



BRIDGES

Bring & Develop Good Education Systems

FACTORY LEARNING LABS OPERATING AS
SIMULATED COMPANIES REALIZED



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D3.2 – FACTORY LEARNING LABS OPERATING AS SIMULATED COMPANIES REALIZED

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INTRODUCTION

The **Factory Learning Labs (FLL)** is a core and innovative component of the **BRIDGES project (Bring & Develop Good Education Systems)**, co-funded by the **Erasmus+ Programme** under the **Capacity Building in VET (CB-VET)** action. The project aims to improve **the quality, relevance, and inclusiveness** of vocational education and training (VET) in the tourism sector in selected Latin American countries by developing and institutionalising **structured Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Programmes (PaPs)**.

Created within the framework of Work Package 3 (WP3), the FLL is a **practice-oriented educational setting** designed to replicate the real-world operations of a tourism enterprise. It enables learners — particularly those from disadvantaged or underrepresented backgrounds — to actively participate in **role-based and scenario-driven activities** that help them develop the practical and soft skills required in the workplace. The FLL provides a **safe, structured, and pedagogically guided context** where students can bridge the gap between theory and practice through **hands-on experiences** that reflect actual workplace challenges and expectations.

Developed within Work Package 3 (WP3), the FLLH represents a **simulation-based educational model** that replicates the dynamics of tourism enterprises. It provides learners — particularly those from disadvantaged or underrepresented backgrounds — with **hands-on, scenario-driven experiences** that mirror real workplace processes. By engaging in **role-based activities** within a safe and supportive setting, students can build both **technical competences** and **transversal skills** such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving.

The FLL directly supports the overarching objective of BRIDGES: to **bridge the gap between classroom-based learning and labour market demands**, especially in contexts where **dual training systems and structured work-based learning opportunities are limited**. Within the Pre-Apprenticeship Programme, the FLL functions as a preparatory tool that:

- Translates occupational skill requirements into applied, experiential learning activities;
- Expands access to workplace-like training experiences for learners lacking direct opportunities;
- Strengthens digital, entrepreneurial, and interpersonal skills needed in the tourism sector;
- Encourages equity and inclusion by offering flexible, adaptable, and practice-oriented pathways.

The FLL is designed to operate in **both physical and digitally supported formats**, ensuring that it can be implemented in diverse contexts. A set of **ready-to-use scenarios and role cards** will be developed by the consortium, enabling trainers to adapt activities to their classroom or blended environment. Trainers will be provided with **guidance and recommendations** on suitable platforms and tools for online delivery; however, the choice of format and tools will remain flexible,

allowing each institution to select the approach best suited to their learners and resources.

The first version of the FLL will be released as a **prototype** and further refined based on continuous feedback from trainers, learners, and institutional stakeholders during its implementation. This iterative approach will ensure that the model remains **pedagogically sound, user-friendly, and transferable** across diverse institutional and cultural contexts. Beyond its immediate contribution to learner development, the FLL will serve as a **demonstrator model of innovation in VET**, capable of being **scaled, adapted, and integrated** by other education providers and systems.

This deliverable provides:

- The educational principles underpinning the FLL;
- Practical guidance for trainers implementing simulation-based pedagogy;
- A detailed overview of the scenarios, role cards, and supporting tools;
- Recommendations for the FLL's integration into the Pre-Apprenticeship Programme.

Fully aligned with the BRIDGES project objectives, the **Factory Learning Labs** contribute to creating more **inclusive, engaging, and competence-based learning pathways** that prepare young people for successful entry into the tourism labour market and foster a **culture of innovation in VET provision**.

1. WHAT 'FACTORY LEARNING LABS' IS?

Conceptual Framework of the Factory Learning LABs (FLL)

What the FLL is (and isn't). The FLL is a **classroom-first, scenario-based teaching methodology** that uses **role-play** to mirror tourism-sector workflows. It is **not a software platform**. Delivery is **flexible and adaptable**, with the methodology most

commonly applied in classroom-based settings, but also able to incorporate digital elements to enrich activities when suitable. The Factory Learning Labs constitutes a realistic, experiential learning setting — a structured and practice-oriented educational framework designed to replicate the real-world operations of a tourism enterprise through role-based activities, collaborative decision-making, and scenario-driven challenges. Rather than creating a digital platform, the FLL focuses on hands-on, classroom-based exercises that mirror company dynamics within a safe and pedagogically guided context. Digital tools are recommended as supportive instruments to enhance the delivery of scenarios and role-play activities, but they remain optional and complementary to the core learning experience.

The Factory Learning Labs (FLL) is a structured, simulation-based educational model designed to replicate the essential functions, workflows, and interpersonal dynamics of real-world businesses in the tourism sector. Developed within the framework of the BRIDGES project, the FLL enhances the practical relevance and quality of the Pre-Apprenticeship Program (PaP) by offering learners meaningful exposure to applied tasks in a controlled and guided environment. It acts as a transitional learning framework that bridges the gap between school-based education and work-based learning, while facilitating the acquisition of both job-specific competences and transversal skills.

The Factory Learning Labs constitutes a practice-oriented educational setting — a structured and experiential framework designed to replicate the real-world operations of a tourism enterprise through role-based activities, collaborative decision-making, and scenario-driven challenges. Rather than creating a digital platform, the FLL focuses on realistic, classroom-based exercises that mirror company dynamics within a safe and pedagogically guided context. Digital tools are recommended as supportive instruments to enhance the delivery of scenarios and role-play activities, but they remain optional and complementary to the core learning process.

The design of the FLL is grounded in the analysis conducted during the project's initial phase, which revealed **significant gaps between existing VET provision and the evolving demands of the tourism industry**. The mapping of dual training systems, occupational skills, and enterprise expectations highlighted the following key challenges:

- **Outdated and overly theoretical curricula** that fail to prepare learners for the dynamic and service-oriented nature of tourism workplaces.
- **Insufficient development of practical and digital competences**, including skills related to digital tools, customer interaction, sustainability, and quality service delivery.
- **Limited access to structured work-based learning opportunities**, especially for disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, which hinders equal participation in training and employment.
- **Weak alignment between VET curricula and labour market needs**, particularly in transversal competences such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and adaptability, which are highly valued by employers.
- **Lack of mechanisms to recognise and validate non-formal or informal learning**, preventing learners from building on prior experience and skills.

