

THINK TANK

Deliberation process on the work of the future: Working Document No. 8

Input from the focus group on the proposed terms of reference for a pilot project

(15 February 2021)

This working document complements the previous one, sharing the contributions made by the deliberation group after analysing the proposal of the Department of Economic Promotion, Tourism and Rural Environment in relation to the focus of the pilot project. The proposal is summarised in the BOX below.

It is proposed to focus the experimental project on the **search for meaning** at work. This perspective will inevitably take in major trends such as digitalisation and the quest for sustainability, their impact on value chains and the skills required. It also starts from a base that has been addressed less to date and is therefore more suitable for an experimental project.

Throughout the discussion, the person/business/territory axis was mentioned frequently. In this case, the proposal is to focus on the company, on the grounds that the company will be a space in which to reach people and that it will have a direct impact on the objectives of the province.

It is therefore proposed, to set up an experimental project that will enable **development of processes/tools** that companies can use to improve their understanding of how the search for meaning in employees' work affects their relationship with companies and, based on this understanding, **improve the processes for recruiting and developing individuals**.

The group's contributions are structured below into a number of axes:

Selection of focus

- I find it difficult to judge whether this is the most suitable choice. I would say that I like it because it brings us closer to an issue that we are seeing more and more frequently, namely that companies and job providers need to adapt their offer to people's wellbeing, realising that all stakeholder groups are made up of people: workers, customers, society, suppliers, owners...
- The deliberation process developed and the focus selected are consistent with the process and proposals made to date. However there were also other focuses that needed to be developed.
- Although some of the group would not have chosen this theme, we think the focus chosen is good.
- The interpretation is correct.
- If we are talking about the employment of the future, I think this is the right focus. The focus on meaning at work should mark this future.
- Appropriate and interesting, I agree that it is less often addressed and more difficult for organizations and companies to develop.
- I think this is the right approach. Companies bring together significant numbers of people and increasingly people are moving to "meaningful" projects — projects they identify for their objective and culture. In short, the philosophy and way of doing things.

- In my opinion the result of the interpretation work is more than satisfactory, in the sense that it covers most of the aspects that have been dealt with in the deliberative process, which are not easy to pool together.
- I think it was the right decision to go for the least-worked of the three possible fields, making good on the administration's role as an agent committed to addressing important issues that would not otherwise be tackled.

Level of Ambition / Timeline

- By opting for a longer-term focus, it gets away from the problems currently facing companies; in this regard, direct involvement by companies in the short term is more difficult.
- It poses an ambitious framework that makes the initiative a more attractive project with more room for manoeuvre to explore and find practical solutions with experience.

Participants in the process

Types of territorial actors

- The specifics remain to be decided upon, but the focus is on the relationship with the company. However, we must ensure that there are other agents such as universities, technology centres and the public institutions themselves... we should make sure that we extend the focus to these agents (creating networks and networking ecosystems, etc.).

Involvement of personnel

- I believe that focusing on the company as the core and origin in order to reach employees is the right approach.
- I agree that by placing the focus on the company we can reach the individual and the territory, in terms of the experimental project, but I think it is important, albeit in some second stage, also take individuals into account. Differences between companies can mean that many people who are very interested and committed to their own development process are left out of the project and do not have a chance to participate.
- We must not forget the people operating in the background. What do today's challenges mean for people? How can we align ambitious and competitive professional development with healthy personal development? How do we adapt human capabilities to the fast-paced evolution of the business and professional world without perishing in the attempt.
- How can government accompany people who are motivated by change, when the company does not come within that context?
- Participants: we start from companies committed to working on these areas internally. It should not focus only on young people entering the labour market. Instead it should take into account people who are currently in employment, who may be aged over 50 and who plan to remain in employment for many years to come.
- We would like to make it clear that we do not agree with reducing the issue to youth employment. On the one hand, the young people of today will be the adults of tomorrow, and, on the other hand, because we want to achieve the greatest possible diversity and integrity.
- In my opinion, focusing "on the new generations" should not be "exclusivist". The perspective must be for "employment" (of the territory), which will obviously have different approaches depending on the different groups.
- Our only doubt is whether in this planning, in which we mention that generational change brings with it a different experience of the meaning of life, we focus on the

meaning of those who are in the midst of the generational change, ignoring those who have not made the change (a sector of the population that should continue to contribute, who might be excluded from the new dynamics because they have greater difficulties in adapting).

