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## **WP2 KTSkills Investigation Report**

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## Introduction

This report is the first deliverable of the KTSOFT Skills Project, which started in December 2022 and aims at removing those barriers between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and external partners by supporting and improving their mutual understanding and negotiation processes. Knowledge Transfer (KT) professionals, as cooperation partnerships builders and managers, play a key role in leading the complex processes of working between research and business and community organizations. KT professionals can exacerbate or smooth those barriers to HEI-business cooperation. Thus, the degree of effectiveness of KT professionals in managing KT activities very much depends on their level of training.

The project aims to enhance KT professionals' competencies, specifically soft and transversal skills that may support the transformation of HEIs into more inclusive organizations. Therefore, we expect that the project will have a multilevel impact. For this reason, the project's key output consists of designing a KT soft skills training programme, intending to advance and improve the effectiveness of KT professionals.

To do so, the project's consortium conducted a first phase of in depth research that included two major elements:

- 60 interviews with experts and practitioners in the Knowledge Transfer domain
- Review of existing soft-skill programmes

The research phase finishes with this report, that will be used as an input for the creation of a novel tool to measure Knowledge Transfer Soft Skills, and ultimately, the development of a novel training programme and toolkit.

Therefore, the objective of this report is (a) to provide a detailed overview of the **skills and competencies that are already present in training programs turned to Knowledge Transfer (KT) professionals**; and (b) to provide a detailed overview of the **set of soft skills (SS) and competencies that KT professionals lack**, and that would be very useful to enhance the effectiveness and inclusiveness of KT activities (e.g., to come up to effective cooperation partnerships and innovative output co-designed and co-managed by HEIs, business, public organizations, etc.).

The specific questions that the project intends to answer are the following:

- *What are the most relevant SSs that KT professionals use and lack in their current role?*
- *What are the most relevant SSs that KT professionals will need in the future (the KT professional of the future)?*
- *How can these SSs be trained and adopted individually and collectively?*



This report represents a first step in the direction of answering the above questions. In particular, it aims to:

- (a) Provide a detailed overview of the **skills and competencies that KT professionals already have;**
- (b) Provide a detailed overview of the set of **soft skills and competencies that are missing from the curricula of available training programs;**
- (c) Understand the set of **soft skills and competencies that** would be very useful to enhance the effectiveness and inclusiveness of KT activities;
- (d) Serve as the **basis and initial cornerstone** for the creation of *WP3 KT Soft Skills Self-Assessment Framework and Handout* and *WP4 KT Soft Skills Training Programme and Toolkit*.

The specific goals that we pursued with the activities that guided the data collection and writing up of this report were:

- Conducting desk research, to review the training courses already available for KT professionals across Europe and beyond, to identify the specific contents and skills characterizing them;
- Designing the questionnaire and **conducting 60 interviews** (24 KT professionals in HEIs + 18 KT professionals in business + 12 KT experts) centred on the skills owned, required and desirable for KT professionals and experts, in order to manage KT activities effectively;
- **Validating the set of skills** identified by KT professionals and experts;
- Synthesizing the insights from both desk research and the interviews with KT professionals and experts to **inform the development of subsequent project activities.**



## Theoretical and Methodological Underpinnings

This report rests on three subsequent and different activities that have been designed and carried on according to three different methodological approaches. First, resting on existing knowledge and literature, we developed a theoretical model taking into account the most important aspects for KT activities. This model then informed and acted as guide for collecting and analysing subsequent data. Second, we designed a desk research, with the aim of better understanding the state-of-the-art in terms of training programs for KT professionals, and what instead is taught in training courses specifically addressing SS. As final step, we conducted interviews with KT professionals and experts, to have a clear point of view on the type of skills needed for the profession, by people directly and daily involved in it.

We describe here in the following, the methodological approaches used to carry out all these three activities.

### Theoretical model for research

For the purpose of the KTSOFTSKILLS project, we are defining **Soft Skills (SS)** as important *job-related* skills that are closely associated with *emotional intelligence* and can be applied in a *variety of job activities*. Accordingly, these can be classified as abstract *personal* or *interpersonal* skills necessary for acquiring and excelling in a job.

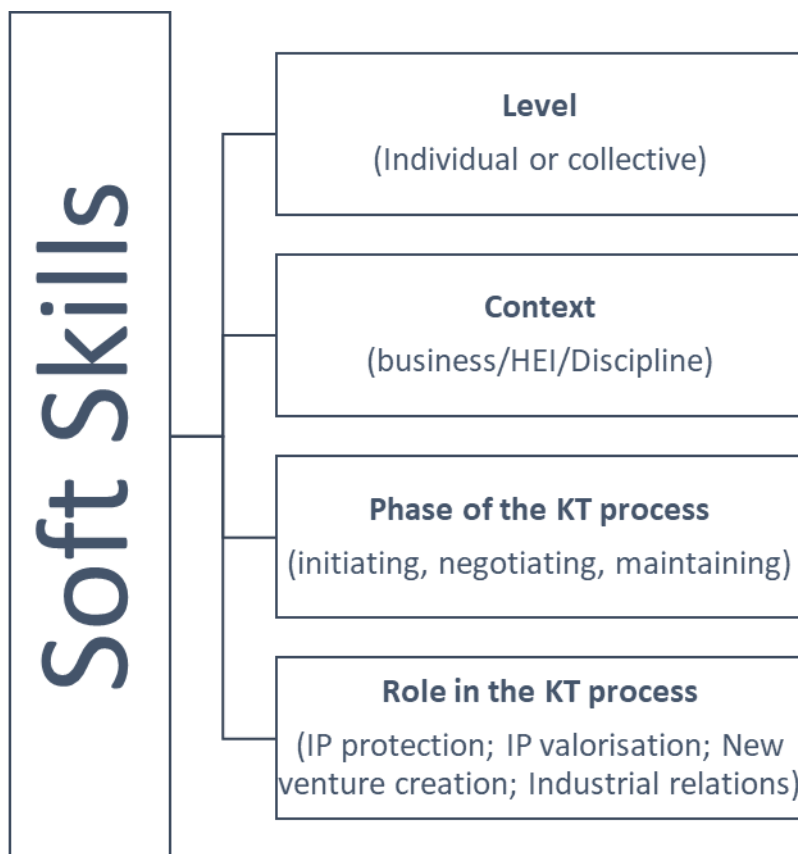
Goleman (1998) categorized SS into five elements: *self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills*. According to James and James (2004), SS include specific career attributes such as *team, communication, leadership, customer service, and problem-solving skills*.

The range of SS useful in working environments is wide and can vary a lot according to job characteristics and contextual dimensions. To figure out the types of SS needed to manage KT activities, we acknowledge that they can differ according to some key features that are typical of the KT field:

1. the **level** at which SS are needed: at the individual level (e.g. empathy) or at collective level (e.g. trust-building in a team);
2. the specific **characteristics of the professional contexts**: for example, public or private research centers;
3. the **phase** of the KT process where SS are needed: for example, in the royalty negotiation phase or during the KT phase;
4. the specific **role** that the KT professional has: a KT professional working on the protection of Intellectual Property (IP), or a KT professional working on building relations with business.

We report a visual representation of these key characteristics below, in order to summarize them and make them more immediately evident to the reader.





**Figure 1** – A characterization of Soft Skills for KT activities (Source: UNIBO elaboration)

Starting from a general overview of the most important features characterizing KT activities and trying to better understand the role of SS within this context, we built a theoretical framework that tries to link together all the aspects identified above and supported us both in data collection and analysis.

The model is composed of three parts:

1. **Conditions.** They refer to the specific characteristics of the situation in which a KT professional applies the SS:
  - **Role:** depending on the professional tasks and expected behaviour, a KT professional covers different roles in the KT process. The name of the role differs across countries, organizations and groups, but generally speaking, we consider roles can be divided in: IP protection (i.e., patent searching, patent creating and application); IP valorisation (i.e., promoting, negotiating and collocating the IP in the market); new venture creation (i.e., supporting the creation of research based start-up and spin-off companies); establishment and maintenance of relations with business (i.e., creation of long-term agreements with industry, creation of cross-partnerships with other research centres, etc)



- **Context:** we distinguish between the private and the public context in which the KT professional is developing his/her activities; also, the specific discipline in which they are working (i.e., pharma, nanotechnology, agroindustry, space, etc), and any other important contextual factor that may require special attention regarding SS.
- **Phase:** looking at the different stages of the KT process, we distinguish between *initiating, negotiating, and maintaining* the collaboration.

2. **SS dimensions.** They refer to the specific type of skills needed.

- **Team skills** refers to the ability of KT professionals to manage teams, to successfully achieve the desired outputs of the collaboration. Examples can be the following: trust building, conflict management, etc.
- **Communication skills** refers to a pool of engaging communicational approaches able to generate better collaboration pathways and maximize the benefits for the parties.
- **Leadership skills** refer to the ability of the KT professional to guide a team by, for example, integrating ideas coming from different parties, understanding when a compromise is needed to reach a mutually acceptable decision, etc.
- **Commercialization skills** refers to the ability of the KT professional to successfully convey intellectual property to the market, by, for example forecasting successful innovations, developing and negotiating pricing strategies and market allocation of the technology.
- **Problem-solving skills** refer to the position of the KT professional regarding their ability to adapt to changing environments, fast decision-making in high-risk contexts, conflict management, and other related skills.

3. **SS levels** are related to whereas the SS depend on the single individual, and thus requires a distinct type of individual training, or it has a more collective nature, that means that depends not only on individually trained professionals, but on creating the necessary conditions for those skills to arise within a group. This distinction may have an important impact on acknowledging the type of SS needed and how they can be learned and practised.





**Figure 2** – A model of Soft Skills applied to KT activities

(Source: UNIBO elaboration)

The three parts of the model were very useful for data collection and analysis, and specifically in the case of the interviews. Indeed, the interview protocols were designed to take into account the three different aspects, in order to obtain a comprehensive view of the *current, desired and future* **KT professional SS needs**, as well as how they can be satisfied through **learning and training techniques**.

## Methodology for Desktop Research

The desktop research activity was executed through several actions:

1. *Partners were provided with a report template* – UNIBO team provided each partner with the report template for the execution of the desk research activity.
2. Specific focus were chosen and assigned to the partners. The topics were distributed as follows: ASTP and NETVAL partners conducted the desk research on the analysis of training courses currently delivered for the KT profession, while UNIBO, JAG, THINK and SOPU partners focused on training courses specifically addressing SS. This was important to avoid overlapping info and have a wide coverage.
3. Each partner analyzed *5 case studies based on training courses*, which had to span different countries, institutions, methods, etc.
4. Each partner was asked to provide *feedback and suggestions to the Desk Research Reports* provided by the other partners.



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5. *Desktop Research Report creation* – Each partner was asked to finalize the Report with five training courses, according to the comments and feedbacks received in the peer review. The different Reports are considered key in informing the subsequent stages of the project.