The FLL directly addresses these shortcomings by simulating professional roles and scenarios typical of tourism operations. Learners participate in structured, role-based activities that reflect industry workflows, customer-facing situations, and problem-solving challenges. Through this approach, the FLL fosters learner engagement, contextualises learning outcomes, and develops the transversal skills — such as teamwork, communication, and critical thinking — that employers consistently identify as essential.

Importantly, the FLL is not a standalone digital platform but an practice-based training methodology. It can be implemented in multiple formats — classroom-based exercises, blended delivery approaches, or training sessions enhanced with

digital support — depending on institutional needs and available resources. To ensure flexibility and accessibility, the FLL provides a set of role-play scenarios and activity cards, available in both printable and digital versions. Trainers are also supported with guidelines and suggestions for complementary digital tools that can enrich the learning process, while retaining full autonomy to choose the most appropriate delivery method.

Inspired by the concept of a “simulated company,” the FLLH enables learners to take on realistic professional roles, such as travel agents, hotel receptionists, customer support officers, or event coordinators. Within these roles, learners perform tasks that mirror real industry operations — responding to client inquiries, managing bookings, resolving service issues, designing travel itineraries, or planning promotional activities. Each scenario provides clear role descriptions, task prompts, and step-by-step instructions, ensuring structured participation.

Every simulation is facilitated by a trainer, who prepares the environment, assigns roles, monitors activities, and provides formative feedback. Following the role-play, structured reflection sessions encourage learners to evaluate their performance, share alternative solutions, and consolidate learning outcomes. This cycle of application–feedback–reflection promotes deeper learning and the development of transferable competences.

By simulating workplace learning without requiring direct placement in a company, the FLL provides a flexible and inclusive solution for contexts where structured apprenticeships are limited. It is particularly valuable for learners who face barriers to accessing real-world training, ensuring they still benefit from practice-oriented, competence-driven experiences.

Pedagogically, the FLL promotes experiential learning, enabling learners to acquire knowledge through direct application, collaboration, and reflection. It supports the development of key transversal competences — communication, teamwork, adaptability, and problem-solving — while also building confidence in handling occupational tasks. Its adaptability allows trainers to tailor the model to different

learner levels, cultural contexts, and market realities, making it a versatile resource across diverse VET settings.

Trainers play a central role in the delivery of the FLL. Their responsibilities include designing scenarios, preparing the environment, assigning learner roles, guiding activities, and leading post-simulation evaluation. To support them, the FLL package includes trainer guidelines, role descriptions, scenario templates, assessment tools, and learner reflection sheets. Trainers will also be offered recommendations for digital platforms and tools that can complement or extend the simulations, increasing interactivity and modernising delivery.

In conclusion, the Factory Learning Labs is a pedagogically sound, inclusive, and adaptable model that equips learners with a realistic, engaging, and practice-based introduction to the tourism sector. By combining digital and printable resources with flexible delivery formats, it enhances VET provision, strengthens the learner experience, and contributes directly to the BRIDGES project's mission of reinforcing vocational training systems through innovation, inclusion, and alignment with labour market needs.

2. PEDAGOGICAL OBJECTIVES AND EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF THE FLL

2.1 Why a Learning Labs?

The development of the Factory Learning Labs (FLL) within the BRIDGES Pre-Apprenticeship Program arises from both systemic necessity and pedagogical innovation. Vocational education and training (VET) systems in several participating countries face ongoing challenges in aligning education with the evolving demands of the tourism sector. The OECD (2021) *Education Policy Outlook* highlights that in many Latin American countries, VET curricula remain outdated and insufficiently responsive to emerging occupational profiles, especially in service sectors such as tourism. Similarly, the European Training Foundation (ETF, 2020)

notes that the transition from school to work is hindered by a lack of structured dual training systems and weak cooperation between VET institutions and employers. The skills gap analysis carried out in the initial phase of the BRIDGES project confirmed these findings by identifying recurring issues such as outdated curricula, insufficient focus on new professional profiles, and limited integration of digital and practical competences. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2020), the tourism sector is undergoing rapid digitalisation, yet training provision in many partner countries continues to prioritise traditional occupational roles, leaving learners ill-prepared for new demands such as online marketing, sustainable tourism management, and customer experience design.

At the same time, many learners are unable to access structured workplace training due to the absence of dual training systems, fragmented apprenticeship models, or the limited capacity of local enterprises to host trainees. The ILO Global Apprenticeship Network (2019) stresses that limited availability of apprenticeships disproportionately affects young people in developing regions, while CEDEFOP (2020) reports that disadvantaged groups face systematic barriers in accessing high-quality work-based learning opportunities. These obstacles are compounded for vulnerable learners, including those from rural or low-income backgrounds, who encounter further difficulties linked to mobility constraints, lack of social networks, or socio-economic exclusion.

As a result, VET provision is often overly theoretical and disconnected from the realities of the labour market, leaving students underprepared for professional challenges. This gap between classroom instruction and workplace practice has been consistently emphasised in EU policy documents such as the Council Recommendation on Vocational Education and Training (2020), which calls for modernisation of curricula, stronger partnerships with employers, and wider access to work-based learning as prerequisites for improving employability and social inclusion.

The Factory Learning Labs has been designed to address these shortcomings by creating a **structured, practice-oriented educational setting** that replicates the functions and workflows of a real tourism enterprise. Within this **controlled and supportive framework**, learners engage in **scenario-based activities and role-play exercises** that reflect everyday business operations. They may, for example, take on the roles of hotel receptionists, travel agents, or event coordinators and be required to manage bookings, respond to customer complaints, design itineraries, or plan promotional campaigns. By participating in these **hands-on learning experiences**, students are able to apply theoretical knowledge in **realistic, practice-oriented contexts**, develop occupational competences specific to the tourism sector, and strengthen transversal skills such as communication, teamwork, and adaptability. This approach ensures that they are better prepared for workplace expectations and fosters confidence in handling complex professional tasks.

