Methodological Guide

Youth Employability Competences: Strategy for Developing Advisory Boards

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Strategy for Engaging Young People and Employers in Advisory Boards

Intellectual Output	IO1 Methodological Guide
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It has long been established that young people must be supported to participate in the design and creation of responses to their ongoing educational, training and employment needs. The Youth Employability Competences ("YEC") is a practitioner-led project and this Methodological Guide focuses on innovative and engaging approaches to help re-think how employability competences are developed.

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Introduction

It has long been established that young people must be supported to participate in the design and creation of responses to their ongoing educational, training and employment needs. With a focus on development of *communication competences* the **Youth Employability Competences** project in its aims to promote quality youth work and promoting empowerment will fulfil the following objectives:

- Increase the employability of young people
- Increase the validation of young people's employability competences
- Increase the engagement of young people in competency tool development
- Increase the focus on young people's employability among young people and their practitioners

In terms of the Intellectual Output (IO1) Methodological Guide, the specific aims are to:

- Develop and pilot a methodology which creates a space for dialogue between young people, employers and the project partnership.
- Ensure that the project is promoting authentic youth engagement and participation.
- Create Youth and Employer Advisory Boards to influence and shape the tools developed through the project.
- Ensure that the Youth and Employer Advisory Boards provide a platform for the identification of lifelong employment competences.
- Facilitate the Youth and Employer Advisory Boards so that they are able to agree the skills and competency agenda for the project.

These aims will be realised by establishing Youth and Employer Advisory Boards that follow a methodological approach that spans the entire life-time of the project. Integral to the approach is:

- A Youth Work Approach is used to foster an ethical way of working to ensure that young people are meaningfully engaged, and their voices heard to gain an insight into young peoples' experiences, and
- Employers are fully engaged in developing solutions that inform education, training and employment practices that enable young people to gain lifelong employment competences.

Those responsible for facilitating the Advisory Boards will fix dates that best fit their local environment, however, will ensure that these are scheduled, as follows:

- Advisory Board Meeting   No1 May 2019
- Advisory Board Meeting   No2 August 2019
- Advisory Board Meeting   No3 November 2019
- Advisory Board Meeting   No4 February 2020
- Advisory Board Meeting   No5 May 2020
- Advisory Board Meeting   No6 July 2020
- Advisory Board Meeting   No7 November 2020
- Advisory Board Meeting   No8 February 2021

Youth and Employer Advisory Boards

The Youth and Employer Advisory Boards will work together to establish a common working ground to agree the skills and competency agenda for the project and inform project deliverables, including:

- Guiding and informing the project partners on the key competencies for employability skills identified for the project;
- Advise on the content for the Train the Trainer course, and
- Mapping of validation systems; along with
- Playing a key role in developing a public relations strategy for raising awareness of the need for lifelong learning through one's career, which will be especially targeted to those NEET or already engaged in employment.

Each of the Boards will have a slightly different focus, as follows:

Youth Advisory Boards:

- Enabling young people to engage with project partners and local employers to address what they feel are their training needs when it comes to lifelong employability skills competencies.
- Engaging with the project's external evaluator

Employer Advisory Boards:

- Allowing an exchange of learning and insight between young people and employers
- Providing employers an opportunity to express the gaps they are witnessing in young people's employability skills.

Advisory Board Creation and Management: Four Project Partners

- Project Partners, STRIM, Ballymun Job Centre, Ciofs-FP and Turku will establish one Youth Advisory Board and one Employer Advisory Board.
- Each Board will meet quarterly throughout the life-time of the project.

Each of the Boards will meet in accordance with the Intellectual Output (IO) Timeline and will provide input to the project's activities for the lifetime of the project. Further, will be responsible for supporting the compilation of a LOCAL REPORT featuring local recommendations, as part of Intellectual Output (2).

Rinova and MetropolisNet

- Will be responsible for overseeing the quarterly Board meetings, allowing for unbiased monitoring of the Boards.

Advisory Board Set-up

Reasons for creating an Advisory Board

The main reason for creating an advisory board is to seek expertise outside of the project. In the case of YEC we are seeking young people and employers who can provide project partners with knowledge, understanding, insight, experiences and in some cases, strategic thinking needed to develop tools and address employability needs.

Creating and operating an Advisory Board

There are two key questions to be asked when creating and operating an advisory board. The first question is "What are we trying to achieve?" and the second is "How should the advisory board by conducted?"

