



# GIG ECONOMY REGIONAL ALLIANCE

## SET-UP TOOLKIT

The GIG Economy....  
a Liberating New form of  
**Self-Employment** or  
A **New Form of Exploitation?**

[www.enteringthegigeconomy.eu](http://www.enteringthegigeconomy.eu)



Labour market dynamics are shifting rapidly, driven by technological progress and globalization, with many organizations no longer offering fixed contracts. Meanwhile, surprisingly little is known about the realities of '**gig work**'.

**Is it a liberating new form of self-employment or a new form of exploitation?**

There is a growing need to reflect on how society deals with these changes in a manner that prepares, protects and educates our working people

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# 01

## INTRODUCTION



# THE GIG ECONOMY

The **GIG economy** is rapidly becoming a fact of everyday working life. Labour market dynamics are shifting rapidly, driven by technological progress and globalization, with many organizations no longer offering fixed contracts.

Meanwhile, surprisingly little is known about the realities of 'gig work'. Is it a liberating new form of self-employment or a new form of exploitation? There is a growing need to reflect on how society deals with these changes in a manner that prepares, protects and educates our working people.

At first, the term 'gig' was commonly used to refer to musicians who would play wherever they could, going from place to place to get paid for their performance. A gig economy nowadays represents an environment in which temporary positions are common and organisations contract with independent workers for short-term engagements.

Surprisingly little is known about the realities of 'gig work'. There is a growing need to reflect on how society deals with these changes in a manner that protects and educates young people, and addresses the needs of all stakeholders in the community. This project facilitates knowledge development about the emerging GIG economy to share, discuss and develop effective methods to address the risks

The following video describes the GIG Economy



# THE TOOLKIT

Today's gig economy represents an environment in which temporary positions are common and organisations contract with independent workers for short-term engagements. Individuals who work as freelancers sell their work on a task to task basis. In essence the gig economy is a spectrum.

At one end workers are poorly paid, have few rights and have no financial and therefore life security. Their lives are described as precarious.

At the other end of the spectrum there are project workers and freelancers who are self-employed by choice and command higher annual incomes than they would if they were full-time employees. For some businesses the introduction of freelance expertise allows them to experiment and ultimately to innovate, there is evidence that this process is an engine for the creation of entirely new full-time jobs.

## WHAT ARE THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETY IN GENERAL?

## HOW DO COMMUNITIES PREPARE THEIR WORKERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THIS NEW REALITY?

The European Commission has contracted with an EU consortium of regional authorities, education providers, business development agencies and civil society partners to examine this emerging phenomenon and begin the process of answering the questions posed above.

The included infographic identifies some of the issues facing the main stakeholders affected by the GIG Economy - workers, employers and government.



[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD ENTERING THE GIG ECONOMY](#)

## SO HOW DO REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS WORK TOGETHER TO UNDERSTAND AND ADDRESS THE ISSUES PRESENTED BY THE GROWING GIG ECONOMY?

### HOW DO THEY COLLABORATE EFFECTIVELY?

A tried and trusted methodology is to form an integrated Regional Alliance, effectively a network of gig-economy stakeholders to address the issue. But how is that done in practice? This project provides a toolkit that can be used by all stakeholders.