A further strength of the FLL lies in its inclusive orientation. By simulating workplace experiences that may not otherwise be accessible, the model guarantees that all learners, including those from disadvantaged or underrepresented backgrounds, can benefit from practice-oriented training. In contexts where company placements are scarce, where mobility is limited, or where discrimination and socio-economic barriers hinder access to apprenticeships, the FLL functions as an equaliser. It creates opportunities for young people to engage in applied learning and to experience the interpersonal and organisational dynamics of the workplace in a safe and structured way. This inclusive dimension is central to the added value of the FLL, as it reduces inequalities in access to high-quality vocational training.

In line with Erasmus+ priorities, the Factory Learning Labs is also designed to actively promote inclusivity and accessibility in vocational education. The simulation methodology can be adapted to meet the needs of learners with fewer opportunities, including those with limited digital skills, migrant backgrounds, or disabilities. Trainers are supported with guidance to ensure that scenarios are

accessible, role cards are written in clear and inclusive language, and activities can be modified to accommodate different learning styles or support requirements. The FLL also emphasises gender balance and equal participation by encouraging mixed-role assignments, promoting female representation in leadership roles within the simulations, and creating a safe environment where all learners feel empowered to contribute. By integrating these accessibility measures, the FLLH not only strengthens equity in participation but also reflects the diversity and inclusiveness that characterise modern workplaces.

By embedding the Factory Learning Labs within the Pre-Apprenticeship Program, the BRIDGES project reinforces its commitment to innovation, inclusion, and systemic quality improvement in VET. The model not only increases learner motivation and engagement by contextualising abstract curricular content, but also cultivates a culture of experiential learning where knowledge is acquired through doing, reflecting, and collaborating. At the same time, it serves as a scalable and adaptable framework that can be replicated across institutions and adapted to diverse national and local contexts. In this way, the FLL makes a strategic contribution to the broader objectives of BRIDGES by bridging the gap between school-based instruction and workplace practice, modernising VET provision, and ensuring that learners acquire competences directly aligned with the needs of the tourism labour market.

2.2 Objectives of the FLL

The Factory Learning Labs (FLL) has been conceived as a strategic instrument within the BRIDGES project to enhance the quality, relevance, and inclusiveness of vocational education and training (VET) in the tourism sector. Its primary objective is to bridge the existing gap between classroom-based instruction and the practical realities of the labour market by providing a **structured, practice-oriented learning setting** in which learners can acquire, apply, and consolidate the competences required by employers in the contemporary tourism industry.

To achieve this overarching goal, the FLL pursues the following specific objectives:

1. Translation of Occupational Requirements into Experiential Learning

The FLL is designed to transform occupational standards and job requirements into structured, scenario-based learning activities that replicate authentic workplace tasks and processes. By engaging in role-specific exercises—such as managing customer inquiries, designing tourism packages, or resolving service-related challenges—learners develop occupational competences within a pedagogically guided, practice-oriented context.

2. Strengthening of Transversal Competences

In addition to technical skills, the FLL aims to reinforce a comprehensive set of transversal competences that are essential for employability in a service-driven sector such as tourism. Through collaborative decision-making, problem-solving, and interactive role-play, learners cultivate communication, teamwork, adaptability, intercultural awareness, and critical thinking—competences that significantly enhance their readiness for professional integration.

3. Facilitation of the Transition from Education to Employment

A central objective of the FLL is to function as a pedagogical bridge between theoretical instruction and real-world professional practice. By replicating company workflows and operational challenges within a structured framework, the FLL allows learners to familiarise themselves with workplace expectations, organisational dynamics, and service standards. This preparation ensures a smoother and more effective transition into apprenticeships, employment, or further vocational training.

4. Expansion of Access to Work-Based Learning Opportunities

The FLL responds directly to the shortage of structured apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities in many partner countries. By offering a simulated workplace framework within VET institutions, it provides learners—especially those from disadvantaged or underrepresented groups—with equitable access to practice-based training. This ensures that all learners, regardless of socio-economic

background or geographic location, can benefit from experiential learning opportunities.

5. Support for Innovation and Digital Competence Development

While the FLL is not conceived as a digital platform, it promotes innovation by integrating optional digital tools and resources into its simulation-based methodology. Trainers are encouraged to complement role-play with relevant digital applications—such as booking systems, communication platforms, or collaborative online tools—thus strengthening learners' digital literacy and preparing them for technology-enhanced work environments.

6. Promotion of Inclusion, Equality, and Diversity

The FLL places a strong emphasis on inclusivity by ensuring that simulation activities are accessible and representative of diverse learner needs. Scenarios are designed to challenge stereotypes and promote gender balance, while activities can be adapted for learners with disabilities, limited digital skills, or migrant backgrounds. This inclusive approach not only enhances participation but also reflects the diversity and equity principles that underpin modern labour markets.

7. Enhancement of Institutional Capacity and Systemic Cooperation

Finally, the FLL seeks to strengthen the institutional capacity of VET providers by offering a flexible, scalable, and transferable pedagogical model. It can be embedded within existing curricula, tailored to local labour market conditions, and utilised as a framework for cooperation between training providers, employers, and public authorities. In doing so, the FLL contributes to the modernisation of VET systems and supports more coordinated approaches to skills development.

Through the achievement of these objectives, the Factory Learning Labs transforms vocational training into an integrated, learner-centred, and labour market-oriented process. It enables learners to acquire and apply a wide range of competences in a simulated model that closely mirrors real workplace conditions, thereby improving their employability and preparedness for professional life. Simultaneously, it strengthens the capacity of VET institutions to deliver inclusive, innovative, and

relevant training provision, contributing to the overarching goal of the BRIDGES project: to align vocational education with labour market needs while promoting social inclusion and equal opportunities.

2.2 Learning Outcomes

The Factory Learning Labs (FLL) is designed to support the acquisition of a coherent and multidimensional set of learning outcomes that reflect both the operational realities of the tourism sector and the broader employability skills demanded in contemporary labour markets. Unlike traditional classroom instruction, which often remains abstract and theoretical, the FLL provides learners with practice-based opportunities to participate in role-based simulations that replicate business operations and customer interactions typical of tourism enterprises. Within this structured framework, learners are able to experiment with decision-making, carry out occupational tasks, and reflect on their actions in a safe yet realistic setting. This pedagogical approach ensures that outcomes are not only knowledge-based but also practical, applied, and directly transferable to real-world professional contexts. Moreover, all identified learning outcomes are aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), ensuring that the competences acquired are transparent, recognisable, and transferable across different national and institutional contexts.