- Mandate

To ensure that the advisory board functions well and meets expectations, it will be important for those creating the advisory board to consider what the participants are expected to do and what input is expected from them. The advisory board may be more dynamic and productive if each board member has distinctive knowledge and/or different experiences. Ask yourself, "What is being sought from the advisory board / what sort of advice is being sought?"

- Focus

Individuals selected and taking part in an advisory board should share a commitment to the common goal and/or have similar interests. Essentially, the advisory board should determine the focus of the board. However, it will be the role of the Facilitator to guide, support and keep the board on track.

- Size

The size of the advisory board will influence both efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, it may be beneficial to start from a fairly small group and then grow the board to its ultimate number. It is suggested that the maximum size for an advisory board is eight members so that there is a good group dynamic. For the YEC project the following has been agreed:

- Partners will each recruit and engage 10 young people on the Youth Advisory Board
- Partners will each recruit and engage 10 employers on the Employer Advisory Board

See the **Ten Top Tips** for Engaging the Board Annex (1) and Annex (2)

Considering the benefits for bringing the two Advisory Boards together

Through YEC two types of Advisory Boards will be created – (i) Youth Advisory Board and (ii) Employer/Youth Worker Advisory Board. Whilst there are initial benefits of facilitating these groups separately, it is strongly advised that consideration is given to the benefits gained from bringing the two Advisory Boards together, especially during phases of reviewing training materials, providing guidance on the train the trainer programme, public relations and the validation of the project, for example.

Considering the project's timeline, it is suggested that the Advisory Boards have opportunity to meet one another, however, it should be the group and not the facilitator that decides how they should/could introduce one-another. Some ideas are as follows:

Once individual Board Profiles are created, individual partners should explore and implement creative ways in which those Profiles can be exchanged between the Boards.

- o Consider the group, especially the young people engaged, and make a judgement as to whether the young people could take part in a short online introduction session.
- o If you have access to the appropriate facilities and resources, can a short video be made to have both Boards create a group introduction that can be shared.

Consider opportunities for the two Boards to meet in person, as follows:

- o Create an opportunity for a social meeting. For example, this could take place at the beginning of the 'Performing' stage of the group.
- o Consider whether it is possible to organise that the Boards both meet on the same day but at different times e.g. the Youth Advisory Board meet between 16:00-17:00 then take part in a social event (with food and refreshments) at which the Employer Advisory Board join the social before attending their meeting at 18:00-19:00.

To enable this creative and supportive process to happen it is recommended that:

- Those planning the arrangement for and timing of the Advisory Boards show the flexibility needed to ensure maximum engagement and retention.
- The facilitator(s) is/are highly skilled and competent in facilitation of young people, professionals, or both.
- Those responsible for managing the Advisory Boards locally should demonstrate an extensive skills, knowledge and competency profile of each Facilitator engaged.

If further clarification of the role of the facilitator is required, the following Toolbox resource may be useful: https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/leadership/group-facilitation/facilitation-skills/main

Creating the right environment and facilitating the Advisory Boards

Setting your local agenda

There are eight Advisory Board meetings over the lifetime of the YEC project. It is envisaged that the first two Advisory Board meetings will be longer than the remaining six, as these will focus on forming and bonding the group and setting the foundations for their collaboration and work to be undertaken. It is recommended that the facilitator agrees the length of the meetings with the Advisory Board so that they can take ownership of decision-making. Whilst setting a local agenda is considered important, it is recommended that the Advisory Boards are facilitated to create a Theory of Change and that format for the meetings are planned broadly with the following in mind:

- **Input**: activities reflect the needs of the group in terms of (i) the welfare and well-being of the group and (ii) the staged development of the group and the project's activities.
- **Output**: activities reflect what needs to be produced at each key stage of the project.

- **Reflective reports**: verbally and written to ensure (i) reflection on what went well, what went not so well and lessons learnt and (ii) resulting impact and what needs to be reflected back to the Advisory Board, especially in terms of what has changed in terms of their input.
- **Theme reports**: verbally and written to ensure (i) IO Leaders are informed of Advisory Board discussions, responses and actions.
- **Evaluation**: both Advisory Boards should be provided with an opportunity to evaluate their performance and progression. It is recommended that evidence of impact is captured at key stages, for example, at the time of reviewing training materials, public relations, train the trainer programme, etc.