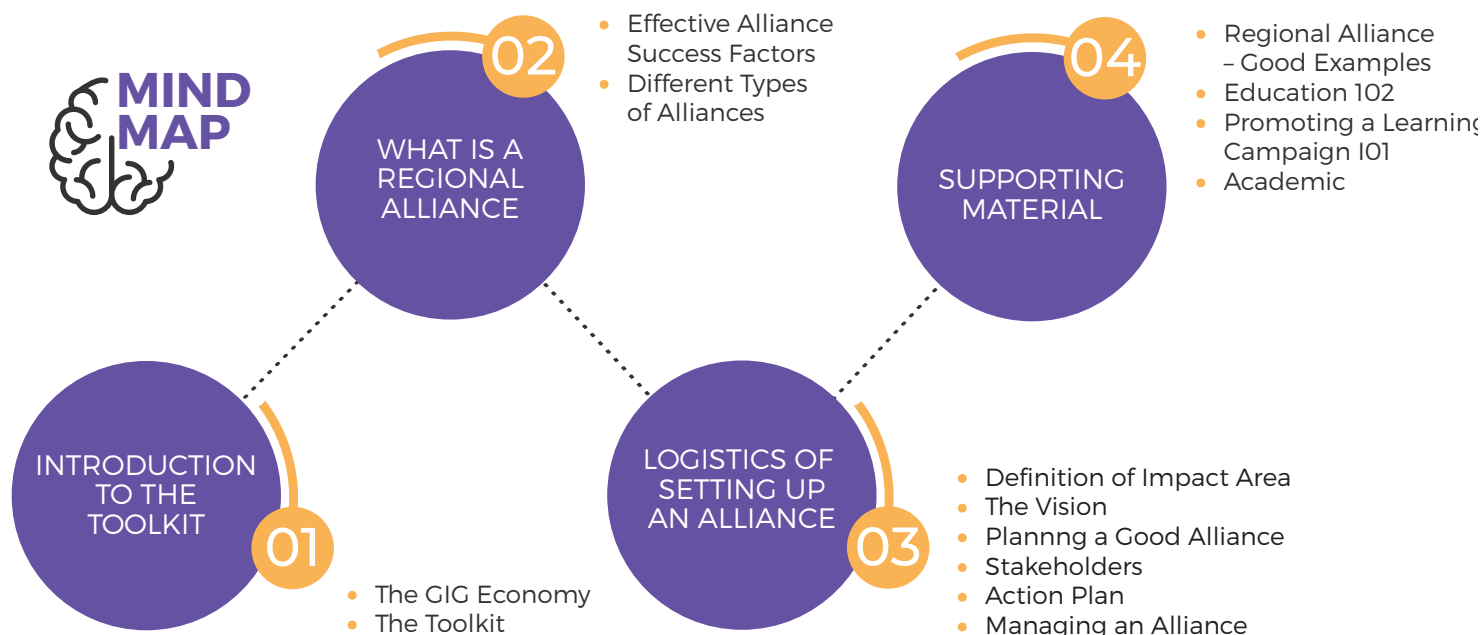
This toolkit will facilitate and stimulate organisations and individuals that are affected by the gig economy to cooperate and join forces to increase the impact and create an integrated approach to the delivery of the GIG economy goals and deliverables. In order for this to work engaged regional stakeholders such as local and regional authorities, elected policy makers, educational institutes (universities and VET), youth organisations, co-working spaces, incubators, chambers of commerce, employers organisations, branch organisations, organisations of freelancers, self-employed and sole traders, etc. are needed to come together to address the issue of the GIG Economy

### THIS TOOLKIT WILL COMPRISE A SERIES OF KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES

which guide stakeholders on the topics and skills most needed by starters on the labour market in today's digital landscape and to effectively deal and cooperate in this emerging field (the gig economy) in their region.

The toolkit comprises professionally designed, online and **DOWNLOADABLE DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES** (PDFs, PowerPoints, Video, Interactive Elements) to facilitate the adoption and realization of the regional alliances in partner countries and ultimately in other regions throughout Europe.

### THE TOOLKIT EXPLAINED



# 02

## WHAT IS A REGIONAL ALLIANCE



Regional Alliances are designed as a collaboration between stakeholders to form an intentional, collective approach to address public problems or issues through building shared knowledge, designing innovative solutions, and forging consequential change. It will unite all stakeholders that are affected by the changes the gig economy will bring; people - directly affected by the gig economy labour market themselves but also educational institutes, local and regional authorities, policy makers, youth organisations, co-working spaces, employers organisations, etc. All these actors will join forces in the GIG regional alliances to understand the implications of the gig economy and create regional strategies and action plans to address the gig economy together

**THE FOLLOWING PRESENTATIONS DEFINE SOME OF THE SUCCESS FACTORS IN FORMING AN ALLIANCE AND ALSO LIST SOME DIFFERENT TYPES OF ALLIANCES.**



**SOME FURTHER READING ON ALLIANCES CAN BE FOUND HERE.**



LINK  
**01**

LINK  
**02**

# 03

## LOGISTICS OF SETTING UP AN ALLIANCE



A Regional Alliance is at its core a 'Strategic Collaboration' which is defined as an intentional, collective approach to address public problems or issues through building shared knowledge, designing innovative solutions, and forging consequential change. When used strategically collaboration produces positive impacts, stakeholders committed to policy or program change and strengthened capacity of individuals and organisations to effectively work together.

