



Project number: 101087579

# Memorandum of Understanding

Edited and coordinated by:



September 2024

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## 1. Acknowledgements and Disclaimer

The Memorandum of Understanding and its appended Annexes have been approved by the NEARVET Erasmus+ Consortium, under the coordination and facilitation of MetropolisNet EEIG.

The NEARVET consortium comprises the following organisations:

Metropolisnet EEIG (Germany)  
Dimitra Education and Consulting (Greece)  
Fachhochschule des Mittelstandes GMBH, University of Applied Science (Germany)  
Association of Thessalian Enterprises and Industries (Greece)  
M.M.C Management Centre Ltd (Cyprus)  
Cyprus Hotel Association (Cyprus)  
Folkuniversitetet (Sweden)  
Cámara Oficial de Comercio, Industria y Servicios de Zaragoza (Spain)  
Centre for Research and European Studies (Italy)  
CIOFS Formazione Professionale (Italy)  
Assolombarda (Italy)  
Rinova Málaga Sociedad Limitada (Spain)



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## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

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### 1. Introduction and Background

The NEARVET (Network of Excellence for Applied Research in vocational education and training) project aims at addressing challenges in vocational education and training by fostering applied research, innovation, and collaboration with companies, professional associations, research organisations to modernise its approaches and offer, and to stimulate continuous exchange and cooperation.

The NEARVET project (<https://nearvet.projectlibrary.eu/>) focuses on fostering the capacities and interaction among those actors in charge and able to systematically introduce and stimulate applied research in the VET contexts. It originates from the attempt to answer two founding questions: if Applied research is critical in VET, and to VET innovation, who are the applied researchers? What are their needs in terms of knowledge, capacities, methods and tools to play this critical role effectively?

Our vision is that Applied Research in VET, fostering high-level innovation in vocational education and training (VET) across Europe - happens in many different ways and contexts; it is implemented and driven by all VET actors – i.e. VET teachers, VET managers, employers and businesses, trade association and others acting as organisers and intermediaries; VET (including higher VET) students; researchers and that it does not occur in a vacuum, but rather in a diverse and interconnected environment where relations, interactions, cooperation and co-creation are possible and feasible<sup>1</sup>.

We focus on strengthening ties between VET providers, SMEs, and the academic community to enhance the relevance and quality of VET. Through transnational cooperation and a Community of Practice approach, NEARVET seeks to create a European community of applied researchers in VET, promoting digital transformation,

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<sup>1</sup> We deliberately adopted this perspective, conscious of the many different approaches to Applied Research across Europe, different governance settings, stakeholders and interests involved and driving Applied Research experiences. The methodological framework of NEARVET sets the specific baseline, perspective and conclusions adopted in this context. It can be consulted at <https://nearvet.projectlibrary.eu/#outputs>.

innovative teaching, and closer connections between education and the labour market<sup>2</sup>.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) serves as a common agreement to establish key areas of progress and cooperation that will extend beyond the project's duration.

It outlines the mutual understanding and agreement of the undersigning parties to continue supporting and expanding the NEARVET network and its outcomes. This includes sustaining the network's impact, promoting its achievements, and leveraging the project's results for ongoing development in the VET sector.

Informed by the project's experiences, outcomes and achievements, the MoU is initially signed by the participating partners, with the aim of expanding membership to include organizations from VET, business, research, and academia interested in advancing and building upon these experiences and outcomes in the future.