Group Development Stages: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing and Adjourning

It is important to remember that the Advisory Boards come together as a new group of individuals. As a group, collectively, they will go through as staged pathway from getting to know one-another through to performing as a group, building relationships and facing challenges along the way. It is important to bear this in mind. It might be wise to facilitate an understanding of the stages of team/group development during the first meeting so that everyone understands that what is happening at the various stages fits in with a recognisable pattern of behaviours. Further, by following these various stages the facilitator will be able to design and embed group activities that will enhance the group's potential within each stage and achieve their set goals. The path that most groups/teams follow, as identified by psychologist Bruce Tuckman's is as follows:

Forming: At this stage the Advisor Board members are positive, polite, some anxious, excited, and some, if not all, will not have a clear idea of what the Board has to do and achieve.

Storming: This is the stage when Board members and indeed sometimes the entire group push boundaries. It is at this stage when many groups/teams fail. Authority may be challenged, people might challenge formed perception of position or role. Individuals within the Advisory Board might find this situation stressful.

Norming: This is when people start to resolve their differences, appreciate one-another and their strengths, etc. It might be now that the Board feel more social and that they feel sufficiently secure to give and receive constructive feedback.

Performing: At this stage, the Board will work hard towards goals, milestones and targets and the functioning of the Advisory Board will be effective and efficient.

Adjourning: Members of the Board who like routine, or who have developed close working relationships with others may find this stage difficult, and therefore, careful disbanding of the Board must be built into the programme of facilitation.

Facilitation

For YEC to be successful the Advisory Boards will need to be facilitated through authentic engagement. Therefore, those responsible for the Advisory Boards need to ensure that they are effectively facilitated. The person appointed as facilitator for either one or both of the Advisory Boards is required to have the following skills:

- Communication Skills
- Active Listening Skills
- Ability to Build Rapport
- Capable of implementing Structure and recording Facts and Feelings
- Capable of developing Synergy
- Ability to use Effective Questioning Techniques

The qualities of a good facilitator are:

- Understanding/experience of the need to ensure the well-being of all participants
- Experience of and skill in participatory and peer-to-peer facilitation methods
- Ability to practice openness
- Demonstrates flexibility
- Demonstrates a passionate interest in the subject/theme

Safeguarded environments

YEC will engage young people who are experiencing a range of situations including (i) Educational Difficulties, (ii) Social Obstacles, (iii) Cultural Differences and (iv) Economic Obstacles.
Due to the complex characteristics the target group will have it is important to ensure that the advisory board meetings will be held in a safeguarded environment. It is important that the young people feel safe and secure during the project activities as this will enable them to concentrate on the activities and benefit from the experience and gain skills and experiences. The participants should be able to feel safe in the environment to take risk and step outside their comfort zones to enable them to explore, innovate and be constructive.

To create a safe environment for the advisory board meetings the partners should undertake the following:

1. Hold the meetings in a clean and orderly room
2. Ask the participants to create a code of conduct on for the meetings (e.g. no personal or derogatory comments, respect the speaker, do not interrupt each other).
3. Allow the participants to be openly expressive and encouraging to others
4. Celebrate the work achieved during the meetings
5. Turn mistakes into learning activities.
6. Create connections and interact with the participants.
7. Stay calm and controlled always.
8. Model kindness at every opportunity.

More information on safeguarding can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees

Method: Participatory Appraisal

One method of peer-to-peer facilitation that can be considered most useful for the types of Advisory Boards being created and developed is Participatory Appraisal.

Participatory Appraisal can be considered an appropriate participatory facilitation model for YEC as it is one that enables local people to identify their own priorities and make their own decision about the future. Participatory Appraisal uses visual and flexible tools to ensure that everyone can join in regardless of their background, which is particularly useful for the engagement and participation of young people. Also, it is a method that can be used in a familiar environment/location, which should put everyone at ease.

A brief introduction to participatory appraisal is provided here:
http://shortwork.org.uk/participatory-research/an-introduction-to-participatory-appraisal/

Essentially, participatory appraisal is best used when the users of the method are willing to let the community take control, when you want to base your actions on local knowledge and when you want to reach out to and engage diverse representatives of the community. With this in mind, it is considered that participatory appraisal can be used effectively for YEC. In terms of tools, *appreciative inquiry* is considered one of the most useful tools that can be used.

Appreciative Inquiry will help the Advisory Boards build a vision for the future. The facilitator will need to initially consider exploring what has worked in the past, the reasons why and then go on to imagine and create a vision of what would make a successful future. There are various stages of appreciative inquiry to consider, as follows:

- **Discovery Stage**: instead of focusing on "what are the problems" appreciative inquiry asks "what works", which helps focus on identifiable positives.
- **Dream Stage**: allows for the focus on how 'the community' can contain all of the positive features (in the discovery stage).
- **Design Stage**: requires focus on participants working together and try to identify the steps that can make the dream stage a reality.
- **Destiny Stage**: is focused on making adjustments and implementing actions/stages with a view to attempt to secure future success.

