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THE MAIN ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES OF PROCESS PROJECT SO FAR

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Abstract

Processing Complexity with Emotional, Sensorial and Spiritual (ProCESS) is an Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliances (KA) project that started in January 2021 and will end in December 2023. The project brings together HEIs (Higher Education institutions) and companies from four European countries (Finland, France, Latvia, and Romania) with strong expertise and experience in different fields.

The ProCESS focuses on teaching current and future managers to break out of traditional thought patterns, complement traditional methods of analysis, upset their established intellectual order, broaden their perspectives, and aid them in the ability to step outside the box. In the ProCESS, partners develop new, innovative, and multidisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning by creating a new innovative curriculum, educational method, and training course for managing complexity. The new training approach improves managers' agility in the decision-making for more performance, gives rise to new teaching profiles, and leads to sustainable changes in management habits and more well-being at work.

At the beginning of the ProCESS, partners together created the models and methods to facilitate the involvement of students, HEI educators, and company experts in the international, multilevel, and multidisciplinary Research & Development & Innovation (R&D&I) cooperation.

In the ProCESS, 12 complex management case studies are implemented in three rounds. The topics for these case studies are developed in cooperation with HEI and company partners in every partner country. Multilevel and multidisciplinary student teams in all four partner HEIs solve the problems, and they are guided by HEI and company coaches. Students are encouraged to find solutions to proposed problems using in addition to rational problem-solving techniques sensorial, emotional, and spiritual intelligence skills (SESS) which they get to practice in the six workshops organised by the SESS trainers during the project at their own HEIs. Students become better acquainted with complex situations, and not just understand, and dare to "step outside the box" to resolve them.

The new training models developed in the ProCESS project are implemented both in degree programs of HEIs and vocational education. New trainers with SES Skills are trained and integrated into a global network of change-makers.

The paper describes deeper and wider the main activities and outcomes of the project when four case studies of the first round have been successfully completed and the planning of the four case studies of the second round is going on.

Keywords: complex, management, case study, international, multilevel, multidisciplinary.

1 INTRODUCTION

The situations to be managed within any company, association, or entity, whether public or private, have become more complex. The complex is an unstable and open system, a conjunction of order and disorder, within which antagonistic logics exist, evolves by bifurcations, and is the seat of multiple and diversified interactions [1].

Traditional hierarchical management models functioned well in the context of physical production [2], but in today's VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous) environment they do not work. There has been a change from traditional management theories toward the complexity theory in defining the context of organisations [3].

The International Association for Management Development in Dynamic Societies carried out an exploratory study [4] to gain insight into what new knowledge, skills, and attitudes are required for managers to succeed in European countries. Based on data from 11 countries and 145 companies, the study concluded that society as a whole is undergoing a process of transformation, creating the need

for a new skill set and mindset for employees working in Europe. Educational offerings should be developed together with the corporate world, and new innovative teaching methods are needed. The ProCESS project takes up four challenges:

1 The Difficulty of decision making

Decision-making based upon rational approaches is no longer sustainable in the face of an increasingly VUCA world. The more complex decisions become, the fewer executives can rely on rational approaches. In this context, it is appropriate that HEI curricula continue to evolve and explore different ways to better equip students as future leaders, perhaps in radical ways.

2 The Weakening of managerial staff

The obligation to decide on issues characterized by uncertainty and unpredictability, for which the recycling of old schemes or the use of traditional tools based on rational analysis aren't sufficiently operational, leads to the weakening of managerial staff. This has a direct impact on people: staff turnover, absenteeism, addiction, and even an increase in burnout. Evolving in such a world increases the frequency of reorganisations and changes in management practices. Having to constantly deal with ambiguity can lead to anxiety and doubts and can decrease the level of trust one has in his/her company if he/she is not self-equipped to evolve.

3 The Underperformance of organisations

Firstly, a lack of decisiveness and the occurrence of delays have a cost. Secondly, the correlation between the quality of work-life and economic performance is largely established in many situations. These pitfalls indirectly impact companies' attractiveness, leading to difficulties in recruiting young managers since the younger generation considers well-being at work an essential criterion when making a career choice.

4 The Inappropriate education of future managers

Nowadays, students need to apply their knowledge in unknown and evolving circumstances. For this, they need a broad range of skills, including cognitive and meta-cognitive skills (e.g. critical thinking, creative thinking, self-regulation), social and emotional skills (e.g. empathy, self-efficacy, and collaboration), and practical and physical skills.

