

# Intrapreneurship in Microenterprise: The VET Decalogue

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## PROJECT ABSTRACT

GENIE is an innovative project that develops training and tools to ignite intrapreneurship in Micro-, Small- and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Intrapreneurship is at the junction of entrepreneurship, open innovation and forward-looking management models. It has the potential of involving and engaging staff and management in MSMEs to develop new ideas, business and management processes, products and services to sustain MSMEs' innovation, competitiveness, growth.

Therefore, GENIE has the aim to help MSMEs to integrate and deploy intrapreneurship into their everyday work environment by realizing the following project outputs:

1. Setting of the **OER platform** of the GENIE project, which hosts all the training contents, operational tools and the interactive boardgame created to support MSMEs' growth and success through the adoption of intrapreneurship.

For better orientation on the OER platform please view our GENIE OER platform Video Guide: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVOE1FWUsKU>

2. Development of the **innovative GENIE Model of intrapreneurship** in Micro-, Small- and Medium Enterprises. This result outlines mechanisms for MSMEs to implement intrapreneurship involving and engaging staff and management to develop new ideas, business and management processes, products and services - all to sustain MSMEs' innovation, competitiveness, and growth.

3. The **GENIE innovative training and gamification** is the main project outcome. The partners developed a set of innovative training on intrapreneurship. Part of the training is also the GENIE game to test and improve your knowledge about intrapreneurship. The training includes many case studies, examples and lessons learned to make the training as concrete and direct as possible.

A very important part of this project result is the test and validation phase, which is essential to finalise the training and boardgame. During this real-operational environmental testing the GENIE partnership collected feedback from users on content, delivery means, depth and relevance of the modules, user friendliness of the boardgame, functionalities of the OER platform, etc.



4. The **GENIE Adoption Suite** and **GENIE VET Decalogue** is the last piece of the GENIE puzzle that completes the picture for complete adoption and inclusion of the project in the ecosystems of VET and MSMEs across Europe, and full roll-out of the training and boardgame.

All the project results are available online at our OER platform: [www.genieproject.eu](http://www.genieproject.eu)



## INTRODUCTION GENIE DECALOGUE

The GENIE Intrapreneurship VET Decalogue is an operational document that summarizes all the experiences gained and lessons learned during the implementation. It consolidates the wealth of knowledge about the dynamics and importance of intrapreneurship, the active involvement of employees in management processes of a company, from an operational and practical perspective.

With this executive document we want to encourage the stakeholders and representatives of the worlds of VET (at formal, informal, non-formal level), economic development and microenterprises (MSMEs) to push for the model of intrapreneurship and therewith explore the full potential and innovation capacity of MSMEs.

The Decalogue consolidates the “ten guiding principles”, focusing on sustaining replicability and fostering intrapreneurship-friendly business environments from an education and training perspective. That means the document represents the ten most important key recommendations, for further utilization by the project stakeholder in the specific field of interest tackled by the project. It stems from challenges, opportunities and conclusions identified by partners in consolidation of the **innovative GENIE Model of intrapreneurship** as well as during the development and deploying of the **GENIE innovative training and gamification**.

## INTRAPRENEURSHIP IN MICROENTERPRISE VET DECALOGUE

Intrapreneurship is a dynamic and evolving phenomenon that offers immense potential for MSMEs. By adopting these recommendations, companies can embark on a transformative journey and foster innovation and employee empowerment. The path to intrapreneurship is not without challenges, but the benefits far exceed the costs and open the doors to new opportunities and competitive advantage.



## 1. Invest in Capacity Development

To lay the foundation for intrapreneurship, you should invest in empowering your employees with a comprehensive range of skills. This includes technical knowledge, the right attitude and soft skills required for intrapreneurship success.

It is advisable to develop a holistic training ecosystem that covers not only intrapreneurship skills but also mindset development. This includes training programs, online courses, workshops, mentorship programs, continuous learning and access to resources. Ensure that the training ecosystem is accessible to employees from different industries and sectors. To ensure a comprehensive knowledge transfer, MSMEs should organize awareness-raising workshops and seminars so that stakeholders can get in touch with experts and practitioners from different fields.

