

# Intellectual Output Report

## O4 TopWeek & O5 Company Project



### ***Authors***

Agnieszka Zulewska, Associated Professor, VIA University College

Ole Gregersen, Associated Professor, VIA University College

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## Funded Project Partners

### Lead Partner

VIA University College, Denmark



VIA University  
College

Offenburg University of Applied Sciences

Germany



Fontys University of Applied Sciences

The Netherlands



## Associated Project Partners

Universidad the Burgos, Spain



UNIVERSIDAD  
DE BURGOS

HAMK University of Applied Sciences, Finland



University of Applied Sciences Zeeland, The Netherlands



## Preface

Since the foundation of the European Community in 1992, business has become increasingly global. For logistics and supply chain, this means it has to support and co-ordinate the flows to and from different continents. Goods are sold today in more countries, in larger quantities, in greater variety, and at a faster pace as a result.

The growth of the global economy and progressing internationalization has given business greater access to markets all over the world. This aforementioned statement applies not only to business but also to education.

The European Union created many initiatives to stimulate the flow and exchange of knowledge between higher education and enterprises embracing the internationalization, recognition and mobility thus enabling generation of European Mindset.

Reference to a European Mindset clearly defines the parties' respective expectations regarding knowledge and skills such as flexibility, culture understanding, team spirit and communication, which defines in great degree employee attractiveness.

A Midplus project is one of the initiative generated under umbrella of European Union. The Midplus project takes account of the increased attention to the field of Logistics and Supply Chain. With the Midplus project the intercultural and European mindsets of students, teachers and companies were enhanced and connected to the demands of the regional, national and European/International economy.

The Midplus funded project partners' expertise within the applied science ensured that offered intellectual output understood as knowledge, skills and competence gained within the field of Logistics and Supply Chain responds to the business need everywhere.

Midplus project members would like to express its gratitude to all external parties involved in the successful execution of the project. The working group associated with the intellectual output O4 (TopWeek) and O5 (Company Project), described further in this report, comprise of Agnieszka Zulewska (VIA UC, Denmark), Ole Gregersen (VIA UC, Denmark), Sophia Gruner (Fontys University of Applied Science, The Netherlands), Margot M.H. Franssen (Fontys University Of Applied Science, The Netherlands), Ken K.R. Zschocke (Fontys University of Applied Science, The Netherlands) and Ingo Dittrich (Offenburg University of Applied Science, Germany).

We also thank our associated project partners for their assistance and contribution.

Our appreciation is also due to our students for their active participation and contribution in securing the practical aspects of the social arrangements.

We wish you a pleasant and fruitful exploration of the Intellectual outputs O4 and O5.

August 2021

Agnieszka Zulewska

Ole Gregersen

## Executive Summary

This report aims at provide a description O4 - an intensive knowledge week (TopWeek) and O5 – a Company Project.

The given report describes the results of the selected activities conducted in the course of Midplus project during the period from 2018 to 2021. The focus of the report is on the intellectual outputs O4 and O5 defined respectively as O4 - an intensive knowledge week (TopWeek) and O5 - a Company Project. The purpose of this report is to give an insight to the experiences gained via the Midplus project cooperation.

The three lead Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) worked together in order to ensure the quality of the intellectual outputs. The activities at first sight were be split into mobility and structured development of knowledge with the focus on connection, intensity and exchange of competence/ knowhow in the field of Logistics and Supply Management.

Key areas of the chosen intellectual outputs were following: Negotiation, Supply Chain Simulation, E-Commerce/Multi-Channel Management, Lean and Six Sigma.

The report is organized in the two main sections. A description, organization and learning outcome of each Intellectual output is provided. The two sections are:

- 1. O4 - Top Week**
- 2. O5 - Company Project**

As Midplus project goes further than a usual staff/ student exchange or a university project, and tends to represent a universal approach towards cross-border education between several HEIs, this report aims to secure that the gained experience is documented and shared.

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## Introduction

The given report describes the results of the selected activities conducted in the course of Midplus project during the period from 2018 to 2021. The focus of the report is on the intellectual outputs O4 and O5 defined respectively as O4 - an intensive knowledge week (TopWeek) and O5 - a company project. The purpose of this report is to give an insight to the experiences gained via the Midplus project cooperation.

The Midplus project handles an approach where three lead High Education Institutions (HEI), i.e. VIA University College, Denmark; Fontys University of Applied Science, The Netherlands; and Offenburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany, work together in order to ensure the quality of the intellectual outputs. This was gained by teachers actively participating in mobility programs and using each other core competences by having open source webinars with guest teachers, including core competences found in companies. The activities, at first sight, were split into mobility and structured development of knowledge with the focus on connection, intensity and exchange of competence/ knowhow in the field of Logistics and Supply Management.

