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ON THE MOVE

Empowering apprentices
through mobility

Common introduction to Blended Mobility for Apprenticeships

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Abstract: Blended mobility for apprenticeships — combining physical and virtual learning within the workplace-based period — is an emerging yet strategically significant innovation in European Vocational Education and Training (VET). This document presents the conceptual and methodological foundations underpinning the four frameworks developed within the “On the Move” project (No. 101195914), co-funded by the European Union and implemented by a seven-country consortium (Greece, Italy, Spain, Iceland, Denmark, Cyprus, and Bulgaria). Drawing on a rigorous mixed-methods approach — including systematic literature reviews, desk research, semi-structured interviews, and two rounds of focus groups — the document identifies cross-cutting findings on the barriers, enablers, and contextual factors shaping blended apprenticeship mobility across partner countries. It further describes the four resulting frameworks: The Blended Mobility Scheme, the Qualifications for Mobility Coordinators in Intermediary Organisations, the Company Capacity Building, and the Integration of Apprentices in the Host Country through blended activities. Together, these frameworks form an integrated ecosystem designed to guide VET actors in planning, managing, and sustaining high-quality blended mobility experiences for apprentices across Europe.

Keyword List: Blended mobility, Apprenticeships, Vocational Education and Training (VET), International Mobility

Consortium

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Short Name</i>	<i>Country</i>
1.	ACTION SYNERGY SA	ACTION	GREECE
2.	CAMARA OFICIAL DE COMERCIO INDUSTRIA SERVICIOS Y NAVEGACION DE SEVILLA	CCSEV	SPAIN
3.	ASSOCIAZIONE FORMAZIONE PROFESSIONALE DEL PATRONATO SAN VINCENZO	AFP	ITALY
4.	GEOCAMP ICELAND EHF	GEOCAMP	ICELAND
5.	CONSUFÉ	CONSUFÉ	DENMARK
6.	ONE TERRENE INTERNATIONAL GROUP	OTI GROUP	CYPRUS
7.	SDRUZHENIE BULGARSKA TARGOVSKO-PROMISHLENA PALATA	BCCI	BULGARY

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List of Abbreviations

The following table presents the acronyms used in the deliverable in alphabetical order.

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Description</i>
BMA	Blended Mobility for Apprenticeships
BMS	Blended Mobility Schemes Framework
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
EU	European Union
IAH	Integration of Apprentices in the Host Country Framework
IO	Intermediary Organisation
QMC	Qualifications for the Mobility Coordinator Offices in Intermediary Organisations Framework
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Executive Summary

The “**On the Move**” project (Project No. 101195914 – *Building the Capacity of VET Actors to Create and Apply Blended Mobility Schemes*) addresses a key gap in European Vocational Education and Training: the limited availability of structured and quality-assured frameworks for blended apprenticeship mobility. Funded by the European Union and implemented by partners in Greece, Italy, Spain, Iceland, Denmark, Cyprus, and Bulgaria, the project develops practical tools to help VET actors design, coordinate, and implement blended mobility experiences that combine physical mobility with virtual activities linked to the apprentice’s workplace placement.

Context and rationale. Blended mobility is a priority within the European Skills Agenda and the Erasmus+ programme, however blended mobility in apprenticeships remains an emerging practice. Evidence collected across partner countries shows that most existing initiatives are linked to school-based learning rather than workplace training. Administrative complexity, limited language skills, low company readiness, and the lack of practical reference models continue to limit its adoption.

Methodology. The four project frameworks were developed through an iterative research process combining: (1) a two-phase literature review covering national practices and EU policy developments; (2) semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, including mobility coordinators, VET providers, companies, and apprentices, across the seven partner countries; and (3) two rounds of focus groups, first to generate mobility scenarios and then to validate and refine the frameworks. This approach ensured that the frameworks are both evidence-based and adaptable to different national VET contexts.

Key cross-country findings. The research identified several recurring themes. The feasibility of blended mobility varies significantly across vocational sectors, and stakeholders often require a mind-set shift from traditional physical mobility models. Administrative and regulatory complexity—particularly for SMEs—remains a major barrier. Language skills also limit participation. At the same time, strong networks and intermediary organisations are essential facilitators, while structured onboarding and preparation before mobility are critical for success. Although host companies play a central role, they remain among the least engaged actors in mobility initiatives.

The four frameworks. In response, the project developed four complementary frameworks:

1. the Blended Mobility Schemes (BMS) Framework, defining the organisation, monitoring, and quality assurance of blended mobility programmes;
2. the Qualifications for the Mobility Coordinator Offices in Intermediary Organisations (QMC) Framework, specifying the knowledge, skills, competences, and attitudes required for mobility coordinators, aligned with the EQF;
3. the Company Capacity Building (CCB) Framework, identifying the support needed to prepare host companies for participation; and
4. the Integration of Apprentices in the Host Country (IAH) Framework, outlining blended activities before, during, and after mobility to support learning and integration.

