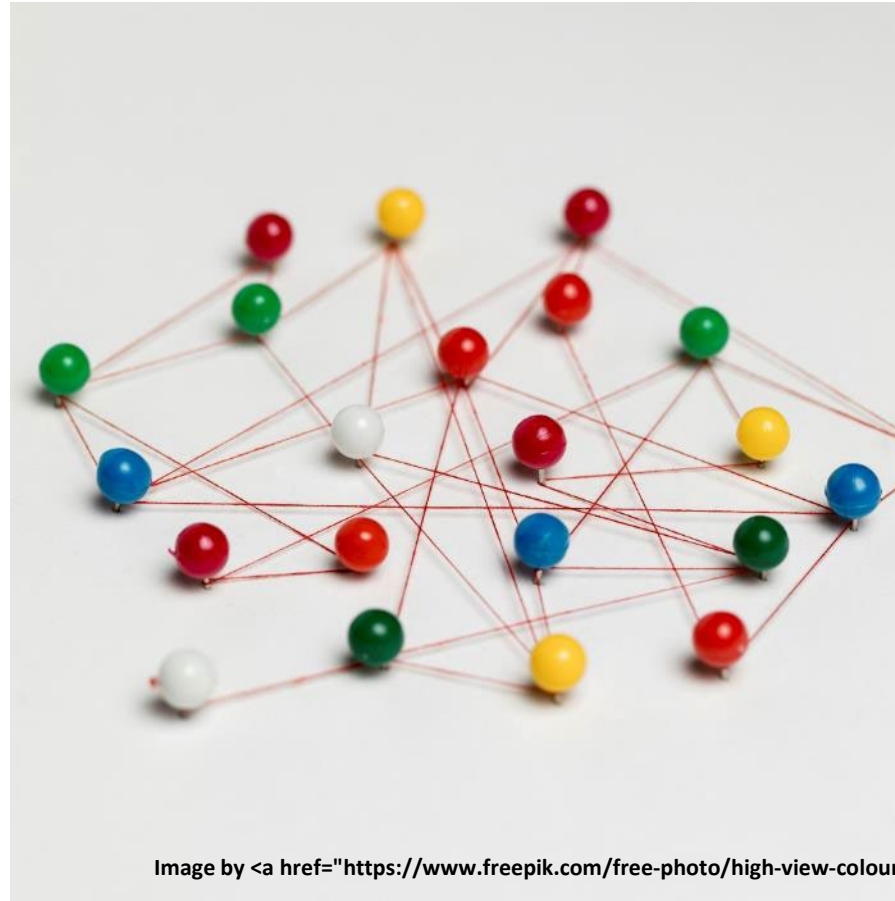


The essence of CoVE – Building Skills Ecosystems & Developing a methodology for implementing a Skills Ecosystem tailored to their assigned region

8.12.2025
Helsinki
Jouni Hytönen



What are Skills Ecosystems?

- Building a skills ecosystem is an ongoing process that requires commitment, collaboration, and adaptation.
- It's about creating an environment where individuals can acquire the skills they need to succeed while contributing to the growth of industries and the overall economy.



How do COVE's work?

- By bringing together a wide range of partners, such as providers of vocational education and training, universities of applied sciences, employers, research centres, development agencies, and employment services (among others), that share a common interest in:
 - Specific sectors or industrial ecosystems
 - Innovative approaches to tackle economic and societal challenges
 - Innovative approaches to increase the outreach, quality and effectiveness of existing CoVEs.

How do COVE's work?

- The Platforms for Centres of Vocational Excellence initiative introduces a European dimension to vocational excellence by supporting the development of Centres of Vocational Excellence, operating at two levels:
 - National: Establishing Centres of Vocational Excellence (hubs) that bring together a wide range of partners contributing to create skills ecosystems responding to local needs
 - International: Through international collaborative networks bringing together Centres of Vocational Excellence that share a common interest in developing skills ecosystems



Why we need Skills Ecosystems?

- Addressing Skill Gaps
- Promoting Lifelong Learning
- Talent Attraction and Retention
- Enhancing Employability
- Fostering Innovation
- Reducing Inequality
- Adapting to Technological Disruption
- Supporting Economic Growth
- Global Competitiveness



COVE-Skills Ecosystem

Centres of Vocational Excellence
Fostering local "Skills ecosystems"



Bringing together:

- *Policy makers*
- *Companies*
- *Chambers*
- *VET institutions*
- *Universities of applied science*
- *Research centres*
- *Employment services/agencies*
- *Regional development agencies*
- *Professional or sector associations*



COVE-Skills Ecosystem

VET pro-active in the
"Knowledge triangle"



Steps for building The Skills Ecosystem

1. Assessment and Mapping:

- Identify the skills gaps and needs in various industries and sectors.
- Conduct surveys, data analysis, and consultations to understand current and future skill requirements.
- Map out existing educational and training programs to identify strengths and weaknesses.



Steps for building the Skills Ecosystem

2. Stakeholder Collaboration:

- Bring together government agencies, educational institutions, industry associations, businesses, and community organizations.
- Foster a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility for skills development.

3. Strategic Planning:

- Develop a comprehensive skills development strategy that outlines goals, objectives, and action plans.
- Set targets for upskilling and reskilling, focusing on both current and emerging skills.