Below definition of the main concepts associated with the described activities:

**Midplus Logistics Knowledge Cluster:** The discipline of Logistics and Supply Chain Management demands a steady exchange of information based on a cross-country knowledge mobility. Therefore, the main target of the Midplus Logistics Knowledge Cluster is to achieve a steady and sustainable student and teaching mobility in order to enhance cross-border knowledge in the field of Logistics and Supply Chain Management with all its facets.

**Midplus Project Objectives:** The main objective of the Midplus project was to stimulate the flow and exchange of knowledge between higher education and enterprises. The project was promoting internationalisation, recognition, and mobility via enhancing intercultural and European mindsets of students, teachers and companies involved. Midplus project focused at combining the skills with knowledge in the field of Logistics and Supply Chain management. The project aimed to suggest a model of how a common ECTS system should be developed as to secure cross-institutional activities having a common evaluation system. Additionally, through the project activities, a general framework was to be suggested on how mobility of students and teachers in future could be carried out. Project activities involving students facilitated introduction of different teaching cultures and supported creation of a cross-national network. Additionally, Midplus project focused on developing skills via reinforcing cooperation between higher education institutions on various levels, e.g. cooperation between HEI's in the EU, cooperation through an Alumni students network, and common cross-institutional knowledge database.

**O4 (TopWeek) & O5 (Company Project):** The regular activities of the Midplus Logistics Knowledge Cluster. All partner institutions of Midplus project stand for specific core competences. Students of all partners were welcome to attend a block course of about a week at a partner university in the field of its competences. Due to COVID-19-restrictions, some of the activities were held online and these activities were broken into smaller sessions in longer period. O4 & O5 also include cultural elements to stimulate the dialog between the students and foster intercultural understanding.

## Intellectual Outputs

### O4 TopWeek

#### General description

A series of five TopWeeks have been held in the duration of the Midplus project.

The TopWeeks were conducted as a combination of lectures and hands-on workshops & exercises, where students were able to gain practical experience of different subjects in focus.

The program of each TopWeek comprised about 40 hours of work and English was spoken.

The TopWeeks conducted physically have been done using teachers mobility; otherwise, digital technologies like MS Teams, Zoom, and Midplus Platform have been used as working platforms.

The TopWeeks were attended by students of funded project partner- and associated project partner universities. In total, 144 students from five different countries, i.e. Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands, Finland and Spain were joining TopWeeks, followed by 10 external partners (defined as not a member of Midplus project), including guest lecturers and business partners. After finishing the TopWeek, students were expected to gain skills and competencies to prepare for, enter and make different business decisions with respect to different culture and international business environment.

Figure 1 shows an overview of the activities within O4 together with a general description.

*Table 1: Overview of TopWeek conducted over period of 2018-2021*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Hosting University</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Participating Universities</b>
November 2018	VIA University College	Negotiation Skills in an International context	Universidad de Burgos - <b>5 students</b> Hochschule Offenburg - <b>5 students</b>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>1 Lecturer</b></li> </ul> Fontys University of Applied Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>5 students</b></li> <li>- <b>1 lecturer</b></li> </ul> HAMK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>1 Student</b></li> </ul> VIA University College <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>5 students</b></li> <li>- <b>2 hosting lecturers</b></li> </ul>
March 2019	Fontys University of Applied Science	The Fresh Connection - Supply Chain Gaming	Hochschule Offenburg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>5 students</b></li> </ul> Fontys University of Applied Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>3 students</b></li> <li>- <b>2 hosting lecturers</b></li> </ul> VIA University College <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>6 students</b></li> <li>- <b>2 lecturers</b></li> </ul> Universidad de Burgos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>1 student</b></li> </ul>
April 2020	Offenburg University of Applied Science	E-Commerce/Multi-Channel Management	Canceled due to Covid – 19
December 2020	Offenburg University of Applied Science	Virtual TOPweek  E-Commerce/Multi-Channel Logistics	Hochschule Offenburg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>15 students</b></li> <li>- <b>1 hosting lecturer</b></li> </ul> Fontys University of Applied Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>4 students</b></li> <li>- <b>1 lecturer</b></li> </ul> VIA University College <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>7 students</b></li> <li>- <b>2 lecturers</b></li> </ul>
March 2021	VIA University College	Virtual TOPweek  Negotiation in a virtual world	Hochschule Offenburg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>6 students</b></li> </ul> Fontys University of Applied Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>5 students</b></li> <li>- <b>1 lecturer</b></li> </ul> Universidad de Burgos

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>1 student</b></li> <li>VIA University College</li> <li>- <b>4 students</b></li> <li>- <b>2 hosting lecturers</b></li> </ul>
April 2021	Fontys University of Applied Science	Virtual TopWeek  Orange Belt Certification	Hochschule Offenburg - <b>9 students</b>  Fontys University of Applied Science - <b>38 students</b> - <b>2 hosting lecturers</b>  Universidad de Burgos - <b>4 students</b>  VIA University College - <b>15 students</b> - <b>2 lecturers</b>

Source: Own creation

## Learning outcome

The main goal of TopWeeks, apart from offering elective courses to students in a cross-national setting, was to make a study on the different teaching cultures and sharing of learning methods and facilitate cooperation with business environment within the field of Logistics and Supply Chain.

