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Enhancing the development of Centres of Vocational Excellence in the Danube Region by fostering competence and skill development, business-education cooperation and transnational networking

**4th Meeting of the Danube
Region Platform on CoVEs**

30th September 2025

István Lábodi, project manager

SMF partnership



LP - South Transdanubian
Regional Innovation Agency,
Hungary



PP2 - School Center Škofja Loka,
Slovenia



PP3 - Regional Economic
Development Agency for
Sumadija and Pomoravlje, **Serbia**

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➤ Research –

Comprehensive assessment of Vocational Education and Training enhancement initiatives

- Primary research:

Questionnaires, deep interviews, focus groups within our target groups.

(VET learners, educators, SMEs, large companies, chambers, sectoral agencies, higher education and research organisations and public authorities)

- Secondary research:

Existing reports, databases, EU project repositories compiled on past and current CoVE development initiatives.

➤ Findings –

Specific needs, challenges of our target groups

- **Learners:** clearer individual pathways, real work-based learning, better guidance and exposure to green/digital.
- **Teachers & VET providers:** applied CPD with industry, time/resources to modernise curricula, recognition for short units.
- **SMEs & sector bodies:** a single entry point, light admin to host learners, usable skills intelligence.
- **Public authorities:** durable governance linking VET to development, faster practice -> policy uptake, territorial balance.

➤ Findings –

Cross-cutting gaps and challenges

- Fragmented governance and uneven CoVE maturity; reliance on local champions.
- Skills data not translating into school-level decisions; weak feedback loops.
- WBL skewed to large firms; SME burdens and urban bias.
- Continuing professional development (CPD) often too theoretical; micro-credentials lack clear recognition.
- Inclusion and territorial disparities; out-migration risk from lagging areas.

**Excellence must spread, not just
concentrate.**

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**Thank you for your
attention!**

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István Lábodi, project manager

South Transdanubian Regional Innovation Agency

labodiistvan@ddriu.hu

+36 30 55 64 130

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