Together, these frameworks form a coherent system: the BMS provides the structural model, the QMC and CCB strengthen human and organisational capacities, and the IAH translates the scheme into concrete learner-centred activities. The frameworks have been translated into the seven partner languages and are ready to be applied in real-world VET contexts.

1 Introduction

Blended mobility is defined as a structured combination of face-to-face and virtual learning periods, designed to create a unique and coherent learning experience. Unlike hybrid learning (which takes place simultaneously online and in person), blended learning alternates these components sequentially (e.g., online-face-online), allowing for greater flexibility and accessibility for learners (Kirdulytė et al., 2023).

Blended mobility is a fundamental pillar of the European Skills Agenda and the Erasmus+ mission. It develops learners' employability, adaptability, and intercultural competence, while promoting innovation and social cohesion across regions (European Commission, 2023). Blended mobility facilitates access to these opportunities by addressing the main barriers to apprentice mobility identified by CEDEFOP (2021): the legal and administrative complexity of cross-border contracts, financial constraints for SMEs and learners, and linguistic and cultural barriers. By shortening in-person placements and integrating online training, blended learning formats reduce costs, mitigate risks, and broaden participation, especially for learners with fewer opportunities.

Blended learning mobility also supports the two transitions shaping the future of work. Virtual components reduce the carbon footprint of mobility, while digital collaboration tools strengthen apprentices' digital competence, as promoted by the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 (European Commission, 2020).

The Council Recommendation "Europe on the Move" (13 May 2024) places learning mobility at the heart of Europe's skills strategy, explicitly including apprentices and newer formats such as blended mobility. Its ambition is to make learning mobility a normal feature of education and training at all ages, as a lever for personal development and for meeting green and digital skills needs. It sets enabling conditions (quality, recognition, support) and identifies concrete tools and networks to make this real.

In the context of apprenticeships, blended mobility enables the implementation of learning mobility during work-based periods.

The project **"Building the Capacity of VET Actors to Create and Apply Blended Mobility Schemes"** (*Acronym: On the Move*, Project No. 101195914) is co-funded by the European Union and implemented by a consortium of experts from seven European countries: Greece, Italy, Spain, Iceland, Denmark, Cyprus, and Bulgaria.

The project aims to facilitate the design and implementation of blended mobility schemes that effectively combine physical and virtual mobility, while strengthening the capacity of all relevant actors—including intermediary organisations, VET providers, and companies—to plan, manage, and support these schemes.

In pursuit of this aim, and following extensive consultation with stakeholders, the project is developing four comprehensive frameworks designed to enhance the transparency, quality, and integration of apprenticeship mobility across Europe:

- Qualifications Framework for the Mobility Coordinator Offices in Intermediary Organisations: defining the knowledge, skills, competences, and attitudes required of Mobility Coordinators working within Intermediary Organisations.
- Framework for fostering the integration of apprentices in the host country through blended activities: describing the activities to be implemented before, during, and after the apprenticeship period, combining both online and face-to-face components.
- Blended Mobility Scheme: outlining possible models and procedures for the organisation and monitoring of blended mobility experiences.
- Capacity Building for Blended Mobility Framework: identifying the types of support that can be provided to companies involved in blended mobility.

Collectively, these frameworks constitute a coherent ecosystem—covering organisational readiness, learner integration, and recognition—ensuring that all dimensions of blended mobility are underpinned by structured processes, shared quality principles, and operational guidance.

This document forms part of Work Package 2 (WP2): “Development of Frameworks”, and presents the conceptual and methodological foundations that underpin the design of the four frameworks. The document is organized into six main sections. It begins with an introduction about blended mobility, outlining the project's objectives and scope. The next section defines key concepts and situates the project within the European policy framework. The methodology section details the research process used to develop and refine the frameworks, and the next section describes the key cross-country findings that inform the framework, followed by a section providing an overview of the apprenticeships programs in the seven participating countries. Finally, the document concludes with a description of the four frameworks and their relationship, presenting their structure and interconnections as a comprehensive model for implementing blended mobility in apprenticeships across Europe.

2 BLENDED MOBILITY FOR APPRENTICESHIPS: POLICY ALIGNMENT, STAKEHOLDERS AND KEY TERMS

2.1 Policy alignment

Blended mobility for apprentices (BMA) has become a key mechanism for strengthening European Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems. It directly supports EU goals for employability, inclusion, and digital transformation. BMA is recognized as a vital element of the European skills strategy, fostering essential cooperation among educational institutions, businesses, and intermediary organizations. It represents the necessary evolution of VET, making international experiences more accessible, inclusive, and sustainable for apprentices.