A first and essential category of outcomes concerns the development of **technical competences**, or job-specific skills directly linked to occupational roles in the tourism industry. Through the FLL scenarios, learners are introduced to workflows that mirror the day-to-day operations of hotels, travel agencies, tour operators, event management companies, and cultural heritage organisations. They may be required to design travel itineraries, process reservations, handle customer enquiries, solve logistical challenges, or coordinate service delivery. These activities are deliberately diverse to reflect the multidisciplinary nature of the tourism sector. In addition to practising core functions, learners internalise industry standards, acquire knowledge of sectoral procedures, and become familiar with the

operational routines that underpin workplace practices. By repeatedly engaging in these simulated tasks, they not only reinforce their technical abilities but also build confidence in performing them in authentic professional contexts.

The second group of outcomes focuses on the acquisition of **transversal competences**, which are crucial for employability across all sectors and consistently highlighted by employers as essential for long-term success. Within the FLL, learners engage in scenarios that require teamwork, effective communication, and collaborative problem-solving. They are challenged to interact with peers, share responsibilities for collective outcomes, and make joint decisions under conditions that replicate real-world time pressures and unpredictable circumstances. Through this process, learners develop communication skills, adaptability, time management, and the capacity to work productively as part of a team. Moreover, the need to handle unexpected problems or customer complaints within the simulations fosters resilience and initiative, enabling learners to practise coping strategies that are invaluable in dynamic service environments. These transversal competences complement technical skills and significantly enhance learners' readiness for professional integration.

In addition to technical and transversal outcomes, the FLL places strong emphasis on the development of **digital competences**, recognising that the tourism sector is increasingly shaped by digitalisation. Learners are encouraged to use digital tools to coordinate activities, communicate with colleagues, and present their outputs. Depending on the scenario, this may involve the use of digital booking systems, online communication platforms, or presentation tools to deliver solutions. In doing so, learners build confidence and fluency in applying digital technologies to workplace tasks, preparing them for the digital transformation of the industry. Alongside digital literacy, the FLL fosters **entrepreneurial competences** by encouraging learners to think creatively about customer needs, service innovation, and quality assurance. For instance, they may be tasked with designing a tourism package for a specific target group, developing a promotional campaign, or

proposing innovative approaches to service delivery. These entrepreneurial dimensions strengthen learners' ability to adapt to evolving markets and nurture a proactive, solution-oriented mindset.

Finally, the learning outcomes of the FLL are designed to be **complementary to those of the broader Pre-Apprenticeship Program (PaP)**. While classroom-based modules provide learners with theoretical knowledge and sector-specific foundations, the FLL ensures that this knowledge is applied and tested under conditions that closely resemble real workplaces. This integrated approach reinforces motivation, builds self-confidence, and nurtures learner autonomy. Most importantly, it offers disadvantaged learners — particularly those with limited access to apprenticeships or company placements — an inclusive pathway to experience workplace dynamics and practise essential competences.

By combining technical, transversal, digital, and entrepreneurial outcomes, the Factory Learning Labs prepares learners not only for successful participation in apprenticeships and entry-level employment but also for lifelong adaptability in a rapidly evolving labour market. In doing so, it establishes itself as a cornerstone of the BRIDGES Pre-Apprenticeship Program and a model of inclusive, competence-based vocational training. The table below illustrates how the expected learning outcomes correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) descriptors.

Table 1. Mapping of FLL Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome Area	Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility & Autonomy
Technical competences	Understands core concepts, workflows, and procedures in tourism operations.	Applies sector-specific techniques and tools to complete operational tasks independently.	Works under supervision but with increasing autonomy; takes responsibility for task completion and service quality.

Learning Outcome Area	Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility & Autonomy
Transversal competences	Understands principles of collaboration, communication, and customer service in a business context.	Communicates effectively, collaborates with peers, and solves problems in unpredictable contexts.	Takes responsibility for own work and contributes constructively to group outcomes.
Digital competences	Knows basic digital tools and their application in tourism services.	Uses digital platforms, software, and communication tools to complete professional tasks.	Demonstrates autonomy in selecting and applying digital solutions; adapts to emerging technologies.
Entrepreneurial competences	Understands fundamental business principles, customer needs, and innovation processes.	Generates ideas, develops service solutions, and adapts offers to client demands.	Shows initiative, assumes responsibility for proposing improvements, and reflects on outcomes.
Intercultural and diversity competences	Understands principles of cultural diversity, inclusivity, and intercultural communication in tourism.	Adapts communication and service approaches to different cultural contexts.	Acts responsibly and ethically in multicultural environments.

Learning Outcome Area	Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility & Autonomy
Sustainability and ethical competences	Understands sustainability principles, environmental responsibility, and ethical business practice.	Integrates sustainable and ethical considerations into decision-making and service delivery.	Takes responsibility for promoting sustainable and ethical practices.

2.3 Pedagogical Methodology

The pedagogical design of the Factory Learning Labs (FLL) is grounded in the philosophy of **experiential, learner-centred education**, which prioritises active engagement and applied practice over the passive reception of knowledge. Rather than merely studying theoretical concepts related to the tourism sector, learners are placed in **structured, simulation-based model** where they are required to act, make decisions, and collaborate as if they were operating within actual tourism enterprises. This approach reflects well-established principles of adult learning and vocational education, which emphasise that competences are most effectively internalised when learners perform tasks, explore alternative strategies, and reflect on the outcomes of their actions within a **guided and supportive context**. In this sense, the FLL operationalises the transition from “*learning about work*” to “*learning through work*”, even in settings where direct access to companies or apprenticeships is limited.