The ProCESS addresses the lack of training in the field of complexity management, which leads to the underperformance of many organisations and the weakening of the people within these organisations. For that, the ProCESS wants to develop new ways of training managers, with the main lever being the development of SES (Sensorial, Emotional and Spiritual) Skills on an equal basis with hard and soft skills to train managers to sense, feel, and understand.

2 BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROCESS PROJECT

In this chapter, there are introduced the HEI and company partners, operational objectives, work packages and methodology of the ProCESS project.

2.1 Partners

- In the ProCESS project there are four HEI and five company partners from four different European countries (Finland, France, Latvia, and Romania) as full partners:
- Catholic University of Lyon (UCLy, the coordinator, <https://www.UCLy.fr/>), the pharmaceutical company Sanofi Pasteur SA (<https://www.SANOFI.com>), and the staff development company PerformanSe (PERF, <https://www.performanse.com/>) from France
- JAMK University of Applied Sciences (JAMK, www.jamk.fi/en/) and Mediahouse KeskiSuomalainen (<https://www.keskiSuomalainen.com>) from Finland
- RISEBA University of Business, Arts & Technology (RISEBA, <http://www.riseba.lv/en>) and Latvian Post (<https://www.pasts.lv/en/>) from Latvia
- Technical University of Cluj-Napoca (TUCN, www.utcluj.ro/en/) and the consulting company De Klausen Consult (<https://deklausen.ro/>) from Romania

The group of full HEI partners consists of two academic universities and two universities of applied sciences and the group of full company partners consist of one SME and four large enterprises.

34 associated partners from five European countries want to follow the progress of the ProCESS and possibly take part in its activities, e.g. to offer a topic for a student case study. Eight of the associated partners are HEIs, three HR networks, 22 enterprises, and one cluster.

2.2 Operational objectives

The ProCESS has four operational objectives:

- 1 To develop an original and innovative method of dealing with complex problems, process method, by mobilizing Sensorial, Emotional, and Spiritual (SES) Skills, and training modules targeting the development of SES Skills.
- 2 To test the process method in real situations, with students under the supervision of both academic and company coaches, to ensure its operability and to assess its efficiency.
- 3 To deploy the developed training modules both in heis and in professional education.
- 4 To set up a pool of trainers with SES Skills and integrate them into a global network of change-makers.

2.3 Work packages

The ProCESS project consists of seven work packages. Project Management (WP1) and Analysis of company cases through the ProCESS method (WP3) are led by UCLy. Preparing the company cases and building the training modules (WP2) and Quality assurance (WP5) are led by JAMK. Pilot trainings at partners and associated partners (WP4) is led by RISEBA. Evaluation (WP6) is led by PERF and Dissemination and Exploitation (WP7) is led by TUCN. Three of these work packages (WP1, WP2, and WP3) are explained deeper in the following chapters. The work packages and their connections to each other can be seen in Fig. 1.