This learning scheme is essential for achieving mobility at scale, contributing directly to the 2030 EU target of having at least 12% of VET learners, including apprentices, experience a period abroad. A robust blended mobility framework must seamlessly integrate digital and physical components, empower SMEs, utilize EU recognition instruments like Europass and Youthpass, and promote green and digital skills as core learning outcomes.

European policy frameworks provide a solid foundation for this approach. The European Framework for Quality and Effective Learning (EFQEA) establishes mobility as a quality indicator, while Erasmus+ promotes practical mechanisms for its implementation through blended intensive programs and other cross-border schemes. The Digital Education Action Plan (2021–2027), the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), and the European Quality Assurance Scheme for VET (EQAVET) contribute to creating a coherent policy environment that links quality assurance, recognition, and innovation. In parallel, initiatives such as the European Alliance for Learning (EAfA) strengthen collaboration between education and industry, reinforcing the role of intermediary organizations.

Recent EU recommendations, in particular “Europe on the Move: Mobility Opportunities for Learning for All” (2024), reaffirm mobility as a right for all learners and advocate for its integration into education systems. The Council Recommendation on VET for Sustainable Competitiveness, Social Equity and Resilience (2020) similarly promotes adaptable and inclusive models that equip students with the green and digital skills required by a constantly changing economy. Research by CEDEFOP, the OECD, and UNESCO-UNEVOC supports these directions, emphasizing that high-quality mobility requires strong intermediary organizations, clear learning outcomes, and robust feedback and quality assurance mechanisms.

In this context, blended mobility is not a temporary solution but a structural innovation in European VET. It ensures that international learning is accessible to all apprentices, strengthens Europe's skills base, and accelerates progress towards a greener, more digital, and cohesive European Education and Training Area. It embodies the EU's commitment to quality, transparency, and equal opportunities for all learners.

The distinguishing feature of BMA, in the context of this project, is that both the physical and online activities are anchored to the work placement in the host company, not to classroom

instruction at the apprentice's home school. Online activities serve purposes directly connected to the workplace experience: familiarising the apprentice with the host organisation and its working environment, delivering job-relevant theoretical or procedural content, fostering communication and trust with the host team before arrival, supporting reflection and progress monitoring during the stay, and consolidating learning outcomes after the physical phase ends.

The approach has many benefits across stakeholders:

- Apprentices: Improved technical, linguistic, and intercultural skills; greater digital literacy; increased employability; greater confidence and autonomy.
- Companies: Access to international talent; exposure to new work practices and innovation; flexible participation through shorter or virtual internships.
- VET Providers: Modernization of curricula; integration of online tools and mobility into regular programs; improved assessment and recognition of learning outcomes.
- Intermediary Organisations: Stronger coordination roles; expansion of international networks; improved guidance and support systems.
- Policy Makers/ Systems: Progress toward inclusion, sustainability, and large-scale mobility; better alignment between training programs and labor market needs.

2.2 Stakeholders' Map

Blended apprenticeship mobility relies on a network of interconnected actors who share responsibility for ensuring the quality, safety, and educational value of each learning experience. These actors operate at the organizational, institutional, and systemic levels, and their collaboration forms the basis for effective capacity building across the entire VET ecosystem.

Organizations' ability to participate in blended mobility depends not only on their internal readiness but also on the clarity of the roles, communication channels, and governance mechanisms that connect them. Each stakeholder (VET providers, host companies and employers, intermediary organizations, mentors and supervisors, and apprentices) contributes specific skills and resources to the mobility process:

- The VET provider acts as the educational hub of the program, ensuring pedagogical quality, consistency of learning outcomes, and recognition of achievements. It is responsible for selecting participants, preparing them for the mobility period, and coordinating with host partners abroad. Each mobility period is governed by a learning agreement, and post-mobility recognition is aligned with national and European qualification frameworks.
- The host company, whether an SME or a larger enterprise, provides the practical learning environment in which apprentices apply and develop their skills. It supports

professional and cultural integration and ensures compliance with health, safety, and insurance requirements.

- The employer, which is often the same as the host company, is legally responsible for the apprentice's contract, remuneration, and social security contributions. When these roles differ, close coordination between the employer and the host company is essential to avoid administrative inconsistencies and ensure continuity of support.
- Intermediary organizations, such as chambers of commerce, regional development agencies, and educational consortia, act as a link between the various stakeholders. They facilitate connections between apprentices and host organizations, organize logistics, and provide ongoing support before, during, and after the mobility period.
- Within companies, the mentor or supervisor acts as the key link between learning and practical experience. Mentors guide apprentices, monitor their progress, and provide constructive feedback to ensure the achievement of learning objectives. In blended mobility, mentors are increasingly adopting digital mentoring practices: holding online meetings, using collaborative tools, and providing remote follow-up.
- Finally, the apprentice is the central actor in the process. Their commitment, motivation, and adaptability are crucial to the success of the mobility experience. The apprentices bring fresh perspectives and innovation to the workplace but require clear guidance, structured communication, and regular feedback, especially during the online phases of blended mobility, to maintain confidence and productivity.

