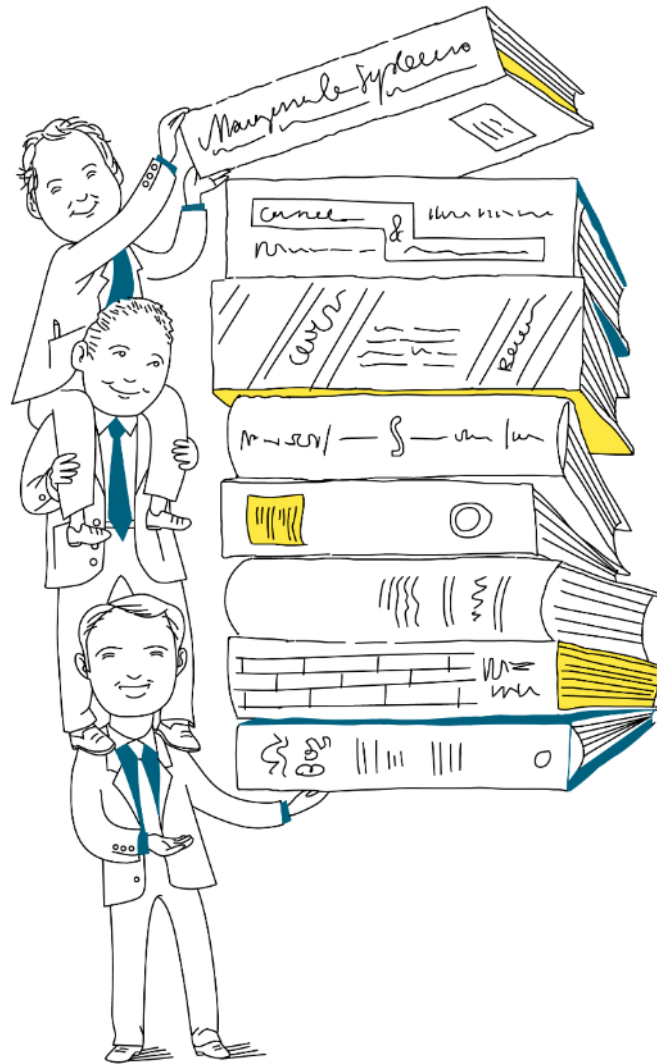




Identifying the eco-innovation and entrepreneurial qualifications and training needs of enterprises

Interview session & Online questionnaire

Final Report: 2018-11-30



The Final Report is prepared from denkstatt Bulgaria for Bulgarian Industrial Association

European project 'A knowledge Alliance in Eco-Innovation Entrepreneurship to Boost SMEs Competitiveness', funded by the Interreg Balkan MED programme.

Introduction

In connection with implementation of the project '**A knowledge Alliance in Eco-Innovation Entrepreneurship to Boost SMEs Competitiveness**', funded by the Interreg Balkan MED programme, denkstatt Bulgaria has received a request for an offer from the Bulgarian Industrial Association (BIA). Our company had to organize an **online survey** and to conduct **in-depth interviews** with representatives of companies operating on the **Bulgarian market**. Following its acceptance by BIA, a contract was signed between the two organizations. The goal was to identify what the **business needs** are related to **eco-innovation** and **entrepreneurial trainings**. denkstatt Bulgaria had to choose the respondent companies and, accordingly, to conduct interviews with them. The main requirement of BIA was the selected companies to be representatives of various branches and to have different subjects of activity in order to reach big scope of business area.



Activities and stages \according to the offer and contract\

In order to cover a variety of companies and to be able to effectively assess their eco-innovation training needs, the following activities were carried out:

Preparation of a list of companies

According to the offer and the signed contract, denkstatt had to create a list of 50 companies to contact and to ask specific questions provided by BIA. The ultimate goal was to gather answers from 20 companies and to further hold personal conversations with representatives of 10 other companies.