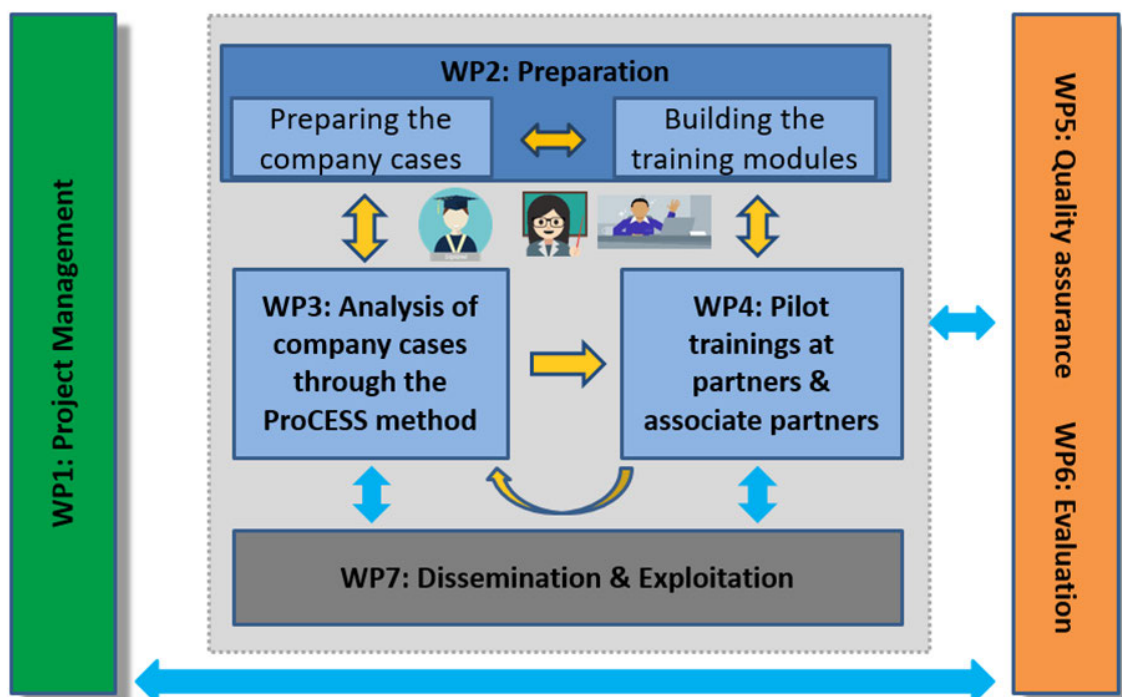


Figure 1. Work packages of ProCESS project and their connections to each other.

2.4 Methodology

The ProCESS project delivers a methodology (Fig. 2) to respond to changing needs in the wider economy and shape the careers of tomorrow; prepare individuals for today's varied and unpredictable career paths, training them in skills such as the ability to think critically, take initiative, solve problems, and work collaboratively. It is necessary to improve the correspondence between the training of managers and the reality of managing within complexity.

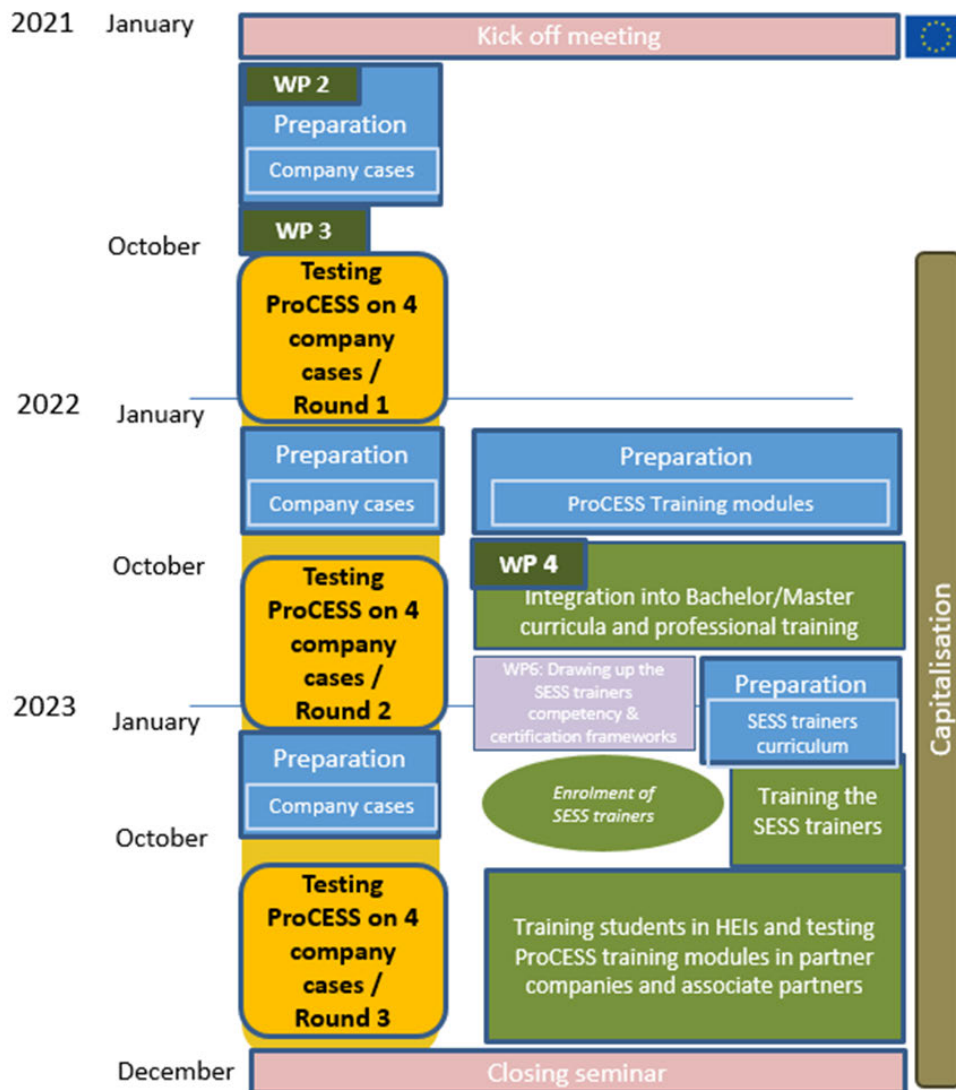


Figure 2. Overview of the schedule of WPs 2, 3 and 4.