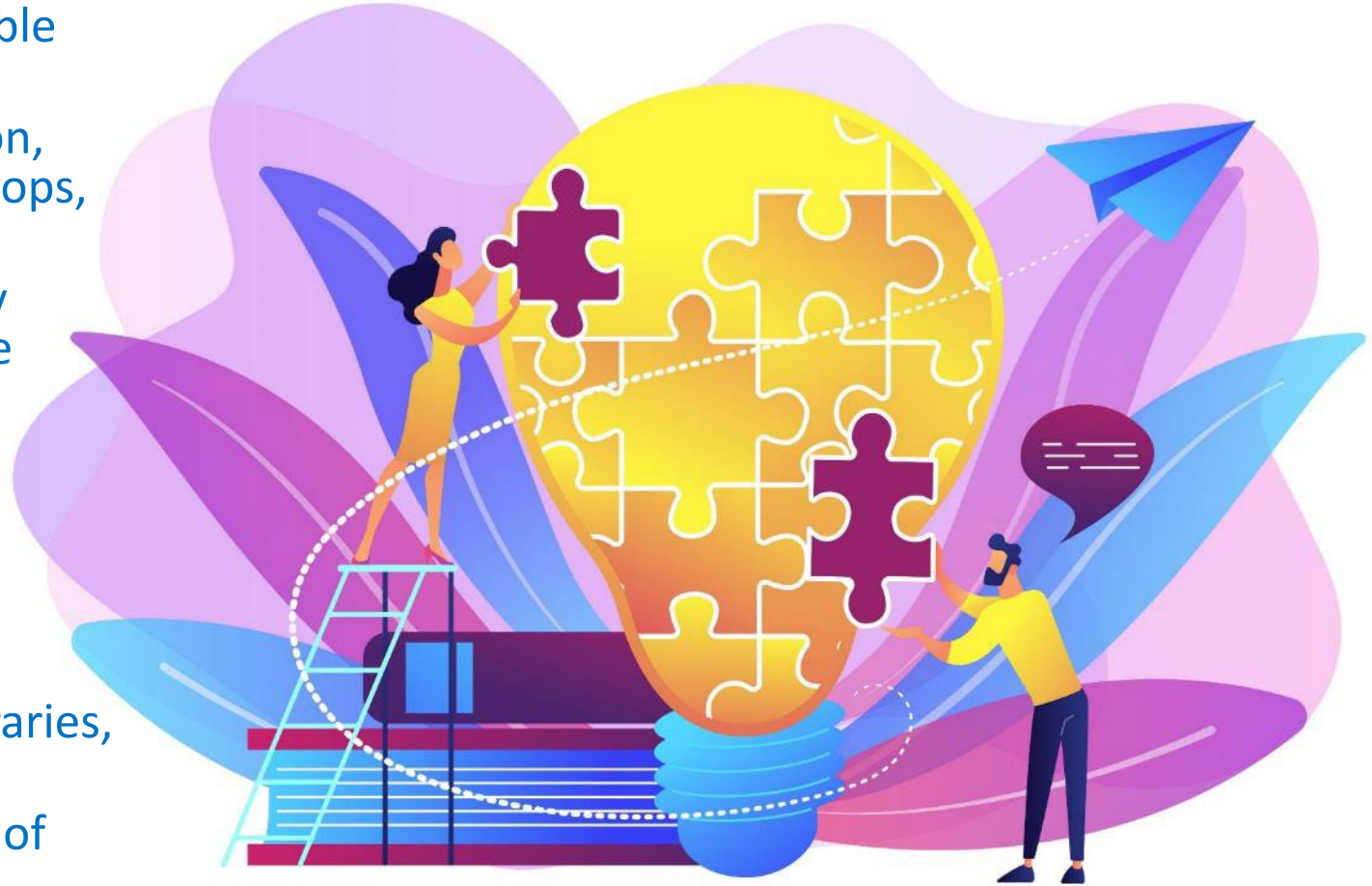
Steps for building the Skills Ecosystem

4. Education and Training Programs:

- Design and implement relevant and flexible education and training programs.
- Offer a mix of formal vocational education, microcredentials, online courses, workshops, and apprenticeships.
- Collaborate with universities, community colleges, and vocational schools to create programs aligned with industry needs.

5. Lifelong Learning Infrastructure:

- Establish platforms and resources for continuous learning.
- Create online learning portals, digital libraries, and resources for self-paced learning.
- Encourage individuals to take ownership of their learning journey.



Steps for building the Skills Ecosystem

6. Industry Partnerships:

- Forge partnerships with businesses to ensure that training programs are aligned with industry requirements.
- Incorporate industry input into curriculum development to produce job-ready graduates.

7. Technology Integration:

- Leverage technology for online learning, virtual labs, simulations, and digital credentialing.
- Embrace emerging technologies like AI, VR, and AR to enhance the learning experience.

8. Recognition of Skills:

- Implement a system for recognizing skills acquired through both formal and informal learning.
- Offer certifications, microcredentials, and digital badges that are recognized by employers.



Steps for building the Skills Ecosystem

9. Awareness and Outreach:

- Create awareness campaigns to inform individuals about available learning opportunities.
- Promote the benefits of continuous learning and upskilling for career growth.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Regularly assess the effectiveness of skills development programs.
- Collect data on skill acquisition, job placements, and career progression.
- Use feedback to refine and improve the ecosystem.



Steps for building the Skills Ecosystem

11. Policy and Advocacy, Funding and Incentives

- Advocate for policies that support skills development
- Lobby for educational reforms that align with the changing needs of industries.
- Secure funding from government grants, private sector investments, and public-private partnerships.
- Provide incentives for individuals and businesses to participate in upskilling initiatives.

12. Ecosystem Sustainability:

- Build a sustainable ecosystem that can adapt to evolving technologies and market demands.
- Continuously update programs and offerings to stay relevant.





Source: The EU initiative on "Centres of Vocational Excellence", Joao Santos, 2019

Linking Skills Ecosystems to the regional development

- **Identify Regional Needs:**
 - Understand the unique strengths, industries, and challenges of your region.
 - Identify the skills required to support the growth of existing industries and emerging sectors.
- **Engage Local and International Stakeholders:**
 - Collaborate with local businesses, industry associations, chambers of commerce, and economic development agencies.
 - Gather input from these stakeholders to align skills development with regional economic priorities.
- **Foster Entrepreneurship and Innovation**
 - Foster an environment that encourages entrepreneurship and innovation.
 - Offer training and mentorship for aspiring entrepreneurs to develop their ideas and contribute to the local economy.
- **Enhance Community Engagement:**
 - Engage with local communities to ensure that skills development initiatives are inclusive and accessible.
 - Consider the needs of underserved populations and provide opportunities for them to participate.