In the work process, denkstatt team decided to extend the scope and to create a list and database of 100 companies. The rationale behind this decision was to ensure the needed answers and to gather as much information as possible.

The extended list was agreed with BIA and after approval, we started disseminating online questionnaire and organizing interview sessions.

The list of companies is included in **Appendix 1** of this report.

Development and distribution of a questionnaire

BIA provided the team of denkstatt Bulgaria with 7 questions in English. For the purpose of the project implementation, the questions were translated into Bulgarian and a questionnaire was created using professional online survey platform which denkstatt Bulgaria has a subscription for: www.quiz-maker.com.

A personal email was sent to representatives of all targeted companies from the list. We used the online platform for e-mail campaigns MailChimp (mailchimp.com).

The e-mail contained the following information:

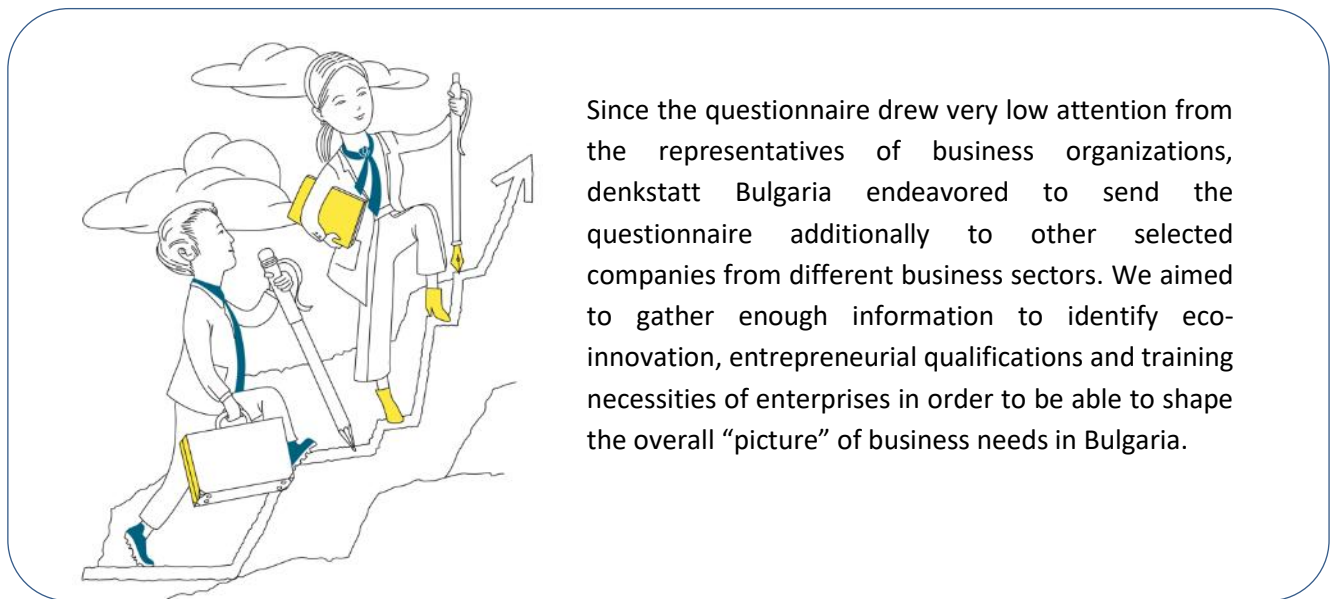
- A brief presentation of the project;
- What is the potential benefit for the business of participating in the survey;
- Request to support and fill in the questionnaire with an option to choose – whether to answer by phone, e-mail or personal meeting;
- GDPR statement on the personal data which will be collected and the purpose of its use;
- Link to the questionnaire itself.

A few days later, our team sent a reminder to all targeted companies, containing brief recalling information about the project's essence, its purpose, and the importance of their participation.