2.3 Key Terms

The following definitions clarify key terms and concepts used throughout this project.

Table 1: Key terms

Apprenticeship	A work-based learning arrangement combining on-the-job training in a company with school-based education at a VET provider, under a structured partnership that leads to a recognised qualification (Council of the European Union, 2018).
Blended Mobility	A mobility format that combines virtual and physical learning experiences into a coherent pathway, enhancing access, inclusion, and digital skills (European Commission, 2021).
Learning outcomes	Statements of what a learner knows, understands, and is able to do, expressed in terms of knowledge, skills, and competences (European Parliament and Council, 2017).

Recognition and Validation	Processes for formally acknowledging and recording learning outcomes achieved during mobility, ensuring transparency and portability (Council of the European Union, 2018).
Host Company	The organisation that receives the apprentice and provides practical training aligned with agreed learning outcomes, ensuring safety and quality conditions (Council of the European Union, 2018).

Employer	The entity holding the apprentice's contract and legal responsibilities, including remuneration and social protection. Often, the employer is also the host company (Council of the European Union, 2018).
Mentor / Supervisor	An experienced professional responsible for guiding, supporting, and assessing the apprentice's performance during the mobility period (Council of the European Union, 2018).
VET Provider / Sending Institution	The institution that ensures pedagogical quality, coordinates learning agreements, and validates results according to national and EU frameworks (Council of the European Union, 2018).
Intermediary Organisation (IO)	A coordinating body that facilitates matching, logistics, and quality assurance among VET providers, companies, and apprentices (Council of the European Union, 2018).
Learning Agreement	A formal document outlining learning outcomes, responsibilities, and assessment criteria for all parties involved in a mobility experience (European Commission, 2021).
Mobility Coordinator	The person responsible for planning, implementing, and monitoring mobility processes, ensuring alignment with institutional and EU requirements (Council of the European Union, 2018).
European Qualifications Framework (EQF)	An eight-level reference tool that supports transparency, comparability, and recognition of qualifications across Europe (European Parliament and Council, 2017).
EQAVET (European Quality Assurance in VET)	A framework providing indicators and a continuous improvement cycle for quality assurance in VET (Council of the European Union, 2009).
Europass / European Digital Credentials	EU tools that enable learners to document and share their qualifications and micro-credentials securely and transparently (European Commission, 2022).

3 METHODOLOGY APPROACH

The methodological approach adopted for developing the four frameworks was designed to ensure both scientific rigor and practical relevance. Given the project's objective of strengthening the capacity of VET stakeholders to design and implement blended mobility programs, it was essential to combine theoretical exploration, empirical validation, and stakeholder engagement. Consequently, the selected methodology integrates various qualitative techniques, enabling a comprehensive and multi-perspective analysis that incorporates policy orientations, institutional practices, and the lived experiences of both learners and training providers.

The process followed for the development of the four frameworks is briefly explained below:

Literature review

The literature review was organized into two distinct phases to ensure comprehensive coverage.

The first phase involved desk research carried out by each partner. This focused on collecting national-level information regarding the practice of blended mobility in vocational training, associated national practices (online learning, online mobility), and any existing institutional or national policies.

The second phase involved a specific literature review led by the task leader for each of the four project frameworks. This review focused on identifying the key concepts related to their specific framework while also providing context on the broader European and international environment.

This literature review provided the theoretical basis for the frameworks and helped identify existing models, quality standards, and best practices in the participating countries.

Semi structured-interviews

The literature review identified key thematic areas for each framework, which served as the basis for designing four semi-structured interviews, one for each framework. Interviews were conducted in all partner organizations with representatives from intermediary bodies, companies, vocational training providers, apprentices, and policymakers. Their objective was to gather the experiences, needs, and perspectives of stakeholders, identify barriers and facilitators for the implementation of blended mobility, and explore emerging trends and effective practices.

Before participating, each interviewee provided informed consent, thus ensuring compliance with research ethics and data protection regulations. To facilitate both the execution and subsequent analysis of these interviews, guides and templates for presenting the results were also created.

Table 2 presents the target group for each interview, as well as the number of interviews conducted by all partners for each framework.