A central feature of the methodology is its reliance on **simulation pedagogy**, which integrates role-playing, scenario-based learning, and collaborative problem-solving into a coherent framework. In practice, learners are assigned professional roles — such as hotel receptionist, travel agent, or event coordinator — and immersed in structured scenarios that replicate the complex workflows and service dynamics of

real tourism businesses. These scenarios may involve handling customer complaints, coordinating last-minute changes in reservations, designing itineraries under budget constraints, or planning an event with limited resources. By situating learners within such realistic simulations, the FLL exposes them to the authentic dynamics of service provision, including **time-sensitive decision-making, customer satisfaction management, and effective coordination among colleagues**. Carefully designed role descriptions and task prompts ensure that each learner is actively engaged, while the collaborative nature of the activities strengthens teamwork, communication, and interpersonal skills — all essential transversal competences highlighted by employers.

Equally important is the **integration of reflection, formative assessment, and feedback** as core pedagogical components. The learning process within the FLL does not conclude when a simulation ends; rather, it transitions into a structured debriefing phase facilitated by the trainer. Learners are encouraged to reflect on their performance, analyse the decisions they made, and discuss the challenges they encountered. This reflective stage often takes place collaboratively, allowing peers to exchange observations and constructive feedback. Trainers use this opportunity to highlight best practices, address skill gaps, and reinforce key competences. By embedding reflection and feedback into the methodology, the FLL ensures that learners not only perform tasks but also **critically evaluate their actions**, internalise lessons, and transfer knowledge to new contexts. This cyclical approach fosters **self-awareness, confidence, and continuous improvement**, all of which are essential for successful labour market integration.

The **formative assessment strategy** employed in the FLL further enhances its pedagogical value. Assessment is not limited to evaluating final outputs but focuses equally on the process of learning and competence development. Trainers observe how learners communicate, manage their time, contribute to team objectives, and solve problems under simulated pressures. The assessment tools included in the FLL package provide structured criteria for evaluating both technical and

transversal competences, ensuring **objectivity, transparency, and consistency**. This approach positions assessment as a developmental tool rather than a summative judgement, supporting learners in identifying areas for growth and guiding them towards continuous skill enhancement.

Another defining principle of the FLL methodology is its flexibility in implementation, which allows the model to be adapted across diverse institutional contexts and resource conditions. The Hub can be delivered in fully face-to-face settings, where classrooms are transformed into simulated offices, travel agencies, or reception areas, with printed role cards and scenario materials structuring the activities. It can also be implemented in blended formats, where physical role-play is complemented by digital tools—such as online booking mock-ups, collaborative documents/boards, or communication software—to enhance realism and interactivity. In contexts where in-person training is not feasible, the FLL can be facilitated remotely using widely available tools that allow learners to connect and enact scenarios collaboratively. **A dedicated section in the FLL Trainers' Guide provides optional recommendations and quick-start checklists for lightweight digital support (e.g., Delightex Edu and similar tools),** and the final choice of format remains flexible, enabling institutions to select approaches best suited to their learner profiles, infrastructure, and pedagogical objectives.

By combining **active participation, realistic simulations, structured reflection, formative assessment, and flexible delivery**, the pedagogical methodology of the FLL creates a dynamic, engaging, and inclusive learning setting. It motivates learners by contextualising abstract knowledge through real-world tasks, builds confidence by offering safe spaces for experimentation, and fosters a culture of collaboration and critical thinking. Moreover, it enhances the capacity of VET institutions to deliver **high-quality, work-relevant training** even when access to company-based learning is limited. In doing so, the FLL methodology directly supports the objectives of the BRIDGES project: to **modernise VET provision**, enhance **equitable access** to applied learning, and prepare learners for meaningful

participation in **dual training systems, apprenticeships, or entry-level employment** in the tourism sector.

3. ROLE OF THE TRAINER: FUNCTIONS AND GUIDANCE

The effective implementation of the Factory Learning Labs (FLL) is fundamentally dependent on the competence, preparation, and commitment of trainers. Their role extends far beyond the transmission of knowledge and encompasses the facilitation of experiential learning, the orchestration of simulated environments, and the provision of structured feedback that enables learners to develop and apply competences in a realistic, practice-oriented context. Within the FLL, trainers act as facilitators, mentors, and pedagogical guides, ensuring that simulation-based activities are meaningful, inclusive, and aligned with the objectives of the Pre-Apprenticeship Programme.

Preparation of the Simulation Environment

A key responsibility of trainers is the preparation and contextualisation of the simulation environment. While the FLL provides a comprehensive package of resources — including role cards, scenario templates, observation tools, and facilitation guidelines — trainers are expected to adapt these materials to their specific institutional settings and the needs of their learners. This may involve adjusting the complexity of activities to match learners' competence levels, adapting case details to reflect local tourism realities, or incorporating optional digital tools to enrich the simulation. Such adaptations ensure that the scenarios remain relevant, engaging, and pedagogically coherent while reflecting the realities of the tourism sector.

Role Distribution and Inclusivity

Ensuring inclusive participation is a central element of the trainer's role. Trainers must allocate roles strategically to balance individual strengths and learning needs while encouraging active participation from all learners. The rotation of roles across simulations allows participants to gain a comprehensive understanding of different functions within tourism operations, from front-line service provision to

administrative coordination. Special attention should be given to supporting learners who may face additional challenges, such as limited digital literacy or language barriers. Clear instructions, tailored support, and peer collaboration are recommended to ensure that all participants are able to engage fully. Furthermore, trainers should actively promote gender balance and equitable participation, assigning decision-making and leadership responsibilities without bias and modelling inclusive professional practices.

Facilitation and Observation

During the execution of simulations, trainers serve primarily as facilitators and observers. Their role is to create a safe and supportive environment in which learners can actively engage, make decisions, and learn from their actions. Observation should be systematic and guided by the structured tools provided within the FLL framework, enabling trainers to assess both technical competences — such as the accurate handling of bookings or communication with clients — and transversal skills, including teamwork, adaptability, and problem-solving. Trainers should intervene only when necessary to clarify instructions, address misunderstandings, or introduce controlled variables that increase the complexity of the simulation, thereby enhancing its realism and educational value.