Signatory partner organisations:

Short name	Legal name	Country	Type of organisation
<b>MetropolisNet EEIG</b>	METROPOLISNET- EUROPEAN METROPOLIS EMPLOYMENT NETWORK EWIV	Germany	European network
<b>Dimitra</b>	DIMITRA EDUCATION & CONSULTING	Greece	VET provider
<b>FHM</b>	FACHHOCHSCHULE DES MITTELSTANDS (FHM)	Germany	Applied Research University
<b>STHEV</b>	Association of Thessalian enterprises	Greece	Employers and business association
<b>MMC</b>	M.M.C MANAGEMENT CENTER	Cyprus	VET and services provider
<b>Cyprus Hotel Association</b>	CHA	Cyprus	Employers and business association

<sup>2</sup> NEARVET has published a Blueprint, operationalizing the Methodological concept (available at <https://nearvet.projectlibrary.eu/#outputs>), and a Digital Hub comprising three interconnected spaces and tools to operationally progress its intentions. It is composed of a Digital Community of Practice,

<b>FU-UPPSALA</b>	STIFTELSEN KURSVERKSAMHETEN VID UAUNIVERSITET	Sweden	Adult education and VET association
<b>CRES-FB</b>	<i>CENTRO RICERCHE E STUDI EUROPEI - FUTURE BUSINESS</i>	Italy	European network
<b>Ciofs-FP</b>	<i>FONDAZIONE C.I.O.F.S. - F.P. ETS</i>	Italy	National VET association and provider
<b>Assolombarda</b>	<i>ASSOCIAZIONE INDUSTRIALE LOMBARDA DEI TERRITORI DI MILANO LODI MONZA E BRIANZA PAVIA</i>	Italy	Employers and business association
<b>Rinova Málaga</b>	<i>RINOVA MALAGA SL</i>	Spain	Learning and development company
<b>CCIZ</b>	<i>CAMARA OFICIAL DE COMERCIO E INDUSTRIA DE ZARAGOZA</i>	Spain	Employers and business association

## 2. Objective

The Memorandum of Understanding aims to strengthen the cooperation established during the NEARVET project by enhancing the capacities of VET actors and stakeholders to integrate applied research competencies, networks, and initiatives into their daily operations. It defines the areas of common interest that the parties wish to continue exploring and advancing beyond the project's end, ensuring the sustained impact of NEARVET's achievements.

The MoU formalizes the mutual understanding of the parties regarding their interest in and support for building upon the experience, achievements and outcomes of NEARVET. Notably, by doing so, this MoU establishes a framework that can build upon NEARVET with regards to enabling the growth of applied research in VET and fostering ongoing innovation in vocational education and training across Europe.

### **3. Strategies**

Our mission was to develop a first step with reference to supporting the evolution of Applied Research in VET across Europe according to our NEARVET concept.

A Community of Practice was initiated amongst the NEARVET participations and a digital environment developed to provide resources and opportunities to support Applied Research in VET.

Therefore we, the Network of Excellence for Applied Research in Vocational Education and Training, pursue the following strategic aims:

#### **Sustaining and developing the NEARVET Network Concept**

- To ensure the continued operation and enhancement of the NEARVET network concept
- To promote the network's activities, outcomes, and benefits at national and EU levels that are consistent with our vision of applied research in VET.

Therefore we, the Network of Excellence for Applied Research in Vocational Education and Training, pursue the following strategic aims:

#### **Sustaining and developing the NEARVET concept**

- To ensure the continued operation and enhancement of the NEARVET concept.
- To promote the activities, outcomes, and benefits at national and EU levels.

#### **Mainstreaming Applied Research Collaboration**

- To Continue fostering collaboration in Applied Research between VET providers, private sector entities, and public institutions.
- To detect relevant innovative initiatives, knowledge and cases already happening in the European VET landscape in Applied research as specified in NEARVET and connect these with our engaged communities.

#### **Enriching NEARVET Communities of Practice**

- To Maintain and expand the NEARVET communities of practice by engaging new stakeholders and enhancing network reach and involvement.
- To Utilize the network's findings to address competence needs and develop effective applied research cases.

#### **Maximizing Utilization of Project Results**

- To Ensure the effective dissemination and application of NEARVET's results to maximize their impact.
- To Facilitate open access to resources and results to support ongoing research and development in VET.