Table 2: Interviews information

Framework	Interviewee Profile	Number of interviews conducted
Qualifications Framework	– Project or mobility coordinators in sectoral associations, or VET consortia. – Staff responsible for liaising with VET providers and employers on mobility placements. – Coordinators with experience in Erasmus+, digital mobility tools.	24
Fostering the integration of apprentices in the host country	– Current, former, or potential apprentices (not general interns) who have participated in, are planning to participate in, or are interested in apprenticeship mobilities abroad.	30
Blended mobility scheme	– Project or mobility coordinators and trainers in VET organizations. – Representatives from companies that host or have hosted apprentices/interns or have taken part in mobility programs for their employees. – Representatives from Intermediary organizations managing the logistics of blended mobility programs.	23
Capacity building of organisations to undertake blended apprentices' mobility	– Companies or organisations that currently host or have hosted apprentices or interns, or that may have an interest in doing so in the future.	23

The interview data were analysed thematically and compared with findings from the literature and desk research to ensure triangulation and validity.

The data obtained from the two previous phases became the input for developing the first version of each of the frameworks.

Focus Groups

The project focus groups were conceived as a two-phase qualitative process combining creative exploration and validation. This approach ensures that the frameworks are innovative and empirically grounded, reflecting the experiences, perspectives, and priorities of key stakeholders involved in blended learning for apprenticeships.

Creative Focus Groups (Phase 1)

The first round of focus groups was designed as a creative and participatory exercise to generate novel and forward-looking scenarios for blended mobility. The main objective of these sessions was to develop practical and innovative models that would serve as a conceptual basis for the Blended Mobility Schemes Framework, while also contributing to the refinement of the other three frameworks. These scenarios provide a benchmark for assessing whether the evolving frameworks adequately reflect the variety of blended mobility configurations identified in different contexts. Consequently, the insights derived from this first round will support the design of more comprehensive, adaptable, and inclusive frameworks.

Each creative focus group brought together 8 to 12 participants representing vocational training providers, intermediary organizations, businesses, and apprentices. This diverse composition allowed for the inclusion of multiple perspectives from different sectors and levels of digital maturity.

The discussions followed a structured five-phase process that combined individual reflection with collaborative scenario building: introduction and contextualization; building a vision for the future of blended mobility; co-creating scenarios; in-depth analysis of selected models; and synthesis of key ideas. The resulting scenarios described possible blended mobility configurations, stakeholder roles, and necessary support structures, providing valuable insights for improving the initial versions of the four frameworks.

All participants provided informed consent, and their contributions were treated confidentially. The results were summarized using a common reporting template, and a thematic analysis was applied to identify common challenges, innovative practices, and strategic enablers. The sessions were moderated by trained facilitators and supported by note-takers or technical coordinators (for online meetings).

Focus Groups for Validation (Phase 2)

A second round of focus groups was conducted to validate and refine the frameworks after integrating the results of the creative phase. The objective of the validation focus groups was to verify the coherence, usability, and applicability of the improved frameworks, identify any remaining gaps, and ensure their suitability to institutional practices and policy priorities. This iterative process ensures that the final versions of the frameworks are evidence-based, user-centred, and contextually relevant across the various VET systems.

Each task leader defined the priority aspects of the framework to be validated, the focus group guidelines, and the format for reporting the focus group results.

Each partner country organized four focus groups for validation, one dedicated to each framework. Each group included participants representing intermediary organizations, vocational training providers, and companies, as well as current and former students, to ensure that students' experiences and perspectives were fully represented. The reports from each focus group were sent by the partners to each task leader for analysis and subsequent modification of the frameworks.

Integration and synthesis

In summary, the literature review, interviews, and two rounds of focus groups form a coherent and iterative process that grounds the development of the frameworks in both theory and practice. The literature review provided the conceptual and policy foundation by identifying key European initiatives, definitions, and quality standards in blended mobility. The desk research provides inputs about the experience of the countries with the blended learning for apprenticeship practices. The semi-structured interviews incorporated the perspectives of the stakeholders involved highlighting operational needs and contextual challenges. Based on these perspectives, the focus groups generated innovative and forward-looking scenarios that guided the initial design of the frameworks, ensuring they reflect diverse contexts and future trends. The validation focus groups evaluated these refined frameworks in practice, verifying their coherence, usability, and alignment with real-world implementation environments. This integrated and sequential approach ensures that the resulting frameworks are evidence-based, inclusive, and ready to be tested in real-world vocational training settings, bridging the gap between design and practical application.

Translation of the frameworks into national languages

Once the final versions of the frameworks were completed, they were translated into English, Italian, Greek, Icelandic, Danish, Spanish, and Bulgarian.

4 KEY CROSS-COUNTRY FINDINGS THAT INFORM THE FRAMEWORKS

The data collected during the development of the four frameworks was initially analysed separately in order to inform each framework individually. However, several cross-cutting themes emerged consistently across different moments where data was collected. These themes provide a broader understanding of the current state of practice regarding apprenticeship mobility and the potential development of blended mobility approaches.