Debriefing and Feedback

The debriefing stage is a crucial component of the FLL methodology and one of the trainer's most impactful responsibilities. Following each simulation, trainers should facilitate structured reflection sessions, encouraging learners to critically analyse their decisions, strategies, and behaviours. Reflection should focus on identifying effective practices, recognising challenges, and considering alternative approaches to problem-solving. Constructive feedback must be provided in a formative and supportive manner, emphasising strengths, addressing areas for improvement, and linking the learning experience to real workplace expectations. Peer feedback can also be encouraged to enhance collaborative learning and promote multiple perspectives.

Capacity Building for Trainers

To fulfil their responsibilities effectively, trainers must possess both pedagogical and facilitation competences. As simulation-based learning differs significantly from traditional instructional methods, trainers should be prepared to manage group dynamics, guide collaborative processes, and conduct structured reflections. Continuous professional development, peer exchange, and institutional support are therefore essential to strengthening trainers' capacities and ensuring the consistent and high-quality implementation of the FLL methodology. The project provides a range of dedicated resources — including observation templates, reflection tools, and facilitation guidelines — to support trainers in developing and refining these competences.

FLL Trainer's Guide

A dedicated FLL Trainer's Guide will be developed to further support trainers in the design and delivery of simulation-based activities. This guide will include step-by-step instructions for preparing and implementing simulations, adapting role cards and scenarios, applying observation and feedback techniques, and facilitating reflection sessions. It will also offer practical recommendations on promoting inclusivity and adapting delivery formats to different learning contexts.

Importantly, the guide is designed to support implementation of the FLL both in fully physical settings and with the integration of digital tools when appropriate. A dedicated section provides optional recommendations and quick-start checklists for lightweight digital support (e.g., Delightex Edu and similar tools), helping trainers confidently choose and apply digital elements to enrich learning activities if needed. The guide will serve as a comprehensive reference tool to ensure consistency, quality, and pedagogical coherence across the implementation of the FLL in diverse institutional settings.

Link to FLL Trainer's Guide: <https://bridges.projectlibrary.eu/factory-learning-hub/>

4. COMPONENTS AND DELIVERY STRUCTURE OF THE FLL

The Factory Learning Labs (FLL) is designed as a comprehensive and adaptable pedagogical framework, consisting of key components that together create a structured, simulation-based learning experience. These components ensure that the model is pedagogically coherent, inclusive, and transferable across institutional contexts, while remaining flexible enough to accommodate different delivery modes. Each element serves a distinct function within the overall learning process and contributes to the effectiveness and sustainability of the FLL as part of the Pre-Apprenticeship Programme.

Scenario Templates

Scenario templates form the backbone of the FLL methodology. Each scenario outlines a realistic workplace situation drawn from the operational contexts of the tourism sector — such as hotel reception services, travel agency consultations, event planning, or handling customer complaints. The templates define the learning objectives, context, roles involved, and expected outcomes of the activity. They also specify the materials required, the timeline for execution, and the key competences targeted. By following these templates, trainers can ensure that simulations are consistent, purposeful, and directly aligned with the broader objectives of the Pre-Apprenticeship Programme. At the same time, the templates are designed to be adaptable, allowing trainers to modify details according to their learners' backgrounds, institutional priorities, and local industry needs.

Role Cards

Role cards are essential tools for facilitating active learner participation and ensuring meaningful engagement within simulations. Each card assigns a specific role to a learner — such as receptionist, guest, tour operator, or event organiser — and provides clear background information, behavioural expectations, and key objectives. The role cards help learners understand their responsibilities, guide their interactions, and encourage them to act authentically within the simulation environment. They also support the development of empathy, as learners must

adopt different professional perspectives and navigate the interpersonal dynamics of workplace scenarios. Role cards can be provided in both printed and digital formats, enabling easy integration into various delivery modes.

The role cards are available in **printable format** to ensure their easy integration into different delivery modes, including classroom-based, blended, and online environments.

The complete set of Role-Playing Cards can be downloaded from the following link: <https://bridges.projectlibrary.eu/factory-learning-hub/>

Trainer Guidelines

The trainer guidelines provide structured support for the effective preparation, facilitation, and assessment of FLL activities. They offer step-by-step instructions on how to set up the simulation environment, distribute roles, manage group dynamics, and facilitate reflective discussions. Additionally, the guidelines include practical advice on dealing with common challenges — such as uneven participation, communication barriers, or time constraints — and strategies for fostering inclusive, collaborative learning environments. They are designed to support trainers in delivering the FLL both in fully physical classroom settings and, where appropriate, by integrating digital tools to enrich activities. A dedicated section offers optional recommendations and quick-start checklists for lightweight digital support, helping trainers confidently incorporate digital components when needed. By following these guidelines, trainers can ensure pedagogical consistency across institutions and deliver high-quality simulation experiences that support the intended learning outcomes.

Reflection and Evaluation Tools

Reflection and evaluation tools are central to transforming simulation exercises into deep learning experiences. These instruments guide both trainers and learners through structured processes of self-assessment, peer feedback, and formative

evaluation. Observation checklists enable trainers to systematically record learner behaviours and competences demonstrated during simulations, while reflection prompts help learners critically analyse their actions, decisions, and outcomes. Peer feedback forms encourage collaborative evaluation and foster a culture of constructive critique. Together, these tools support continuous improvement, promote self-awareness, and enhance the transferability of learning from simulated contexts to real workplace environments.

Inclusive Design and Adaptation Strategies

Inclusivity is a defining principle of the FLL, and all components are designed to ensure meaningful participation by learners with diverse backgrounds, abilities, and needs. Trainers are provided with recommendations for adapting materials to different language levels, simplifying complex instructions, and incorporating culturally relevant examples. Strategies such as rotating roles, pairing learners with complementary strengths, and providing additional scaffolding for those with lower digital competences help to create an equitable learning environment. Gender balance is actively promoted through deliberate role distribution, and opportunities are provided for all learners to take on leadership and decision-making responsibilities. By integrating inclusive design principles into every component, the FLLH ensures equitable access to quality vocational training and promotes social cohesion within learning groups.

Delivery Modes: Classroom, Blended, and Online

The FLL is designed for maximum flexibility and can be implemented across a range of delivery modes, depending on institutional resources, learner needs, and contextual factors. It can be delivered in physical classroom settings, complemented by digital tools where useful, or implemented fully online if required. A dedicated section in the FLL Trainer's Guide provides practical recommendations and quick-start checklists for integrating optional digital solutions (e.g., Delightex Edu and similar tools) to enrich activities.