6. *Finalise the KTSkills Desk Research Report with 18 case studies* – Out of the five cases presented by each partner, the three most relevant were selected to be included in the final Desk Research Report. The training courses selected together with the information obtained from the interviews were used to produce this KT Skills Investigation Report.

Note: Although all partners were provided with a standardized template to fill in their desk research, it should be noted that the reports were written by different partners. This means that the way of writing might vary between the desk research cases. Also, it should be noted that the depth of the desk research cases might also vary due to the differences in the online information about the courses described in this report.

### *Focuses of the Desk Research*

The partners were divided in two different groups for conducting desk research: Focus A and Focus B.

Whereas partners using Focus A had to answer the question “*What SKILLS are taught in KT Programs today?*”, partners using Focus B had to answer the question “*What SOFT skills are taught in graduate/undergraduate/corporate programs today?*”

### *Transversal Focus: Local, regional, and international scope of research*

Given the international capillarity that characterizes the project and the Consortium, those partners focusing on Soft Skill more specifically (FOCUS B) conducted their desk research starting from their nearby examples (i.e., national level), and then extended their research to a more international outlet. This two-step methodological procedure ensured that the five cases developed by each partner, represented both the national realities involved in the project (i.e., Italy, Poland, Finland, The Netherlands), and an international benchmark to include the best practices worldwide.

Focusing first on the national/local level allowed for more capillary and details. It also proved essential to capture cultural and behavioural aspects otherwise overlooked (i.e., in some countries, certain professionals are treated only in formal registers and will not answer to informal contacts).



## Desktop Research Process

The process to be followed by each partner for the desk research was as follows:

1. Definition of the research focus (Focus A or B).
2. Search for relevant cases:

Focus A: partners looked for programmes and courses provided by KT professional associations (e.g., ASPT, UIPO, etc), universities, and other training institutions specialized in training for the KT sector.

Focus B: partners looked for training courses on SS at undergraduate, graduate and business levels, starting from their own country, and moving then to the international context, both in public and private institutions. The aim was to find three national cases, and at least two training courses from abroad. International cases had to cover preferably both Western and Eastern countries.

3. Relying on the choice made by each partner regarding the three most relevant cases out of the five developed, UNIBO took into consideration all the training courses selected, in order to evaluate their representativeness all together. The final report, indeed, has to collect as many variegated cases as possible to have heterogeneous inspirational insights.

4. After the “green light” given to the partners, it was important to communicate why each specific case was finally chosen for the report. For example, “*we chose this case because of the skills presented, the innovative training methods, the popularity and usefulness of the program, etc*”.

5. Each partner wrote each case with the template provided by UNIBO.

## Interview methodology

The methodological procedure to conduct the interviews started with searching for the most representative sample of KT professionals and experts we could reach through the partners’ network. We paid attention to have enough variety in terms of geographical distribution, gender, role, experience, etc. For this purpose, we proceeded as described here:

1. Search for **interview candidates**;
2. Discussing the composition of the **final list of contacts** for each partner, to be used to undertake interviews;
3. Undertaking and writing up **interviews**;
4. Summarise interviews from partners and **review**;
5. **Anonymization** of information and compilation of the final Interview Report.



### *Interview focus*

To gain better and more accurate insights, the interviews were divided according to two different stakeholders.

- **KT Professionals in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and/or business:** they are individuals currently in (or who have previously been in) some kind of KT professional role in a HEI and/or business organization
- **KT Experts:** they are individuals with specific knowledge of and/or experience with university-business cooperation/collaboration.

Starting from these two types of direct stakeholders, we used the following focuses to conduct the interviews:

1. FOCUS A: it took into account KT professionals in HEIs and business, in order to have in-depth understanding of the SS they consider more relevant for their job, and to inform about existing internal training opportunities that they might have at their own organization, to train them on SS.
2. FOCUS B: it took into consideration KT experts, in order to have a more general overview of the skills needed for the KT profession.

These interviews allowed in-depth practical and theoretical reflections on the relevant SS for enhancing knowledge transfer.

## What is in the market of KT?

### *An overview of the Desktop Research on available courses for KT professionals*

Thanks to the review and identification of several training courses specifically designed for KT professionals across Europe and beyond, we were able to conclude that many different types of trainings are currently available, addressing different types of skills and competencies for the KT profession, for acquiring specific and contextual skills that are useful for a successful KT practice today. The training courses taken into consideration in this report section serve as a basis for understanding the training offered for KT professionals globally.

By undertaking this research, all the partners are more aware of the training opportunities available to KT professionals to increase their skills, as well as the weaknesses and shortcomings these training courses currently suffer from. We know that, for example, while the set of hard competencies for KT is widely covered in KT training, the different SS that could be relevant to make



KT more effective are rarely considered in the curricula. This is very well depicted in the cases analysed within Desk Research Focus A.

We have reported here the contents of the course and different lessons-delivery formats. For this project, we take these training courses as starting point in order to design additional contents and tools, focusing on the soft skills that are needed to manage the complexity and the challenges of and university-industry collaborations.

Within our desk research, we took into consideration various cases from Europe and beyond in order to maximize variety with respect to different dimensions: how the training course was delivered (i.e., face-to-face, online, blended, etc); the duration of the course; the audience (i.e., beginners, experienced); the geographical coverage of the programme; the average number of attendees and the format of the lessons. We present some examples in the Appendix.

### Descriptive characteristics of the training programmes analyzed

We considered the beginner- and intermediate-level training courses for KT professionals in Europe, America, Oceania and Asia. We spanned from courses that lasted a couple of days to those lasting more than a year. We dug both into specialist courses (i.e., a specific course on software protection) and more generalist ones (i.e., a general course on “Essentials of Academic Technology Transfer”). In terms of audience, whereas the general requirement for intermediate-level courses was at least a 2-year experience in the KT field, for the beginner-level courses it was sufficient to work or aim to work in Technology Transfer Offices. One of the intermediate-level courses that we took into account, was specifically designed for managers.

In terms of how skills were taught, in general the training courses were delivered on-site, and the most common way of teaching were the following: face-to-face lessons, seminar-style presentations, interactive workshops, and group exercises. One training course left more freedom to the students, by providing self-driven access to materials including lectures and case studies. In terms of more interactive and alternative pedagogies, in one case (a Master distributed along 16 Months – 12 months classroom + 4 months project work) we found a slightly different, considering individual and group works for presenting and discussing case studies, analyzing significant situations and elaborating solution strategies. This course envisages a final project work aimed at presenting an innovative solution linked to the needs of the KT professional’s own organisation, or regarding a useful topic by a professional point of view. The project work has a strategic goal in the training path.

The teaching approach usually found in most of the courses is in line with the type of material delivered and used in the course, which was essentially based on slides, handouts, and real-life case studies.



## Content and expected learnings: competencies and skills

Regarding the **content**, the analysis of the training courses highlights two different types of skills generally taught:

- **technical and specific skills;**
- **contextual or big-picture (ability to understand situations at a broad or high level) skills.**

We find useful to highlight this distinction because it unveils the importance of **understanding the context** in which the KT professional will operate for a successful practice of the profession. This finding revealed the importance of the **systemic vision** for a successful KT practice.

The most important **technical and specific skills** generally taught are the following:

- IP (Intellectual Property) Protection and IP Valorization
  - Introduction to licensing
  - Licensing Models
  - Introduction to academic spin-offs
  - Basics of spin-off financing
  - Patenting
- Student entrepreneurship, training and facilities at support
- Patenting Software – Current Insights
- Dealing with Data
- Open Science/Research and Open Innovation
- Open-Source Software
- 

The **contextual or big-picture skills** we found in the courses, instead, are the following ones:

- Research Valorization, Knowledge Transfer and Third Mission
- Innovation management and impact
- KT Internationalization and best practices
- Evaluation of exploitation strategy and options
- KT organizations and stakeholders (incubators, accelerators, foundations)
- Public and private funding to Research and KT
- Management, Development and Tools of Financing
- Research and Innovation with the Society
- Public research and innovation policy
- Legal aspects and contractual nature of KT



Not surprisingly, **transversal content related to soft skills** was also mentioned in some courses, but in those cases, they were never the core argument, but a secondary aspect. In particular, we found some traces of the following topics covered in the curricula:

- The communication of Research and Public Engagement
- Technology transfer through research collaborations - The relations with corporates
- From reading macro scenarios to research and innovation opportunities
- Strategy and Leadership
- Collaboration and negotiation strategies
  - Setting up and structuring the deal
  - Reaching commercial terms
  - Negotiating the deal
  - Doing the deal and post-deal amendments

With an exercise similar to what we did for the **content**, we went through what the course participants were **expected to learn** in the courses, therefore, the **skills** they are supposed to acquire by completing it. For our convenience, we divided the skills into **three big clusters** that helped us extract some interesting conclusions regarding the strengths and shortcomings of the training courses themselves. We can group the skills as follows:

### 1) Specific knowledge and skills

#### a. About Intellectual Property protection:

- Protection of IP, regulatory sources
- Documentation in Industrial Property: patents, models and trademarks
- PCT procedure and European patent
- Commercial and legal due diligence
- Gain insights into patenting and patent evaluation, and the licensing process
- Support and manage open-source software

#### b. About Spinoff and start-up companies:

- License fee/equity
- Spin-off equity models
- The evolution of spin-offs
- Organizational forms of incubators, accelerators and other intermediaries
- Private VCs operating in seed phase and PoC
- Engagement and investment models
- Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial mind set



- The regulations underlying student start-ups
- Policies, regulations, procedures and tools to support the creation of IP based spin-off companies and relations with existing companies
- Make the most of the fundraising and venture financing tools and be able to dialogue with the different stakeholders involved
- Increase knowledge on setting up a spin-off company, including the broad financing possibilities

c. About Intellectual Property Valorization:

- Understand and manage the processes of valorisation, application and transfer of research and innovation in public and private organisations, and to better identify and understand European policies and tools to support research and innovation
- Understand the strategic implications of intellectual property management choices
- Instruct a lawyer to draft a licensing term sheet and subsequent agreement to capture the key financial and non-financial terms negotiated
- Apply relevant methodologies for valuing IP and know what resources are available to support valuation of IP
- Discounted cash flow, Relief from Royalties and Excess Earnings
- What is licensing and different types of licenses
- Typical features of technology transfer contracts and barriers to licensing

## 2) Contextual knowledge and skills

- What is innovation and its business models
- What is Technology Transfer (TT), Knowledge Exchange, Knowledge Transformations
- A broad overview of the fields covered by Knowledge Transfer Officers and offices; Role and positioning of TTOs; basic output of a KTO / TTO
- How processes change with respect to different stakeholders
- Knowledge of principal technology transfer European communities and associations
- Universities responsibilities/goals; University Business Cooperation (UBC)
- TT and Government
- Who pays for public research; Overview of Horizon Europe opportunities for TT
- Placements and roles of the different actors in the chain of the creation of businesses
- Analysis of external context and trends (technological, social, economic, cultural, demographic)



### 3) Transversal skills

#### a. Related to negotiation and enhancing relation with industry:

- Encourage dialogue between public and private research systems
- Develop the rudimentary tools for dealing with inventions, inventors, licensees, founders and potential cooperation partners
- Tips and tricks on negotiating a successful deal (with a collaboration partner, a spin off or a licensee)
- Structure a licence deal and understand how different options can affect the overall commercial outcome of the licence
- Identify and evaluate the needs of the inventors/researchers, university and industry partner in a classic win/win licence negotiation
- Negotiate effectively
- Draft a term sheet that satisfies the needs of the inventors/researchers, university and industry partner
- Identify the key components of a licence agreement and know which sections can cause contention and/or involve risks for the university that should be avoided
- Overcome barriers that arise as a result of non-negotiable licence terms
- Effectively manage the execution of a licence agreement
- Actively manage contract compliance
- Understand when it is appropriate to re-negotiate or amend a licence and how you go about achieving this
- Ability to navigate the complex relationship with faculty who prefer open source as a transfer mechanism.

