



Establishing Our International Mini Company

The How-s and the What-s
Questions and Issues

Presentation for our partners in Bulgaria

**DEVELOPING YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS BY RUNNING
A MINI-COMPANY ON A EUROPEAN LEARNING LEVEL**

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The need for a template

We have been provided with the guidelines and the plan for establishing our international mini company and this material is a valuable tool for our students when setting out to accomplish this task.

However, after many discussions with JA and partners, it has become obvious that there has not been any similar endeavor before and while we can be proud to be pioneers in starting the first international mini company ever, we have to be aware that we still do not have the “recipe”, that is a clear picture of how our international mini company will look like and operate.

Remember our goal

In our application form we wrote:

“Two of the most important results of the project, and also two that are likely to **endure even after the project ends, are a virtual partnership of mini-companies, formed of all participating companies, that can be furthered, perpetuated, monitored even after the project has ended.** It is an accumulation of all our best practices (existing knowledge, know-how and activities) and all the exchanges that happened during the project. The second is the “Young Enterpriser in the Virtual Space” Fair, the crowning of the exchanges of best practices carried out throughout the project, and a true milestone and example for all those who wish to implement the concept of mini-company in their schools.”

“Let’s dot our i-s and cross our t-s”

Therefore, what we aim to do is establish an international mini-company that is not only functional but above all, will stand as a MODEL for others.

And so, as a MODEL to be used by others, it should be easy to replicate, it should meet the educational requirements for which it was conceived (acquisition of 21st century skills) in the first place, it should be realistic, simple, sustainable and efficient.

This is something we need to consider at all times in every action we take towards creating our international mini-company.

Questions and Issues – The “Hows” and the “Whats”

1. STRUCTURE

How will the international Mini-Company (let's call it IMC for now) be established?

There are 2 existing proposals. We need to agree on one of them or find a new solution. The structure is crucial and must be agreed upon during the mobility in Bulgaria because it will further determine the next steps in making the IMC operational.

A. Each partner school creates its own mini-company but all will have the same name, logo and object. (Each of these mini-companies shall be registered on the respective JA platforms)

Questions and Issues – The “Hows” and the “Whats”

B. We create a single IMB and each partner school will represent a department of that IMB according to their strong points (e.g. Italy – Production, Belgium – Services, Norway – Transportation, Romania – Marketing).

Questions and issues in case we agree upon A

- How will activities and results be shared, reported, unified?
- How many members should each partner include in their respective mini-company?

Questions and Issues – The “Hows” and the “Whats”

- Communication between students from different countries has been the weak point of our project so far. Students have communicated with each other only during mobilities. Given this, we should consider that communication during the establishing of the IMC could be slow and therefore constitute an issue. Students should be encouraged to communicate more and the most facile channel should be chosen for that.
- It is probably more difficult for each partner school to keep its mini-company running and therefore maintain the unity at international level after the end of the project (or not? – feel free to dispute this)

Questions and Issues – The “Hows” and the “Whats”

Questions and issues in case we agree on the B proposal

- Where shall we register it? (JA, Enterprise without Borders etc.)
- How many students can there be from each country (1 student is out of the question. It does not fall within the scope of the project which is to involve as many students as possible)
- How possible is it to perpetuate this IMB after the end of the project? (The Romanian JA suggested that the same IMB can continue to exist beyond one year provided that the business idea is expanded or innovated. Another possibility is to have the students who actively participated in the running of the IMB become some sort of consultants and offer assistance to those who wish to start a similar enterprise)

Questions and Issues – The “Hows” and the “Whats”

2. TYPE

Real or virtual?

In our app form we wrote that we would create a VIRTUAL partnership. However, we agreed that it should have REAL results. Romania’s experience can be used for the VIRTUAL side of the IMC while for the REAL side, all the other partners can contribute with their experience. After all, the exchange of good practices goes both ways.

3. IDEA

We have decided to hold brainstorming sessions in each school and each such school will then choose their best idea. All these ideas will be put together and a final business idea will be chosen. When organizing these sessions we have asked our students to consider the principles of sustainability and those who participated in Norway at the sustainability workshop shared their experience with their colleagues.

Questions and Issues – The “Hows” and the “Whats”

How do we choose the best business idea?

The structure of the IMB we agree on will significantly determine the criteria of selecting the best business idea. If we establish 5 different min companies, the idea will likely be selected according to the particularities of the market in each country. If we establish one IMC we should agree on one idea that meets the characteristics of the markets in all countries (Is that possible? Doable? Realistic?).

Another possibility is to ask students to chose an existing business idea and add something innovative (E.g. a taxi company offers its customers who are coming from parties or weddings etc. a ride home not only for them but also for their cars).

Questions and Issues – The “Hows” and the “Whats”

4. IMPLEMENTATION

a) Name and logo

How will the students choose the name of the IMC?

Since it is meant to be a model, should this name be relevant, descriptive, illustrative of its purpose or object of activity, or should it just be chosen by students at random?

The logo needs to be created by students, not by teachers or specialists. This is vital if we want them to develop their IT skills.

Questions and Issues – The “Hows” and the “Whats”

b) Running the company and decision-making

How are students going to communicate within the IMC and what is the best channel?

As pointed out, communication between students in-between mobilities has not been a strong point of the project and needs definite improvement. For the IMB, whatever the structure we decide upon, communication is critical. Students need to communicate promptly, especially when they need to decide on a certain aspect relating to the running of the IMC.

Questions and Issues – The “Hows” and the “Whats”

5. TRANSACTIONS

How will students conduct transactions?

A good practice arena for this will be the Fair in Romania. However, we need to agree on and have a clear picture of how transactions will be conducted. Again, this depends largely on the structure we choose for our IMC. In the first scenario, can the 5 different mini companies of each country conduct transactions with one another? (let us not forget they have the same name and object).

A good idea would also be to create a mock crisis situation inside the IMC from which the students could learn what and how to make the best decisions, develop a critical thinking and so on.