to entrepreneurs and small and micro businesses. The tool can be used by experienced trainers as well as those starting out on an enterprise training / coaching / mentoring career.

2 WHERE TO FIND THE CONTENT

Obviously, as you are reading this, you have already logged on to the BIC for SME homepage at <https://www.bicforsme.eu/>. As you will see, this provides general information on various elements of the project.

Having researched the sector, and having undertaken a specific Training Needs Analysis with entrepreneurs, those interested in entrepreneurship, and recognised trainers in the field, the partners have developed training tools and materials around ten business Modules of relevance to entrepreneurs as well as small and micro enterprises including:

1. Creating Ideas, Creating a Business
2. Adding Value through Innovation
3. Managing the Human aspect of Your Business
4. Staying on the Right Side of the Law
5. Connecting with your Audience and Growing your Sales
6. Getting Money to Start, Grow and Sustain your Business
7. Using Technology to Help your Business
8. Connecting with People and Making them Work for You
9. Going International
10. How is My Business Doing?

In order to properly experience the outputs of the BIC for SME project, and to understand how to use them, you should go to the sections on [Training for SMEs](#) and [Training for Trainers](#).

2.1 Training Materials and Resources for SMEs

Let's look at the **Training for SMEs** section first. When you click on the tab entitled [Training for SMEs](#), you will be brought to an information section which explains what you will see and which provides two hyperlinks.

The first link brings you to a [Concept Map](#) which, in a single image, shows you the topics addressed as part of the BIC for SME project and the main elements dealt with within each module.

The second one brings you to a [Video](#) which goes into significant detail on how to use the tools and materials which have been developed.

Scroll down a little further and you will see the ten modules which we have developed for entrepreneurs. Click on any of these Modules and you will see a number of links including:

- **Concept Maps**
- **Diagnostic Test** or Self-Assessment Tool
- **Training Materials** (including **Appendices** where relevant)
- **Summary Power Point** versions of the Materials

This structure is common for all of the Modules. There are Spanish versions of the Training Materials available also and the Summary Power Points are available in Spanish, Slovenian and Italian.

When you click on these links you will be brought to:

Concept Maps

Each Concept Map gives entrepreneurs and early-stage business owners an overview of the key elements of each module so that, in a single image, they get an overall understanding and a ‘full picture’ of the key issues in business topics such as sales and marketing, human resource management, finance and funding, innovation, etc.

Diagnostic tests

The Diagnostic Tests are designed to help identify the competencies, knowledge and understanding of entrepreneurs and early-stage business owners in relation to the ten business Modules developed. By clicking on the Diagnostic Tests link, you access an excel model with five separate worksheets.

1.

The first Worksheet is essentially an Introductory ‘cover page’ with links to the other Worksheets.

2.

The second Worksheet gives an overall Step-by-Step Guide on how to use the Diagnostic Test tool.

3.

Worksheet three is the main one of interest to Entrepreneurs and early-stage business users. Within this Worksheet users will find yellow text boxes which will guide them on using the various elements of the Diagnostic Tool. The first key element is 9 – 12 questions on key issues to do with the Module the user has selected. To the right of these questions, you can rank a users’ responses from -3 (very weak) to +3 (very strong). Depending on the ranking you will get a red, amber or green light, with red obviously indicating that there is a lot of work to be done, while green indicates the user is very knowledgeable on the subject. Another graphic also gives a visual representation of the users’ level of knowledge.

Further down you can add additional information on the company such as stage of development, no. of employees, etc., as well as adding additional notes in relation to the user.

Finally, there is a section where you can give a weighting to the importance of the three main themes of any Module being addressed with the user.

4.

The fourth Worksheet is similar to the Entrepreneurs one in that, trainers, mentors, coaches and business development staff in relevant organisations can assess their own level of knowledge in relation to the Module under consideration at the time. This is further explained under the section on Training for Trainers.

5.

The Roadmap Worksheet is the final one where the findings of both the Entrepreneur Diagnostic and the Trainer Diagnostic are summarised. Here a brief training plan can be put in place for those topics which the user of the Diagnostic assessment needs to work on. This can be printed off or emailed to the user as a brief 'take-away' on the key issues which they need to work on.

