

THINK TANK

Deliberation process on the work of the future: Working Document No. 7

Proposal for the bases of an experimental project

(4 February 2021)

This working document follows up on the six previous ones, setting out the bases of a future experimental project proposed by the Department of Economic Promotion, Tourism and the Rural Environment to the deliberation group for reflection and debate. The proposal is based on the six previous documents and also takes into consideration the criteria established by Etorikizuna Eraikiz for defining experimental projects.

The process of drafting the proposal comprised the following steps:

- (1) Summary of the main outcomes of the deliberative process
- (2) Prioritization of the focus of the pilot project
- (3) Proposed framework for the development of the pilot project

These three phases in the process are shared in the paragraphs below, which are intended to act as preparatory material for the workshop on 18 February 2021, where they will be discussed with the focus group.

Summary of the main outcomes of the deliberative process

The results of the deliberation process are summarized in the table in Appendix 1. This table includes the trends highlighted during the deliberation process, together with the problems that these trends are expected to create and possible solutions (indicating potential objectives of the experimental project and the roles that the different stakeholders in the territory can play in identify and building these solutions).

The discussion on trends was summarised in three broad reflections:

- a) Digitalisation and the ecological transition will affect the work of the future; it is important to work on ensuring that people have the necessary skills in these new scenarios
- b) The transformation of value chains, as a result of various factors, among which digitalisation has been analysed, will lead to a different relationship between people and companies in the future. The change can be summarised by saying that whereas previous generations had one job for life, current generations have seven throughout their professional career and future generations will have seven simultaneously. Taking this in combination with the previously identified

trend and the importance of skills, two groups of workers can be identified: those who have the skills companies are looking for and those who do not.

- c) The generational change also involves a different experience of the meaning of life and, within this framework, the meaning of work. It will be important to understand these new logics if we want new generations to continue to choose to work (and thus find meaning) in companies in Gipuzkoa. This trend is considered to encompass the two previous reflections on the new skills required and the new forms of relationship between companies and workers. Moreover, it starts from a perspective that has been worked on less than previous ones and "is more difficult for us to understand".

Within the framework of these trends, the problems that have emerged have been in the person/company/province axis:

- a) Workers who do not have the skills companies require will face problems in establishing stable relationships with companies, which will require such profiles less often and for shorter periods of time. This will have a negative impact on these people's ability to maintain decent living conditions, leading to inequalities in the province.
- b) Companies will find it difficult to maintain long-term relationships with people who have the skills in greatest demand. This may have a negative impact on the competitiveness of companies and, consequently, of the province.
- c) The two problems identified above generate difficulties for the provincial government in achieving the objectives set out for the province with regard to ensuring a level of competitiveness that impacts individual welfare and reduces inequality.

The elements raised in the deliberative process in its search for solutions to these problems are:

- a) A stress on the role of learning processes, suggesting that learning formulae should be explored that go beyond "traditional courses" and help each individual and society as a whole to make the transitions that lie ahead.
- b) Learning should not be viewed exclusively as an individual process by each person. The concepts of learning company and learning territory were also raised.

The roles of citizens, companies and government are as follows:

- a) In terms of the role of each citizen, the team stressed the importance of reflecting on the vulnerability of the skills themselves and the job in its current form; in addition to any possible support from companies and government, there should also be a personal awareness of the challenge posed by current trends.
- b) Companies can extend their commitment to a form of individual development that goes beyond current training plans and tools. This requires understanding, budgeting and accompanying this development in different ways than at present, integrating the search for meaning into this process.
- c) The role of the public administration, and more specifically of the Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa is seen as being to accompany by providing leadership, a territorial vision, shared mission, collaborative governance and resources.

Prioritization of the focus of the pilot project

Of the three trends, it was proposed to focus the experimental project on the third one, the search for meaning in work. This perspective will inevitably take in the other two, but from a base on which less work has been carried out so far and which 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 proposed, therefore, to set up an experimental project to develop 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 of recruiting and developing individuals.

Next steps in defining the project

Once the contributions of the deliberation group have been incorporated into the established priorities, a first draft of the project will be prepared, taking into account the characteristics stipulated by Etorkizuna Eraikiz for experimental projects, which must:

- a) Connect with one or more of Etorkizuna Eraikiz's strategic objectives
- b) Seek to respond to one or more challenges in this field
- c) Include multidisciplinary groups from the province, as well as international agents to facilitate international comparison and contrast
- d) Be oriented towards practical experimentation, with the aim of transformation
- e) Incorporate the university in the process

- f) Address research, internationalisation and dissemination in a coordinated fashion

Difficulties are often encountered in going from pilot projects to more widespread dissemination and impact. To circumvent these problems, a form of collaborative governance will be built in parallel to the process of experimentation, which in the future will allow the results to be transferred to the companies. Consequently, over coming months, the possibility will be studied of incorporating territorial actors who can play a relevant role in this governance process.

APPENDIX 1. SUMMARY OF THE DELIBERATION PROCESS