A representative of denkstatt Bulgaria team held phone conversations with representatives of the listed companies to gather information on whether the e-mail has reached them, what is their opinion about it, are they interested in participation etc.

The online questionnaire can be viewed here: <https://www.quiz-maker.com/QU5CAG6>.

The questionnaire in Bulgarian language is included in **Appendix 2** to this report.



Online Questionnaire

The survey was conducted among representatives of business organizations from different business sectors and with different activities. Most of the economic sectors in which they operate in Bulgaria were covered.

Interviews with representatives of 10 companies

Based on the phone and email communication with the companies on the list we identified 10 companies to conduct in-depth interviews with.

We achieved the goal to receive 20 answers of the online survey platform and to conduct 10 personal interview sessions.

Online Questionnaire

The results of the online questionnaire completed by the representatives of business organizations are summarized in a table with the following content:

- Name of the organization
- Business sector
- Replies of each question from the online questionnaire

Appendix 3		FINAL REPORT						denkstatt create sustainable value	
		Identifying the eco-innovation and entrepreneurial qualifications and training needs of enterprises							
		Online questionnaire							
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
БИЗНЕС СЕКТОР	КОМПАНИЯ	Какви са настоящите нужди/проблеми на Вашата компания? Моля, посочете до 5 основни нужди/проблема.	Кои от описаните по-горе нужди/проблеми са свързани с екоинновации и предприемачество?	Как се справяте с тези проблеми във момента?	Какви са разходите на Вашата компания във момента (приблизително, като % от общия годишен оборот), свързани със зелени практики/решения и/или зелени продукти/услуги? (вкл. costs за изследвания, внедряване на инициативи в производствения процес, като SMEs мейк-апа)	Според Вас какви компетенции във Вашата компания или на Вашите служители да бъдат обучени, за да можете да се справяте с проблемите, свързани с екоинновации и предприемачество. Моля, опишете какво точно очаквате да научите за посочените от Вас сфери.	Моля, посочете три сфери в които искате Вашите служители да бъдат обучени, за да можете да се справяте с проблемите, свързани с екоинновации и предприемачество. Моля, опишете какво точно очаквате да научите за посочените от Вас сфери.	Какъв формат на обучение е най-подходящ за Вас и Вашите служители (вкл. курсове/семинари, семинари, обучение във университета, практическо/онлайн обучение от различни фирми)?	
	Кавани ДАД	Нови методи за намаляване на емисиите от прага	Новите методи са екоинновации	С опростяване чрез водосточна	Не мога да дам отговор	Няма имаме внедрено ISO 14001	модерни системи и методи за "Business operations"	счетоводно от различни фирми	
10	Производство на селскостопански площи	Повишено потребление на енергия	използване на енергията	Продукти - разл. видове	Не мога да дам отговор	Популяризиране на продуктите и процесите.	Бизнес умения, проеси, системи за управление.	Счетоводно от различни фирми - напредовано обучение през уебсайта, практически семинари.	
11	"Кан Омурта" АД	Разнообразие по проблем, избор на решение	интервюване на екологични иновации за реализиране на зелени процеси.	Сорими от еко инновации на сградата	Не разполагам с данни.	Популяризиране на продуктите и процесите.	Бизнес умения, проеси, системи за управление.	Счетоводно от различни фирми - напредовано обучение през уебсайта, практически семинари.	
12	БЪРГАС КОМЕРС АД	Разнообразие по проблем, избор на решение	не са ми ясни въпросите ви	Иновации в сферата на опазването на околната среда	2%	Преди всичко общо домашно управление по поддръжка на работната среда	Не мога да процуция	Различни форми	
13	Минна индустрия	Увеличение на енергийно потребление	50% от производствения процес е свързан с екологично съвместими решения	Иновации в сферата на опазването на околната среда	Не зная	Преди всичко, да ги и грена. Техническите компетенции са еднакви с производствения	Грима за околната среда, чрез това икономия, zero waste mentality	Екологични	
14	Производство на керамични и керамични добавки	Машини, необходими за производствения процес за речката, безвъзмездно финансиране	Продуктите, които произвеждаме са екологични	Трудно	30%	Компетенции имаем, но средства нямаме	Екологични добавки и безопасности	Семинари	
15	Индустриален Союзен Български ЕООД	Рециклиране на възпроизведени емисии и рециклиране на производствения процес	Инициативи за рециклиране на производствения процес	Трудно	Не зная	Необходими са повече, при изпълнение на правилата за управление на отпадъците	Рециклиране на възпроизведени емисии.	Семинари	
16	Счетоводни услуги	РАНГ В ООД	Качествени служители, по-добри	Не са свързани. Може би допълнително	0 не са знания	Не са имаме, не са релевантни за нашата сфера на работа.	Не ни касат тези обучения	1. Информационност за видовете практики, 2. Дълбочина сравнение между зелоите и стандартните	

