



RCF lessons learnt about cooperation between schools and businesses

About the RCF



The **Regional Challenge Fund (RCF)** is a **financing facility designed to increase youth employability** and boosts the competitiveness of enterprises in Western Balkans 6 by funding investments in selected cooperative training projects that are implemented through partnerships between vocational training institutes and the enterprises.

- Workshop **infrastructure and equipment** for training facilities within the vocational training institutes
- Training of teachers, in-company trainers and cooperative training coordinators
- Advisory support during the planning and implementation of the project

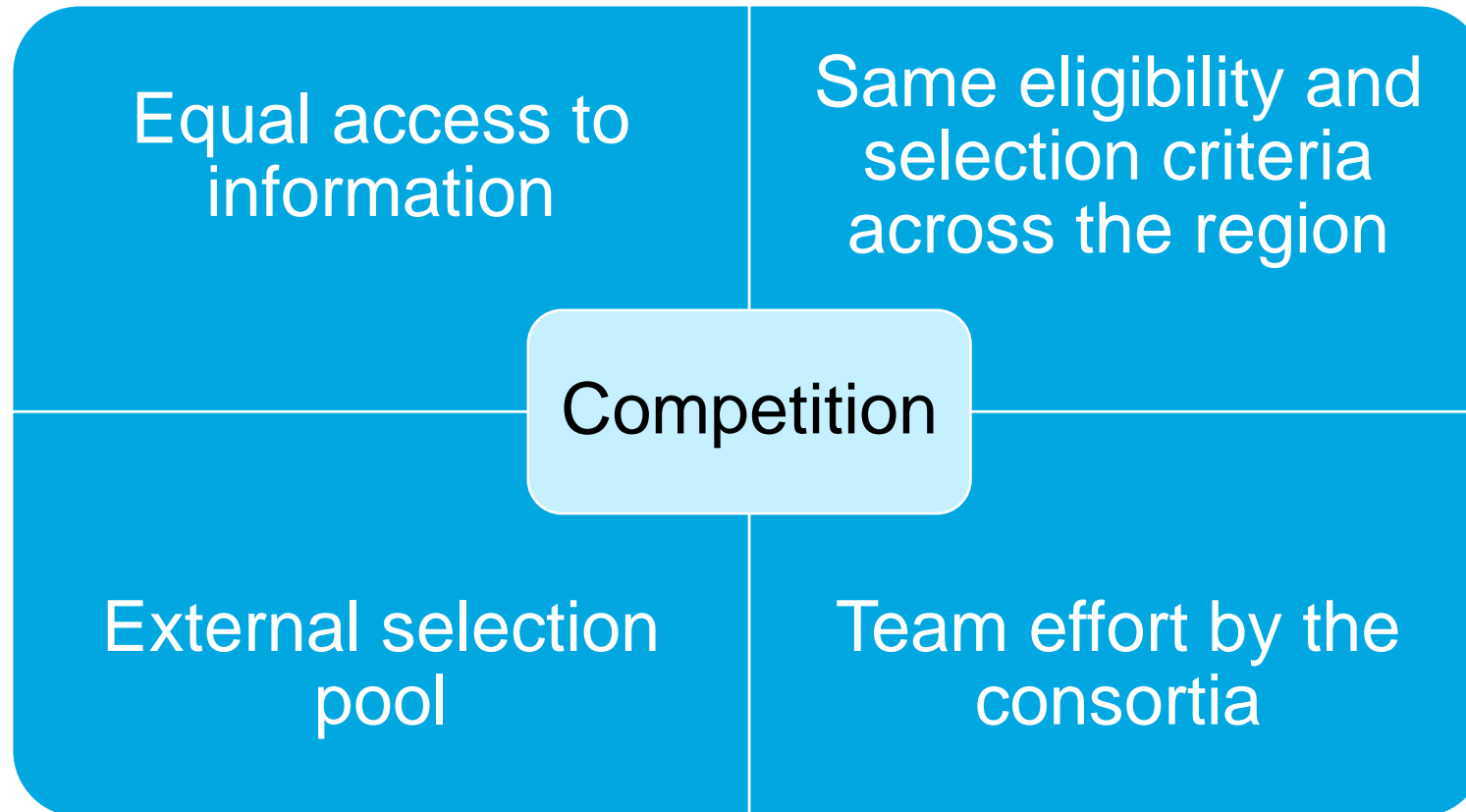
Funds

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development commissioned **64.43 million EUR** for the RCF, and the Swiss Government, represented by the SDC Swiss Development Cooperation, co-financed an additional **9.7 million CHF**.

The funds were commissioned to the KfW Development Bank and executed by the Western Balkans 6 Chamber Investment Forum (WB6-CIF), a joint initiative of chambers of commerce from the region.

The Fund Management Unit was established by the implementing consulting consortium in order to support the WB6-CIF secretariat in the day-to-day management and financial management of the Fund.

Key Concepts of RCF Funding



RCF in Figures – 1st and 2nd Call



Expressions of Interest	205
Enterprises signed MoU	636
Shortlisted Projects	66
No. of Selected Projects	36
Planned Investments	14.9m Euro
Equipment	57%
Infrastructure	20%
Training/Advisory	23%

Expressions of Interest	123
Enterprises signed MoU	461
Shortlisted Applications	47
No. of Selected Projects	27
Planned Investments	12.2m Euro
Equipment	66%
Infrastructure	26%
Training/Advisory	8%

Selection Criteria



Conceptual Criteria

Joint responsibility/ joint project management
Cooperative training approach
Workplace training approach
Mismatch in skills supply and demand decrease

Ambition Criteria

SME Orientation
Innovation
Student/Learner Support to achieve employment
Inclusion of women
Inclusion of Vulnerable groups