It also provides a version of the Concept Map which one can 'click and drag' on to again see (in a single image) those key issues which need to be addressed in the training.

A facility also exists where the most suitable learning approaches or pedagogy can be set out for the training to be undertaken such as face-to-face lessons, case study reviews, discussion groups, etc.

Lastly, milestones and KPIs can be established in relation to the training to be taken by the user.

Note: this Roadmap Worksheet should be aligned with the Action Plan & Milestones set out in the Training Materials documents available for each of the ten business Modules covered by the BIC for SME Project.

Training Materials

The Training Materials for each of the Modules follows the same structure.

There is a document with six Sections.

1. Section 1 introduces the Module in general terms, poses some questions to get the user thinking about the topic and introduces some well-known business analysis tools.
2. Section 2 highlights the Module Goals and Objectives, how to Plan out a Training Process incorporating the Diagnostic process and Training and Action Plan development.
3. Section 3 includes the Training Material – it provides information on key issues which will help users improve their knowledge and competencies in a given Module. This includes Learning Material and Tools (with internal links quickly bringing the user to specific areas of interest) as well as Useful Links, Key Words, Exercises and some Self-Assessment questions.
4. Section 4 helps users structure a Roadmap & Action Plan which the user can work on over a period of time.
5. Section 5 covers Follow-Up and Outputs, which helps users determine whether the Action Plan has been implemented effectively.
6. Where relevant, Section 6 provides useful Appendices.

Summary Power Points

Here you will find a Power Point Summary version of the Learning Material.

3 TRAINING MATERIALS AND RESOURCES FOR TRAINERS

The [Training for Trainers](#) section is very similar in layout to the **Training for SMEs** area.

It has a similar information section which explains what you will find and which provides the hyperlinks for a [Concept Map](#) and [Video](#), while further down you will see the ten Modules which we have developed for trainers. Under these Modules and you will see the same links including:

- **Concept Maps**
- **Diagnostic Test** or Self-Assessment Tool
- **Training Materials** (including **appendices** where relevant)
- **Summary Power Point** of the Materials

The difference here is that the materials and resources are directed at the trainer specifically. Trainers can assess and improve their knowledge and competencies whether they are starting out in their training or mentoring career, looking to branch into other areas of training and mentoring knowledge, or simply using the BIC for SME outputs to better structure their current professional offering.

Note: A more detailed **Trainers Manual** is also available in this section so that users can better use the BIC for SME outputs for the benefit of their client base.

4 FINALLY

4.1 Global Diagnostic Tool

The project partners have developed a summary version of the Diagnostic Tool which covers three key issues across each of the ten business Modules. This **Global Diagnostic Tool** allows SME users and Trainers to assess their general knowledge across all of the ten business Modules at once, rather than doing it on a Module-by-Module basis.

4.2 Flexibility

A very important point in terms of the BIC for SME outputs is that they have been built with great flexibility in mind. For example, all of the Diagnostic Tool questions can be edited. If a trainer or an SME support organisation staff member feels that questions in the Diagnostic Tool should be phrased differently or changed, then they can do so without negatively impacting the diagnostic capability of the tool.

Likewise, a Trainer can also edit the Training Material. Trainers can use the Training Material as is, or they can take those parts which are of interest or relevance to their own situation and use it in that way or, they can take relevant material and supplement it with their own material which may better suit their own specific situation.

The outputs, specifically the Diagnostic Test, can also be used as an ongoing client management tool. As a trainer meets with a user on a regular basis, they can keep notes in the section provided for in the Entrepreneurs Worksheet to record actions agreed. They can also assess progress by using the questions in the Test at different times.

Where a trainer is working with a large group of potential users, they can also use the Diagnostic Tool to assess the capabilities of those members of the group and to assess whether the Training Material needs to be adapted to cater for different levels of ability within the group. However, you use the outputs of the BIC for SME Project we hope you find it both enjoyable and helpful.