The total number of organizations which completed the questionnaire is 20. Company names and their responses are specified in **Appendix 3** to this Report.

Based on the questionnaire's results we can make the following conclusions:

QUESTION A - What are your company's current needs/problems? List up to five major needs/problems.

- There is a necessity for sufficient, well-trained employees and development of specific for each employee skills.
- Compliance with the legislation was identified as an apparent need for the companies.
- Small and medium-sized enterprises are generally lacking enough information on the "Eco-innovation and entrepreneurship" topic.

- In general, companies lack sufficient funding for business development and in addition, the technological equipment is outdated.
- The question is too general and for this reason part of the respondents did not go further with answering the questionnaire.

QUESTION B – Which of these are related with eco-innovation and entrepreneurship?

- Small and medium-sized enterprises are generally lacking enough information on the topic "Eco-innovation and entrepreneurship "and therefore it is considered as "not important".
- “Better trained employees on understanding of the topic” are identified as possible "eco-innovation" by some business companies.
- Outdated technology hinders eco-innovation.
- There is a necessity for incentives for the introduction of eco-innovation by business organizations.

QUESTION C - How do you currently solve these eco-innovation and entrepreneurship problems? (If they answer yes to the previous question)

- Providing well-trained staff, training of the employees.
- Different projects implementation.
- Intension to protect the environment in which the business organizations operate.
- Optimization of the processes.

QUESTION D - What is your current expenditure (as a rough % of total annual turnover) associated with green practices/solutions and/or green products/services of your company? (e.g. Ecolabel for products/services, establishment of environmental management systems, such as EMAS or ISO 14001)

- A significant part of the business companies do not have special budget or % of annual turnover for eco-innovations.
- Such costs are not determined as necessary.

QUESTION E - What competences (knowledge & skills) do you think that are necessary for your employees or yourself to have in order to address issues associated with green practices/solutions and/or green products/services of your company? (e.g. Ecolabel for products/services, establishment of environmental management systems, such as EMAS or ISO 14001)

- More information on the subject.
- Eco-innovation legislation and its compliance.
- Good eco-innovation practices.
- Hygiene in the work environment.

QUESTION F – Please name three fields that you wish you or your employees to be trained on, to address eco-innovation and entrepreneurship problems in your company. Please give more details about what you expect to learn about the fields you chose

- Ecology trainings are not recognized as a necessity for many business organizations.
- Those who listed educational areas are working on the topic or at least have information about it because they identify specific topics for the sector in which they operate. They are mainly big companies not in the segment of SME.
- There is lack of capacity and sufficient financial resources for training of the employees.

QUESTION G - What kind of training format is most suitable for you and or your employees? (e.g. morning/afternoon sessions, full day, sessions in weekends, classroom/online/blended learning environment)?

- Business organizations declare flexibility in the format of training. Most of them would participate in trainings, regardless of their format.