#### b. Related to exploitation and identification of opportunities:

- Opportunities - policy and funding public for student start-ups
- Identify and exploit transformative business, research and innovation opportunities related to socio-environmental challenges
- Overview of the best resources available to technology transfer offices (TTOs) for navigating the open-source ecosystem: basics of open-source software, including different types of open-source licenses, open-source business models, and source code management/release.

As can be clearly seen, what we call “**transversal skills**” comprehend a wide range of soft skills that are not mentioned in the curricula exposed previously. Moreover, taking into consideration that the pedagogies used in the available training course for KT professionals do not seem very innovative and oriented to soft skills acquisition – like would be in the case of immersive case studies, participating in a real negotiation, on the job training, etc. – it will be very unlikely that KT



professionals could acquire soft skills as a spillover effect deriving from innovative ways of teaching. We will explore this aspect in the following concluding remarks.

## Conclusion Desk Research Focus A

Highly specialized substantive knowledge is required by KT professionals in order to carry on their job effectively. Thus, access to skills like patent management, venture capital investments, and legal contracts have to be considered essential training. However, the set of soft skills that can make the transfer of knowledge more impactful, more accessible, more effective and more inclusive is also needed.

We found that, in general terms, most of the training courses for KT professionals are well equipped with substantive knowledge about technical and practical content on how to deal with Intellectual Property affairs, how to valorize it, and how to succeed in the procedural process of applying and obtaining a patent and subsequent license agreement. Yet, we found no traces of any specific content oriented to tackling difficult conversations, the consequences of dealing with a naturally risky and uncertain asset (i.e., low TRL technologies), how to sustain on-time collaborations (i.e., Long Term Research Agreements), or how to compensate for the different speeds of public and private procedural stances.

We also highlight the attention given by KT training programs to contextual knowledge, financing models, and actors of the KT world. This knowledge is supposed to give the participants the basic notions of who plays in their field and their specific function. However, we found no record of teaching how to reach the different players more effectively, whether there is a better timing for doing that, what strategy would succeed in different scenarios or nations, etc.

Regarding the training models and ways of learning, we found that most of the training courses are taught in the traditional classroom mode. However, much of the daily experience of KT professionals requires a diverse range of skills and access to a diverse range of practical examples. Since we believe that this may be a shortcoming, more effective training methods should be taken into account, including sharing experiences from experienced practitioners and as much case study/sharing as possible.

All these shortcomings can be seen in the mismatch between what is taught (**content**) and what is supposed to be learned or what competencies are supposed to be acquired (**expected learning**). In particular, we find a whole range of **transversal skills** that are clearly needed in this context and even “expected” for a KT professional. However, no evidence of them is found in the official training courses curricula available on the market. Starting from the mismatch between the expected learning and the teaching content, there is space for building solid soft skill content-related curricula that, together with an appropriate learning method, can fill the void and provide KT professionals with an overreaching toolkit for a successful practice of their profession.

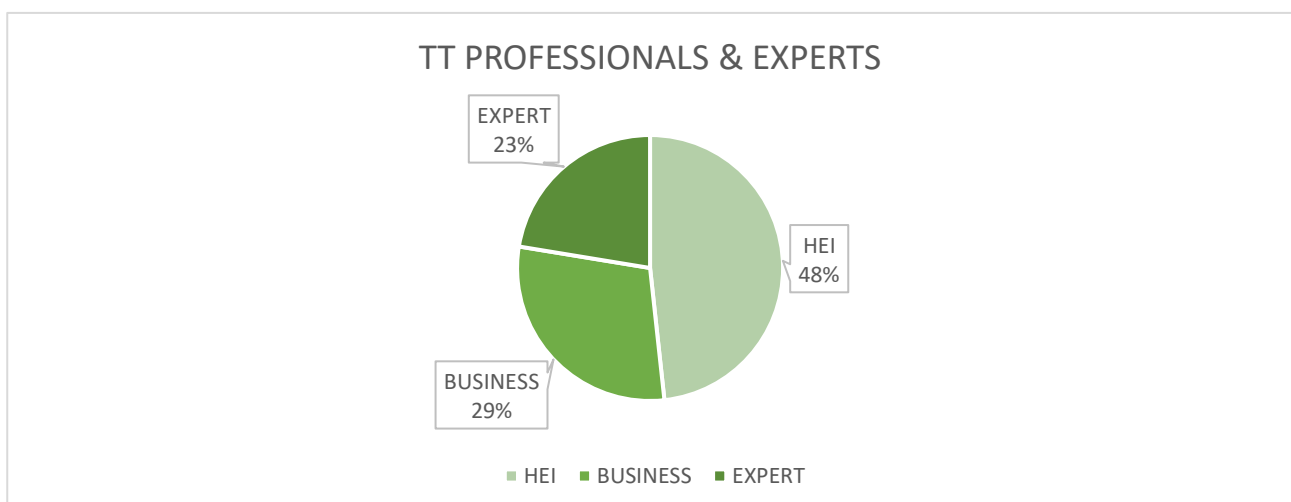
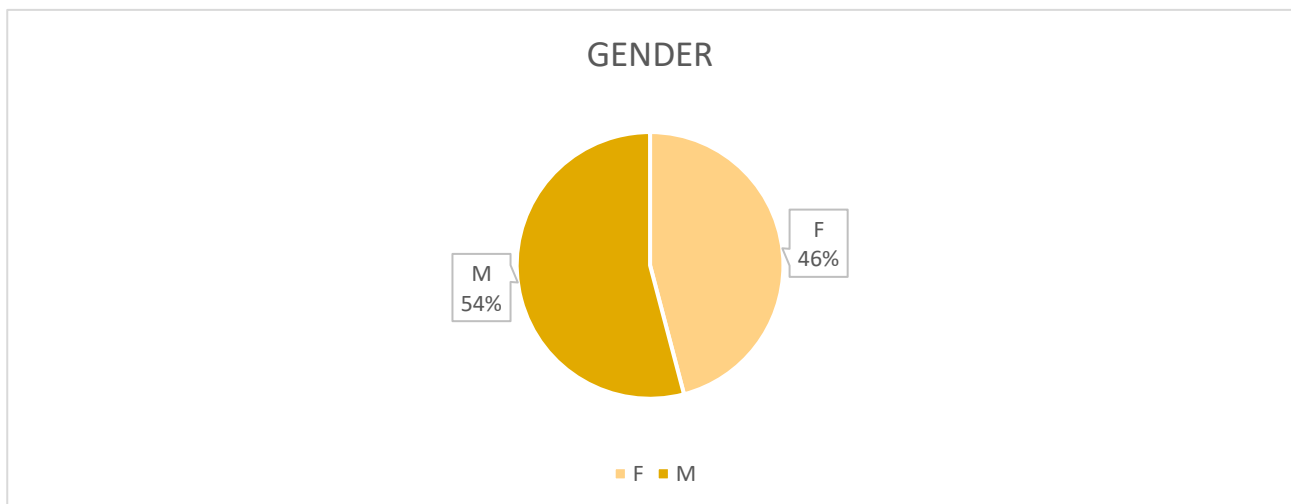


## What Soft Skills does KT actually need?

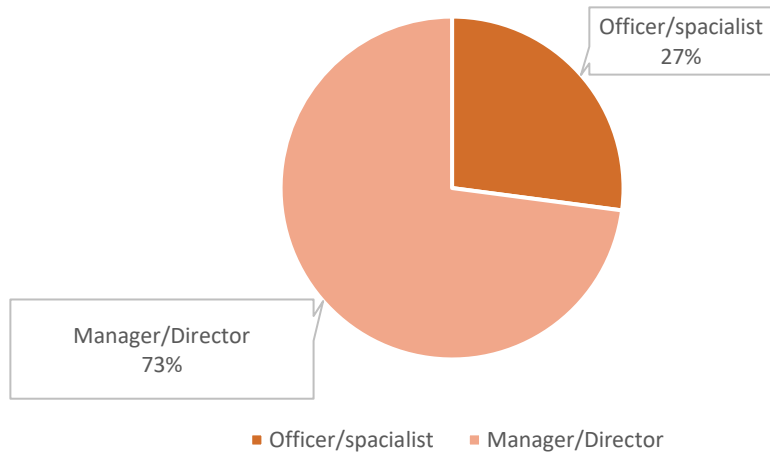
An overview of the interviews conducted with KT professionals and experts that uncovered the missing soft skills

Sample selection: descriptive statistics about our informants

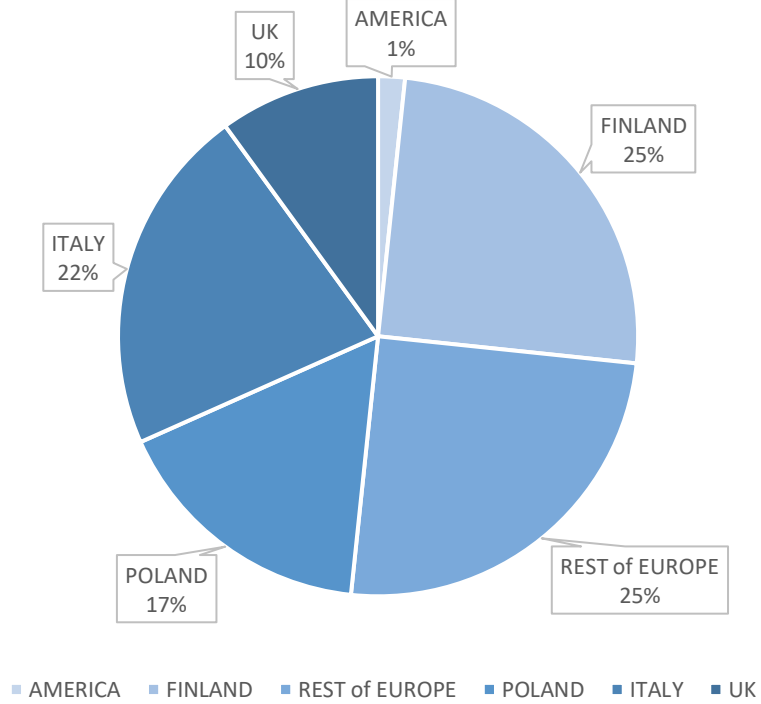
In the following graphs we describe the sample population that participated to our interviews. In all, we interviewed 61 professionals with semi-structured interview protocols that were build based on our theoretical framework. An example of interview protocol can be found in the Appendix.