The Biggest Challenge in Regional Development?

= **Active collaboration between stakeholders**



Examples of Ecosystems

YIBinSport

Youth with immigrant background in Sport

YIBinSport: Youth with an immigrant background in Sports 2019–2021

- **Sport cafes: 159** students
- **Sporting groups: 159** students
- **Dual career workshops 3 events: 69** students
- **Peer Instructor training one event: 8** participants
- **Sport equipment library: 24** students
- **Other events: Mini Fun Run 12.10.2019 @Vantaa**

Total 565 participants in different events from HBC.

<https://sport4youth.eu/>

YIBinSPORT- FACTS AND FIGURES

Key facts and figures

 Project duration
2019-2021

 EU-grant
400 000 €

 Intellectual outputs
6

 Physical activity events
30

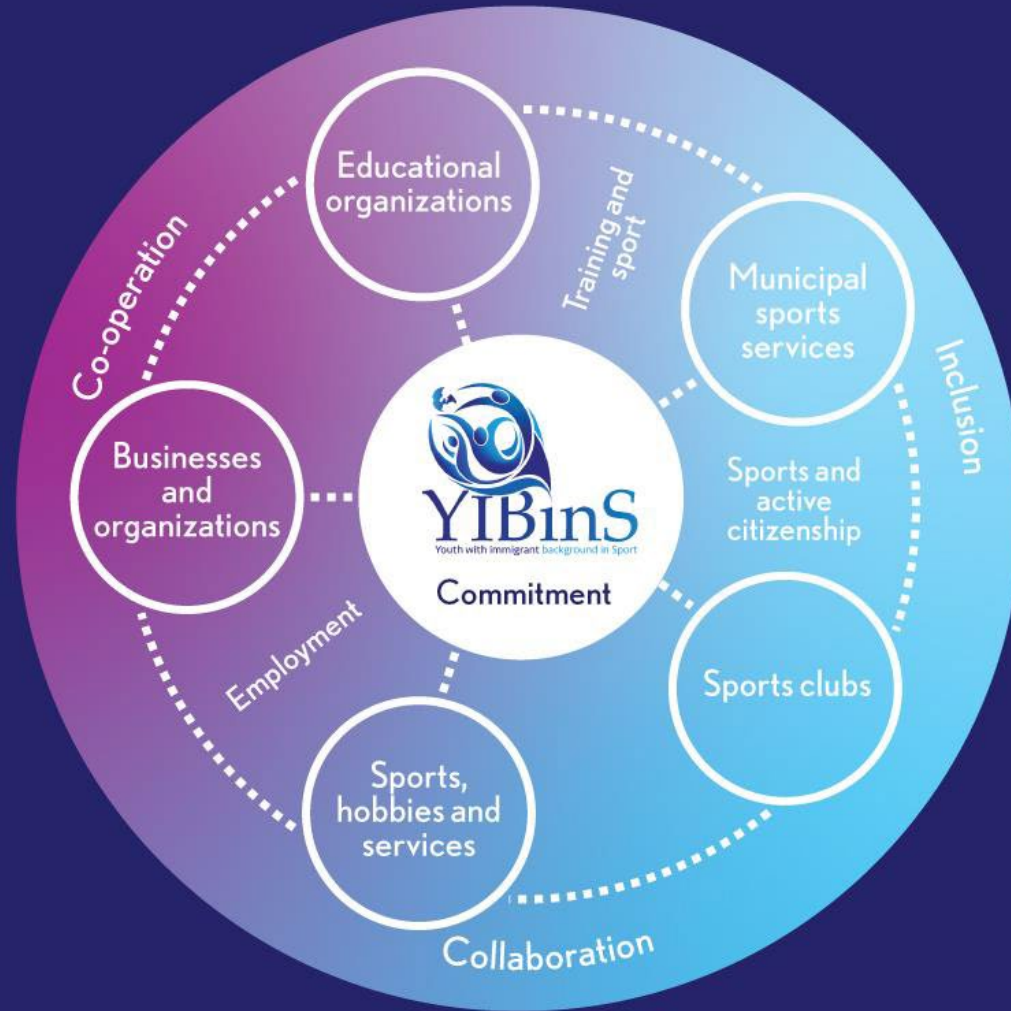
 Participants
2000

 Spread in Europe

 Finland  Sweden  Spain  Italy  Bulgaria

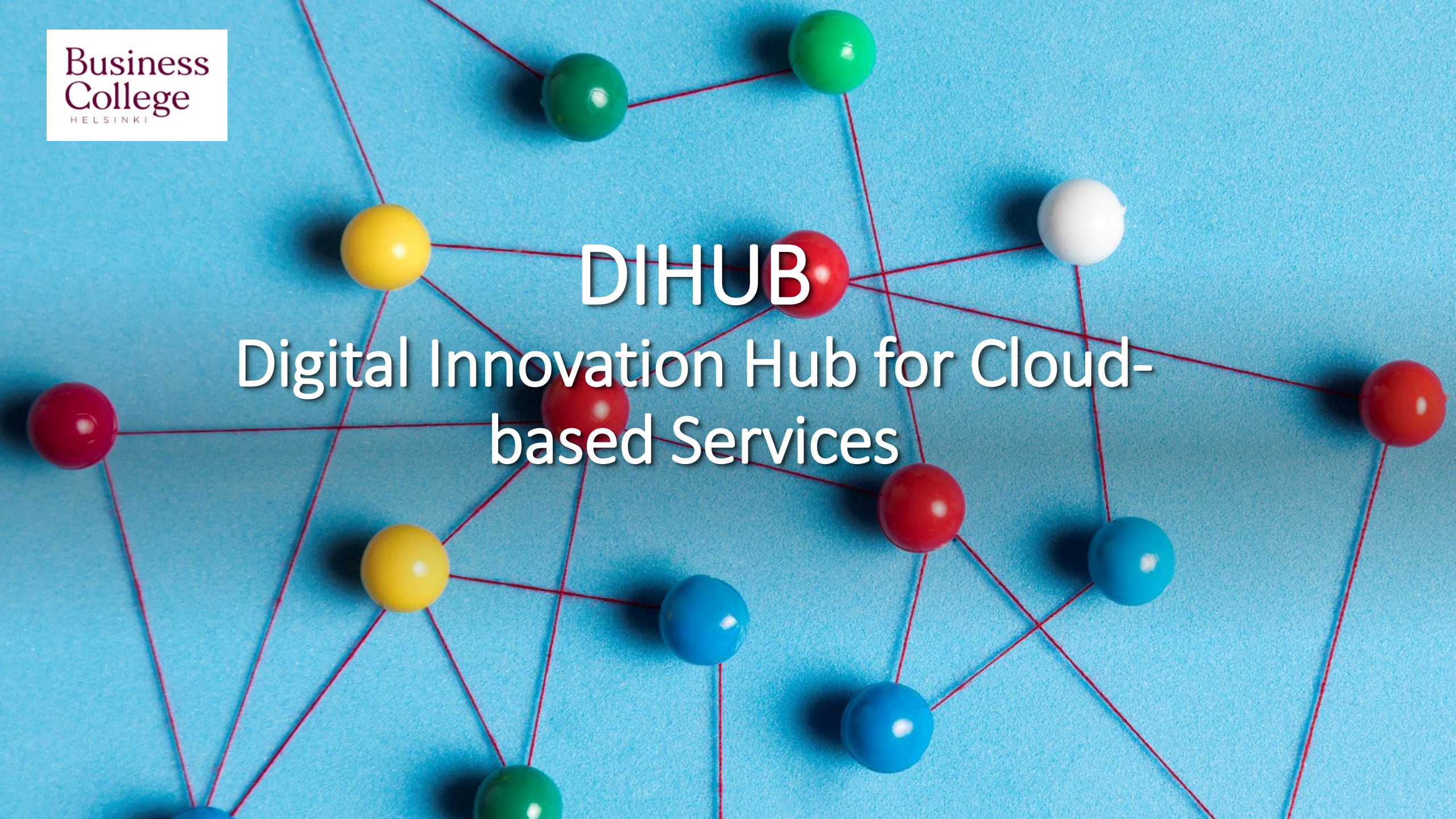


JUMP INTO COLLABORATION



Enhance your communication skills

Share your knowledge / Be open minded / Listen actively and show real interest /
Act proactively / Be present and empathic / Be prompt /



DIHUB

Digital Innovation Hub for Cloud-based Services

What is DIHUB?

- **Platform** where students, VET/Education providers and businesses **collaborate** for innovations development, education and cloud-based projects.
- Cluster of interconnected nodes using the latest cloud computing technologies that will expand to connect stakeholders all over Europe.
- Digital Innovation Hub for cloud-based services