The ProCESS methodology is tested on 12 management cases which student teams are able to analyse in four months (Fig. 3). At the beginning of the project, students participate face-to-face or virtually in the kick-off meeting in the project company and at the end of the project, they all are present and have their final presentations in ProCESS Winter School. They also participate in six SESS training workshops organised by their own HEI's SESS trainers and are coached by the company and academic coaches. The students who take part in the implementation and teamwork of management case studies get five ECTS credits.

The Process training method and modules are transposed and tested in bachelor, master, professional, and in-company training programs.

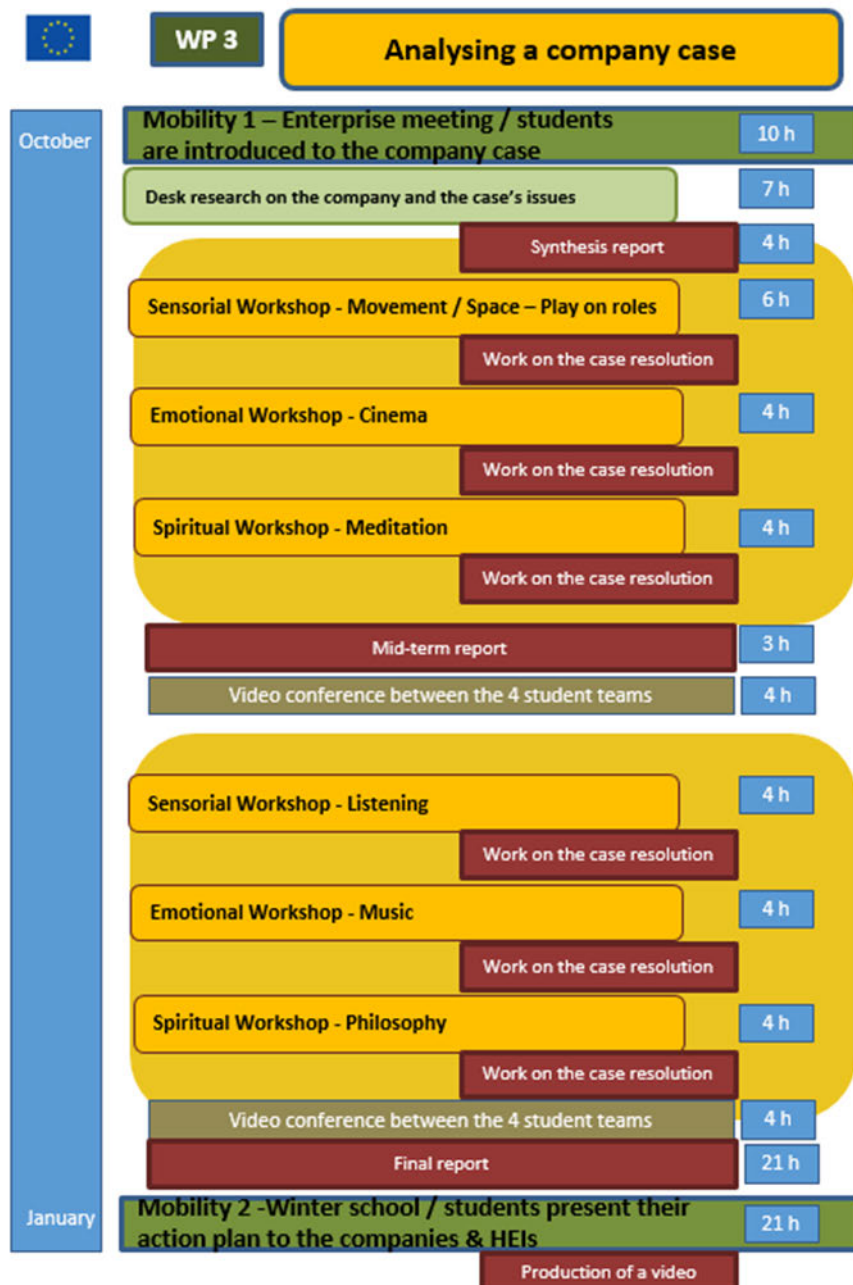


Figure 3. Methodology for analysing complex management cases.