- **Classroom Delivery:** Simulations take place in physical spaces that replicate workplace settings, using props, printed materials, and face-to-face interactions. This mode is particularly effective for developing interpersonal and communication skills through direct interaction.
- **Blended Delivery:** A combination of physical and digital tools is used to enhance the simulation experience. For example, learners may role-play in person while using online booking systems, collaborative documents, or digital communication tools to perform specific tasks. This approach enriches the learning environment and prepares learners for the digital realities of the tourism sector.
- **Online Delivery:** When face-to-face delivery is not feasible, simulations can be conducted entirely online using widely available platforms. Video conferencing tools enable live role-plays, while collaborative platforms and virtual environments facilitate interaction and scenario enactment. Although digital tools are optional, they can significantly extend the reach and accessibility of the FLL and provide flexible alternatives for different contexts.

5. Role-Playing Scenarios Library

This chapter provides a structured collection of simulation-based activities for trainers. Each scenario is designed to replicate real-world workplace situations in the tourism sector and support the development of technical, transversal, intercultural, and digital competences

Scenario No.	Title	Brief Description	Main Competences Developed
1	Hotel Reception – Check-in and Customer Welcome	Learners manage multiple guest interactions simultaneously, prioritising tasks, adapting communication, and ensuring satisfaction under pressure.	Customer service, task prioritisation, emotional intelligence, communication
2	Handling Customer Complaints – Hotel Service Issues	Focuses on de-escalation, empathy, and problem-solving while addressing different types of customer complaints professionally.	Conflict management, active listening, empathy, service recovery
3	Designing a Holiday Package – Travel Agency Simulation	Learners gather client needs, design tailored packages, and present solutions persuasively while balancing budgets and preferences.	Customer needs analysis, communication, sales skills, creativity

Scenario No.	Title	Brief Description	Main Competences Developed
4	Mediating a Dispute – Conflict Between Hotel Guests	Learners mediate conflicts fairly and professionally while managing interruptions and maintaining service quality.	Negotiation, conflict resolution, neutrality, stress management
5	Team Meeting – Planning a Hotel Event	Learners collaborate to plan a hotel event, negotiate priorities, and agree on a shared action plan within budget constraints.	Teamwork, planning, negotiation, decision-making
6	Intercultural Misunderstanding – Helping International Guests	Learners adapt communication and service approaches to different cultural expectations and communication styles.	Intercultural competence, inclusivity, adaptability, communication
7	Online Booking & Digital Communication – Managing Guest Requests and Complaints	Learners handle multiple digital channels (email, booking, social media) simultaneously, adapting tone and prioritising responses.	Digital communication, multitasking, customer service, writing skills
8	Emergency at the Hotel – Crisis	Learners manage emergency situations	Crisis management, leadership,

Scenario No.	Title	Brief Description	Main Competences Developed
	Management Simulation	(fire alarm, medical emergency, missing child), staying calm and prioritising actions.	communication, teamwork
9	Job Interview Simulation – Preparing for Employment in Tourism	Learners practise presenting themselves professionally and answering interview questions confidently.	Self-presentation, communication, career readiness, confidence
10	Marketing & Sales Pitch – Promoting a Tourism Service	Learners design and deliver persuasive pitches tailored to different client profiles, addressing objections effectively.	Persuasion, entrepreneurial thinking, communication, creativity
11	Handling a Guest Complaint – Service Failure Recovery	Learners practise service recovery strategies to resolve complaints and rebuild customer trust.	Service recovery, empathy, problem-solving, professionalism
12	Digital Promotion and Online Presence – Creating and Presenting a Tourism Offer	Learners create a simple digital campaign (social media post, brochure, website mock-up) to promote a tourism product or service.	Digital literacy, content creation, creativity, marketing

5. SIMULATED COMPANIES WITHIN THE PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME

A dedicated section of the Pre-Apprenticeship Programme (PaP) is focused on the establishment of simulated companies as part of the learning pathway. These simulated settings are designed to replicate the key dynamics and operational processes of real businesses in the tourism sector. By engaging in activities that mirror authentic workplace practices — such as decision-making, service delivery, and customer interaction — learners develop a practical understanding of how tourism enterprises function.

This component of the programme enables participants to experience the entrepreneurial context in a safe and structured setting, helping them to connect theoretical knowledge with applied practice. It also fosters essential competences such as teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability, while building confidence for future engagement in real-world work environments. Through the simulated company experience, the PaP provides a realistic yet supportive space where learners can explore professional roles, understand business processes, and prepare more effectively for employment or apprenticeships in the tourism industry.

CONCLUSIONS AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The Factory Learning Labs (FLL), developed within the BRIDGES project, marks a substantive advance in strengthening the quality, relevance, and inclusiveness of vocational education and training (VET) in the tourism sector. By combining experiential, scenario-based pedagogy with structured guidance for trainers and learners, the FLL provides an educational model that is both innovative and operationally practical. Its core value lies in replicating real workplace dynamics within a safe, guided environment, enabling learners to acquire not only technical skills but also key transversal competences—communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and intercultural awareness.

A major strength of the FLL is its flexibility. The model can be delivered in physical, blended, or fully digital formats, and scenarios can be calibrated to learner level while role cards are easily adapted to cultural and linguistic contexts. Where useful, digital tools can be incorporated to support and enrich specific activities, and the FLL Trainer's Guide includes recommendations and practical tips on how such tools can be integrated into the learning process. This adaptability allows the FLL to serve diverse learner profiles, including those with fewer opportunities, and supports providers where access to authentic workplace training is constrained. In doing so, the FLL offers an inclusive response to a persistent VET challenge: bridging the gap between classroom instruction and workplace practice.

From an innovation perspective, the FLL moves beyond traditional approaches by embedding structured simulation and role-play as integral components of VET curricula. Direct alignment with the learning outcomes of the Pre-Apprenticeship Programme (PaP) ensures that theoretical knowledge is consistently reinforced through applied practice, enhancing learner motivation and confidence. The integrated package—scenario templates, role cards, trainer guidelines, and reflection tools—can be readily adopted within existing programmes or deployed as a stand-alone resource.