More information on appreciative inquiry:
https://appreciativeinquiry.champlain.edu/learn/appreciative-inquiry-introduction/

Importantly, participatory appraisal can deliver empowered participants, better relationships between participant groups, reliable and valid mapping of local knowledge and priorities, and is a good tool to make decisions with.

Method: Theory of Change

To ensure that YEC is reflective of the local environment and impact of the project's implementation is captured, it is recommended that by the end of the second meeting of the Advisory Boards there should be a Theory of Change (ToC) created and secures the "buy-in" of both Advisory Boards. ToC is often referred to as a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. Basically, ToC defines long-term goals and then maps backward to identify necessary preconditions. These are then mapped out in an Outcomes Framework, which then provides the basis for identifying what type of activity or intervention will

lead to the outcomes identified. Overall, development of a ToC will lead to better planning and evaluation.
https://www.thinknpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Creating-your-theory-of-change1.pdf

Approach: Embedding a Youth Work Approach

- **Youth Work**

As with the suggestion of taking a participatory appraisal approach that has a focus on exploring "what works". Youth Work focuses on personal and social development – the skills and attributes of young people – rather than to 'fix a problem'. It is an educational process that engages with young people in a curriculum that deepens a young person's understanding of themselves, their community and the work in which they live and supports them to proactively bring about positive change.

Youth Work is informed by a set of beliefs which include a commitment to equal opportunity, to young people as partners in learning and decision-making and to helping young people to develop their own set of values.

- **Youth Work Values**

A Youth Work Approach is one that is underpinned by a clear set of shared values, which can include:

- Young people choosing to take part
- Utilising young people's view of the world
- Treating young people with respect
- Working with young people to help them make informed choices about their personal responsibilities within their communities
- Helping young people develop stronger relationships and collective identities
- Respecting and valuing differences
- Promoting the voice of young people

For the YEC project it is envisaged that the participation level via the advisory boards will be collaborative. The young people will be involved in the development of ideas and solutions. The partnership will work with the young people to incorporate the ideas and solutions that have been developed as a result of the advisory meetings.

Having a Flexible Plan: the Art of Facilitation

It is important that the Facilitator builds activities into the Advisory Board sessions so that the group is prepared for the tasks ahead. Equally, timing is everything – the Facilitator needs to carefully make informed judgements on the group dynamic and be able to adjust the task and the timing of the task/meeting to enable full engagement. Therefore, the Facilitator needs to consider:

- o Using appropriate ice-breakers and activities that help put the group at ease and help the group to develop competencies needed to undertake the tasks ahead

- The Advisory Board provides an excellent opportunity for young people to develop their employability competencies, so each Advisory Board meeting should include activities that help build these competencies.
- Aligned to the above, it should the role of the Facilitator to consider how young people can be encouraged to think about what employability competencies they are developing and applying to tasks, and how being involved in the Advisory Board might enhance employment prospects.

It will be the responsibility of the skilled Facilitator to create a framework for each of the Advisory Board Meetings. Initially, the framework will require significant input from the Facilitator, however, it is expected that over time, the Advisory Board will set the agenda and focus the activity of each Advisory Board Meeting. It will be the role of the Facilitator to support and facilitate progress aligned to the YEC project's Intellectual Outputs (IOs), for example:

- Advisory Board Meeting (1): ensure that the Employability Competences are explored
- Advisory Board Meeting (3): ensure that the Public Relations Strategy is agreed
- Advisory Board Meeting (5): ensure that there is consensus on the Training Materials
- Advisory Board Meeting (6): ensure that there is agreement made on the Train the Trainer

Recruitment: Young People

In terms of recruiting and engaging young people, it is important to hold an initial informational meeting with a 'hook' to draw in young people. You will need to build excitement and awareness of the YEC project through appropriate communication channels and social media that young people prefer to use. In all communications it will be essential to promote the benefits of getting involved.