Intrapreneurship promoters should help employees to develop cross-functional skills that are critical to their role as intrapreneurs. These skills will enable them to step into new roles as innovators, problem solvers and change agents.

Here it is also important to promote entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship as competences itself. The integration of entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship as key competences in the curricula of VET systems can have an enormous added value for societal and entrepreneurial challenges and personal development. Using the EntreComp Framework as a model and supporting its application in different learning environments, courses, workshops and resources to equip individuals with the skills needed for entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship can also be helpful.

It is important to communicate the content of the intrapreneurship approach already to young learners and young adults. For this reason, the GENIE training, the GENIE game and other intrapreneurship initiatives should already be integrated into (vocational) training and academic teaching.

For a holistic approach, it would also be useful to develop a training program or workshops for the CEOs or management level of MSMEs to demonstrate the benefits of intrapreneurship and how they can promote and apply it in their companies.

## 2. Provision of the necessary Resources

MSMEs should ensure that they allocate all necessary resources, including time, budget, human resources, technology, training and mentoring, to successfully realize intrapreneurial initiatives. It is therefore also important that MSMEs have access to funding if they are unable to independently raise the necessary funds.

In order to turn their ideas into reality, intrapreneurs must be provided with the tools required. The promoters of the intrapreneur ecosystem, especially VET provider, should create training materials that are modular in nature, allowing users to select relevant modules based on their industry or domain. Access to the training should be made easy and the training materials should be clear and goal-oriented. Furthermore, facilitators should provide guidelines for customization to adapt the content to the specific needs, challenges, and opportunities of different sectors.

The VET provider and companies should offer training programmes inspired by frameworks like EntreComp and LifeComp, emphasising the acquisition of essential skills for entrepreneurial learning.

It is also important to introduce and invest in digital collaboration tools and technology platforms that facilitate idea sharing and teamwork. These tools can help employees collaborate on intrapreneurial projects regardless of their physical location. These platforms should be scalable, secure, and user-friendly. Ensure that technology supports the dissemination of training materials, resources and tools for collaboration in different areas.

Intrapreneurship should be supported and motivated by top leadership. Next to recourses, managers and business owners should provide guidance to intrapreneurs, highlighting the importance of innovation. Since mentoring is one of the most effective skill development methods, it is advisable to offer mentorship programs and training to develop employees' intrapreneurial skills. Encourage managers to act as mentors and role models for intrapreneurs. Another option is to encourage experienced intrapreneurs to mentor and coach others within and outside the organization. Peer-to-peer learning can be a powerful way to transfer knowledge and expertise.

Furthermore, it is recommendable to promote flexible work cultures that allow employees to allocate time and energy to intrapreneurial projects. This includes accommodating remote work, flexible hours, and project-based assignments.

In order to be able to mobilize this range of resources, it is crucial to convince the owners of MSMEs that it is worth getting their employees excited about the topic of intrapreneurship and qualifying them accordingly. An incentive for MSMEs to implement intrapreneurship activities can be the resulting successful perception of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Intrapreneurship initiatives are evidence of a genuine interest in employee empowerment, career development and talent development.

### 3. Sharing Risk and Responsibility

To foster intrapreneurship, employees must be empowered to make decisions and take responsibility on their own. Intrapreneurs willingly take calculated risks, which can take the pressure off top management. By empowering employees through delegating decision-making authority and to take responsibility for driving innovation and change, leaders can focus on more strategic challenges. A culture of shared risk-taking can lead to remarkable results and will create a supportive environment for intrapreneurial initiatives.

Managers should give employees clear goals and guidelines, but also give them the freedom to make their own decisions and implement their ideas. This fosters a sense of ownership and strengthens entrepreneurial thinking.

