

# Press Article

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PEACOC

17/12/2021



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

**Key Action 2 | Call 2**  
**Cooperation for innovation and the**  
**exchange of good practices within the**  
**Strategic Partnerships for vocational**  
**education and training.**

**This project is funded by the European Commission (N. 2020-1-UK01-KA202-079235). The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.**

## PEACOC - PErsonALised e-Business Coaching for Construction SMEs

Construction industry is the largest industry in the global economy, representing 13% of global GDP <sup>1</sup>. Over time, the construction sector has successfully met our requirements in relation to the built environment, such as comfort, safety and economic and environmental sustainability. This evolution has also resulted in an increasing complexity in relation to legislation and regulations and also costs associated with construction works <sup>2</sup>.

While construction-related products and services have significantly evolved to respond to these growing demands, especially in recent decades, business models within the construction industry have remained similar to those in the past. Even with the enormous advances that can be observed due to the more common implementation of BIM technologies, mainly at the project and planning level, the low digitization rate of construction companies continues to be evident and recognized. <sup>3</sup>

As the sector has been sensitive to different economic crisis, it is important to find adaptation and innovation strategies while recovering from social and economic consequences of covid-19 pandemic. For this reason, European Union has presented important financial tools to support public investments and reforms, in order to promote recovery and resilience of European economies for the future<sup>4</sup>. In fact, one of the fundamental pillars of this recovery is digital transition.

As already mentioned, low digitization of the construction sector is widely known. In fact, the culture of "business-as-usual" still prevails in some companies, choosing conventional solutions over innovation. Furthermore, this sector presents great diversity regarding size (small, medium or large companies) and business outcomes (different types of products and services). Companies' size has been recognized as a relevant barrier for achieving this digital transition <sup>5</sup>. While larger companies usually have more technological and human resources (since it can be easier to make these investments), it turns out to be more difficult for small and medium-sized companies (SME's) to take this step into the future. On the other hand, the diversity of products and services means that it is not possible to find a single strategy for the entire sector, as it is necessary to understand each business and its specific needs and challenges.

Thus, it is important to focus on a strategy directed to these companies and to democratize digitalization allowing innovation, qualification of human and technological resources and internationalization. At the same time, this strategy must be focused on people, businesses and their needs.

The goal of the PEACOC project is to design, develop, test, implement and disseminate an innovative e-Business Manager Training Course (BMT) for Construction SMEs based on the needs and specificities of this economic sector. This training methodology will comprise a series of modules, namely:

- Administration;
- Project management;
- Collaboration platforms/CDE;
- Internal/external communication;
- E-commerce;
- E-tendering & E-bidding / E-procurement;
- Supply chain management;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Industries/Capital%20Projects%20and%20Infrastructure/Our%20Insights/The%20next%20normal%20in%20construction/The-next-normal-in-construction.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> European Commission, Strategy for the sustainable competitiveness of the construction sector and its enterprises, (2012). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012DC0433&from=EN>.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325976240\\_Advances\\_in\\_Construction\\_ICT\\_and\\_e-Business](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325976240_Advances_in_Construction_ICT_and_e-Business)

<sup>4</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/industry/smes/PH-SME-Digitalisation-final.pdf>

- Marketing.

PEACOC is co-financed by the Erasmus+ programme from EU and is being co-promoted by CIVIC - Civic Computing Limited (project coordinator), IDEC - Aintek Symvouloi Epicheiriseon Efarmoges Ypsilis Technologias Ekpaidefsi Anonymi Etaireia, Itecons - Instituto de Investigação e Desenvolvimento Tecnológico para a Construção Energia Ambiente e Sustentabilidade, Atermon B.V., CCIS - Gospodarska Zbornica Slovenije and Instalofi Levante S.L. (FyG Consultores).



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