On implementation, several recommendations follow. For VET providers, the FLL should serve as a core element of preparatory training, particularly for cohorts with limited access to apprenticeships. Beyond instruction, it can operate as a diagnostic instrument to identify strengths and development needs prior to workplace exposure. Trainers should receive targeted support—via dedicated guidelines and capacity-building workshops—to ensure effective facilitation, observation, and debriefing. For policymakers, the FLL offers a replicable model suitable for inclusion in national strategies to modernise VET, especially where dual systems are still emerging. Adoption at policy level would improve the alignment of provision with labour-market needs and advance broader objectives of inclusion and social cohesion.

Looking ahead, the FLL has clear potential for further development and scaling. While conceived for tourism, the model can be adapted to other VET fields—such as healthcare, retail, logistics, or green industries—by tailoring scenarios to sector contexts. Embedding the FLL within national curricula would strengthen sustainability and institutional impact; linkage to accreditation or micro-credential frameworks could enable formal recognition of competences acquired. At European level, the FLL can act as a demonstrator of good practice in simulation-based VET and support knowledge exchange among providers, policymakers, and researchers.

In conclusion, the FLL is an innovative, inclusive, and flexible pedagogical model that directly addresses gaps between theory and practice in vocational education. It enhances learner readiness for employment, offers VET institutions a practical mechanism to modernise delivery, and provides policymakers with a scalable framework for system improvement. By combining hands-on learning with the possibility of integrating lightweight digital tools where appropriate, it remains adaptable to diverse contexts and future-ready. Continued refinement, adaptation, and expansion of the FLL will help sustain its contribution to the quality and inclusiveness of VET in tourism and beyond.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. FLL Scenarios

[Annex 1. FLL Scenarios](#)

Annex 2. FLL Trainers Guidebook

[Annex 2. FLL Trainers Guidebook](#)

Annex 3. Role Playing Cards

[Annex 3. Role Playing Cards](#)

Annex 4: Learner reflection prompts

Annex 5: Evaluation & feedback form samples

Annex 4: Learner reflection prompts

Learner Reflection Prompts
These reflection prompts are designed to be used after each role-play scenario or training session. They encourage learners to think critically about their performance, behaviour, decision-making, and personal development. Trainers can use them for group discussions, individual written reflections, or digital feedback forms.
General Reflection Prompts (For All Scenarios)
1. What did you find most challenging about this activity? 2. How did you feel during the scenario (confident, nervous, stressed)? Why? 3. What strategies did you use to manage stress or unexpected situations? 4. How did you adapt your communication style to suit different people or situations? 5. Did you demonstrate empathy and understanding toward others? Give examples. 6. What was your most effective decision or action during the activity? Why? 7. What would you do differently if you were faced with the same situation again? 8. Which competences (e.g., communication, teamwork, cultural awareness, digital skills) do you think you improved the most? 9. What feedback from others resonated with you, and how will you use it to improve? 10. How can you apply what you learned in this scenario to a real workplace setting?
Scenario-Specific Reflection Prompts
Below are tailored questions trainers can choose from based on the learning focus of each activity:

Scenario Focus	Sample Reflection Prompts
Customer Service & Front Desk	- How did you prioritise multiple guest requests? - What techniques helped you remain calm and professional? - Did guests feel listened to and respected? How do you know?
Conflict Management	- How did you balance fairness and empathy when mediating conflicts? - What signals showed that the situation was escalating? - What de-escalation techniques were most effective?
Intercultural Communication	- How did you adapt your communication to different cultural expectations? - Did you recognise any hidden cues (e.g., hesitation, frustration)? - How did you ensure inclusivity and respect?
Digital Communication	- How did your tone and language change across different digital platforms? - How did you prioritise tasks under time pressure? - What would you improve in future digital communication?

Crisis Management	- How did you organise and prioritise actions under pressure? - Did you communicate instructions clearly and confidently? - How did you reassure and support others in the situation?
Sales & Marketing	- What persuasive strategies did you use to promote your service? - How did you adapt your pitch to different client profiles? - What objections were hardest to handle and why?
Job Interviews	- How did you present your strengths and address weaknesses? - Did your body language and tone reflect confidence? - What will you focus on improving before a real interview?
Trainer Tip: You can select 3–5 prompts per activity depending on time and learning goals. Encourage learners to write their answers or discuss them in pairs or groups.	

Annex 5: Evaluation & feedback form samples

Purpose:

These forms help trainers assess learner performance during simulations and gather self-assessment and peer feedback. They can be printed, used digitally, or integrated into an LMS.

A. Trainer Evaluation Form (Role-Play Performance)

Criteria	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Needs Improvement (2)	Poor (1)	Comments
Professionalism and attitude	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Communication clarity and tone	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Active listening and empathy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Problem-solving and decision-making	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Adaptability and flexibility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Criteria	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Needs Improvement (2)	Poor (1)	Comments
Conflict resolution skills (if applicable)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Cultural awareness and inclusivity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Digital communication competence (if applicable)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Teamwork and collaboration	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Overall performance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Trainer's Feedback (Summary):

- Strengths observed: _____
- Areas for improvement: _____
- Suggested next steps / recommendations: _____

B. Learner Self-Assessment Form

Reflection Area	Yes	Partially	No	Comments
I felt prepared and confident in my role.	☐	☐	☐	
I communicated clearly and professionally.	☐	☐	☐	
I listened actively and responded appropriately.	☐	☐	☐	
I demonstrated empathy and cultural sensitivity.	☐	☐	☐	
I stayed calm and handled pressure well.	☐	☐	☐	
I proposed realistic and effective solutions.	☐	☐	☐	
I reflected on my performance and identified areas for growth.	☐	☐	☐	

Personal Reflection:

- My biggest strength during this activity was: _____
- The skill I most need to improve is: _____
- I will improve this by: _____

C. Peer Feedback Form (Optional)

Evaluation Criteria	Comments / Examples
What did the learner do particularly well?	
What could they improve next time?	
How did they contribute to teamwork?	
Did they demonstrate empathy, communication, and professionalism?	

Trainer Tip: Peer feedback can be done anonymously to encourage honest and constructive input.