In this context it is also very important to accept divergent opinions and critical thinking. Create a culture that welcomes divergent opinions as long as they are based on critical, rational and well-founded arguments. This openness to divergent views fosters a spirit of innovation. Create platforms for constructive discussion and feedback that encourage intrapreneurship. Furthermore, transformational leadership is the critical factor encouraging employees to approach existing procedures differently, critically, and innovatively.

Intrapreneurship facilitators should encourage business leaders to adopt a more participatory and inclusive management style. Emphasize the importance of involving employees in decision-making processes. Risk-Taking is part of the game. MSMEs should acknowledge that not all intrapreneurial endeavours will succeed. They have to be prepared to accept failure as a learning experience and not as a setback.

#### 4. Encourage Intrapreneurship for Creativity and Innovation

Intrapreneurs are the catalysts that drive innovation from the inside out. An intrapreneurship-friendly environment encourages employees to come up with new ideas and find innovative solutions. Companies should foster innovation culture by making room for experimentation and mistakes. Employees should be encouraged to try new approaches and learn from mistakes. This requires a tolerant attitude toward risk and a culture of learning and continuous improvement. In this context it is important too, to promote a culture of employee engagement where employees are encouraged to voice their ideas and take an active role in decision-making processes.

MSMEs should provide platforms where employees can present their innovative solutions and collaborate on entrepreneurial projects. The promotion of cross-functional teams and brainstorming sessions will foster innovative problem-solving. Building a culture of innovation is the key to maintaining competitiveness.

Intrapreneurs implement new methods in organizations by using opportunistic tactics and leveraging small changes to inspire larger changes throughout the organization. For this reason, MSMEs should anchor initiative, creativity and entrepreneurial thinking in the organizational culture and among employees, regardless of their professional status.

In addition, intrapreneurship promoters should create an innovation-friendly ecosystem by establishing a regulatory environment that encourages innovation in all sectors, by recognizing the importance of open innovation in the corporate world and setting up support structures to facilitate its implementation, and by optimizing administrative processes to better support innovators, especially in MSMEs.



## 5. Foster Cross-Functional Collaboration

Characteristics of a successful intrapreneur include creativity and a comprehensive understanding of the internal and external environment, vision and flexibility, fostering teamwork and using a multidisciplinary approach, encouraging open discussion, building a coalition of supporters, and demonstrating perseverance.

The management level of MSMEs has to recognise that the employees are experts in their domains. Intrapreneurs can provide valuable insights and ideas related to their areas of expertise. They should be encouraged to leverage their knowledge to identify opportunities for business growth, development, and diversification. In order to be able to implement all the necessary aspects for innovative ideas, intrapreneurship facilitators should encourage cross-functional teams and collaboration across different departments or teams to bring diverse perspectives and expertise to intrapreneurial projects.

Therefore, the creation of an open communication culture is critical to encouraging employees to actively participate in management processes. Managers should organize regular feedback sessions, team meetings and open discussion forums to gather ideas and suggestions from employees. It is important that employees feel that their opinions and ideas are valued and that they can contribute to the success of the company. This approach stimulates the flow of diverse ideas and perspectives.

Employees should also be encouraged to think proactively. Those who are proactive tend to be self-motivated, focused, self-confident and forward-thinking in terms of successful teamwork.

## 6. Creating Incentives and Rewards

Determining factors for entrepreneurial behaviour are previous experience, certain skills, the perception of one's own abilities, personal knowledge, the relationship to the organization, motivation, satisfaction and intention. In addition, companies should create incentives and rewards for intrapreneurial action in order to involve employees in management processes. This can be in the form of financial incentives, profit-sharing, recognition, awards, career development possibilities, time to drive innovation or the opportunity to participate in special projects. By creating incentives, employees feel motivated to actively participate in management processes and drive innovative ideas forward.

MSMEs should establish recognition programs by defining clear and specific objectives and possible rewards for intrapreneurial initiatives. They have to clearly communicate what the organization aims to achieve through intrapreneurship and link these goals to the overall business strategy. They also have to ensure that recognition and rewards align with the values and goals of the specific sectors of the organisation.