All TopWeeks has been evaluated in order to evaluate the quality of the program, and to secure the knowledge gained is been used in the next TopWeeks. All TopWeeks have been evaluated using MS Forms. Evaluation questions were designed to offer data analysis like statistics of number of participants, country etc. and reflect the general satisfaction of the TopWeek. All evaluations are available upon request. A sum up of the most important findings can be found below.

It was the ambition that all TopWeeks should include some topics which are not been taught in the regular program at the partner universities. The partner universities has taken an active role in identifying first of all own core competences, market demands in terms of knowledge, skills and competences needed and secure that the courses were universal in the sense that they could be applied in the different countries/contexts. The courses offered in the TopWeeks

were carefully designed to match the criteria and based on the evaluations, where we asked all participants if the primary goal had been fulfilled. A great majority have confirmed TopWeeks meet the objective, and expressed great satisfaction on the course content and the execution.

All TopWeeks have included guest lecturers, company visits and cultural activities during the duration of the program. Based on the evaluation, all participants find it very beneficial and a good learning experience to get knowledge from the business environment, and to have some social activities. Overall, the programs provided a good professional, social and cultural learning environment. Examples of students own expression of the TopWeek experience, can be found below.

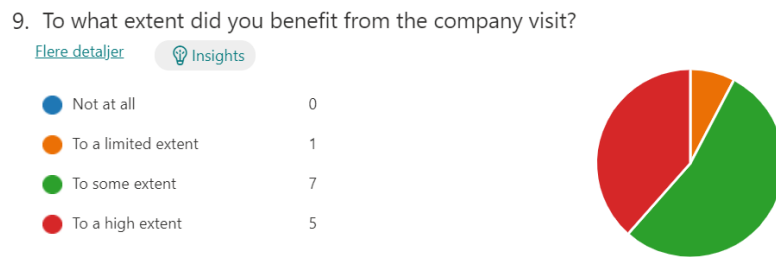
*“Real life examples helped me understand how to put negotiation into everyday life. It helped me realize how important cooperation is and trust in negotiation.”*

*“Literally everything. The content of the subject we've been working on has been amazingly explained, through lecturers that knew how to reach us and keep our attention, the attitude of the lecturers and the rest of students made from this an amazing cooperative team from which we all have learned. I must say some words also for our hosts, who provided us with more than we needed, showed us the city and made us feel the most comfortable. Thank you to the lecturers and the Danish student (including the ones that come from abroad). It has been a brilliant and motivating experience.”*

*“Great knowledge and fun with students and teachers. The fresh connection game really gave great insight to supply chain management, and that is what I was seeking, I got that I am really happy I participated. Everything about TopWeek has in my mind been a positive experience.”*

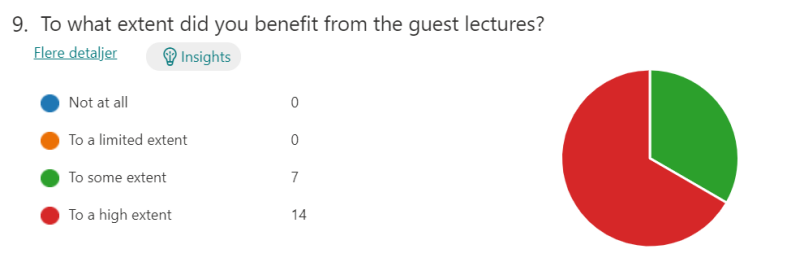
Examples of general evaluation of external Inputs in form of company visit and guest lectures can be found below.

Figure 1: Evaluation - TopWeek - Fresh Connection - March 2019



Source: own creation

Figure 2: Evaluation - TopWeek - Negotiations - November 2018



Source: own creation

## Crediting a joint ECTS- system

During the cooperation between different universities, the differences in crediting ECTS points for courses were recognized. In the pursuit for establishing an unified way of crediting and enabling a conduction of “commonly recognized courses”, which could be accepted in the different universities as a part of the curriculums, we have asked students to express their willingness to receive 5 ECTS points for the course if additional work, in form of as an example report was required. The answers from final evaluations, shown that vast majority of the students would be willing to pursue that option if it was offered.