The literature review and desk research confirm that blended mobility for apprenticeships remains an emerging practice. While Erasmus+ programmes have promoted blended mobility in recent years, most existing examples relate to short-term learning activities organised by schools, often involving groups of students and linked to classroom learning objectives. These initiatives are generally not directly connected to the workplace learning component of apprenticeship programmes.

Some countries show more extensive experience with blended learning in educational settings, particularly within schools or training institutions. However, the interviews suggest that very few examples exist where online and physical components are intentionally integrated within the workplace-based period of apprenticeships. As a result, the design of blended mobility models that combine digital interaction and physical workplace learning during apprentices' company placements remains limited.

Across the data reveal several system-level insights are found:

Feasibility of blended mobility across sectors

The feasibility of blended mobility for apprenticeships depends strongly on the nature of the vocational sector. Because stakeholders have limited practical experience with blended mobility, many find it difficult to imagine how such models could function in highly practical or hands-on trades, where learning is strongly tied to physical equipment, workplace routines, and practical tasks. As a result, the blended component is most commonly perceived as potentially useful in preparatory phases, such as on boarding activities before the physical mobility period.

This perception reflects not only the practical requirements of vocational training but also a strong preference for face-to-face learning mobilities within the mobility practices. In several interviews, participants indicated that the value of mobility lies precisely in the experience of being physically present in another workplace and engaging directly with different working practices.

A key factor behind this perception might be the lack of practical examples. Without concrete reference models, stakeholders tended to compare blended mobility with traditional physical mobility. Providing clear examples or scenarios of how digital and physical components can be combined may therefore help stakeholders better understand how blended mobility could function in different sectors and identify realistic opportunities for its implementation.

Need for a mind-set shift

Traditional mobility models based on physical travel are widely perceived as highly beneficial for apprentices. Participants repeatedly emphasized that mobility contributes to the development of both technical competences and transversal skills, including independence, adaptability, and intercultural understanding.

However, imagining how blended mobility could be implemented requires stakeholders to rethink existing assumptions about mobility, learning, and collaboration. Blended mobility implies exploring new forms of interaction, preparation, and knowledge exchange that go beyond the traditional model of physical placement abroad.

Regulatory and administrative complexity

A recurring theme across data is the high administrative and regulatory complexity associated with apprenticeship mobility. Legal requirements, contracts, insurance arrangements, accommodation logistics, visa procedures, and funding regulations make mobility coordination resource-intensive and bureaucratically demanding.

Stakeholders highlighted that navigating these requirements requires significant expertise and time. This complexity can discourage organizations from engaging in mobility initiatives, particularly companies with limited administrative capacity. The challenge is even more pronounced for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which often lack dedicated staff to manage international mobility activities.

Participants also noted that introducing a blended component may further complicate mobility arrangements, particularly when funding schemes or national regulations do not clearly recognise virtual participation as part of the mobility period.

Language skills as a persistent barrier

Language proficiency was consistently identified as a significant obstacle for apprenticeship mobility. Limited language skills may reduce apprentices' confidence in participating in international placements and may also limit companies' willingness to host apprentices from other countries. This challenge was mentioned across several interviews and aligns with findings in the existing literature on mobility participation.

Importance of networking and intermediary actors

Networking emerged as one of the most important enabling factors for mobility. The interviews clearly indicate that mobility rarely happens through the initiative of a single organization. Instead, successful mobility programmes depend on collaboration between VET institutions, companies, and intermediary actors, both at the national and international level.

Many companies do not have the resources, knowledge, or international connections needed to organise mobility independently. As a result, they rely heavily on intermediary organisations

and mobility coordinators to facilitate partnerships, manage administrative procedures, and coordinate placements.

Strengthening networking capacities and collaboration mechanisms may therefore help stakeholders combine complementary strengths and compensate for organisational limitations.

Need for flexible design approaches

Participants repeatedly emphasised that mobility models must remain flexible. Legal frameworks, funding conditions, institutional responsibilities, and organisational capacities vary significantly between countries, sectors, and even regions within the same country. These contextual differences influence who can organise mobility, what activities are allowed, and how mobility periods can be structured.

Clarification of responsibilities

Despite the need for flexibility and networking, the data also highlights the importance of clearly defining responsibilities among stakeholders. Questions regarding who should initiate mobility, coordinate logistics, monitor learning outcomes, and support apprentices were frequently raised during the interviews and focus groups.

Without clear role distribution between VET providers, companies, apprentices and intermediary organisations, mobility initiatives risk becoming fragmented or difficult to sustain.