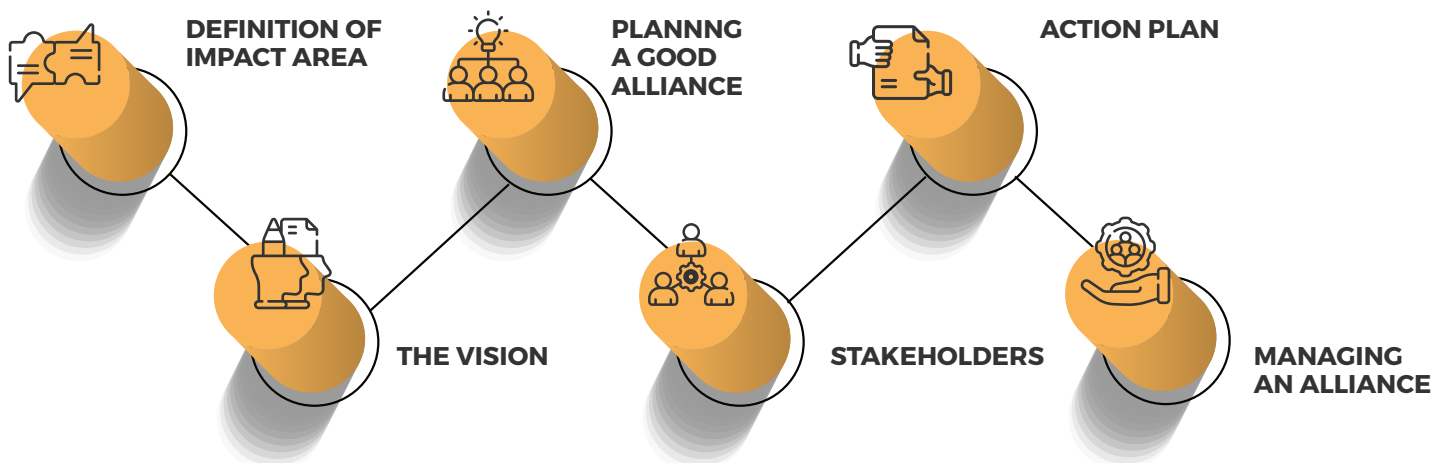
## BUT HOW DOES ONE GO ABOUT FORMING AND RUNNING AN EFFECTIVE ALLIANCE?

## HOW DOES ONE ORGANIZATION GO ABOUT SETTING UP AN ALLIANCE?

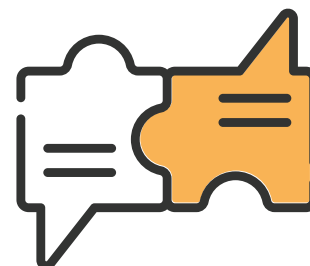
It is difficult to do, but done well it can really bring forth fruit. A practical toolkit is provided for regional stakeholders that are affected by the gig economy to setup an integrated regional network of gig-economy stakeholders. The toolkit will facilitate and stimulate organisations and individuals to cooperate and join forces to increase the impact and create an integrated approach to the delivery of our common GIG goals.

The toolkit comprises professionally designed online and downloadable documents and resources – PDFs, powerpoints, video etc) to facilitate the adoption and realization of the regional alliances in partner countries and ultimately in other regions throughout Europe.

These downloadable materials are designed to guide the setting up of an effective alliance. How to guides, action plans, stakeholder identification etc. These resources are tried and tested in the real world and come from practitioners in the field providing some deep dive information and resources for Alliance managers. There is a lot of background material, good examples of successful alliances, promotional and educational material along with academic materials on the subject of Alliances



# DEFINITION OF IMPACT AREA



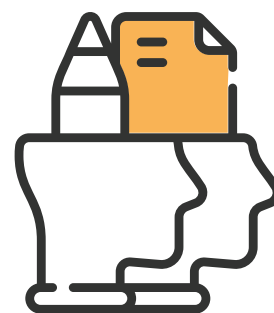
It is important to get a clear idea of the impact area the alliance might be able to influence. As a matter of fact, this is less a theoretical question than a practical one.

## HELPFUL QUESTION TO DEFINE THE RANGE OF THE IMPACT AREA:

- 01 Where is the problem of interest located?
- 02 Where are the main institutions located that may become alliance members?
- 03 Who are the relevant actors and where do they come from?
- 04 Is it better for the issue looked at to define a narrower or wider impact area? This is especially important when it comes to the promotion of the project idea as this is usually done more easily in (geographical) closely linked networks
- 05 Are there already existing activities or networks dealing with the main topic of the alliance in the region? If so, is it possible to embed the alliance in these or to combine actions?
- 06 What are the policy gaps in relation to the alliance and what does that mean for the prospects of success of the alliance

# THE VISION

We are committed to set up a GIG Regional Alliance. Raison d'être: build awareness of the GIG economy in this region.