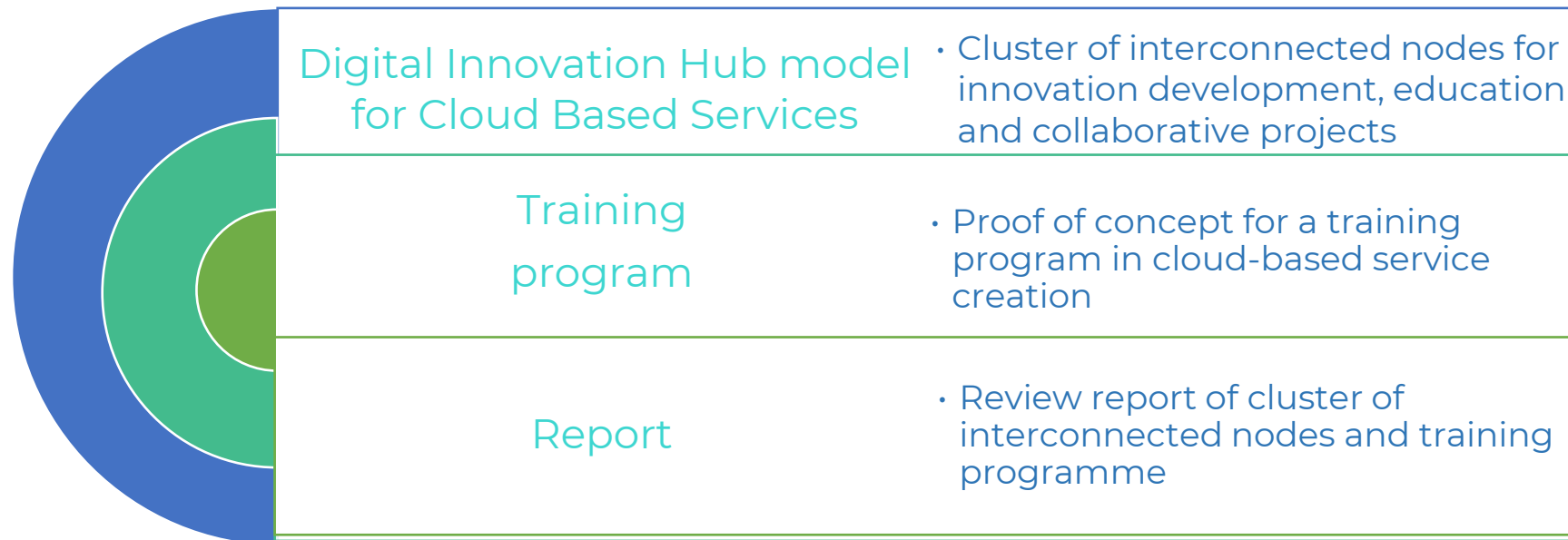
www.dihubcloud.eu



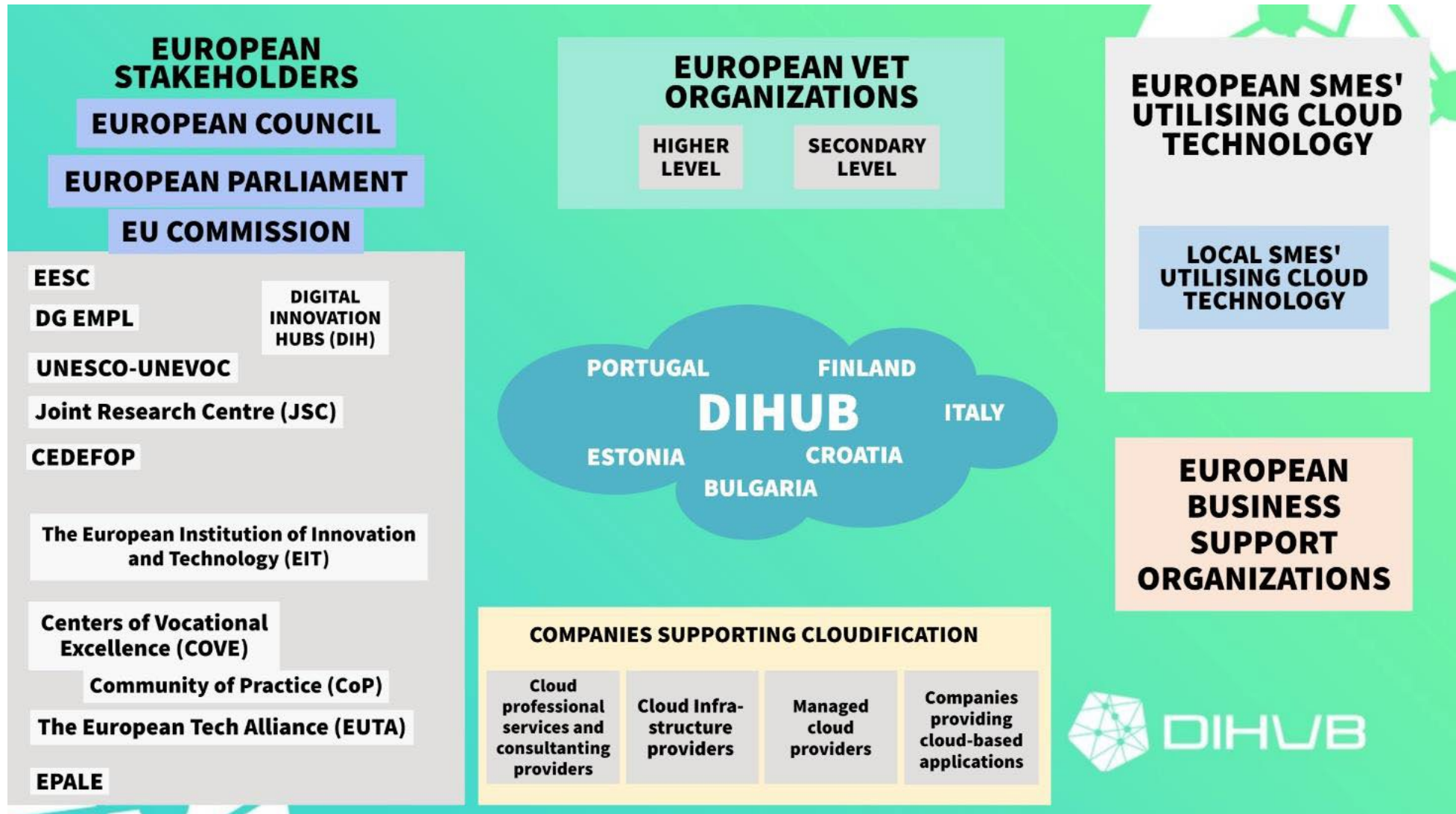
What is DIHUB and what is it working on?

11 organisations from 5 European countries working together to develop:

- A **training program** and **training material** with the latest technologies and tools of cloud providers.
- A **hub model of clustered nodes**, firstly in 5 European countries and then **expanded to further EU stakeholders**.
- A European-wide **hub that will host different projects** where **students** can familiarize with **different cloud technologies** and further develop service ideas coming from companies.
- Links between **vocational education, higher education** and **companies** in the form of collaborative projects.