#### **Policy Dialogue and Integration**

- To Engage in policy dialogue to integrate NEARVET recommendations into national and EU VET policies.
- To Advocate for the prioritization of research and innovation in VET within EU programs and policies.

#### **4. Actions**

The main actions are focussing on nurturing and expanding the NEARVET network on clear and focused objective and to assure the continued relevance and sustainability of the NEARVET results and outcomes, including through their maintenance and promotion within the European wider VET community.

The MoU focuses on the following achievements:

##### **NEARVET Online Hub**

The undersigning parties agree to maintain, develop and promote the hub with its main element – the online e-learning resources (MOOC) – beyond the project's duration. It is the space where the digital applied research community in Europe can connect and applied researchers in VET can gain the competences to drive applied research in their working context.

##### **NEARVET Open Applied Research Resources Space**

The undersigning parties agree to maintain and update the Open Applied Research Resources Space. The ongoing addition of sources, the encouragement of networking and promotion of (European) interconnection of users strengthens the relevance of the hub and its range. To this extent, it is being open to submissions from the new members of the NEARVET MoU.

##### **NEARVET Communities of Practice**

The undersigning parties agree to actively promote, use and refer to the communities of practice established in the project. The CoPs can be enlarged and can communicate through the NEARVET hub and are open for new members. The CoPs expertise shall be sustained through engagement in future action related to applied research in VET, may it be on local, national or European level.

The engagements described above are undertaken by the partnership for the years 2025 to 2027. An annual partnership review is planned within the Annual meeting planned.

#### **5. Future Collaboration**

We resolve with reference to the established cooperation in the transnational and local Communities of Practice to create channels for regular feedback and communication between the undersigning parties.

Specifically, the collaboration shall be realized through:

**Annual Meeting** in form of a moderated online meeting to identify common challenges, share evolved experiences and explore new synergies.

**Bi-annual Updates** on the activities related to the NEARVET network and its outcomes. These can be shared in various forms, including news release on the NEARVET hub and on the organisations' homepages; participation in external events as NEARVET network; annual collaborative short reports to assess the network's impact, utilization of project results, and ongoing activities. This can be both, an internal activity and a published news.

## **6. Roles of Members and Stakeholders**

With reference to the objective and purpose defined above, the initiators of this Memorandum encourage and seek to engage:

**VET Providers** with the aim to

- Continue participating in the NEARVET network and contribute to its activities and research initiatives.
- Integrate and apply research findings into educational practices and share insights with the network.

**Private Sector Entities** with the aim to

- Support the network's ongoing activities and collaborate on implementing research outcomes in industry practices.
- Provide practical insights and feedback to enhance the network's effectiveness and sustainability.

**Public Institutions** with the aim to

- Facilitate support and resources for the continued operation and promotion of the NEARVET network.
- Promote the network's objectives and outcomes within public policy frameworks and encourage policy integration.

**Research Centres** with the aim to

- Contribute to the ongoing research and development efforts of the NEARVET network.
- Assist in validating and improving the network's outcomes through feedback and continuous evaluation.

**further stakeholders** who are willing to

- Engage with the NEARVET network and support its post-project activities and initiatives.
- Promote the network's results and contributions within their respective areas of influence.



## 7. Membership

Any European organization from the VET sector, professional associations, enterprises, and others may join the NEARVET MoU, through a support letter undersigned by an authorized representative, subject to approval by a simple majority of the founding members.

Entities and individuals that undersign the MoU and commit to the values and objectives of the NEARVET project will gain access to the extensive resources and materials developed by the consortium.

New members commit to promoting NEARVET's research outcomes, learning opportunities, and Communities of Practice.

The NEARVET consortium will offer tailored guidance and support, helping these organizations navigate and leverage the project's wealth of applied research, tools, and best practices. This approach ensures that the knowledge and innovations generated through NEARVET can be effectively utilized and further developed by a broader community of stakeholders.