“ Bringing the key actors together - to work together to **help our region support understand and support GIG workers. GIG Economy can be positive and negative** ”

**WHO ARE THE KEY ACTORS IN YOUR REGION?**

**AND WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?**

Bring their 'activity silos' together to form a **'GIG Regional Alliance'** around a set of shared objectives. These shared objectives are set out in an **'GIG Charter'**, i.e. a set of principles that every organisation commits to:

- This **'GIG'** = a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU)
- The key to success will be the commitment of those actors
- Got to have buy-in completely – 'lip service' won't do!
- Need to see gains that are so compelling they can't refuse

## WHY?

A compelling but simple vision:

- The GIG economy is a major part of the economy in YOUR region
- Your credentials (MCC, WIN, LHF etc) as a bona fide leader in this space needs to be clarified and emphasised – why us?
- EU Commission imprimatur – the transnational dimension – that this will influence EU policy – that your organisation and region can be an exemplar

## WHO?

- Include decision-makers, politically accountable representatives, relevant Government agencies, financial stakeholders, business stakeholders and thought leaders
- Include 'exemplars'
- Having high level political buy-in is important
- Identify a '**Champion**' within each actor/organisation
- These 'Champions' have to be key decision makers – people able to agree actions that will support the innovation transfer process

## WHAT?

- First: a GIG **Audit** - to identify barriers, deficiencies and targets – review, agree action, implementation plan
- What (if any) are the cultural barriers?
- Need to let the actors tell us what's missing within their interpretation of the GIG economy
- an '**Agenda For Action**'
- The 'Alliance' of key actors, with the HEI at the centre, which signed up to the Charter agrees how those commitments will be made to work through this 'Agenda For Action'
- Realpolitik and pragmatism – The Agenda For Action has to be deliverable and transferable
- 'GIG Economy' has to be sized to and appropriate for its setting – what is achievable?
- All Charter signatories commit to '**GIG proofing**' their organisations – what can be done?
- This can provide a template to guide the SME training programme and form part of the 'employment milieu'
- Focus is on delivering '**micro-initiatives**' which in aggregate can make a big difference to GIG workers, the HEI and the wider region
- Practical initiatives which benefit the Giggers as well as the businesses



## IN SUMMARY

- **Set up** the Alliance
- **Map** institutional and other barriers as a first step (audit).
- Then press for the adoption of a GIG **Charter** which commits each partner actor, through a **Champion**, to..
- deliver **actions** (Agenda For Action) which while **individually small** add to the sum of regional knowledge



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# PLANNING A GIG ALLIANCE



The establishment of a GIG Regional Alliance is a long-term process requiring high commitment from all stakeholders as well as excellent project management. For this reason, good planning is necessary to lay down the foundation for a successful partnership.

## THIS PLANNING INCLUDES

01

### **PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLAN THAT SHOWS HOW MUCH TIME WILL BE NEEDED TO CREATE THE INTER-REGIONAL ALLIANCE AND WHAT MILESTONES NEED TO BE ACHIEVED ALONG THE WAY (TIME SCHEDULE)**

A project management plan for the entire project is a must. Not only does it help to get a precise idea of how long it will take to finish each single project step. It will also be helpful to calculate financial needs and distribute tasks within the project team. Apart from that, it also shows potential partners until project results can be expected and underlines the seriousness of the project. A well thought out project management plan can be considered a strong signal to convince prospective stakeholders to become actively involved in the alliance.

It is also important to configure the project management plan in line with events that may determine whether or not the project is successful. This means for example, that if funding is needed to financially support the establishment of an alliance, the project management plan must take funding cycles into consideration. If the project relies on funding but no funding is accessible at the moment, it will not be initiated. This may scare off potential stakeholders and partner regions, thus putting the entire project at stake. The same is true for the political agenda. It makes more sense to choose a policy area to become active which already has a high position on the (regional) political agenda as it renders receiving financial support much more probable. Of course, that does not mean that topics outside the political agenda should not be chosen, especially not when the alliance is set-up strong enough to become an agenda setter itself. However, it is important to be aware of the consequences that come along when dealing with problems that are not part of the political agenda of a region e.g. receiving financial support and finding partners may become much more complicated.