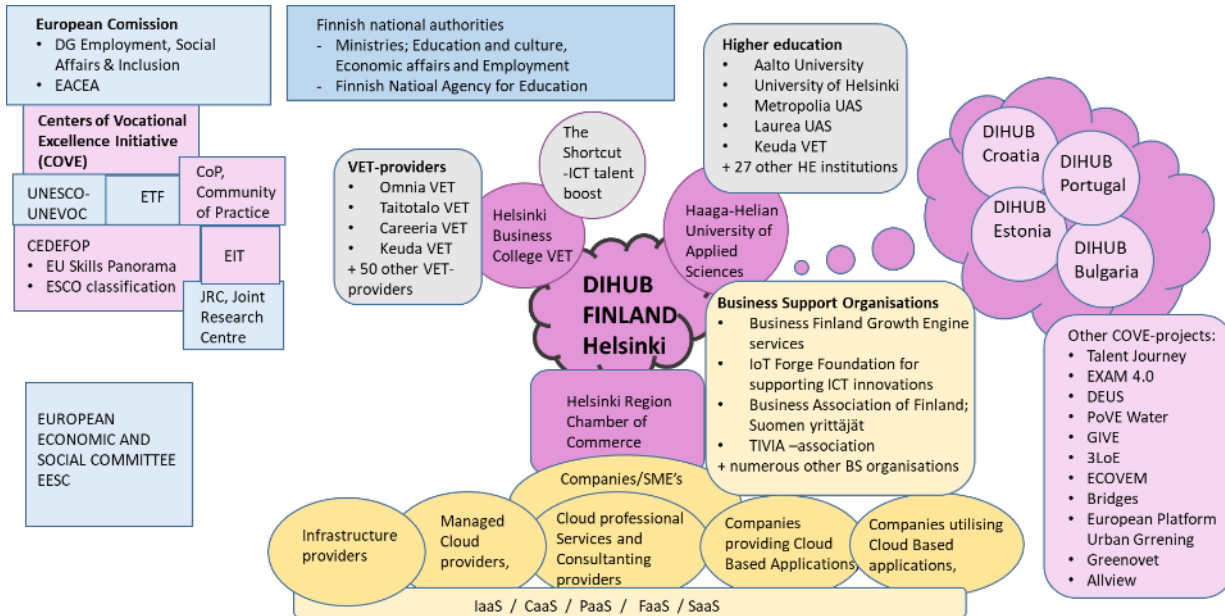


DIHUB stakeholders at the European level

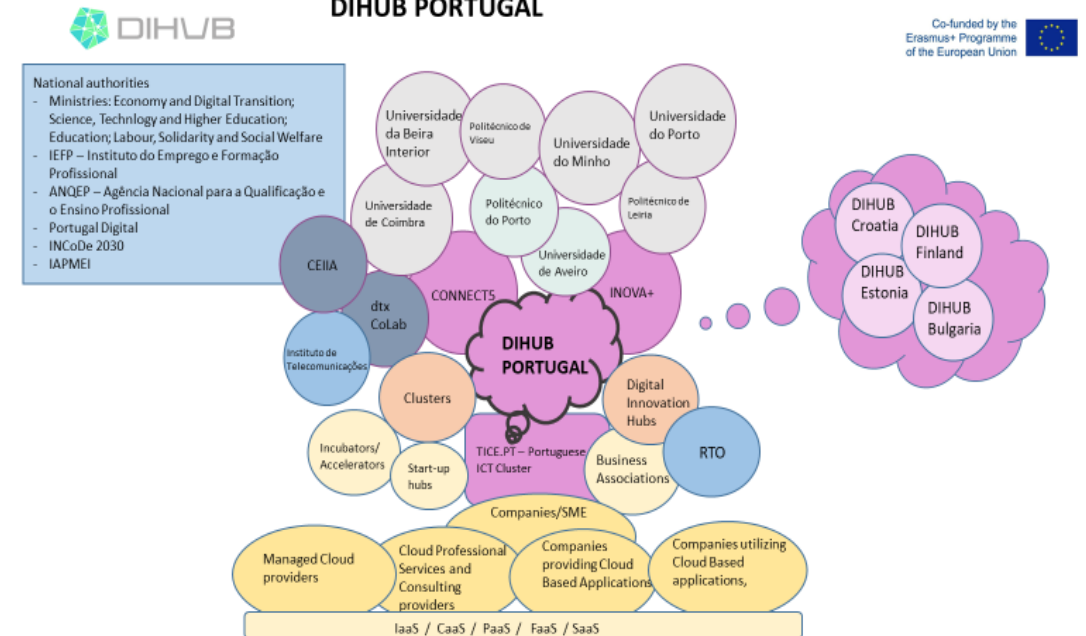


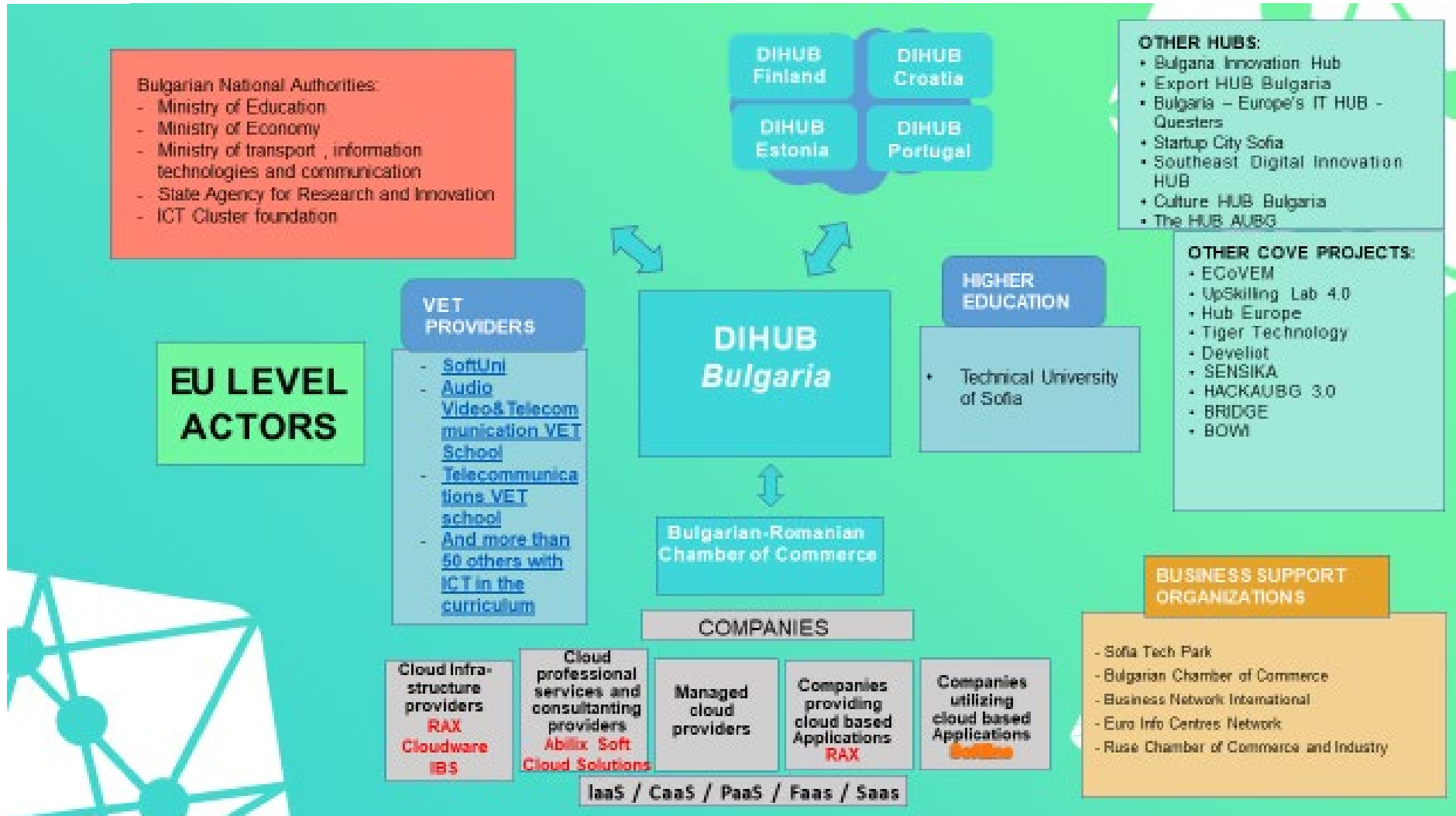
DIHUB skills ecosystems according to the stakeholder analysis:

DIHUB FINLAND

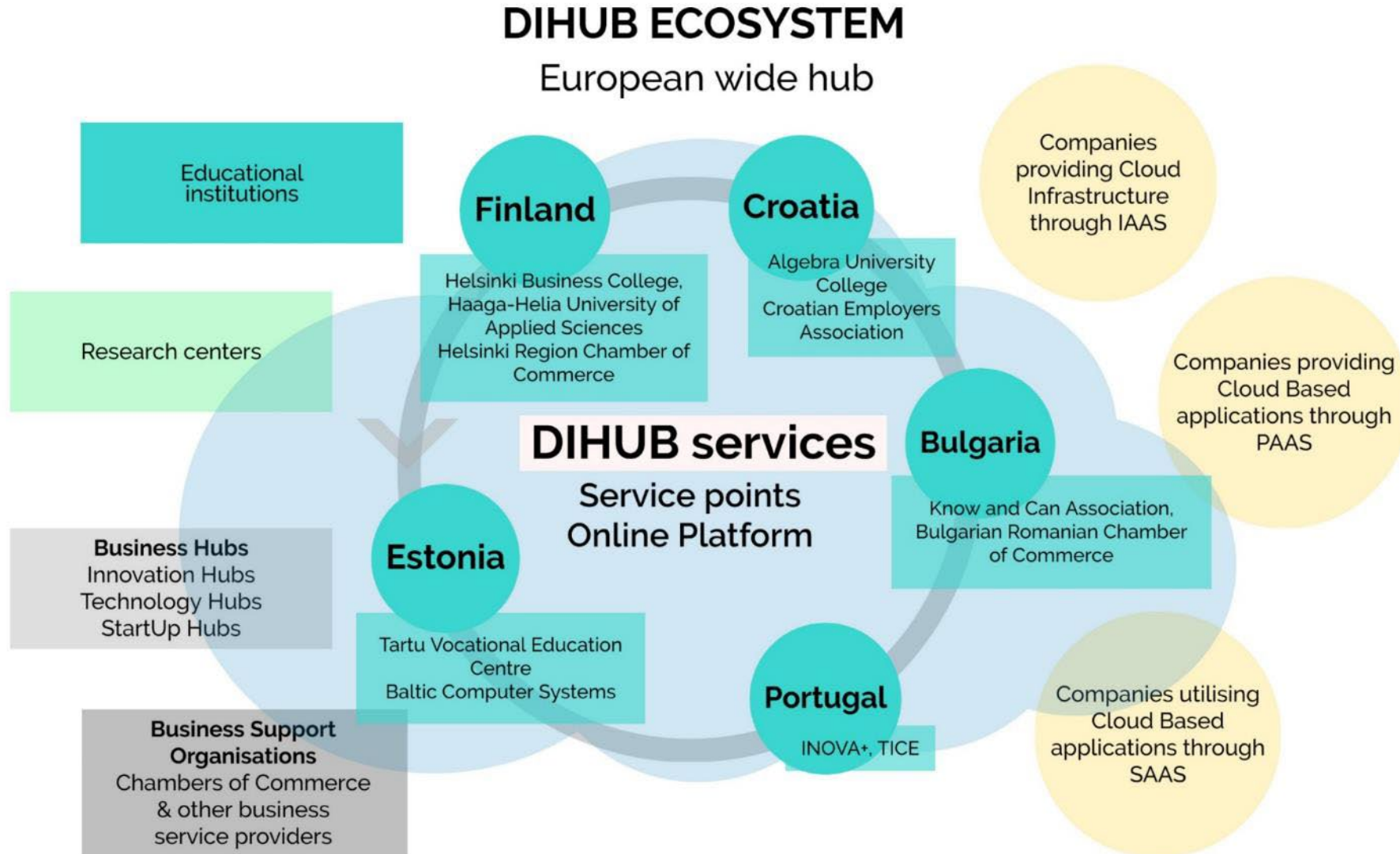


DIHUB PORTUGAL





DIHUB ecosystem





OBCD

Open Business for Community Development

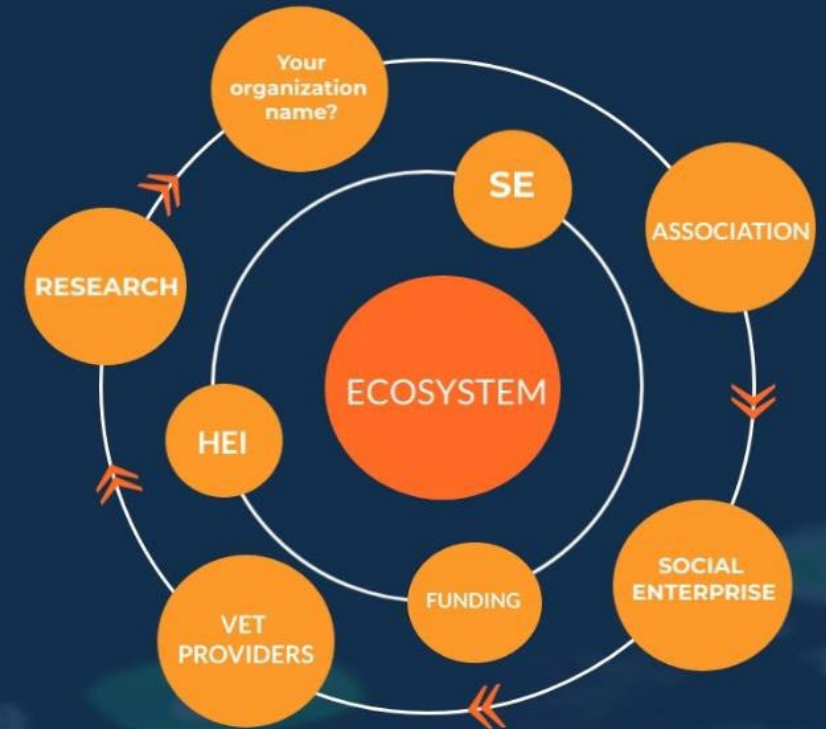
OBCD Open Business for Community Development

- OBCD takes inspiration from the analysis of a **new entrepreneurship paradigm**.
- Based on the necessity of combining economic growth and social innovation, the project aims **to create more inclusive, creative and sustainable societies and economies**.
- The project investigates how **open business** approaches applied to **social entrepreneurship (SE)** can contribute to **local development**.
- This concept leads to new challenges for education and training since it highlights emerging occupations as well as new knowledge, competences and skills, for the development of the so-called SEs.