3 THE MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE PROCESS SO FAR

3.1 Project management, Teams platform, and partner meetings

UCLy as the coordinator of the ProCESS is responsible for Project Management (WP1). In the ProCESS, all HEI and company partners have cooperated well, and all planned activities are done on time so far. At the beginning of the project, JAMK's e-learning designer created the Teams platform for the project where all project documents are stored. She has organised guidance sessions for all partners who need them, and she is always ready to guide and help partners with the use of the Teams platform and the Teams connection which is used at all partner meetings.

In the Steering Committee (SC), there is one representative from every HEI and company partner, so-called project managers, and the leaders of all seven work packages, and it is led by the project coordinator of the ProCESS. Because of COVID-19, all meetings of SC and work packages as also other partner meetings have been implemented in a hybrid by the use of Teams. Only in the third SC meeting which was organised during the same week as the first ProCESS Winter School at JAMK in

January 2022 and in the SESS meeting at UCLy in May 2022, there were present partners from all four partner countries. In the first ProCESS Winter School at Jamk there were present all 16 student teams of the first round of the case studies and most of their coaches. Although most of the project meetings have so far been carried out virtually, virtual connections have usually worked properly and the cooperation between partners has been fruitful and succeeded well. As in all other projects, some partners have needed more help than others to participate effectively in project activities.

In every partner country, HEI and company partners have met each other fluently virtually and face-to-face to discuss the present situation and next steps of the project. This national cooperation has helped companies to follow and take part in project activities.

3.2 Preparing the company cases and building the training modules

HEI partners developed together an original and innovative method to deal with complex problems by using sensorial, emotional, and spiritual intelligence skills (SESS) alongside rational problem-solving techniques. This method is called the ProCESS method. JAMK is the responsible HEI in WP2, and it leads activities to build the training modules and prepare the company cases which are carried out in three project rounds. Academic coaches of four partner HEIs form the core group for this work package. At the beginning of the project, during spring 2021 academic coaches built the training modules, planned the content, and created the schedule for the first-round company case studies. Each of them has had national planning meetings face-to-face and virtually with their own country's company partner. During these meetings, academic and company coaches in each country created one suitable topic for the first-round company case study which was carried out in four partner HEIs in autumn 2021. HEI partners created info materials for these case study projects and sent them to suitable multilevel and multidisciplinary student groups in all four partner HEIs.

August 2021 was the application period for students in every partner HEI and in September 2021 academic coaches selected the students from their own HEI for four case study projects. At the beginning of October 2021, all four projects with four student teams each, one team from each HEI started to work. Totally 64 students took part in four first-round case study projects.

During spring 2022 academic coaches had the feedback meetings of the first-round case studies with company coaches and also with SESS trainers. Some changes to the implementation schedule of the second-round case studies were done, e.g., SESS training workshops will be held more intensively than in the first-round implementation. After that, academic coaches updated the training modules and started to plan the second-round case studies with company coaches, and they had the same steps as during the planning of first-round case studies.

During spring 2022 SESS trainers in each HEI had hybrid meetings and they also met face-to-face with each other, discussed the workshops of the first-round case studies, and planned six new workshops for the second-round case studies projects.

3.3 Analysing the company cases through the ProCESS method

In the ProCESS project, there are carried out a total of 12 complex management case studies during three project rounds. In every round, there is one case study topic from each partner country. The implementation and analysis of the case study projects are the same in every round and in every HEI (WP3). The leader of WP3 is UCLy:

- 1 In each partner country, academic and company coaches create together the case study topic and info material of the case study and send it to suitable student groups at their own and partner HEIs.
- 2 Academic coaches send info on all four case study topics for suitable student groups at their own HEIs.
- 3 Students apply to these case study projects, and the academic coaches of their own HEI choose teams of four students for all four case studies. 64 students participate in every round of the case study projects.
- 4 Four case study projects are carried out simultaneously in four countries.
- 5 Company and academic coaches together organise a kick-off meeting in the home city of the company in which participate the whole own country's student team and one student from the teams of other countries.

- 6 The company and academic coaches supervise, have monthly guidance meetings, and give feedback to student teams.
- 7 SESS trainers organise six workshops for their own country's students. The topics of six SESS training workshops implemented by JAMK's SESS trainers can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Six SESS training workshops at JAMK during the first-round case studies.