02

## **A PRECISE IDEA OF THE NECESSARY BUDGET (FINANCIAL PLAN)**

Clearly, it should be the goal to achieve the most with the least money available in any kind of project. As the establishment of an alliance requires human as well as many other types of resources, an idea of how much financial input is needed to realise the project is of critical importance. For this reason a detailed financial plan is a mandatory feature that may determine the outcome of the project. In many European regions a fair amount of funding opportunities, be it at local, regional, federal or even EU level are available. Therefore, to stay informed about these funding opportunities, the conditions that need to be met to qualify for them, deadlines etc. are of high importance in terms of financing the project. If no funding is available, it is also possible to gather financial support within the intra-regional alliance. However, this alliance needs to be created first. Further, it will always be harder to convince possible stakeholders and partners if, aside from their time, they also need to financially contribute to the project.

03

## **THE SELECTION OF A GOOD TEAM THAT WILL HAVE ENOUGH COMMITMENT AND ENDURANCE TO MAKE THE PROJECT A SUCCESS (TEAM)**

The selection of a good team is maybe the most important part of the planning process. Therefore, it should be carefully considered how many people and what types of qualifications (including social skills) are needed to establish the alliance. Last but not least, good intercultural skills are needed to be able to cooperate with partners from different cultural backgrounds.

## 04

## AN ANALYSIS OF POSSIBLE OBSTACLES THAT MIGHT PREVENT THE ALLIANCE FROM BEING ESTABLISHED (OBSTACLES)

No project will be realised without any problems. Hence, spending some time to think of possible obstacles that may be hindering the establishment of the alliance is already the first step to avoid them. However, not everything can be anticipated and thought of in advance e.g. problems evolving from cultural differences or puzzling bureaucratic processes. Nonetheless, a good preparation will certainly speed up alliance building preventing many problems already in advance.

However, if conflicts between partners evolve a way to settle them must be found quickly. Usually misunderstandings due to different working methods, cultural differences, etc. are the main cause of any conflict. To settle these conflicts the “appointment” of a moderator can be highly useful. Typically, the lead partner of the project is ideal to function as moderator. Hence, it should be clear to all project partners who takes on this responsibility within the project. As a matter of fact, all project partners need to know that there is a moderator, who can be contacted for any kind of problem at any time.

On the other hand, it must be clear to the moderator to take on a neutral point of view to all conflict parties. It is important to point out that transparent communication to each partner is a must do to settle any kind of conflict. Furthermore, it is up to the moderator to identify the main reason for the conflict and to get the conflicting parties together to discuss and solve their problems. Usually, problems can be solved easier than expected once the conflicting parties exchange their views on the subject matter being responsible for the existing conflict. However, the moderator can also make suggestions to solve the conflict at stake, if the conflicting partners are not able to identify adequate solutions themselves.



# STAKEHOLDERS



## WHO IS A STAKEHOLDER?

Every region has its own business, cultural, civic and educational eco-system. Therefore, the functioning of this eco-system must be well understood and the key actors inside this system must be identified. Actors (persons or organizations) who have a vested interest in participating in a regional alliance to understand the GIG economy can be considered potential stakeholders. They may become valuable partners if they actively support the establishment of a regional alliance. These stakeholders or “interested parties” can usually be grouped into the following categories: public, national political, educational, commercial / private, non-governmental organization (NGO) / civil society, labour, and consumers.

## WHICH STAKEHOLDER CHARACTERISTICS ARE ANALYSED?

Characteristics such as knowledge of the area of interest, interests related to youth unemployment, involvement in existing initiatives and partnerships, potential alliances with other stakeholders, and ability to positively contribute to the establishment of an alliance (through their power and leadership) are analysed.

## WHY IS THIS ANALYSIS USEFUL?

Knowing the key actors as well as being aware of their knowledge, interests, positions, partnership activities, and importance related to the policy area allows alliance managers to interact more effectively with key stakeholders and increase support for a given initiative or alliance. By carrying out this analysis before the actual establishment of the alliance, managers can detect and act to prevent potential misunderstandings and/or opposition to the creation of the alliance. An alliance will be successfully established if a stakeholder analysis, along with other key tools, is used to accompany its construction.