Importance of on boarding and preparation

Preparation before the mobility period emerged as a key factor influencing mobility success. Participants highlighted the importance of structured on boarding processes, including cultural preparation, language support, clarification of expectations, and introduction to workplace practices.

This preparation was described both as a factor enabling successful mobility experiences and as an area where failures can negatively affect apprentices' experiences. In the context of blended mobility, on boarding activities were often seen as one of the most realistic areas where digital components could be integrated.

Need to engage host organizations more actively

Host organizations were consistently identified as a key stakeholder in apprenticeship mobility, yet they remain among the least engaged actors in mobility initiatives. Participants emphasised the need to increase outreach towards companies, raise awareness of the benefits of mobility, and reduce the administrative burden associated with participation.

Small companies in particular face structural disadvantages, including limited staff capacity and fewer resources to manage international cooperation. Addressing these challenges is therefore essential to increase company participation in both traditional and blended mobility schemes.

5 APPRENTICESHIP ORGANISATION IN THE SEVEN PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

This section provides an overview of the apprenticeship systems in the seven countries participating in the project partnership: Denmark, Iceland, Spain, Italy, Bulgaria, Cyprus, and Greece.

In the seven partner countries, apprenticeship programs share a common structure: they combine theoretical training with practical on-the-job training, are based on formal agreements between apprentices, training centers, and companies, and lead to qualifications recognized within national frameworks. The relevant ministries or authorities, often with the participation of social partners, establish the standards and curricula. Programs typically begin around age 16 and last between two and four years, with a carefully planned, supervised practical component aligned with quality requirements.

The main differences between countries lie in the degree of integration between work and study, governance structures, the apprentice's employment status and remuneration, and the level of support for international mobility. Denmark and Iceland have dual systems, with long periods of on-the-job training alternating with theoretical instruction, and strong involvement of sectoral committees. Danish apprentices work and receive a salary both during their study and work periods, and can undertake up to a year of work experience abroad. In contrast, the Greek model remains more school-focused, with only a final year of work experience, where apprentices receive 70% of the minimum wage. Spain varies by region, offering more dual models or those more focused on school, without a single national regulation on remuneration. Italy has broad sectoral coverage, with programs lasting from 18 to 48 months and salaries starting at approximately 80% of a skilled worker's wage. Dual training in Bulgaria is concentrated in the final two years of secondary vocational education, while Cyprus offers a three-year program combining school and work, where students receive a fixed grant but are not considered employees. Regarding international mobility, Denmark integrates and funds mobility as part of its apprenticeship system, guaranteeing recognition and quality control. Bulgaria, however, lacks a specific mobility policy and relies primarily on short-term Erasmus+ projects. Other countries, such as Spain, Italy, Greece, Cyprus, and Iceland, participate in EU mobility programs to varying degrees, but their structures and funding mechanisms are less developed.

In general, all countries aim to balance formal education with work experience under public supervision; however, differences in dual education, governance, apprenticeship status, and the organization of mobility result in diverse systems. These differences are essential when designing cross-border or blended mobility programs that can function effectively in different national contexts.

6 DESCRIPTION OF THE FOUR FRAMEWORKS AND HOW THEY RELATE

In the "On the Move Project", a framework is understood as a structured, actionable model designed to guide implementation within a specific context. It translates conceptual or theoretical principles into practical guidelines that targeted users can apply directly in their professional practice. Consequently, the users of the framework are those actors who are expected to take concrete action based on its guidance—rather than all stakeholders within the broader ecosystem.

The following tables provide for each framework a brief definition, purpose, primary and secondary users, as well as some use cases.

Table 3: Blended Mobility Schemes (BMS) Framework

Aspect	Short description
Definition	A framework outlining possible models and procedures for the organisation and monitoring of blended mobility experiences. It details the distribution of tasks, quality assurance processes, and feedback and evaluation mechanisms, providing guidance for the effective implementation and continuous improvement of blended mobility schemes.
Purpose	To define the models, process structure, specific roles, responsibilities, quality assurance (QA) procedures and monitoring mechanisms required to run a blended mobility model for apprenticeships.
Users	Primary users: Sending organizations (VET)
	Secondary users: Policy makers and national VET authorities seeking to standardize schemes. Quality assurance and accreditation bodies monitoring mobility initiatives. Researchers studying VET mobility structures.
Use case	Used as a blueprint to build/adjust a national or institutional blended mobility scheme. As a process handbook defining workflows, responsibilities, and quality procedures. As a reference tool to evaluate and improve ongoing mobility projects.