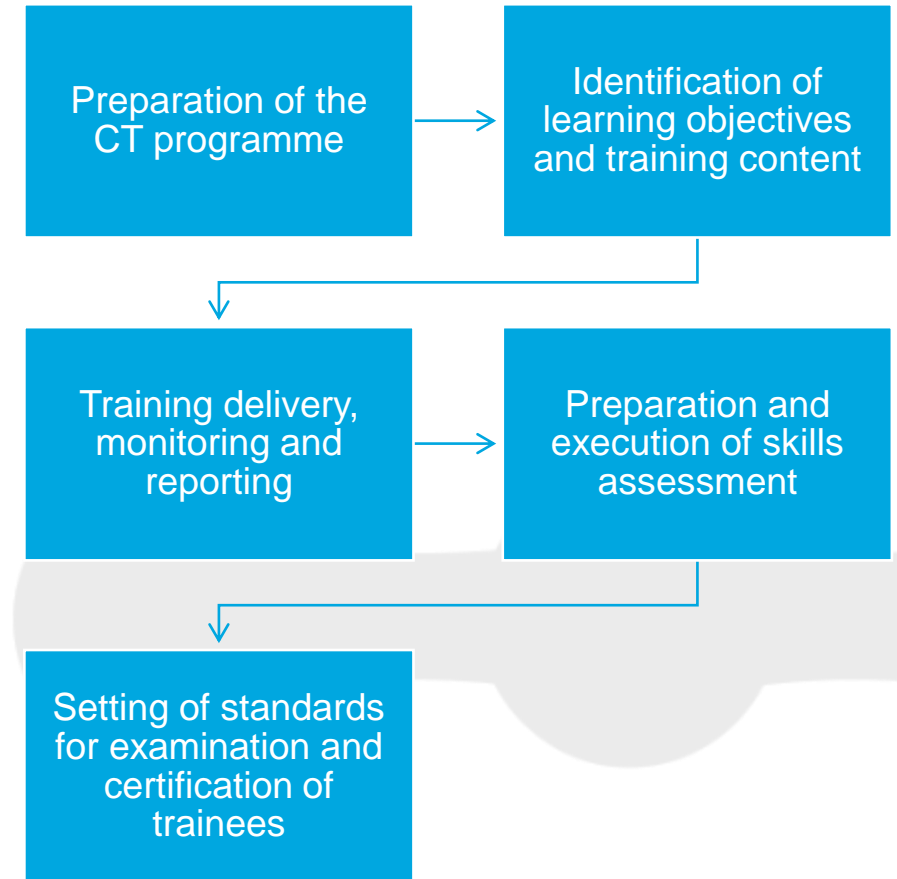