Nevertheless, analyzing differences in number of ECTS points given for different courses at different universities, we have concluded that full alignment might not be possible in the short term as changes in the different curriculums would be required. The current cooperation has proven, that individual partner university has to make its own extra activities in order to apply ECTS credit and to better integrate the course within its study program

## 05 Company Projects

### General description

During the Midplus project three company defined projects\* were planned. Company Projects shall be done including students from all participating HEI's as well as inviting associated partners. Each participating HEI shall have a company defined project. Five students from each HEI shall be invited to join the projects (this also includes the associated partners). The case company evaluation was to result in a testimonial to be used in Midplus marketing. Only one Company Project has been conducted during the project period, which will serve a basis for this reporting.

The overview of the O5 activities can be found below.

*Table 2: Overview of O5 activities during the period of 2018-2021*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Hosting University</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Participating Universities</b>
November 2020	VIA University College	International project JYSK A/S— Designing the future cross channel supply chain for JYSK	Canceled due to COVID – 19
April – June 2021	Fontys University of Applied Science	Virtual O5  Lean Project based on company Aqua Mineral SE, introduced by Camelot Management Consultants	Hochschule Offenburg - 1 student  Fontys University of Applied Science - 1 student - 1 hosting company - 1 hosting lecturer  Universidad de Burgos - 1 student  VIA University College - 2 students - 2 lecturers

Source: own creation

## **The company project – Camelot Management Consultants**

Company Project (O5) has been organized as a case study in collaboration with a consulting company Camelot Management Consultants. The case study concerned a challenge faced by Aqua Mineral SE. The core aspects of the project company were: process flow optimization, bottleneck improvement, poka yoke, and 5S.

The company project was provided and supervised by Camelot Management Consultants. The project comprised a case study where students had to optimize the process flow within the company Aqua Mineral, a mineral water production company. For being able to solve the case study, students participated lectures about the Orange Belt Lean Qualification, defined as one of the O4 activities within the Midplus project. The lectures were provide by Fontys University of Applied Sciences. The Company Project with Camelot Management Consultants this was aimed for applying lean principles in a practical case study.

The student were challenged to understand the process within the factory of Aqua Minerals based on the process flow description and information provided by Camelot Management Consultants. In a remote, international team, five students from four different universities worked together to develop a proposal on how to optimize the production line based on lean principles. The outcome was a presentation to the board of directors, in this case consultants of Camelot.

The students succeeded in providing advices to the board of directors and finished the project to full satisfaction. The company project was attended by students of partner universities from The Netherlands, Denmark, Spain and Germany. The program comprised about 20 hours of work per person. During the project English was spoken.

### **Learning outcome and evaluation**

Evaluation is an important quality check which offers a basis for AS-IS status and possible improvements. The company project has been evaluated using MS Forms.

Evaluation measured general satisfaction and tailored elements, which covered relevant aspects concerning the case study. Evaluation demonstrating the general level of satisfaction can be found in the Figure 3 and 4 below:

Figure 3: The extract from the evaluation of Company project (2021)



Source: own creation

Figure 4: Voice of the students: Which positive experiences do you take from this project?

International group work, getting to know new people, practical experience, being able to apply theory, growing network etc.

Experience; group work; application of theories

Working with international students that have different backgrounds.

Meeting new people, getting on hands experience with improvement projects

Cross-cultural collaboration, better understanding of LEAN tools.

Source: own creation

## Conclusion

The project partners complemented each other in their competencies in the field of Logistics and Supply Chain Management. The partners created a strong network that is characterized by a high stability, motivation and a strong knowledge chain, which was referred in the EU application to the vision of collaboration: „Together we form a strong supply chain“ and „We add value to each other“. All project partners complied with this vision, supported collaboration via their reliability and their experience in similar projects, which resulted in a successful collaboration.

During the Midplus project, partners committed themselves to use new technologies (i.e. Zoom, MS Teams, MS Forms etc.) and a new didactic approach in the sense that for e.g. guest lectures are shared via live streaming. Through this approach, more students/ as well as teachers could profit from one single session and furthermore the external partners achieved greater exposure.

The project has given the students the opportunity to experience new way of teaching and explore new knowledge not covered in original HEI's curriculum, but relevant for the future career in the field of Logistics and Supply Chain in the European Market place.

Overall, the intellectual outputs O4 &O5 provided a good professional, social and cultural learning environment, which are strongly recommended to proceed in the future.

### **For further information on the approach and evaluation see**

Appendix: O4 Roadmap\_How to do TopWeeks.pdf

Appendix: O5 Roadmap\_How to do Company Projects.pdf