Interview session

The results of the interviews are summarized in a table with the following content:

- Name of the organization
- Business sector
- Replies of the questions from the online questionnaire

The total number of the interviewed organizations is 10. Company names and their responses are specified in **Appendix 4** to this report.

We can make the following conclusions from the interviews:

QUESTION A - What are your company's current needs/problems? List up to five major needs/problems.

- There are not enough and well-trained employees.
- The procedures related to state institutions and legislation as a whole are too slow.

QUESTION B – Which of these are related with eco-innovation and entrepreneurship?

- Well-trained employees are a great necessity.
- Funding is insufficient.
- Companies address eco-innovation and entrepreneurship as possible answers to their problem / need.

QUESTION C - How do you currently solve these eco-innovation and entrepreneurship problems? (If they answer yes to the previous question)

- Most companies have implemented ISO systems.
- Training, financing, partnerships with organizations specialized in eco-problems are among the methods to deal with this issue.

QUESTION D - What is your current expenditure (as a rough % of total annual turnover) associated with green practices/solutions and/or green products/services of your company? (e.g. Ecolabel for products/services, establishment of environmental management systems, such as EMAS or ISO 14001)

- A significant part of the business companies don't have special budget or % of annual turnover for eco-innovations.
- However, if they indicate a percentage of the costs for some kind of "green topics", in most cases it is less than 10%.

QUESTION E - What competences (knowledge & skills) do you think that are necessary for your employees or yourself to have in order to address issues associated with green practices/solutions and/or green products/services of your company? (e.g. Ecolabel for products/services, establishment of environmental management systems, such as EMAS or ISO 14001)

- Knowledge related to the ISO environmental management system.
- Sustainable development practices.
- Developing of an organisational culture in this field.

QUESTION F – Please name three fields that you wish you or your employees to be trained on, to address eco-innovation and entrepreneurship problems in your company. Please give more details about what you expect to learn about the fields you chose

- Measuring and monitoring the results of green practices.
- Internal Entrepreneurship.
- Good practices (case studies).

QUESTION G - What kind of training format is most suitable for you and or your employees? (e.g. morning/afternoon sessions, full day, sessions in weekends, classroom/online/blended learning environment)?

- Business organizations declare flexibility in the format of training.

Summary and recommendations

Conversations with business organizations representatives and questionnaires' results show low level of understanding on the examined topics. Most of the companies need clarifications on the topic on its main definitions, content and cover. Moreover, it is difficult to define specific needs related to eco-innovation and entrepreneurship as in fact their needs are at a very basic level. The small and middle enterprises operating on the Bulgarian market do not have a clear view nor they have planning regarding any trainings. More of the shared problems are related to operational issues. Topics like green practices, eco trainings, eco labelling, management systems, internal capacity development are known on basic level with no detailed insights. They are not aware with the benefits of such practices or their influence on the business process. Only small part of the middle and mostly big companies have experience on real issues and knowledge on them. As a common line could be pointed the perception of the examined topics as not enough important for the business development. However, the big companies have identified quite specific topic related needs as circular economy, recycling projects, managing their environmental impacts, ISO implementation, etc.

In small and partly middle business organizations, the person who is able to answer the questions is the general manager of the company but usually he/she is not willing to participate and comment specific issues for their business. The rest of the team representatives have no role in identifying key topics, risks and needs for the business, they do not know if their organization has any activities in that direction.

Our team has received a number of comments that the questions in the survey / interview are not well-developed and it is difficult to receive relevant answers. For example, the first question is very general and it is difficult to make connection with the second question. A significant part of the business organizations involved in the survey refused to participate directly due to lack of capacity and understanding the content covered by the examined topics.

The main business organizations needs on to the "Eco-innovation and entrepreneurship" topic are related: providing more information in order to understand covered issues and more shared practises, trained and educated employees, knowledge and compliance of legislation, sufficient funding for the implementation of various projects in the field.