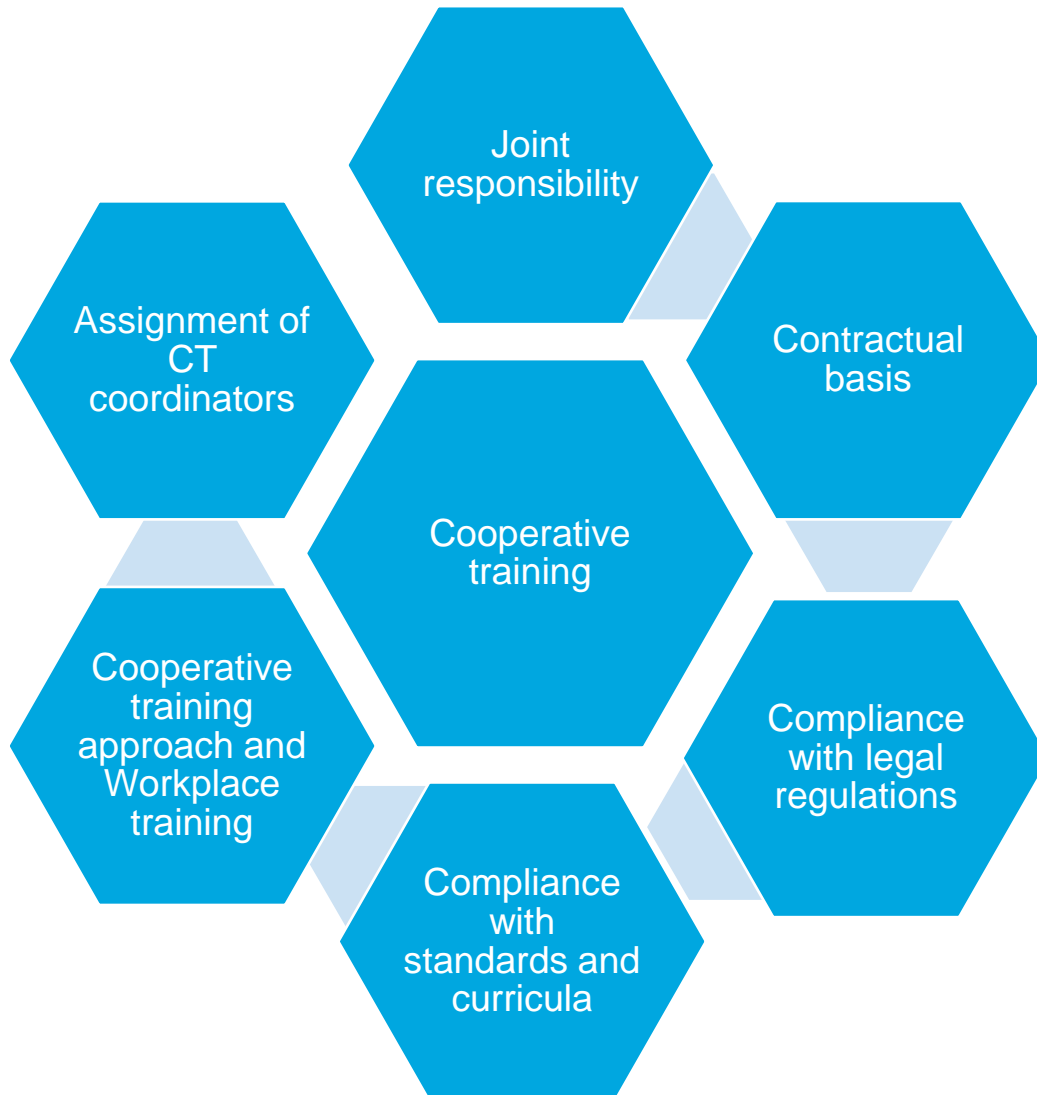
Feasibility Criteria

