From practice-oriented trainings to employable IT experts

In the preparatory research phase (January-May 2018) of this ESF project, we want to explore the possible solutions for the substantial lack of qualified IT profiles given that many IT jobs have become structural shortage occupations. This shortage threatens the growth of the ICT sector in Belgium.

The reason for this challenge is twofold:

- The number of IT graduates is too limited

- The existing training offer is insufficient. The available trainings

• only reach a limited target group

• provide insufficient practical knowledge and lack a component of work-based learning to enhance the employability of the graduates

• are quickly out of date given the rapid technological innovations in ICT

The project's objective is to increase the degree of innovation in ICT trainings and to enhance the employment rate in the ICT sector **through innovative and applied (in the form of dual and digital) learning programmes**. These trainings will differ from the already existing offer due to their **innovative factor and the flexibility to respond quickly to the needs and innovations of the IT market**. The integration and full-fledged development of **dual learning** in these programs seems crucial. How this can be done exactly and with which relevant national and international stakeholders will be further explored during the preparatory phase of this project.

The exact needs and opportunities of the following potential target groups will be identified in consultation with partners in Belgium and abroad:

• young adults for whom the existing training offer is inadequate

• women to whom IT jobs generally still seem unattractive, but who can be the best candidates, e.g. for jobs that do not merely require technical skills

• (newly arrived) migrants who already have acquired competences in IT or would like to start a practice-oriented IT course even before they speak Dutch perfectly

IT companies will also be questioned to assess their needs in view of a more practice-oriented and relevant training and a better employability of IT graduates who dispose of practical knowledge of new IT technologies based on the rapidly changing IT market.

We want to combine the expertise and experiences of partners on a national and international level with the aim to:

• develop innovative ICT trainings with a substantial component of dual learning

• increase the number of well-trained employable IT graduates who can get hired immediately for bottleneck jobs

• establish new partnerships between ICT learning companies, training centres and schools