### TTP professionals role



### COUNTRY



Source: UNIBO elaboration



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## Soft Skills needed in the KT profession

After we conducted the 61 interviews, we realised that in most cases, the informant was not directly *naming*<sup>1</sup> soft skills, but problems and needs that match with some of the greater categories of Soft Skills available in our theoretical framework.

The initial group of **problems and needs** mentioned (directly and indirectly) could be grouped into seven categories:

1. Proactiveness, motivation and wellbeing
2. Leadership, teamwork
3. Ability to deal with uncertainty/change, creativity and problem solving
4. Communication
5. Events and networking management
6. System and process thinking
7. Negotiation and sales/bargain

In the following table we present the words and constructs that were included in each of these eight categories.

---

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that soft skills literacy is not an ordinary ability among the KT professionals interviewed. This fact did not surprise us since the lack of the words to name feelings, emotions and, generally, soft skills is in line with theoretical considerations regarding the lack of training on self-knowledge and emotional literacy.



<b>Proactiveness, Motivation and wellbeing</b>	<b>Leadership, teamwork</b>	<b>Dealing with uncertainty/change, Creativity and problem solving</b>	<b>Communication</b>
Empathy	Motivating people	Problem-solving skills	Communication skills
Positive attitude/approach/mentality	Teamwork skills	Thinking outside of the box	Verbal, visual and written communication
Taking initiative, being self-guided & proactive	Interpersonal skills & relations management	Ability to deal with uncertainty	Interdisciplinary communication/ understanding
Self-awareness & taking care of yourself	Giving feedback	Adaptability and ability to adapt to changes	Listening/active listening (to avoid miscommunication)
Patience, endurance and resilience	Community building	Open-mindedness	
Responsibility	Collaborative mindset	Flexibility going beyond bureaucracy	
Love for creating solutions & learning	Building and managing trust	Change management (adopting to change)	
Self-motivated/ self-starting	Mobilizing internal HR for innovation projects	Creativity & Imagination	
Cultural sensitivity & ability to recognize/feel/sense		Intercultural mindset	
Intuition & attention to details			
<b>Events and networking</b>	<b>System and process</b>	<b>Negotiation and sales/bargain</b>	
Organizational skills: skills to organise events and programs	System thinking & process thinking	Negotiation skills	

Networking (III)	Analysis, simplification & synthesis	Selling/salesmanship/bargain skills
Intercultural networks	Ability to priorities (good time management)	Persuasion & translation skills
Facilitating & networking skills	Understanding the market & commercial skills	Building relationships, trust and project credibility
Stakeholder management	Evaluate & recognize potential and ways of valorisation, risks and potential	Conflict resolution
	Understanding different collaboration models where responsibilities, expectations and ownership structures	Managing expectations also over long periods of time
	Awareness of context aspects (technology developments/gender / open science)	Problem solving & Arbitration
	Timing: speeding up the process of talking to each other, understanding each other, offering solutions;	Customer awareness & facilitative attitude
	Recognition of the capabilities of different human beings	
	Common sense	



By comparing these seven emergent categories with more theoretical understandings of soft skills and the desktop research output we will analyze in the following section, we can conclude that the soft skills that should be available can fall into three categories: **professional, personal and social skills**.

1. **Professional soft skills:** Negotiation and sales/bargain + System and process + Communication\*
2. **Personal soft Skills:** Proactiveness, Motivation and wellbeing + Dealing with uncertainty/change, creativity and problem solving
3. **Social soft skills:** Leadership, teamwork + Events and networking + Communication\*

As can be seen, this is just a level of abstraction that allows us to group skills, but it is neither exhaustive nor definitive since, for example, under the label “**Communication\***” we may find communicative abilities related to translating a technology’s potential into an attractive commercial deal, or communicative ability related to building up an interdisciplinary group of researchers for a multidisciplinary joint research project. We understand the latter as “social” and not “personal” for simplicity and theoretical convenience since it involves communicating with others.

The following examples are perhaps the most relevant for KT professionals under each of these categories:

- **Professional soft skills:** information management; IT skills; systemic thinking & context awareness; financial management; sales & negotiation skills; conflict management; alliance management; project management; and communication skills.
- **Personal soft skills:** creativity; ability to adapt to (and generate) change; problem-solving; decision-making; forward planning; and self-management.
- **Social soft skills:** interpersonal skills around communication (feedback, influencing, assertiveness, networking); team building; people management; leadership; change management; networking and events planning.

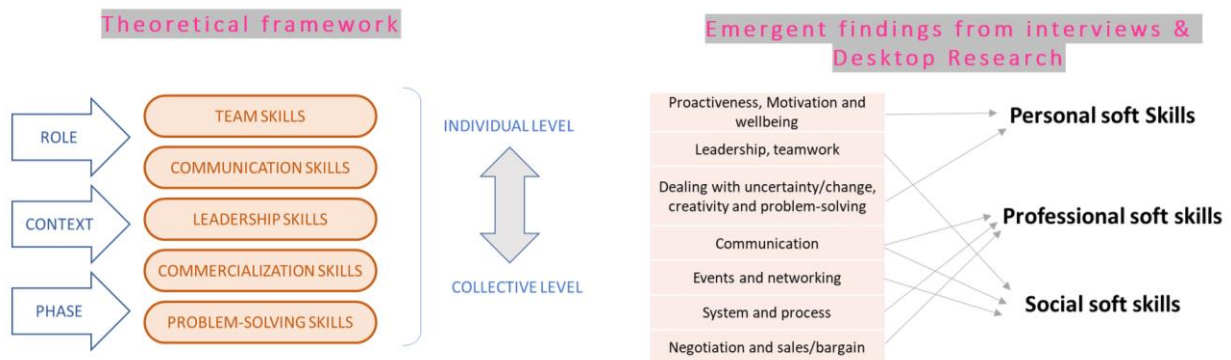
We will further discuss these categories with the **theoretical framework** (see section “Theoretical and Methodological Underpinnings” for more information) we followed as a guidance for conducting the interviews and constructing the semi-structured interview protocols in the following section.



How are these insights related to our theoretical framework?

For conducting our research, we used a theoretical framework that guided our questions in the interviews and our abstraction process after the desktop research exercise. This guide helped us keep searching with an open-minded approach while grounding our search on scientific bases. We build upon a strong theoretical stepping stone that enables us to understand how the KT professional resembles and differs from other professionals in soft skills training.

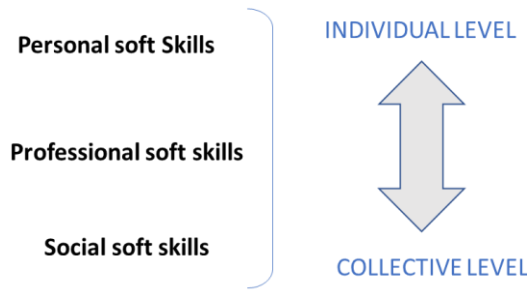
The following figure illustrates the Theoretical model of departure and the Emergent findings from our research.



**Figure 3 – Theoretical model and emergent findings compared** (Source: UNIBO elaboration)

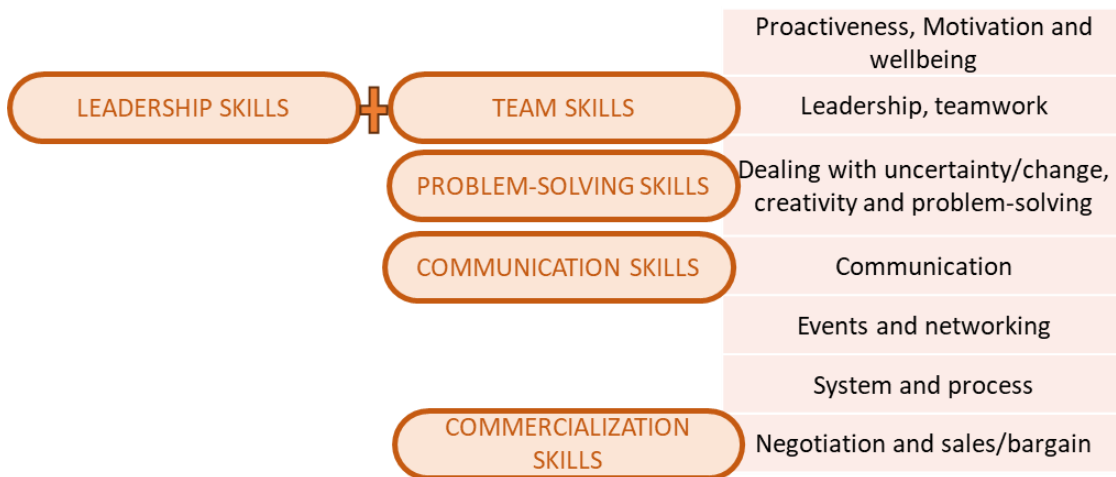
Our Theoretical Model has three parts: Role, Context and Phase; Soft Skills categories; Level (individual and collective). Our emergent findings show categories of soft skills in groups associate with personal, social and professional type of soft skills. In this section we will discuss the connections among the two.

There is a clear coincidence between the emerging soft skills needed in KT practice and the Individual and collective levels in which Soft Skills are theoretically grounded. As Figure 4 shows, the Personal Soft Skills are positioned in the “individual level” extreme, while the Social Soft Skills are on the “collective level” extreme. We position the “professionals” ones in the middle because, within them, we may find some that depend entirely on one’s abilities (i.e., awareness of context aspects like technology developments and open science) and some others that develop at the group level (i.e., building relationships, trust and credibility).



**Figure 4 – Personal, Professional and Social skills in the continuum of Individual-Collective levels**  
 (Source: UNIBO elaboration)

The overlap between the theoretical categories of soft skills and the emergent ones was also quite straightforward. As can be seen in Figure 5, Communication, Problem Solving and Commercialization Skills were already depicted in theory as important categories that were confirmed (and enlarged) by our search. Our interviews and desktop research were also enlightening by bringing in some more Soft Skills categories that seem more specific to KT professionals than anything else (i.e., Proactiveness, Motivation and Well-being, Events management and Networking, Systemic and Process thinking). We may also conclude that Leadership and Teamwork appear to be clearly more intertwined in the KT profession than we thought.