- [Home - OBCD \(obcdproject.eu\)](http://obcdproject.eu)

Join the social enterprise ecosystem!

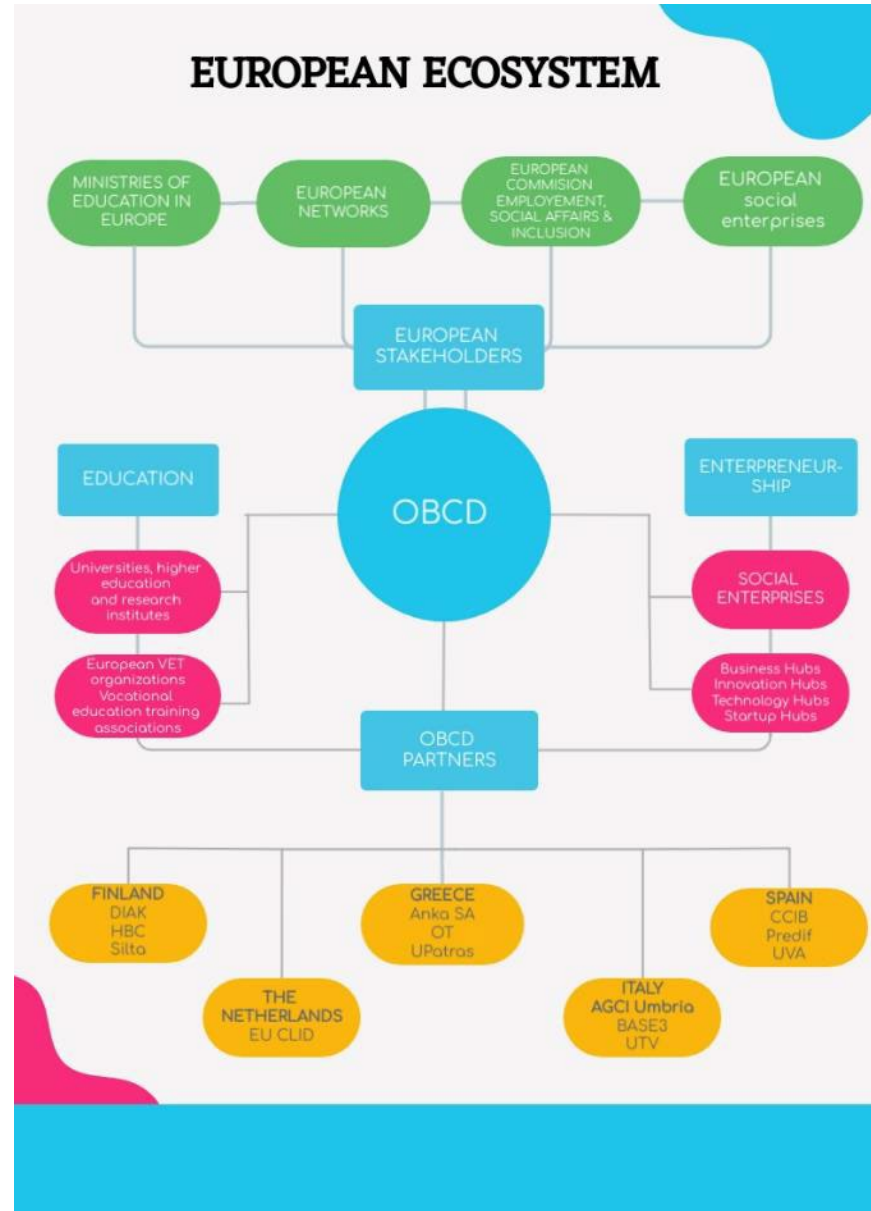
As a member of the ecosystem you get:

- research information on social enterprises and their training needs
 - MOOC online training courses
 - National and international networks
- Information on the open business model
 - Innovation competence



The social enterprise ecosystem is part of the international OBCD project. The project will explore how the open business model can be used in social enterprises and the social economy.
www.obcdproject.eu

OBCD ecosystems in Europe



OBCD ecosystems in European countries



Welcome to the
development of Centres of
Vocational Excellence!

Let's start planning
a fruitful and influential
COVE-project!

THANK YOU!



jouni.hytonen@bc.fi