# ACTION PLAN



**THE GIG ALLIANCE BRINGS TOGETHER SMES, HIGHER EDUCATION (HE), PROVIDERS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET), BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS**

- Develop an Action Plan of collaborative actions to
- Increase Awareness of the GIG Economy
- Educate GIG Workers

**THE GIG ALLIANCE WILL CONSIDER THE THREE THEMES OF:**

- How to develop an innovation mindset among more of our businesses?
- How to monetise R&D?
- How to get more HEI/SME collaboration?

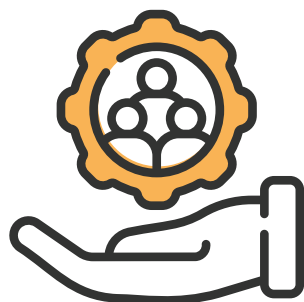
**EACH THEME IS EXPLORED BY 'MIND-MAPPING' TO IDENTIFY:**

- underlying issues behind the identified problem and specific challenges,
- current initiatives seeking to address these issues/challenges and
- new ideas to address those challenges.
- Seven KEY ACTIONS emerged from stakeholder consultation for further development into an action plan

**AN 'ACTIONABLE' ACTION PLAN**



# MANAGING AN ALLIANCE



- Draw up a formal agreement:
- Who does what for what return
- Agree Targets
- Record Work Activity
- Measure progress against targets
- Agree a timetable for regular communication
- Mutually trusted third party to act as mentor/buddy/honest broker



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# 04

## SUPPORTING MATERIAL



The toolkit is an integral part of the project to generate awareness of the GIG Economy in general. For those municipalities, groups, educators etc. who want to gain a deeper understanding of the GIG economy and how it is changing the world of work there is a wealth of further information and tools available.

## REGIONAL ALLIANCE – GOOD EXAMPLES

Developing and running an effective Regional Alliance is a daunting task for those first contemplating such a move. However there are many good examples available from around Europe and the world. A thorough search of the internet using the search terms Regional and Alliance will provide a wealth of good examples. Some primary examples are available here....

[LINK 1](#) [LINK 2](#)

## EDUCATION

The GIG training programme has been developed to target job-starters and those side-lined in the labour market, especially those faced by adversity. It contains materials making sure that they gain appropriate knowledge and competences to be able to deal with the strengths & opportunities and weaknesses & threats they face when entering the gig economy. The training programme is blended training programme, including face-to-face training and an online environment allowing them to access the information themselves at their own pace and time. The training programme includes:- Definition of the Gig Economy, including pro's and con's.-

Examples of companies active in the gig economy (Uber, Airbnb or Deliveroo).-

- Entering the going economy labour market: options to consider and its legal implications (full-time employee, zero-hours contract, freelancer, sole trader, entrepreneur, a combination of abovementioned, etc.).
- Understanding the weaknesses and avoiding the risk of the gig economy: How to arm yourself against exploitation?
- Understanding the strengths and grasping the opportunities of the gig economy: How to present yourself?
- Skills and competences in the gig economy, e.g. sense of responsibility, networking skills, entrepreneurial mind-set and pro-active attitude. Develop your own Employment Plan as a gig worker (a business plan for self employed gig-workers)





## PROMOTING A LEARNING CAMPAIGN

**A key** element is the promotion of a learning campaign to educate the wider public about the GIG economy. An on- and offline learning campaign has been developed and is aimed at educational institutes (VET and universities), employment and enterprise offices, youth organisations, local and regional authorities, policy makers (local political parties), youth organisations, co-working spaces, incubators, chambers of commerce, employers organisations, branch organisations, organisations of freelancers, self-employed and sole-traders etc. with the purpose of knowledge raising and exchange concerning about the gig economy and the effect on starters on the labour market.

This learning campaign is supported by tools including a powerful promotional video, animation video, brochures and PowerPoint presentations targeting different types of stakeholders. The aim is to inform stakeholders that are affected by the GIG economy and activate them to prepare and align **strategies.**



## ACADEMIC

Regional Alliances are subject to extensive academic research. It is beyond the scope of this document to list all the research currently underway. Some research papers are listed **here** ....., but the authors recommend that readers use one of the key academic databases (JSTOR, EBSCO etc.)



“ It’s time to prepare individuals + communities for the opportunities and threats of the gig economy ”







## PARTNERS

The GIG consortium consists of 8 complementary partners from IE, NL, ES and ITA which operate in the field of vocational education & training or in education & regional employment policy making and execution, which all possess a regional and international cooperative orientation

## Follow our journey...



[www.enteringthegigeconomy.eu](http://www.enteringthegigeconomy.eu)