Project efficiency
Teacher training concept
Sustainable utilisation of buildings and equipment

Plausibility Criteria

Quality of investment/financial plan
Suitability of the financing request
Track record of consortium in cooperative training.
Administrative/ management capacity of the consortium

Cooperative Training Principles / Joint Responsibility



Joint Responsibility



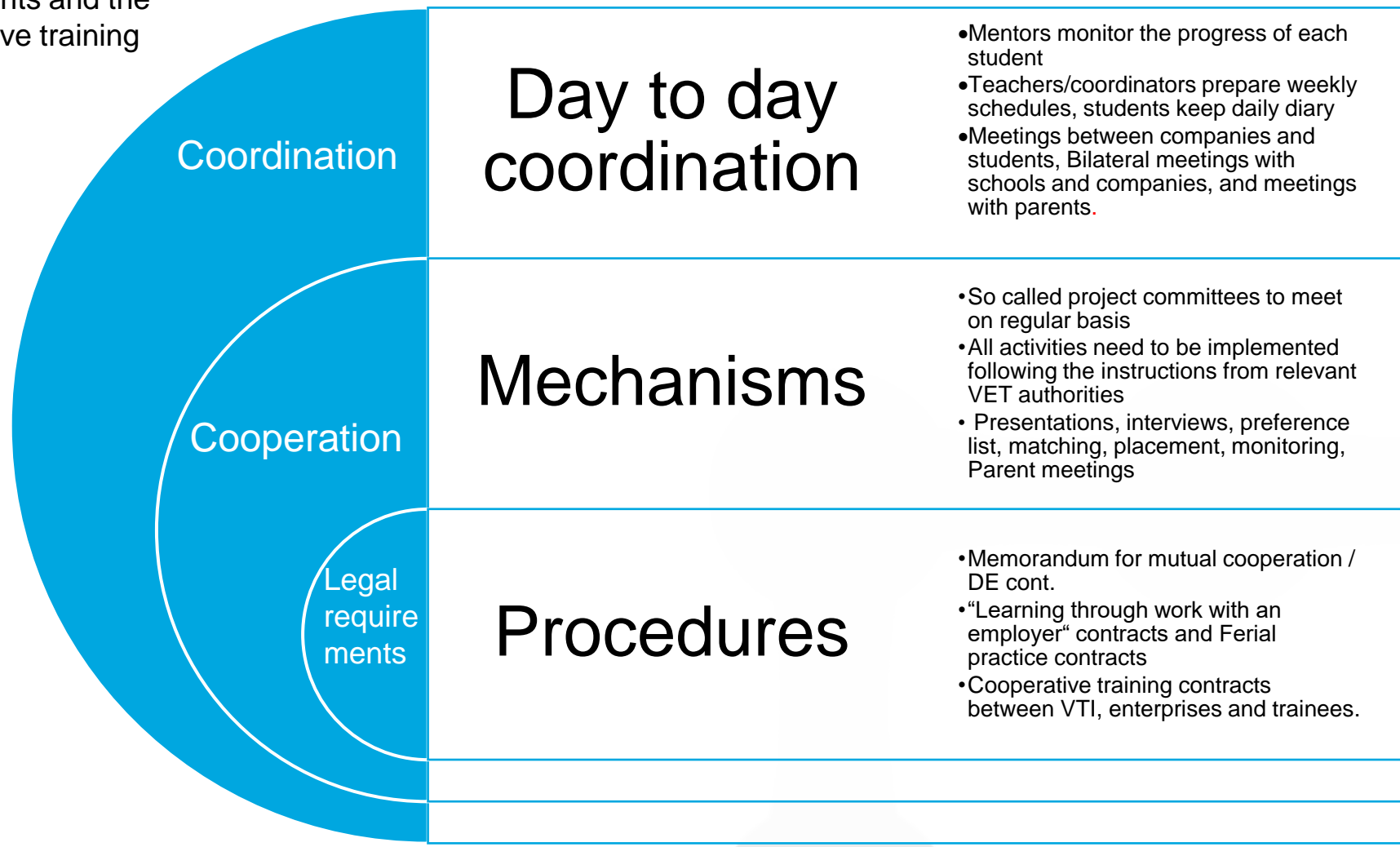
How do they plan to organize the relationship between VTI, vocational trainees/students and the partnering enterprises for the cooperative training programme(s)?

