

The Impact of the RepUtAction Project

In recent years, corporate reputation has emerged as a critical factor for the sustainability and competitiveness of small and micro-enterprises. Within increasingly digital and globalised markets, businesses are required not only to deliver quality products and services but also to actively manage their public image, stakeholder relationships, and online presence. The RepUtAction project was developed in response to this need, aiming to support micro-enterprises and start-ups in strengthening their corporate reputation through targeted training and innovative educational tools. At its core, the project sought to empower small businesses by equipping them with practical strategies and competences to enhance credibility, build trust, and improve their market position. Moving beyond a purely theoretical understanding, RepUtAction focused on bridging the gap between business needs and vocational education and training (VET), recognising that reputation management is not only a business function but also a key competence that should be developed through structured learning processes.

A central achievement of the project was the development of a comprehensive knowledge base grounded in empirical research. Through a transnational analysis conducted in Greece, Italy, and Portugal, the project identified significant gaps in awareness, skills, and strategic approaches related to corporate reputation. These findings highlighted that many SMEs lack the necessary tools to effectively manage their digital presence, respond to stakeholder feedback, and integrate reputation into their broader business strategy. This evidence-based approach ensured that subsequent project outputs were directly aligned with real market needs.

Building on this research, the project designed and implemented an innovative training curriculum tailored to SMEs and start-ups. The curriculum promotes a strategic and modern understanding of reputation management, combining elements of digital communication, branding, stakeholder engagement, and corporate social responsibility. By adopting a learner-centred and practice-oriented methodology, it enables participants to apply knowledge in real-world contexts, thereby enhancing both individual competences and organisational capacity.

In addition to the curriculum, the project produced practical resources for VET providers, including training manuals and methodological guidelines. These tools support educators in integrating reputation management into their teaching practices, encouraging more interactive, experiential, and context-based learning approaches. In this way, RepUtAction contributes not only to learner development but also to the professionalisation and upskilling of VET practitioners. Another important outcome of

the project is its contribution to strengthening the connection between education and the labour market. By addressing a clearly identified skills gap, RepUtAction enhances the relevance of VET provision and supports SMEs in adapting to the demands of the digital economy.

Furthermore, the transnational dimension of the project enabled the exchange of knowledge and practices across different European contexts. By comparing experiences and approaches in three countries, RepUtAction fostered a shared understanding of corporate reputation while also allowing for local adaptation. This collaborative approach strengthens the potential for scalability and long-term impact, ensuring that project results remain relevant beyond their initial implementation. In conclusion, the RepUtAction project represents a significant contribution to the modernisation of vocational education and training. By positioning corporate reputation as a key competence and providing practical tools for its development, the project addresses an important gap in SME support and education. Its emphasis on research-based design, innovative pedagogy, and transnational collaboration highlights its added value in promoting sustainable business growth and enhancing the responsiveness of VET systems in the digital age.