**Figure 5 – Overlapping Soft Skills categories between theory and emerging findings in the KT profession**  
 (Source: UNIBO elaboration)

Less clear was the reference to the **role, context or phase**. Some of the interviewees reported Soft Skills as more important in the “sustaining the collaboration” phase or the pre-scouting phase (i.e., raising awareness phase), however, some other informants insisted on the fact that Soft Skills are

equally important all along the KT process. This unclear connection and mixed evidence will be further explored in the validation meetings that will follow after this report is produced.

We present two interview quotes that illustrate this contradiction:

*Interviewee XX has attended courses on negotiation that utilised soft skills. He several times made the point that many useful SS in the TT field embrace the entire process and are not specific to one particular part of the activity.*

*Professor Z says that if KT professional still has a role in “sustaining” the collaboration phase, that part is when soft skills are more needed. Finally, he highlighted the importance of the TTO professional in helping the team of researchers in the phase of opening the team to different profiles in the scale-up phases.*

### How do KT professionals learn Soft Skills?

Another interesting highlight of the interview process was that the professionals and experts in the field were asked **how did they actually learn** to deal with the above-mentioned problems, or how did they **acquire the soft skills**. Their answers guided us into four ways in which these skills could be taught, besides theoretical inputs and frontal lessons. We will summarize them briefly here:

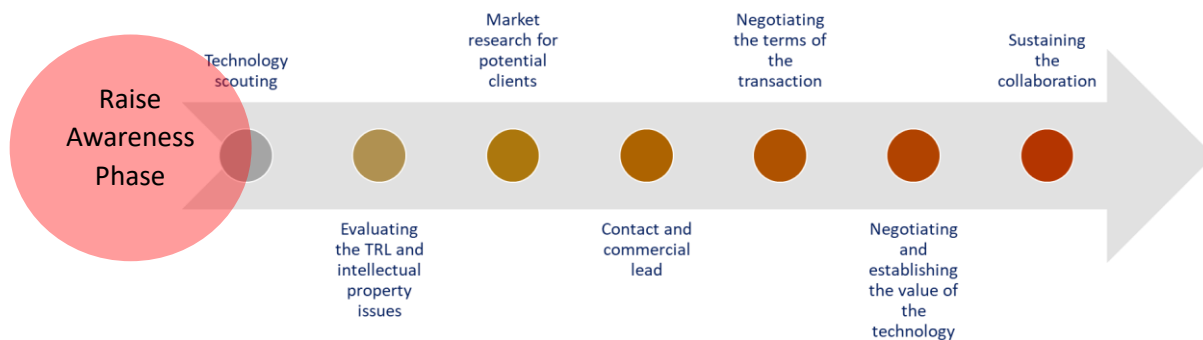
- **Shadowing:** being the “shadow” of a more experienced professional that can teach the way they deal with problems, negotiations, situations, conflicts, etc.
- **On-the job training:** being trained with real life situations, being in the negotiation table, building up the agreements, searching for technologies, etc
- **Workshop + blended methodologies:** for example, gaming
- **Active workshops with peer-to-peer learning:** a useful tool could be constructing a forum for discussion with other professionals in the field

### Other learnings from the interviews

Besides responding satisfactorily to the protocolary questions, some interviews were inspiring because they brought us some unexpected or surprising comments. We will briefly comment on them in this section.

One important note that emerged in some interviews was the need to add to our process model of a “traditional” KT process the pre-scouting phase consisting of **raising awareness activities** in which KT professionals are more and more involved.





**Figure 6** – An exemplar Knowledge Transfer process: phases of the collaboration + emerging Phase  
(Source: UNIBO elaboration)

Another interesting issue that emerged was regarding the importance of the **instructor’s background** and **the type of training associated to phases and parts of the process**. We present two quotes from two different interviews that refer to this topic:

*“One interviewee perceived an issue that the main existing trainings for TT are ‘designed by non-practitioners’ and so focus on ‘the method’ and don’t consider ‘the context’, e.g. for negotiations (understanding stakeholder, understanding the motivation, understanding the culture which is where the soft skill are needed. Noted, “There’s the soft dimension that makes them all different”. “*

*“One interviewee commented that existing TT training courses are very much focused on specific aspects of the process and do not place as much emphasis on the SS that will be of benefit at each part of the process and that learning such skills needs to be ‘much more interactive and confrontational’ that would occur in a MOOC.”*

In the type of training, we also highlight the **need for more realistic learning environments**, almost emulating On-the-Job training.

*“With regard to training the interviewee placed a strong emphasis on using professionals in mock negotiations to plant clues and create realistic opportunities to react and making stronger use of alliance managers who have much ‘hands-on experience’ of making relationships work over a long period of time.”*

Another emerging comment in many interviews was the crucial **importance of sustaining collaborations in time**, *“technology transfer is primarily based on building relationships with partners and contractors, so interpersonal skills are key in building an effective process of*



*knowledge transfer from the university to the world". Because a KT professional need "ability not only to establish, but also to maintain relationships with contractors and sustain interest in cooperation."*

The sustaining collaboration need is in line with our last comment on the many **mentioned barriers to the KT process**. As one of our interviews shows clearly in this quote *"The biggest barriers to TT created by in-house dynamics was identified to be 'not all team members being on the same page' and 'deteriorating communication and trust leading to resentment'. SS to help overcome such barriers included 'Flexibility in personality' and leadership style' and 'Cultural' sensitivity. Which, we suggest is in line with another important topic which is the "facilitator role" or, as Professor C said "the ability of the TT professional to act as a facilitator, helping the group to think about prospectives that represent a win-win situation for all". He went further and suggested that "liaison processes require people who come from different places" and for that group to work well, the head should create "a 'place of peers' because everyone comes from different worlds, it should be the less hierarchical possible."*



## Soft Skills in the Market

### What can we learn from other disciplines and areas in terms of Soft Skills

Though the training courses developed within Focus B, we can provide a starting point for discussing opportunities to improve and extend KT training with a set of soft skills, which are currently overlooked in training courses targeting KT professionals. As pointed out, the results found with this Report represent the starting point for discussing all the possible opportunities with professionals and experts in the KT sector and develop with the most effective solutions.

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### Descriptive characteristics of the training programmes analyzed

With Focus B case-studies we undertook a geographically strategic search to look for the most innovative and relevant cases that covered soft skill teaching across the globe but departing from Partners' national and regional ecosystems. Additionally, we looked for courses spanning graduate, undergraduate and business or professional targets. For this reason, our cases represent to the best of our knowledge an international and mixed target that maximised our learnings and enhanced our creativity in terms of teaching methods and soft skills targeted in the courses.

We investigated cases that lasted a couple of days to 8-month intensive programmes, on and off-line programmes, blended and with unlimited (those online, for instance) to very few (less than 40) attendees. Geographically speaking, we looked into what Latin America (Argentina), North America (USA), South Asia (Singapore), Japan, Continental Europe (Germany), and North Europe (Sweden and Finland) offer in terms of Soft Skills training, but we also took a look at more globally aimed programmes (i.e. MIT online education; European level programmes) to have a comprehensive overview of what is being taught.

Regarding the methods applied, we discovered not surprisingly that courses aimed at enhancing or developing Soft Skills are far more varied and innovative in terms of learning and teaching methodologies. Since we found this extremely important for our project, we will dedicate the next session to discussing these ideas alongside the relevant soft skills that we found could serve KT professional curricula in a particularly useful way, as we learned from FOCUS A cases.

### Soft Skills and ways of teaching

Considering the skills that we found most relevant for KT professionals, we will briefly discuss a categorization that seems useful for our project. We devised five categories of competencies and skills that appeared in the cases analyzed, at different levels and with different focuses. Then we will describe the innovative methodologies that these courses applied and could be inspiring for our project.



## Category A: Self-Knowledge and Emotional Intelligence

We found that some of the cases gave particular importance to the **participant's self-knowledge**, since this is understood as the base for a successful career development, interpersonal skills and healthy leadership. In particular, we found an emphasis on **emotional intelligence** as a pillar for interpersonal relationships and training **empathy** to understand others and generate bonds. Along the same line, these courses underscored **managing one's own and other people's emotions** so as not to be reactive, as well as **emotional literacy** to achieve full and personal mastery in the relationship with others.

In this way, knowledge and personal learning act as a source of knowledge and know-how, in which self-awareness and self-knowledge are the basis for searching **individual sources and experiences of learning and personal development**. This ability is **highly connected** with the much needed in KT professionals' **self-motivation and the mindset of an active learner**, characterized by curiosity, tenacity and discovery.

**Creativity management** was another interesting soft skill we found relevant for our project, which was tackled in many cases. It was understood mainly as searching for innovative opportunities in creative ways, fostering a mindset of curiosity and open-mind.

## Category B: Leadership and Teamwork

**Leadership and the ability to work in a team** are two key soft skills that have a direct impact on the ability of an organization to carry out its mission. **Effective and collaborative leadership** is needed to make sure everyone in the team is going in the same direction and working towards the same goals (SMART approach: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and temporary goals). This is extremely important in the KT domain, where different actors collaborate by bringing different perspectives, points of view, and approaches. The ability to **work in a team and lead the team** are essential to provide a clear vision providing a strategy, adequately motivating team members to use their talents, challenging the team to be innovative and enhance its skills, avoid conflicts and ineffective cooperation.

A team needs to have all its members working together to be efficient. It is very important to have a participative leadership approach, able to effectively **put together team members with different skill sets**. When there is a problem, team members need to be respectful of each other and be able to work through conflicts. Bad feelings and bad attitudes harm the people involved and break down the trust and confidence in the team. This slows down the team's progress because their attention is focused on problems. A **good leader sustaining teamwork** needs to be able to manage difficult conversations, energize people, engage with multiple stakeholders, and overcome obstacles.



## Category C: Negotiation

**Negotiation skills** represent a key topic of the case studies analyzed. Negotiation involves two or more people finding an acceptable solution to a shared problem. Successful negotiators control the process, and come away with a result they're satisfied with. For projects to be successful, roles, strategies, targets, and deadlines all need to be agreed, ideally to everyone's satisfaction. Accordingly, **negotiation skills** offer a valuable tool to resolve conflict and create value. An effective **negotiator** understands the negotiation process and implements planning, conducting and closing **negotiation strategies**. These results are extremely important for KT professionals, who have to manage KT processes that include different phases, challenges, and an evolutionary path. Not all phases need the same approach and have the same characteristics. Effective negotiation in KT processes has to consider all five key stages that include *preparation and planning*, the *definition of ground rules*, *clarification and justification*, *bargaining and problem-solving*, and *closure and implementation*.

To develop a strong negotiation strategy, the negotiator has to define her/his role and **understand** her/his value in the negotiation process. A good negotiation usually plays a key role within the negotiation and has the power to influence the direction of the decisions to be undertaken. This is extremely important in the negotiation processes characterising KT activities, where the KT professional functions as a boundary spanner between actors from different fields, who usually disagree with respect to goals, processes, and value creation approaches.