Six Principles of Engagement

1. We know why we are engaging
2. We know who to engage
3. We know the history
4. We start together
5. We are genuine
6. We are relevant and engaging

Tools for Youth Engagement

- Be clear
- Be genuine
- Be meaningful
- Provide young people with skills
- Develop Relationships
- Build Resources
- Get the timing and location right
- Focus on accessibility
- Provide out of pocket expenses
- Be accountable
- Be supportive

- Use simple and accessible language
- Don't make assumptions
- Adults should not take over

At the stage of recruitment, it is advised that partners capture a baseline profile of the young people engaged. The baseline profile will be focused upon the soft skills identified in the project and monitoring of these will capture development of these competencies at the start, mid-point and end of the project to capture change experienced:

- Job-orientation and searching skills
- Motivation and autonomy
- Wellness
- Communication Skills
- Professionalism

It will be important to build a profile of the Youth Advisory Board, featuring their individual profiles, their input into the project and case studies to showcase what has been gained through their involvement. Such case studies should focus on capturing the impact that their involvement in the Advisory Board has had, especially capturing what has changed in themselves but also capturing what they have helped change. Essentially, each young person needs to be able to clearly see the benefits of being involved.

Over the lifetime of the YEC project, partners will be committed to building the capabilities of young people so that there is a clear link between their engagement and their own personal development, in terms of both cognitive, social and emotional capabilities. Therefore, from the outset, the facilitator will be responsible for the ongoing welfare and wellbeing of the group.

Building Capabilities of young people: a bridge between personal and positional change

Through the Advisory Boards, there should be a focus on building capabilities so that every young person engaged feels they have progressed.

Within this context, a plethora of evidence suggests that all young people need to develop both cognitive, social and emotional capabilities to help them active the outcomes that they, and others, value both in their lives right now, and for their future.[1]

A consistent core set of social and emotional capabilities that are of value to young people were identified in the Young Foundation's 'A Framework of outcomes for young people' as shown in diagram (1) below:

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[1] Young Foundation: youngfoundation.org A Framework of outcomes for young people (Bethia McNeil, Neil Reeder and Julia Rich) July 2012
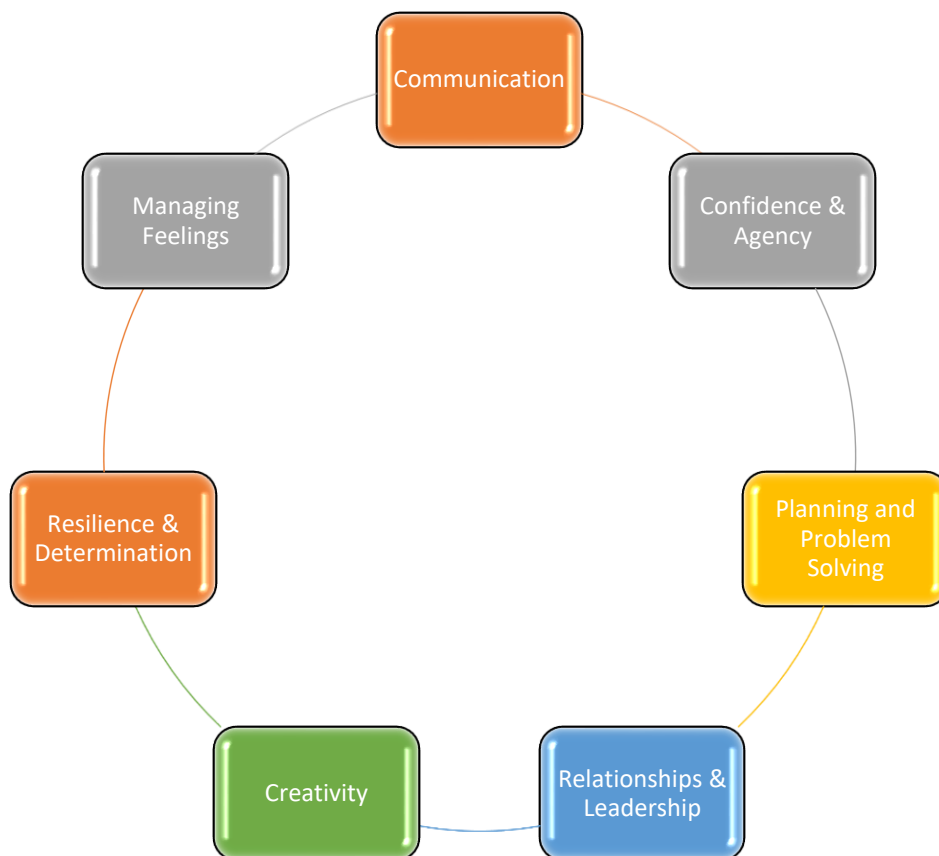
Communication: explaining; expressing; presenting; listening; questioning; using different ways of communicating.