- What I do not quite see is whether the approach is to focus on youth or on the entire working population. I consider the intergenerational commitment to be very important, which is why I believe that the project should extend to the entire population, and also to the entire working population, not only highly-skilled workers; we should not ignore people with difficulties in accessing the labour market.

Type of companies

- The type of company that will participate has not been specified, but it is important that it should be representative of the territory in terms of size, sector and type, etc..
- The companies that will form part of the experiment should be specified (different sectors, different sizes, and specific geographical areas)
- It is important that the experimental projects are carried out within a business framework that is representative of the real situation of Gipuzkoa (companies of different sizes from different industries), thus enabling these experimental projects to serve as a reference point and be replicable.
- CHALLENGE: To get companies to follow the path set by the government. What kind of companies would you focus on? Should we exclude small companies? Are we not losing perspective?

International dimension

- It is very useful to seek international references that can serve as a guide.
- It would be good to look at similar projects elsewhere that might serve as inspiration.

Working methodology

- What mechanisms does the provincial government have and want to use to ensure that companies are aligned with the challenges of the provinces?
- List specific challenges and focus on specific issues (continuous training, work-life balance, etc).
- To ensure that it is effective, we should require the project leader to "control" the project, i.e. to size the project in accordance with the area of influence.
- Change must come from the top. Ownership and management in the company. And from below, education. If we want in the future to have a set of values , a way of doing things, a philosophy of work... we need to start with the educational system. To me it seems complex to change the culture of an entire territory only by addressing the present part. I believe we should work on both the present part (companies) and the future part (young people).
- Develop people who develop companies. It is people who change things through improvement and innovation.
- The meaning of employment (which should be distinguished from work) must take in three extremes: the economic sphere; the field of professional development; the field of socialization and service to society. Where the life development of each person will gradually "rethink" and "materialize" the balance between these areas (and the business model must be able to "respond"). These three extremes involve the development of people (within the company and the territory).

- It is difficult to be specific without starting from the "prior consensus" of the entire working group and without setting prior deadlines or identifying resources,... Nonetheless, we can give and advance idea of certain characteristics of the "experimentation" process:
 - being "committed" agents". It will be essential to build maps (who and what). We need to "call" everyone but... not everyone from everywhere.
 - Universities: knowledge generators and a dynamic of comprehensive assessment of the experimentation process.
 - Internationalisation: identify best practice and make the experimentation process more visible
 - Although the approach should be comprehensive, it should focus on those sections with the "capacity to have an impact" (and in others, a "proactive" attitude").
 - Its "development" should not be a "parallel" initiative, but should include experimentation in "day to day operations" (managing complexity).
- It requires a deeper understanding of the expectations of quality of life and quality of working life, the work-life balance, sustainability, and the involvement of people in the growth and innovation of the territory.
- We need to create attractive companies. We need to change the philosophy, the way of understanding companies. I believe it is a way of living, which is based on creating a different culture.

Issues to be addressed

- We feel it should address the following areas at least: empowerment of people; the social impact of work and workers; ensure lifelong learning and lifelong dissemination in access to employment.
- The area of employment is the company. Therefore, in 5.0 companies, it is necessary to promote contexts that foster quality employment (see the characteristics of EUROFOUND), integrating people, technology and forms of organisation, with a commitment to social impact. The third point, for example: the economic sphere (living wages); the field of professional development (apprenticeship, professional career, value map, participative formulas); and the social sphere (co-responsibility and shared social value).