## Category D: Intercultural understanding and communication

Intercultural understanding and communication are recognized as key soft skills by most of the soft skills training programs. As the world gets more interconnected, the ability to communicate successfully across cultural boundaries is becoming more and more vital. Collaborative projects are increasingly participated by actors and institutions coming from different cultural backgrounds, so asking for advanced **intercultural communication**. Interacting effectively across cultural lines requires **perseverance and sensitivity to one another's differences**. This encompasses **language skills, customs, ways of thinking, social norms, body language, and habits**. Communicating effectively across cultural boundaries is critical to improving relationships by facilitating two-way conversations, which foster mutual understanding between people of diverse backgrounds. This is extremely important for KT professionals, whose job is exactly that of connecting and empowering different people within the same project.

Thus, intercultural understanding and communication result essential for avoiding and resolving conflicts. Some crucial individual competencies that need to be present for effective intercultural communication are **self-awareness, emotional intelligence, empathy, adaptability, patience, and positivity**. Through intercultural communication, KT professionals could replace ambiguity, conflict, and antagonism in collaborative partnerships with clarity, harmony, and cooperation. An important mechanism through which intercultural communication can be enhanced is **feedback**. Feedback is



indeed recognized as a key tool for assertive communication. Other mechanisms that can be used to improve intercultural communication are **storytelling** and **persuasion** in negotiations.

### Category E: Problem-Solving & Strategic Decision Making

Problem-solving and decision-making come together: it is impossible to solve a problem without making a decision. They are essential in any project that needs to set and achieve goals. Problem solving and strategic decision-making are part of KT professionals' daily jobs. Decision-makers can rely on different strategic approaches: more **systematic and rational**, or more **intuitive and emotional**. It is possible to use both, depending on the situation at hand and the types of decisions to undertake (e.g., planned or unplanned). Accordingly, an effective decision-maker has to diagnose a problem and define the process to be followed to come up with a decision. A skill that is highly connected with effective problem-solving and decision-making is **creativity** in identifying and developing options, for which the **brainstorming technique** is particularly useful.

Being a good decision-maker is very difficult in complex situations where different and often diverging interests are involved. Good decision-making requires a mixture of skills: **creative development and identification of options, clarity of judgement, firmness of decision, and effective implementation**. Decision makers having all these skills are better able to work effectively in teams, drive innovation, and manage risk. The acquisition of those skills is particularly relevant in the KT domain, where solving problems and making decisions may result tremendously complex.

Problem-solving and decision-making can be improved at the individual and team levels.

Regarding the innovative ways of teaching soft skills, we concentrated on those that were novel and particularly useful for teaching the skills mentioned above. We list them here:

**Personalized feedback and coaching:** personalized feedback, pre-negotiation planning, negotiation simulations, and scientific research provides attendees with a comprehensive understanding of negotiation principles and techniques. Specifically, applying a Subjective Value Inventory can be an example of scale for measuring a soft skill. The same inventory can be utilised as a self-assessment test since it allows an understanding the learning process's impact.

**Blended learning methods:** e-learning + experiential learning activities. These include case studies, simulations, role-plays, and interactive discussions, to enhance the learning experience and provide participants with opportunities to practice and apply their negotiation skills in realistic scenarios. Online forum for discussion --- good tool

**Self-assessment test:** it allows them to monitor and evaluate their advancement which also testifies the effectiveness of the course and guides the providers.



Another interesting example was **a course entirely designed as an online game** with strong narrative storytelling of the course and another course in which the **transnational activities of it connected students across the continents.**

### Conclusion Desk Research Focus B

We can conclude that if training aims to develop and optimise the skills of individuals working as knowledge transfer professionals, then the nature of the most effective training needs to address the following criteria:

- The training should be accessible to people engaged in work, either full or part-time.
- The training materials could allow people who are just starting to understand what KT is, to get familiar with the KT profession and, hopefully, about and consider joining it – in which case some training should be pitched at newcomers to the profession.

Some interesting learnings we take from the training courses focused on soft skills are:

- the attention to the “environment” in which the course is trained, and its “scalability” opportunity. These two points are decidedly relevant for our project as ‘food for thought’. On one hand, to think about the environment in which we desire our course to be implemented is essential to consider also ‘soft’ aspects of the learning environment and situation of our Master. On the other hand, since we want our Master to be implemented all around Europe, and maybe worldwide, the scalability aspect should not be dismissed. As such, exploring how others have thought about this scalability issue seems absolutely central.
- Training storytelling could be helpful for KT professionals to enrich their toolkit for presenting a new technology to the market, targeting their audience better, and translating difficult-to-grasp knowledge into more compelling business cases.
- In terms of team-level soft skills, delivering knowledge and practice teamwork and team dynamics, setting goals and objectives, and the characteristics and functioning of high-performance teams seem relevant. On this same level, how to solve problems when they arise and prevent them: interpersonal problem-solving skills. Mastering tolerance, handling frustration and decision-making skills
- In terms of individual-level soft skills, the process of self-knowledge provides participants with tools to understand and articulate what interpersonal skills are; they map their own and design an action plan and roadmap to develop their Soft Skills. Emotional Intelligence, which is depicted as a pillar for interpersonal relationships, is also tackled by the courses, aiming at generating emotional literacy. Importantly, they are taught how to train their



empathy and within that, the ability to understand and generate bonds and how to achieve complete mastery in the relationship with others.

- Lastly, we want to highlight the 'effective communication' that some of the training courses tackle, because this emphasises the importance of communication as a key competence in the professional profile.



## Conclusions

Three main insights deserve specific attention as concluding remarks of the Report:

- Gap between training courses' content and expected learning;
- Contextual knowledge vs. interpersonal skills;
- New teaching methods.

### Gap between training courses' content and expected learning

An important issue that came out from the interviews done with KT professionals and experts, related to the expectation that these informants had about the content taught within KT training courses (**real learning**), and the content actually provided by those courses (**expected learning**). In other words, a mismatch exists between what is taught (real learning) and what is supposed to be learned or what competencies are supposed to be acquired (expected learning).

In particular, a lack of SS was found in the training courses curricula available for KT professional, although, a priori, they expect to learn SS during the courses and to have them acquired after the KT training. We find a whole range of **soft skills** that are clearly needed in the KT context, and even "expected" by a KT professional, but no evidence of them is found in the official training courses curricula currently available on the market.

We find here an interesting space for building solid SS content-related curricula that, together with an appropriate learning method, can fill the void and provide KT professionals with an overarching toolkit for a successful practice of their profession.

### Contextual knowledge vs. interpersonal skills

The second aspect that is worth highlighting relates to the mismatch between the contextual knowledge provided by available KT training programs and the types of skills taught. We find that great attention is given to **contextual** knowledge, **funding** opportunities and the different **actors** characterizing the KT sector. This knowledge is supposed to give the participants the basic notions of who plays in their field and the specific role covered. However, we did not find teaching material in terms of how to reach the different players effectively, what is the better timing for involving people with different expertise, what different strategies would be more successful in different scenarios and contexts, etc. We find quite surprising that in such a complex field, like the KT is, where players with different logics operate, no skills about effective communication, conflict resolution, and complexity management are provided. We believe having here another interesting opportunity for the project, since our informants highlighted the crucial role that interpersonal skills (i.e., good communication, networking, social events planning, etc.), as well as negotiation ones, have in their everyday job. Accordingly, a better match between the skills needed to manage the complexity of the KT process and the ones really taught in KT training programs should be found.

### New teaching methods



Regarding the **training methods and pedagogies** used by KT training courses, we find that most of them are taught in the traditional classroom mode. However, the daily activities carried out by KT professionals rarely occur within a room and rarely follow standard practices. Instead, in order to increase their effectiveness, KT professionals require such a diverse range of skills and access to a diverse range of practical examples.

Since we believe that this may be a strong shortcoming of currently available KT training courses, more effective training methods and pedagogies should be taken into account, including sharing experiences from experienced practitioners, discussion of relevant case studies and best practices, as well as KT real-life situations, etc. Our informants mentioned some more interesting ways of learning that deserve our attention at this point: **personalized feedback and coaching**, for which we suppose we will need specifically trained coaches and professional teachers; **blended learning methods**, which include e-learning + experiential learning activities; and **self-assessment tests** to allow participants to monitor and evaluate their learning advancement.



# Appendix 1

Executive summary of the 61 interviews

0101 – 0110

## Executive Summary

The interviewee is a knowledge transfer professional from a higher education institution in Finland. As an experienced professional in international collaboration projects as a part of EIT (European Institute of Innovation and Technology), the interviewee provided helpful insights about international collaboration activities.

There are several topics highlighted during the interview. Firstly, **communication skills** are emphasized several times. **Tailoring the message based on the target audience** is an important skill for KT. This skill also includes **understanding the target audiences**, and how to communicate with them based on their needs. Secondly, **endurance** is another important element that helps KT professionals to achieve their objectives. Since there are a lot of challenges waiting for the KT professionals, it is important to have endurance to go from one failure to another one before a success story. Third, **intercultural communication** is a critical soft skill for KT professionals especially if there are innovation activities expanding the borders of a country -which is very often. Understanding how to negotiate in different cultures helps KT professionals to deliver win-win solutions. It is also mentioned that each culture has some strengths and weaknesses (e.g. the Finnish culture is good at listening compared to many others).

In addition to the soft skills mentioned above, other soft skills that are mentioned are:

- Responsibility & being self-motivated
- System thinking & process thinking
- Interdisciplinary & intercultural communication skills
- Being able to take care of your own wellbeing
- Productive communication – encourage others to engage.
- Motivating people: **leadership**
- **Inclusive communication**

## Executive Summary



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The interviewee provided a valuable perspective about knowledge transfer professionals within HEI. Their tasks in the university vary a lot and require a wide range of soft-skills to be successful. That said, we identified several soft-skills that seem to be resonating with the other interviewees in this project. As their task is mainly connecting people in the innovation ecosystem, there was a strong emphasis on **networking skills**.

In addition to that other skills worth mentioning are:

- Organizational skills: skills to organise events and programs
- Understanding people / listening
- Empathy
- Communication
  - Written and verbal
- Self-leadership and skills to motivate people
- Wellbeing (taking care of yourself)
- Negotiation
  - Inside the team, salary negotiations
  - Persuasion: how to motivate participants to move forward
- Systems thinking, seeing the big picture
- Resilience
- Ability to deal with uncertainty
- Community building

## Executive Summary

The interviewee provided a unique perspective to knowledge transfer profession from Finland's healthcare industry. As the interviewee has been working with several stakeholders, it was interesting to get to know what kind of soft skills was helpful for their work. The main themes emerged from the interview are **how to motivate people**, **how to solve problems**, and **building up a professional network**.