Confidence & Agency: self-reliance; self-efficacy; self-belief; ability to shape your own life and the world around you.

Planning & Problem Solving: negotiating resources; setting and achieving goals; decision-making; researching; analysing; critical thinking; challenging; evaluating.

Relationships & Leadership: motivating others; valuing and contributing to team-working; establishing positive relationships; interpreting others; managing conflict.

Creativity: imagining alternative ways of doing things; applying learning in a new context; enterprising; innovating; remaining open to new ideas.

Resilience & Determination: self-discipline; self-management; self-motivated; having a sense of purpose; self-controlled.

Managing Feelings: reviewing; self-awareness; self-regulating; self-accepting.

Within the context of the YEC project, individual partners will need to consider how the planned activities can help develop one or more of the above outcomes, so that each young person engaged can map their 'journey of change'.

Employer Advisory Board Engagement: Facilitating lifelong learning

The Employer Advisory Board will provide a platform to engage local employers to address what they feel are the employability competencies needed by young people and to address two key issues in order to establish a common ground:

- Allowing an exchange of learning and insight between young people and employers, and
- Providing employers an opportunity to express the gaps they are witnessing in young people's employability skills.

Recruitment: Employers and Employer Representatives
The Board will be made up of carefully-selected professionals and will operate with a strong purpose, a set of shared values and commitment to achieving set goals. This will be achieved by:

- Planning and defining the reasons for forming a board of employer advisers, as this will ensure that the right people for the job are secured.
- The right employer advisory board will be a collection of professionals from wide-ranging business sectors and backgrounds and will bring a myriad of experience and different view points. This should include those employed as Youth Workers as a representative of employers providing youth-focused services.
- It might be wise to balance employers that are recognised as youth friendly with those who are not, so that diverse opinions and different perspectives are brought to the board.
- A small group of employers may prove to be more effective and easier to coordinate.
- Establish clear expectations in terms of role, responsibilities and the commitment that they will need to make.
- Ideally, there should be clear benefits to be gained from taking part.

As with the Youth Advisory Board, the Employer Board will be facilitated, which will enable and encourage discussion. In both cases, if the Board makes a decision, it is important to ensure that the owner of the action or advice given needs to be responded to and taken on board.

See the **Ten Top Tips** for Engaging Employers Annex (2)

Reflection, Reporting and Review

Over the lifetime of the project, it is essential that sufficient time is allocated for reflection, feedback and impact evaluation. With this in mind, two approaches will be implemented by Rinova, as follows:

- After each Advisory Group meeting there will be three processes:

(1) A reflection on the group itself
- The facilitator to fill out a short report (from a template) about how the dynamics of the group went – how people related, any issues etc.
- They then send the report to Rinova and this is followed by a short discussion between Rinova and the partner / facilitator about that particular group/session (using the report as a starting point).

- The partner/facilitator then amends the report to include this discussion and sends the report to Met Net
- Met Net to collate these partner reports from the quarter and to write a short report re: common issues, sharing of best practice etc and send this report out to the partners before their next quarter meetings

(2) Reflection on the main focus / topic of the group
- Facilitator to fill in template re the main focus / topic of the group, e.g. any discussions, outcomes etc. This will then be sent to the partner organisation responsible for the IO that the topic relates to. (the individual partners can choose to create their own template to collect the information they want for their IO, or a standard template can be in place).
- The relevant partner would then collate the information sent into a short report
- This will be shared with partners and would also be fed back to participants at the beginning of the next session (to promote ownership i.e. awareness that their ideas feed into the process)