## 7. Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation

Intrapreneurship thrives when there are open channels for communication and shared insights. MSMEs should create a culture of continuous improvement in which all employees are encouraged to identify areas for improvement and contribute to innovation initiatives. Therefore, the implementation of cross-functional and cross-hierarchical feedback systems that promote mutual commitment and value proposition is crucial. Intrapreneurship promoters should introduce regular assessments and feedback mechanisms to measure the success of intrapreneurship-friendly initiatives and make adjustments as needed.

In order to gauge the effectiveness of Intrapreneurship practices in different sectors, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and evaluation mechanisms should be defined. In this way, the impact and replicability of intrapreneurship initiatives can be assessed. A regular review of progress and the necessary adjustments is required in this context.

Furthermore, it is advisable to establish feedback mechanisms that allow intrapreneurs to receive input from colleagues, customers, and mentors. This feedback loop can help refine and improve intrapreneurial projects.

## 8. Leverage Cross-Industry Knowledge Exchange

The ecosystem of intrapreneurship facilitators should cultivate an environment that promotes productive and effective business relationships, both internally and externally. These relationships are vital for sourcing ideas, know-how, technologies, collaboration, and partnership opportunities. Enable employees to engage in meaningful connections that drive innovation.

For a holistic innovation approach, it may make sense to involve stakeholders such as citizens, users, investors, companies and trade associations more actively and to a greater extent. This requires the creation of structured mechanisms for collecting input and feedback from different stakeholders. Collaborative initiatives that bridge the gap between research, industry and society should also be promoted to maximize the use of the European knowledge base and drive innovation.

To strengthen the cross-sector collaboration it is important to encourage partnerships and collaborations between organizations from different sectors by, for example, creating forums for sharing experiences, challenges, and successful strategies. It is also advisable to establish cross-sector working groups to explore commonalities and adapt intrapreneurship concepts to the specificities of different sectors as well as to encourage industry associations to organise cross-sectoral events and conferences that promote knowledge exchange and the adoption of successful intrapreneurial practices.

However, it should be recognized that while the principles of intrapreneurship are universal, their implementation may require adaptation to the context of particular sectors. Therefore, support mechanisms may need to be tailored to the specific requirements and challenges of individual industries or sectors. This can be addressed, for example, by offering specific mentoring programs, access to industry-specific networks and resources.

## 9. Promotion and Recognition of Case Studies, Best Practices, Strategies and Opportunities

In order to disseminate intrapreneurship and ensure an exchange of experience, it is also important to learn from practical examples and to record and disseminate own experiences.

Thus, MSMEs should compile a pool of case studies, best practices, strategies and detailed implementation guidelines related to intrapreneurship. This will include real-life examples of how intrapreneurship principles have been applied in different sectors. MSMEs should use best practices to successfully integrate intrapreneurship into their business.

MSMEs which are already successfully implementing intrapreneurship initiatives, should document their own experiences, success stories and practical examples to inspire and guide other organizations in implementing similar initiatives. This also includes communicating the added value when a company follows the principles of intrapreneurship.

It is also advisable that intrapreneurship facilitators promote the establishment of a knowledge sharing platform or networks for MSMEs to share their experiences and insights related to intrapreneurship. This could include seminars, webinars, workshops or online communities where best practices are discussed.

## 10. Policy Lobby Work

Intrapreneurship promoters must make greater use of multipliers who have a good connection and access to the target group of MSMEs, as well as their employees and owners. For this reason, targeting and informing professional associations, employers' associations, trade unions and other organizations about intrapreneurship and its importance for business success and employee satisfaction is essential.

They should also advocate political measures at regional or national level that support and incentivize intrapreneurship in MSMEs. This includes:

- Promoting the inclusion of intrapreneurship training and support in vocational training and business development programs
- Advocating for legal frameworks that support and facilitate intrapreneurship in organizations
- Directly address and collaborate with policy makers, business associations and industry stakeholders to simplify regulatory processes related to innovation
- Promote measures that reduce bureaucratic barriers to entrepreneurial initiatives