In addition to the themes mentioned above, here are other notable soft skills:

- Communication with positive humour
- Listening
- Positive attitude
- Problem solver mentality
- Thinking outside of the box
- Carpe-diem / intuition

### Executive Summary

The interviewee provided a very insightful perspective on technology transfer activities. Throughout his career, he has worked in several entities, including a university, an NGO, and a business. Therefore, he offered a more comprehensive picture about the Turkish innovation and tech transfer sector. During the interview, he emphasized the importance of **negotiation**, **mediation** and **conflict resolution** skills multiple times. These skills could be the highlights of this interview. With that said, the interviewee also mentioned many other soft-skills to facilitate win-win collaborations in the tech transfer sector:

- Communication skills
  - Verbal and written communication
  - Intercultural communication
  - Interdisciplinary communication
- Analysis & synthesis
- Understanding the commercial potential of the technology
- Sales (a non-traditional version)
- Being proactive
- Giving feedback



- Teamwork skills
- Positive approach
- Endurance and resilience

## Executive Summary

Interviewee provided helpful insights about technology transfer activities of larger corporates. Throughout his/her career interviewee has been working in several entities with R&D focus. Therefore, we got a chance to have a nice picture about the Finnish innovation and tech transfer sector. During the interview, several concepts and soft skills have been emphasised such as **commercial perspectives, simplifying complex concepts to communicate it with different target groups**. While these skills could represent the highlights of this interview, many other soft-skills to facilitate win-win collaborations in the tech transfer sector have been mentioned:

- Communication skills
  - Verbal and written communication
  - Interdisciplinary communication
- Using layman's terms to communicate complex concepts
- Understanding the commercial potential of the technology
- Sales (a non-traditional version)
- Win-win negotiation skills
- Giving feedback
- Empathy
- Adaptability
- Patience
- Self-awareness
- Building and managing trust



- Being a “go-getter”

## Executive Summary

Interviewee was a Turkish KT professional currently working in a corporate incubation centre. The main responsibilities include open innovation activities, networking and mentoring. While the interviewee currently works in a corporate incubator, previous experiences include university incubation centres as well. Therefore, this interview provided a rich perspective about soft skills in KT.

During the interview, the interviewee emphasized multiple times the importance of **listening skills and empathy**. There was also another interesting finding about the need for **communicating a solution** as clearly as possible. While this could be considered as a part of communication skills, the specific context that was mentioned in this interview would be interesting to keep in mind. In addition to that, the interviewee also mentioned several noteworthy soft skills to facilitate knowledge transfer processes:

- Communication skills
- Active listening
- Empathy
- Teamwork skills,
- Collaborative mindset
- Thoughtfulness, responsibility
- Positive mentality
- Problem-solving skills
- Mobilizing internal HR for innovation projects (leadership)
- Persuasion skills – negotiation skills



## Executive Summary

The interviewee is a seasoned knowledge transfer professional with extensive experience in high level managerial positions at Istanbul Technical University's technology transfer office and techno park. While the time for an interview was limited, he provided very valuable insights on university's technology transfer activities. There are several topics and soft skills mentioned during the interview. With that said, **negotiation skills for knowledge transfer** were one of the most mentioned themes. In addition to that, they underlined the importance of commercial understanding and entrepreneurial approaches.

In addition to that other soft skills worth mentioning are:

- Teamwork,
- Diversity, open-minded
- Communication skills
- Giving feedback
- Active listening
- Assertiveness
- Conflict management
- Business development
- Networking
- Interdisciplinary understanding
- Systems thinking, seeing the big picture

## Executive Summary

Working in a unique position at Aalto University, interviewee provided a valuable perspective about knowledge transfer professionals with in HEI. While some of the findings resonated with the previous interviews, there are several unique angles explored in this interview. In addition to negotiation skills, networking skills and commercial skills; **interdisciplinary communication skills** have been a major emphasis in the interview. In addition to that, interviewee helped us understand that there are also activities even before the technology scouting in KT processes.



Another interesting learning was the ability to understand how to collaborate. Interviewee used an analogy of eating together with different ways such as potluck, cooking together with a plan, or cooking together without a plan. KT professionals would benefit from understanding different collaboration models where responsibilities, expectations and ownership structures are arranged differently.

## Executive Summary

The interviewee is an experienced professional in the knowledge transfer sector. Currently working in one of the global players in white goods industry, they provided helpful insights about the life of a KT professional working in a commercial company. In addition to their current role, they had also previously worked for a university TTO. During the interview a recurring theme was **networking** and **negotiation skills**. The interviewee was involved in multiple international projects and their tasks required to enhance her network inside the company but also outside. Similar to several previous interviews, **networking skills** can be the highlight of this interview.

In addition to that, other notable soft-skills that came up during the interview are:

- Adaptation & working under uncertainty
- Change management (adopting to change)
- Being flexible and agile
- Communication
  - Intercultural networks
  - Interdisciplinary communication
- Understanding the market & commercial skills
- Ability to follow the latest developments in tech and community.
- Love for creating solutions & learning
- Positivity
- Open-mindedness



## Executive Summary

The interviewee was a knowledge transfer professional in a specific sector from Finland. Since education technology sector includes several unique characteristics, it was beneficial to get a “vertical focus” in this interview. At the same time, many topics. Discussed in this interview could be generalised to a larger context across different countries and industries. Another important distinction of this interview was that the interviewee could be considered as a entry-level KT professional with less than 2 years in the sector.

A novel finding from this interview was the concept of **customer service orientation**. While this was not initially mentioned in this way, it was highly resonated with the previous interviews. Another soft skill that is mentioned was **negotiation** and **sales skill**. While the interviewee didn't have the tittle directly related to sales, majority of the activities were described as an indirect sales job.

Other soft skills that would be good. To note are listed below:

- Intercultural mindset
- Teamwork
- Listening
- Make it more simple
- Verbal and written communication skills
- Facilitating & networking skills
- Self-guided
- Taking initiative & proactive
- People person

0201 – 0210

## Executive Summary



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**SoftSkills**  
FOR KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

The interviewee manages a relatively small knowledge transfer office (consisting of 6 people). She points out the specific competence of being able to communicate with senior and degree holders. She also highlights the important ability to step into different tasks and roles, important for transfer centres with limited resources. Points to skills such as staying calm and composed, negotiating and communication skills in the broadest sense.

### Executive Summary

This interview describes well everyday work of head of technology transfer office, which gives autonomy to its employees – so called “brokers”. The role of director is mainly to enable and facilitate. He sees soft skills such as ability to mediate as necessary to fulfil his role. For employees of TTO he emphasise role of communication skills, analytic thinking as well as curiosity as crucial ones.

### Executive Summary

The interviewee gives a point of view of head of intellectual property division in TTO of a big size university. The answers prove the importance of communication skills both within the team and between TTO and business partners. The important observation is also that the soft skills trainings shall be repeated from time to time and that ‘learning by doing’ is equally beneficial as taking part in organized courses.

### Executive Summary

The interview was conducted with a person with many years of experience in innovation management positions in private companies and in a foreign research institute. Relatively recently, he has been a director at a TTO of a technical university. The interviewee's insights focus on the importance of communication, the ability to listen and the use of the language of benefit in building understanding between the scientific side and the business side. He also draws attention to the importance of being



able to have a deep understanding of the processes taking place in the organisation to which one comes for a new position.

### Executive Summary

The interviewee is an Innovation Broker with many years of experience and now is a Head of the Technology Transfer and Economic Cooperation Section . In her remarks, she stressed that technology transfer is primarily based on building relationships with partners and contractors, so interpersonal skills are key in building an effective process of knowledge transfer from the university to the world. She also pointed out the complexity and multifunctionality of the position of brokers, which results in the preparation of specialists on many professional levels. She also pointed out the complexity and multifunctionality of the role of brokers, which requires specialized preparation on many professional levels. An important conclusion is also the importance of the ability not only to establish, but also to maintain relationships with contractors and sustain interest in cooperation. As for soft skills, she believes that primarily these skills are acquired in the practitioner.

Regarding the main barriers concerning the public sector, she expresses a different view compared to other respondents, but points out that the main area for development is increasing the University's risk-taking capacity. Regarding soft skills courses, the respondent mentioned the "Innovation Brokers" workshop organized by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Poland.

### Executive Summary

The interviewee is a well-known expert in the field of intellectual property law, assistant professor at the Chair of Intellectual Property Law at the Jagiellonian University, lecturer in patent law, copyright law, head of the international study Professor emphasises the importance of skills such as negotiation, mediation, the ability to transfer expertise to others, the importance of transparent and effective team communication, creating a collaborative environment and trust-building. She also draws attention to the communication challenges arising from the different roles and diverse experience of team members, with a particular focus on empathy and the need to be sensitive to this issue in the daily work. Nevertheless, she emphasises that expertise and preparation in the topic is paramount. Regarding training or courses on soft skills, the professor mentioned a tutoring course she took at the Jagiellonian University.



### Executive Summary

The interviewee, as director of CTT, has rich and varied professional experience. He emphasizes the importance of leadership skills, task enforcement and focus on achieving a goal. Using his own example, he emphasizes the ability to find common ground even in situations with limited empathy. In addition, he points out that the key to success in technology transfer is solid subject matter preparation. However, he did not mention specific examples of soft skills courses.

### Executive Summary

The interviewee serves as the R&D Portfolio Manager, where she leverages her expertise in sourcing and evaluating life science projects. In her current role, she has analyzed over 400 knowledge-based R&D projects, 50 of which underwent a due diligence process, and 13 evolved into startups in the fields of pharmacy, biotechnology, bioengineering, and clinical research. She is an alumna of the Warsaw University of Technology Business School and the Drug Registration Academy. In her current position, she is responsible for building relationships with the innovation community and coordinating activities during the proof of principle phase. Her educational background is rooted in chemical sciences.

### Executive Summary

The Interviewee works in the position of Director of [REDACTED]. Her work focuses on promoting and finding commercial applications for knowledge and technologies produced by universities and research institutions. Her role is to connect companies with providers of new technologies and to maintain relationships between industry and academia. Her educational background is linked to the Jagiellonian University, where she specialized in biology and biochemistry. She also gained scientific competence through international conferences and scholarships. She works mainly with bio-innovation technologies, including biomedicine, biotechnology, ag-tech and med-tech, and believes that the lack of soft skills, such as interdisciplinary work and effective communication, creates barriers to technology transfer.



### Executive Summary

The interviewee provides insights into the role of a technology and innovation broker. He is a broker for one Polish university, and he discusses the skills required for this role. He emphasizes the importance of soft skills, such as communication and relationship-building, in addition to technical knowledge. He also stresses the need for realistic marketing that does not overhype products or solutions. He notes that this knowledge has been practical and necessary for his role as a broker. Additionally, he has pursued postgraduate studies in social media and content marketing, which have proved useful in communicating between the business world and science. Overall, the interview highlights the multifaceted nature of the technology and innovation broker role. Brokers must possess a range of skills, including technical knowledge, soft skills, and marketing expertise. His educational background in environmental protection and marketing has equipped him with the necessary skills to excel in this role.