10.1. Preparation of the CT programme	10.2. Identify learning objectives	10.3. Training delivery	10.4. Preparation and execution of skills assessment	10.5. Setting of standards for examination and certification of trainees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinators from VTIs and enterprises have overall responsibility • School prepares curricula and organizes arrival of students, according to legal framework • Companies provide working space • Enterprises provide instructors/mentors/trainers <p>-> Conclusion: Limited involvement of enterprises in preparing programmes. In some cases aware of possibility to adjust 30%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predefined • In rare cases teams define learning objectives for 2./3. year • VTI Coordinator will present the curricula and objectives to company, rarely, coordinator from enterprise has possibility to change <p>-> Conclusion: Limited involvement of enterprises in defining objectives, but good to have possibility to propose adjustments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WBL partially in school and partially at companies • No involvement in enrollment; DE limited involvement in selection • M&E: Instructors: notes/diaries, checklists, evaluations. Students: diaries, self-assessments. Teachers: signing diaries, ped. documentation, visits <p>-> Conclusion: Rather low amount of in-company-training; first year often 0</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graded by teachers and assignments by companies • Led by schools • Monitored by mentor and coordinator • Rulebooks in place/Legal regulations • DE: joint assessment, teachers grade or joint grading <p>-> Conclusion: Private sector integrated in execution of skills assessment, "little less in preparing"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set in stone (defined by VET authority) • Standards set in compliance with the administrative guideline on WBL <p>-> Conclusion: Already defined & according to legal regulations</p>

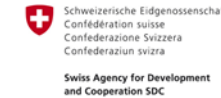
Relationship VTI-students-enterprise



How do they plan to organize the relationship between VTI, vocational trainees/students and the partnering enterprises for the cooperative training programme(s) planned?



Cooperative Training Programmes



Insights from the first call applicants (shortlisted)

Key aspects of the CT programmes are explained in detail within the application forms – full project proposals.

Framework

- A legal framework offering clear modalities for cooperation among VTIs and enterprises, doesn't exist in every economy, impeding the further development of good quality cooperative training arrangements.

Cooperation among learning venues

- Schools and companies need viable mechanisms to cooperate not only in implementing training programmes, but also in the preparation phase.
- Limitations and lack of capacities on both sides to support such closer cooperation.

Building capacities

Building capacities of VTIs and enterprises to jointly prepare, implement and monitor CT programmes is needed.