(3) Participant Evaluation
- Participants to individually give feedback from a template devised by Met Net for general evaluation purposes
- Forms to be sent by facilitator to Met Net
- Met Net to collate and report back to partners
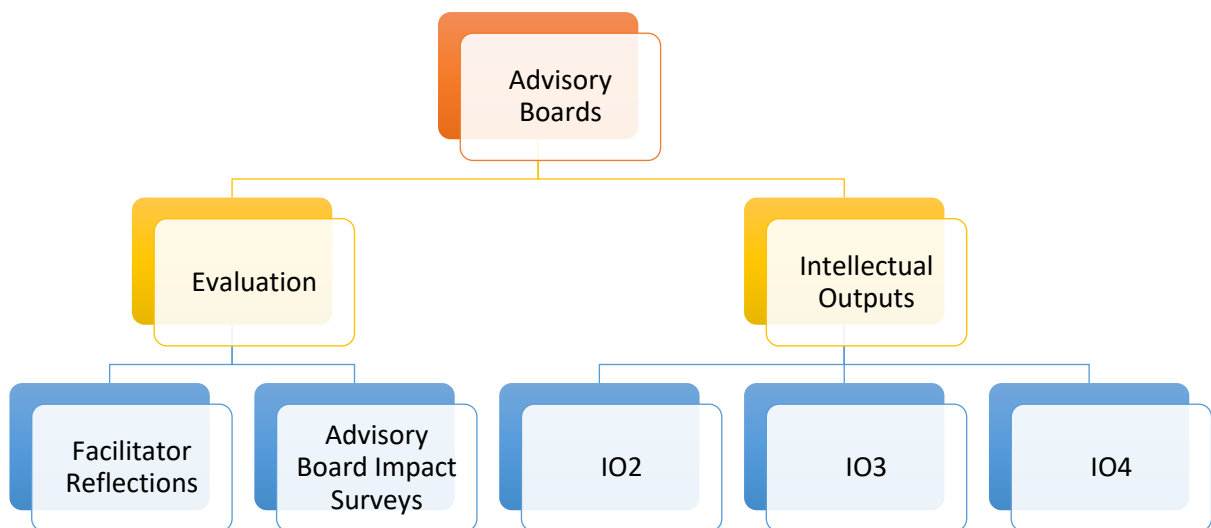
IO2: Training Materials
The aim is to address the need for training in a multitude of employability competencies for young people, with particular focus on the personal, social and learning to learn competency from the Council of The European Union. The Advisory Boards will have a key role in advising the partnership on how to create training programmes to respond to the needs of young people and support them in developing these personal, social and employability competencies

IO3: Train the Trainer
The aim of the Train the Trainer course is to focus on youth workers and guidance practitioners engaging with young people who are seeking employment. The Advisory Boards will have an

important role to play here, engaging with the partnership to assess the appropriateness of the training course created.

IO4: Validation
This aims to provide a guide for local youth workers and practitioners to map the modules from the train the trainer course, or any employability skills training, onto current validation systems under ET 2020. The Advisory Boards will provide insight and expert opinion on how best to present skill validation as a young jobseeker.

Protocols for Problems within the Advisory Boards
Rinova and Ballymun share a responsibility to support a partner with any major issues that arise within an advisory board. However, it is important to reiterate that the facilitators of the boards are expected to have a level of skill and experience in facilitating groups and working with young people and adults

Outline Framework – Advisory Board Meeting Schedule

Youth Employability Competences – Advisory Board Timeline										
Timeline	**Jan – Mar 19**	**Apr – Jun 19**	**Jul – Sep 19**	**Oct – Dec 19**	**Jan – Mar 20**	**Apr – Jun 20**	**Jul – Sep 20**	**Oct – Dec 20**	**Jan – Mar 21**	**Apr – Jun 21**
IO1	Youth and Employer Advisory Boards – Jan 19 – May 21									
IO2		Employability Competencies Training Modules – Apr 19 – Mar 20								
IO3					Employability Competencies Train the Trainer Course – Mar 20 – Nov 20					
IO4								Competency Validation Guide Oct 20 – Mar 21		

		FORMING		STORMING	NORMING	PERFORMING		PERFORMING & ADJOURNING	ADJOURNING
Advisory Board Meetings	⇒	Meeting 1 — May 19	Meeting 2 — August 19	Meeting 3 — November 19	Meeting 4 — February 20	Meeting 5 — May 20	Meeting 6 — July 20	Meeting 7 — November 20	Meeting 8 — February 21
Topic of Meeting	⇒	Advisory Group / Individual Profiles; Group dynamics – IO1; 6 Competencies – IO2; Forming Exercises	Creation of Group; Theory of Change; Introduction to other advisory groups; Forming Exercises; Young People & Employer Social	Theory of Change; Storming Exercises	Discussion (focus group) on potential course materials – IO2; Norming Exercises; Prepare for Young people and Employer groups to merge.	Review of IO2 Materials; Discussion (focus group) on potential course materials – IO3; Performing Exercises; Merge Young People and Employer Groups; Forming Exercises	Feedback from Train the Trainer – IO3; Personal development through participation in groups – IO1; Performing Exercises	Employer board – How to present skills validation as a young jobseeker – IO4; Youth board – Qualification/ validation discussion. Employer Expectations – IO4; Performing & Adjourning Exercises	Review of IO1 Guide; Reflection on project journey – IO1; Review of Skills gained and achievements – IO1; Next steps / Exit Strategy; Adjourning Exercises; Celebration
Reports/ Forms to be completed from meeting	⇒	Completion of (a) IO1 report, (b) Relevant IO feedback forms, (c) Participant evaluation form	Completion of (a) IO1 report, (b) Relevant IO feedback forms, (c) Participant evaluation form	Completion of (a) IO1 report, (b) Relevant IO feedback forms, (c) Participant evaluation form	Completion of (a) IO1 report, (b) Relevant IO feedback forms, (c) Participant evaluation form	Completion of (a) IO1 report, (b) Relevant IO feedback forms, (c) Participant evaluation form	Completion of (a) IO1 report, (b) Relevant IO feedback forms, (c) Participant evaluation form	Completion of (a) IO1 report, (b) Relevant IO feedback forms, (c) Participant evaluation form	Completion of (a) IO1 report, (b) Relevant IO feedback forms, (c) Participant evaluation form