## Signatures

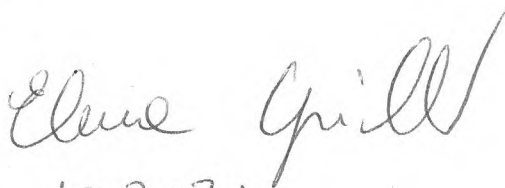
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### For MetropolisNet EEIG:

Name: Elena Grilli

Title: Director

Signature:



Date:

30.10.2024



Kronenstraße 6, 10117 Berlin  
phone +49 (0) 30 - 28409-0  
fax +49 (0) 30 - 28409-210  
email: info@metropolisnet.eu  
Internet: www.metropolisnet.eu

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**For DIMITRA EDUCATION & CONSULTING:**

Name: George Petrou

Title: Executive Director

Signature:

Date: 18/11/2024



170, Farsalon str  
GR 413 35, Larissa  
VAT EL 099423648  
Tel.: +30 2410 554026  
Reg. No: 26615540000

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Signatures

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**For Fachhochschule des Mittelstands (FHM)**

Name: Anne Dreier

Title: Prof. Dr.

Signature:

Date: 04.11.2024



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**For Association of Thessalian Enterprises and Industries:**

Name: Georgios Roupakias

Title: President

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'GR', written in a cursive style.

Date: 19/11/2024

undersigned by an authorized representative, subject to approval by a simple majority of the founding members.

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Signatures

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**For MMC MEDITERRANEAN MANAGEMENT CENTRE LTD**

Name: Efrosyni Savva

Title: EU Project Officer

Signature: 

Date: 01/11/2024

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**For MMC MEDITERRANEAN MANAGEMENT CENTRE LTD**

Name: Christiana Knais

Title: Managing Director

Signature: 

Date: 01/11/2024

**M.M.C Management  
Center Limited**

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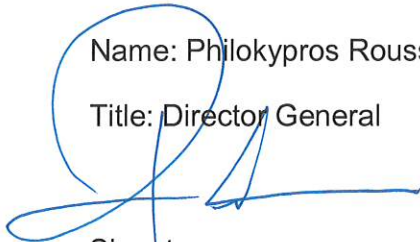
Signatures

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**For CYPRUS HOTEL ASSOCIATION:**

Name: Philokypros Roussounides

Title: Director General



Signature:

Date: 8/11/2024



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#### Signatures

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For STIFTELSEN KURSVERKSAMHETEN VID UUNIVERSITET

Name: Ali Rashidi

Title: Director of International Cooperation Department

Signature:

Date: 11.11.2024

  **Folkuniversitetet**  
Kursverksamheten vid Uppsala universitet  
Bergsbrunnagatan 1  
753 23 Uppsala  
Tel: 018-68 00 00



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For [Centro di Ricerche e Studi Europei - Future Business]

Name: Mario Spatafora

Title: President



Signature:

Date: Rome, 4/11/2024

**CRESfb**  
Centre for Research and European Studies Future Business



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**For Fondazione CIOFS-FP ETS:**

Name: Manuela Annunziata Robazza

Title: President

Signature:

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024



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### Signatures

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#### For ASSOLOMBARDA:

Name: Alessandro Scarabelli

Title: General Director

Signature: 

Date: November 6, 2024

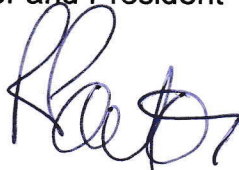
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**For RINOVA MALAGA S.L.**

Name: Richard Parkes

Title: Director and President

Signature:



Date: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024

**RINOVA** Málaga  
Calle Corregidor Ruiz De Pereda 8  
Planta 3, Puerta 14  
29006, Málaga  
NIF: B06969331  
t +34 640857479  
e info@rinova.es

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## Signatures

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**For CAMARA OFICIAL DE COMERCIO E INDUSTRIA DE ZARAGOZA:**

Name: Mr. José Miguel Sánchez Muñoz

Title: Secretary General

Signature:



Date: 04/11/2024



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