Table 4: Qualifications for the Mobility Coordinator Offices in Intermediary Organisations (QMC) Framework

Aspect	Short description
Definition	A framework defining the knowledge, skills, competences, and attitudes required of Mobility Coordinators in intermediary organisations. It aligns with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) to support professional recognition, transparency, and quality in blended apprenticeship mobility coordination.
Purpose	To define the minimum/common professional profile required to coordinate blended mobility for apprenticeships at a high-quality level, specifying necessary knowledge, skills, competences, and attitudes aligned with the EQF.
Users	Primary users: Intermediary Organisations (IOs) Secondary users: Mobility Offices, Training Managers within VET systems, Training institutions designing courses for mobility coordination professionals, Individual Mobility Coordinators planning their professional development, Certification bodies
Use case	Used for job profiles, recruitment criteria, developing internal training curricula for mobility coordinators, and for validating competence gaps in existing staff.

Table 5: Company Capacity Building for Blended Mobility (CCB) Framework

Aspect	Short description
Definition	A framework identifying the types of support companies need to participate effectively in blended mobility. It defines the key needs to be addressed, the support activities to be offered, and the capacity-building measures required to enhance the engagement and readiness of companies.
Purpose	To define the necessary support mechanisms and content (knowledge, tools, materials, services) to ensure companies are ready and willing to participate effectively in blended mobility.
Users	Primary users: Companies hosting apprentices, HR/managers, tutors, companies, chambers, employer associations. Secondary users: VET Schools seeking company partners, Funding bodies assessing company support needs, Intermediary Organisations providing company support.

Use case	Used to design training, material and support offers for companies — and motivate new companies to join by lowering barriers.
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Table 6: Integration of apprentices in the host country through blended activities (IAH) Framework

6.1 Relationships between the four frameworks

Aspect	Short description
Definition	A framework describing the activities to be implemented before, during, and after the apprenticeship period, combining online and face-to-face components to support effective integration and learning outcomes for apprentices.
Purpose	To guide how to prepare, support and integrate the apprentice <i>before, during, and after</i> the mobility using blended (online + F2F) activities to maximize learning and cultural integration.
Users	Primary users: VET schools, host companies, mobility coordinators, mentors, tutors supporting the apprentice directly. Secondary users: Apprentices themselves (as a self-guidance checklist). Intermediary organisations designing learner support systems.
Use case	Used to design the apprentice journey and support plan for each mobility programme: what to do pre-departure, on site, and after return — with blended activities. To evaluate learner experiences and refine mobility support mechanisms.

The four frameworks form an integrated and interconnected system that supports all stages and dimensions of blended learning mobility. Together, they ensure that each mobility experience is coherently structured, quality-assured, and supported by all key stakeholders

The Blended Mobility Scheme (BMS) Framework is the overall process map. It establishes how the mobility experience is organized, monitored, and quality-assured, providing the structural foundation upon which the other three frameworks operate. The BMS defines the rules of

engagement, outlines responsibilities, and ensures consistency and accountability at all stages of the mobility process.

The Qualifications for Mobility Coordinators (QMC) Framework and the Company Capacity Building (CCB) Framework are the enabling components. They define the essential capabilities of the two main organizational pillars: intermediary organizations and host companies. The BMS can only function effectively when:

- It is managed by a qualified professional with the required skills (defined by the QMC).
- It is implemented in a host environment (the company) that has been adequately prepared and supported (defined by the CCB).

The Integration of Apprentices in the Host Country (IAH) Framework represents the practical implementation of the scheme, detailing the specific activities the apprentices undertake before, during, and after their mobility experience. These activities constitute the tangible outputs of the entire system, carried out by qualified personnel (QMC) in well-supported host companies (CCB) and guided by general standards and processes (BMS).

In summary: The QMC and CCB frameworks ensure that the system has the necessary human and institutional capacities. The IAH framework defines the learning and integration activities that directly benefit learners. The BMS framework unifies all components into a coherent, quality-controlled, and practical system for implementing blended mobility in vocational education and training.

6.2 Recommendations on how to use the frameworks

Each framework addresses different but complementary needs:

- If you are designing or managing mobility programmes, start with the Blended Mobility Scheme Framework (BMS) to define the process, roles, and quality measures.
- If you are an intermediary organization or a mobility office, use the Qualifications Framework (QMC) to recruit, train, and assess mobility coordinators.
- If you are a company or employer looking to host apprentices, consult the Company Capacity Building Framework (CCB) to assess your readiness and access support tools.
- If you are a VET provider, mentor, or tutor directly supporting apprentices, apply the Integration Framework (IAH) to design blended learning activities that enhance readiness, adaptation, and reflection.

For systemic use, project partners or national authorities should apply the four frameworks in sequence or combination, according to their objectives: for example, piloting a blended mobility

Common introduction to Blended Mobility for Apprenticeships program (Framework BMS), training staff accordingly (Framework QMC), preparing companies (Framework CCB) and supporting learners throughout the process (Framework IAH).

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