Training Needs

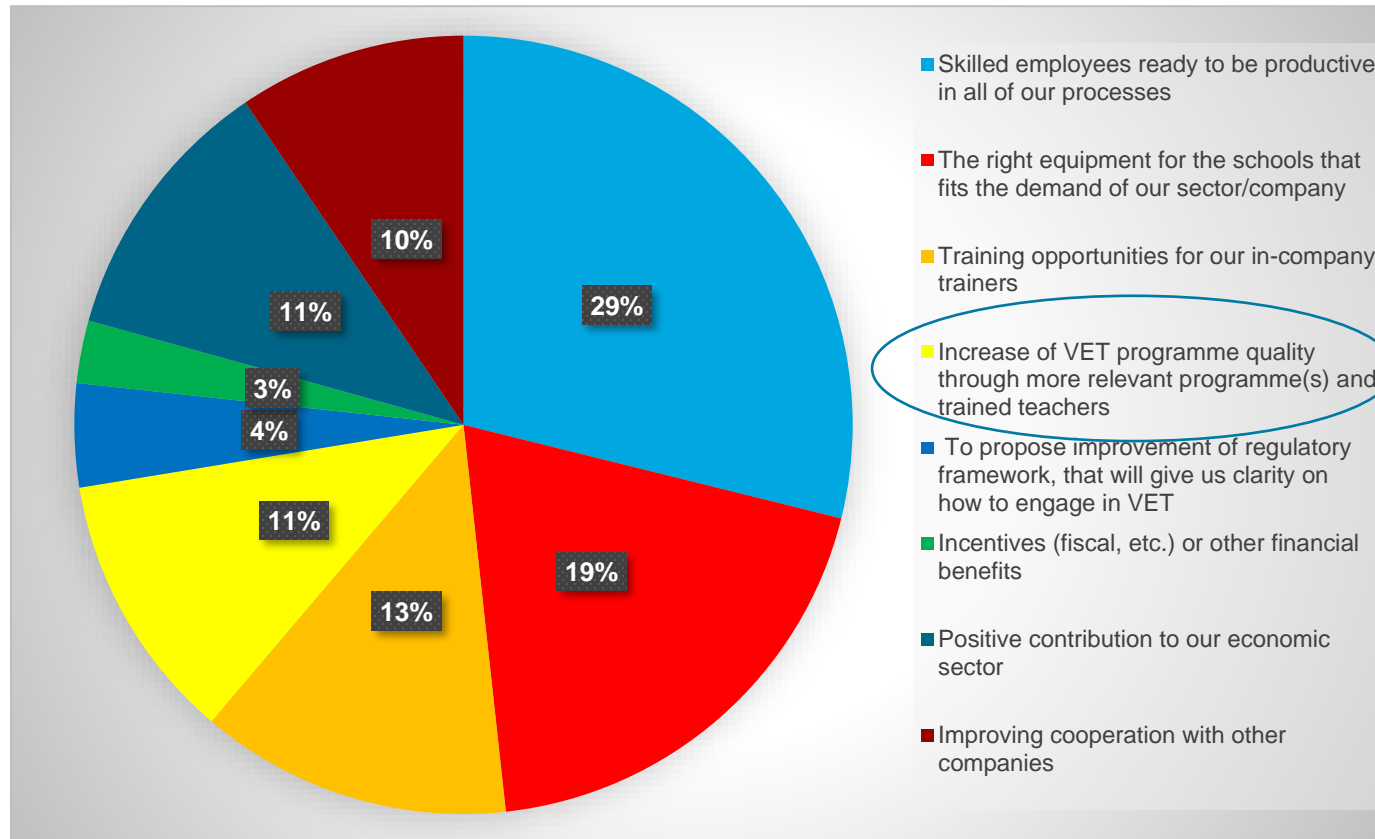


- a) Training of teachers for technical skills and mechanical equipment handling
- b) Training of in-company trainers for pedagogical training or training on soft skills,
- c) Training of teachers for pedagogical skills,
- d) Training of in-company trainers for technical skills
- e) Digital skills for the teaching process
- f) Communication skills
- g) Green skills
- h) Skills for monitoring and assessment.

Although applicants report that they possess sufficient capacities for implementing training activities, training needs for the implementation of project activities are foreseen by almost every applicant.

Teaching capacities are envisaged as sufficient for implementing training programmes.

Expectations from CT programmes



We asked **enterprises**: What are your expectations from the joint implementation of the cooperative training programme(s) with the RCF support?