10 Top Tips for developing a Youth Advisory Board

1. Have a range of ages, backgrounds and abilities: Aim for at least eight members at each meeting.
2. Create the right atmosphere. Ensure that meetings are friendly. Ask everyone to introduce themselves so new members feel welcome. Provide refreshments and reimburse travel expenses.
3. Set an agenda for each meeting. Have one staff member for facilitating inclusion in agenda creation, planning and running the meeting. Involve everyone early so that actions from previous meetings can be reported on, and important things don't get forgotten about. It is essential that the board members feel included.
4. Listen to everyone's opinion so that they know that their voice is being heard. Ensure that sufficient guidance and training has been provided so that everyone feels confident and able to contribute at the level they feel capable of.
5. Balance fun with getting things done. A social aspect of meetings must be effectively and efficiently planned into the agenda, but not at the expense of getting things done, so the group must be facilitated to agree outcomes and achievements.
6. Explore and use ideas put forward in a creative way and encourage everyone to work on them as a team – using participatory appraisal or mind-mapping tools for example, so that everyone can share ideas and explore options.
7. Give unique opportunities for board members to gain new skills and experiences by inviting them to employer networking events and or visiting employer premises or meeting people who implement employability strategy or programmes.
8. Use a range of ice-breakers to help the Board have fun and develop relationships.
9. Make sure that at the beginning of every Advisory Board meeting there is time allocated for a Check-in from each of the Board members.
10. Make sure that at the end of every Advisory Board meeting there is time allocated for a Check-out from each of the Board members.

10 Top Tips for developing an Employer Advisory Board

1. Clearly determine the purpose, values and objectives of your Advisory Board and be sure to engage those that have good local insight.
2. Make sure that you choose the right people by first identifying what skills, knowledge and expertise are needed. Ideally, you want Board members to have strong communication skills, be problem-solvers, influencers and who are open-minded.
3. Highlight the benefits to employers of taking part in the advisory board. These could include: increased understanding of needs of potential employees and ways to support them with these, increased knowledge and understanding of generic, transferable employability skills and how to support their development, development of knowledge of skills validation processes, including qualifications, experience of course / curriculum development, experience of development of public relations strategy and materials, a networking experience that supports best practice and builds local connections
4. By setting expectations from the outset you will more likely to engage the right people and maintain their input.
5. It will be really important to get the most out of the Advisory Board meetings so the venue should be easily accessible, comfortable and free of distractions. Choosing the right facilitator is essential as it they will be able to engage key individuals, how to stimulate and draw out conversation. Actions should be agreed, circulated and revisited.
6. The Board should be encouraged to be open, honest and frank and should be sufficiently professional in their behaviour to consider diverse opinions, and in some instances, hear things that they might not like. It will be the role of the facilitator to
7. In reality, it may prove challenging to get all of the Advisory Board together on a regular basis. So, be considerate of how individual Board members prefer to communication and/or the Board can communicate outside of the formal meetings so that they are well informed.
8. Ensuring that Board members are well informed will ensure that they remain committed and excited about the project and by keeping them regularly informed will be of greater value to all involved and primarily to the project.
9. If for any reason, the Board member proves not to be effective, it would be best to carefully and sensitively exit the Board member, with full written record kept on file.
10. It is important to consider multiple feedback methods so that all Board members can use their time effectively and that (you) don't abuse the time that they have given to the project – be clear about the time that the Board member is being asked to give.
11. Consider ways that you can compensate your Advisory Board. Compensation can include providing food and refreshments.