<i>Workshop theme</i>	<i>Topic</i>
Workshop 1 - Prelude & Practice	Introduction to Complexity Sonaatti
Workshop 2 - Music	Associative practices, music therapeutic approach
Workshop 3 - Theater	Complexity: What a drama!
Workshop 4 - Contemplative Practices	Upa-Yoga & Meditation
Workshop 5 - Empathy Technique and Music	Dynamics of SES skills
Workshop 6 - Recapitulation, the experiences of the students	Visual Narrative Gallery Grand Finale

- 8 During the project, partners of PerformanSe carry out surveys for students and they also interview students to get their feedback, find out the progress of the students, and create an evaluation report
- 9 The case study projects end for a one-week ProCESS Winter School (WS) where are present all students, academic and company coaches, partners of PerformanSe, the project coordinator, and the project managers from all nine partner organisations.

During the WS, student teams have their final presentations, and academic and company coaches give their final feedback, partners of PerformanSe interview both students, and academic and company coaches for the evaluation report. In the program, there is also an innovative session of SESS trainers, a company presentation by the host country's company, and some cultural programs. At the end of the WS, students get their complex management case study certificates.

The first-round projects were carried out in autumn 2021, the second-round projects are carried out in autumn 2022 and the third-round projects will be carried out in autumn 2023. The first WS was hosted by JAMK in Finland in January 2022, the second one will be hosted by RISEBA in Latvia in January 2023 and the third one by TUCN in Romania in December 2023.

During the ProCESS, there are 12 complex management case study projects in three rounds in which 192 students from four partner HEIs take part, SESS trainers carry out 72 SESS training workshops, and 3 Winter Schools are organised, one at the end of each project round.

Project companies and the topics they offered for the first-round projects can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Companies, countries and topics for the first round of case study projects.

<i>Company</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>The topic for the first round of the case study project</i>
Mediahouse Keski-suomalainen	Finland	To find solutions for challenges related to the overall change in consumer buying behavior and media usage, the impact of the future generations on consumer behavior, and different regulations and policies regarding privacy and targeting.
Sanofi Pasteur SA	France	To improve cooperation among all healthcare professionals to increase flu vaccination coverage.
Latvian Post	Latvia	To find solutions on how to vitalize the company values developed in 2017.
De Klausen Consult	Romania	To search and find the most valuable solutions to increase the efficiency of the company in the digital area.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The ProCESS project aims to develop an original and innovative methodology to deal with complex management cases by using Sensorial, Emotional, and Spiritual (SES) intelligence in addition to rational capacities.

During the three-year implementation of the ProCESS, multilevel and multidisciplinary student teams solve 12 complex management cases proposed by project companies in four different European countries. These real-life cases are the core of the project. Academic and company coaches supervise and give feedback to student teams and SESS trainers carry out six SESS training workshops at each partner HEI in every case study project round.

In the ProCESS, there take part in totally 192 students from four partner HEIs. During the ProcESS, there are organised 72 SESS training workshops. At the end of each three project rounds, one of the HEI partners organises ProCESS Winter School where are present all student teams of the certain round, academic and company coaches, project coordinator, project managers of all partner organisations, and partners from PerformanSe.

It is valuable that during the ProCESS all four companies get four different and creative solutions for their three complex management cases. All companies were impressed and satisfied with the students' solutions to the first-round case studies, and they are waiting for the next two rounds' solutions for their new complex cases.

All other six work packages of ProCESS except WP4 started at the beginning of the project. Now also the activities of Pilot trainings at partner HEIs, partner companies, associate partners and other interested parties work package (WP4) have started, and the first results will be seen in the next six months. RISEBA is the responsible HEI in WP4. The application deadline for the candidates as new SESS trainers was in October 2022. The candidates sent their short motivation letters and CVs to the WP4 leader who interviews the potential candidates online and chooses the most suitable new SESS trainers. The training sessions of chosen new SESS trainers start in November 2022 and will last until the end of February 2023.

Because of COVID-19, almost all meetings of the Steering Committee, work packages, academic and company coaches, and SESS trainers have so far been carried out in a hybrid and by using Teams connection. Despite all restrictions and mostly virtual cooperation, it has been encouraging to see how well both national and international cooperation between HEI and company partners as well as in multilevel and multidisciplinary student teams have worked.

We, HEI and company partners of ProCESS, have already now learned many new and useful issues when we have taken part in creating training modules and planning, implementing and guiding complex management case study projects. We have noticed that it is possible successfully to combine hard and soft skills in solving complex management cases and to achieve valuable results and skills from which students have a lot of benefits in their future studies and careers.

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