0301 - 0310

### Executive Summary

The interviewee is President and founder of ██████████, a company founded in 1993 that drives knowledge from idea to market by coaching researchers, entrepreneurs, investing in promising opportunities and advising public and private organisations on innovation strategies. ██████████ has over 25 years' hands-on experience investing in high-growth companies across Europe, and helping Institutions, governments, regions and cities around the world foster more of them. In the last twenty years ██████████ has been working with the European Commission on the exploitation of research results. ██████████ works on and with projects (1.800+), helping them in the exploitation activities, that is all those activities that serve to facilitate the use of a research result. The interviewee points out how communication skills and communication-related aspects are important as soft skills for technology transfer, also emphasizing on understanding the needs of the customer and "How to listen".

### Executive Summary



Brazil native and in Europe for over 30 years now, The interviewee is currently the [REDACTED]. The members of the organization are actually at the forefront of technology of European industries, and goes from IBM in the quantum computing through ABB in all the electrification of Europe, Philips on the health care aspect, and so on. So, a multisectoral company where it bears members both on the very big corporates as well as small and medium sized businesses or industries. [REDACTED] is responsible for running the Secretariat and the Association. He acts as [REDACTED] Treasurer and Secretary to the Governing Board, handles public outreach activities as well as communications. He is in charge for the relations with the members and of recruiting new members. Finally, the interviewee points out how experience, background, mentality, and the “ability to put forward” are essential soft skills.

### Executive Summary

The interviewee, after 13 years working as a scientist, moved into the corporate world.

First, the non for profit, doing exactly technology transfer from large hospitals into pharmaceutical companies. And then she moved into a private corporate world working for larger manufacturers of food ingredients. After that and three years ago, she started her own company, her own startup company. Also, the interviewee points out how having as much as transversal skills as possible (or for example, having a double degree) is a fundamental part in TT.

### Executive Summary

Interviewee is [REDACTED] managing partner, company that manages venture capital and venture building programs related to technology transfer. Also, it is about a year that his team is managing the national pole of Aerospace technology transfer by [REDACTED]. Born as structural aeronautical engineer, he worked for a dozen years in corporations, starting with management of the machinery production line. After a PhD at University of Birmingham, his path into technology transfer started in 2008 thanks to his experience in TT ventures. Regarding Soft Skills, the interviewee puts a special focus on multiculturalism, ability to speak different languages and corporate experience.

### Executive Summary



The interviewee is a speaker in workshops and conferences on intellectual property, licensing and technology management. CEO of MITO Technology and overseer of the company licensing activities, in particularly for evaluation of inbound technologies and negotiation of IP transactions with licensees. Extensive experience in dealing with universities and public research institutions and managing internal organisational issues. He thinks working experience and human component are an essential part of TT.

### Executive Summary

The interviewee is former President and Vice President Policy of ASTP and following a period at Gothenburg University, in 2022, he started to work for [REDACTED]. He has long experience from the university sector as a researcher in Theoretical High Energy Physics as well as in utilization. In addition to this he has substantial experience from leading positions in industry, as well as technology transfer. His industrial experience covers both large companies, small companies and spin off's from universities in various technology sectors. He has been a board member of several companies and organizations over the last 10 years. He initiated the Swedish Network for Innovation and Technology Transfer Support (SNITTS) and was part of ASTP Professional Development Committee for several years. The interviewee point out how listening to other people and understanding their driving forces and values are valuable soft skills to possess.

### Executive Summary

Interviewee worked for the University of Nottingham's School of Pharmacy, where she ran a newly created interdisciplinary Doctoral Training Centre. As Project Manager, she co-ordinated the PhD programme and brought together academics and industry to generate collaborative research projects in targeted therapeutics as well as running a government-funded project to develop researchers' transferable skills. She has also worked for the Food Standards Agency in scientific policy and for Isis Research (now known as Synovate Healthcare) where she was responsible for planning, implementing and analysing large international studies on HIV therapy for the pharmaceutical industry.

The interviewee has a PhD in HIV research from the MRC-Laboratory of Molecular Biology at the University of Cambridge.

The interviewee joined Cambridge Enterprise as Consultancy Associate in January 2008 and became Head of Consultancy in February 2015.

She focuses on "the big picture": She says that we need to learn how to see the biggest picture rather than



our specific tasks.

### Executive Summary

Interviewee finished her PhD in Physics in 1998 and did her Habilitation in Experimental Physics in 2005. After more than 10 years in research she started her education in the field of Intellectual Property Rights and became registered technology transfer professional in January 2012. She was member of several technology transfer expert groups in Austria and Germany and served as an innovation expert for a H2020 project. After more than 10 years in technology transfer, the interviewee worked in collaboration with the rectorate and her colleagues on a strategy to further improve the services in knowledge transfer at the University of Innsbruck. As a result three former independent institutions (two staff units and one external limited company) merged into the Transfercenter Science, Economy, Society, University of Innsbruck. The interviewee points out that the most practical soft skills that a person could have is to adapt to changes and not be afraid of the future.

### Executive Summary

Originally physicist, Interviewee left academia at the end of her PhD to join what was quite a mature spin out in order to commercialise the efforts of her research. She spent about 10 years in industry working with universities, doing collaborations, in some cases actually chasing their patents and licence their patents. After 10-12 years working in the US and Germany, she came back to the UK, and made quite a major change, starting to work at the interface between universities and business. Quite specifically, Lisa ended up working in the newer member states, so Croatia, Bulgaria and then the accession states, so more of the Western Balkans and a lot in Eastern Europe where they're moving from being a transition economy. Finally, the interviewee emphasize on the ability to listen as an important soft skill: he says that we should put more emphasis on people's ability to listen, over one's ability to talk.

### Executive Summary



Interviewee is an independent technology transfer and innovation consultant and author through his business Technology Transfer Innovation. Tom has over 30 years' experience in the university technology transfer industry from working in the UK and around the world. The interviewee is currently working on advisory assignments to universities and governments on technology transfer and is a member of the investment committee of three early stage investment funds in Madrid, Milan and Cape Town. The interviewee points out several skills that are important for her in TT environment: Communication, negotiation skills and "attitude".

0401 – 0413

### Executive Summary

The interviewee is a highly experienced expert in the field of technology transfer, working with a large number of HEIs in Germany and increasingly drawing on high-tech tools to enhance the operational side of the TT business.

Aware of the large number and variety of soft-skills that come in to play during the interactions with multiple stake-holders that take place during the TT process from the standard skills of **communication, networking, negotiation and sales** to the more subtle skills of **Visualization, Emotional Intelligence and Cultural sensitivity/ competency** and the skills that are beneficial to the individual themselves **such as persuasive training and resilience to frustration** and the **ability to promote work-life balance**.

Highlighted the value of different soft-skills that are beneficial depending on which 'side' of the venture creation process you are on including **team building vs. coaching and training**.

Suggested that acquisition of skills needs to take place through:

- Shadowing (primarily)
- On-the job training
- Workshop+ blended (gaming)
- Active workshops with peer-to-peer learning

Saw a longer term need for people to be able to **communicate well in writing** and to be **good moderators** *"because moderating the process cannot be automated"*.

### Executive Summary



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**SoftSkills**  
FOR KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

The interviewee has worked in technology transfer from within industry for over 40 years with a strong focus on life-sciences. Has made use of a number of the professional training courses e.g. LESI and WIPO. He noted that ‘the SS is more an indirect part of an overall training e.g. coaching on negotiation’ but for a good training, this will be a strong aspect of the training.

The interviewee highlighted a number of subtle soft-skills that go beyond the standard ‘**communication, and negotiation**’ core set e.g. **Creativity, problem solving and analysis** to identify ‘the most difficult aspects to transfer as far as actually physically handing over the technology’; **Persuasion** e.g. with patent examiners’; **building trust; attention to details; visual presentation** e.g. speaking in a way that's none threatening and also having a visual look that's none threatening (“Deep Six”); and **active listening and cognitive empathy**.

With regard to training the interviewee placed a strong emphasis on **using professionals in mock negotiations** to plant clues and create realistic opportunities to react and **making stronger use of alliance managers** who have much hands on experience of making relationships work over a long period of time

The interviewee suggested that the presence of soft-skills should be an expectation in all TT roles and that critical soft-skills for the future will include **succinct communicating skills (clear, logical, understandable and persuasive)**.

## Executive Summary

Interviewee worked as a TT professional at CERN in Geneva for 37 years. A period that encompassed the establishment, development and maturity of the office and function. His perspective on TT includes aspects that relates specifically to an international organization with membership from many countries.

Gained many of his early soft skills (SS) via an MBA. Perceived an issue that the main existing trainings for TT are ‘*designed by non-practitioners*’ and so focus on ‘*the method*’ and don’t consider ‘*the context*’, e.g. for negotiations, (understanding stakeholder, understanding the motivation, understanding the culture which is where the soft skill are needed. Noted “there's soft dimension that makes the all different”.

Was able to clearly link the **role** of SS at different part of the TT process to the **SS needed** e.g. Valorization. Role: “Trying to understand who could have a need that could be solved by CERN” and “Identifying the best approach”. SS: Networking.

Identified the core SS needed by TT professionals:

- Negotiation
- Building rapport and trust
- Interpersonal communications
- Change management (particularly for young TTOs)



- Communication
- Selling
- Conflict resolution
- (Cultural aspects in some situations)
- Soft influence to compensate for a lack of power

Suggested at in the next 5+ years TT professionals would need to be:

- flexible and pragmatic
- open to new ideas
- possessing interpersonal skill
- ability to priorities (good time management)
- having the ability to work as part of a team and to work in difficult personal environment (working with difficult people)

## Executive Summary

Interviewee has worked in the KTO of Charles University in the Czech Republic since it was first set up. She has a previous background in Law and had worked for a number of public sector and donor organizations. She highlighted the benefits of early media training to her TT position and that often TT training is not specifically on soft-skills but they are adsorbed, lie dormant and come in to play at a later date.

The **complexity of communicating to different stakeholders to secure desired outcomes** and **problem solving** emerged as daily challenges that could be supported by the right blend of Soft Skills (SS). In addition, the heads of KTOs needs specific skills related to **leadership and the ability to motivate and manage others**.

Other SS that reoccurred during the interview were:

- Communication
- Networking
- Managing expectations

Wirth regard to the skills that KT professional should have in 5 years, these should include

- Able and willing to learn new things (as yet unknown)
- Creativity



- Proactive

## Executive Summary

Interviewee was originally a KP professional at the Innovation Exchange Amsterdam who has made the transition to KT expert in the commercial world by establishing Nascent Ventures. He sees soft skills being critical to realising a task based on hard skills e.g. successful IP negotiation relies on the ability to understand the motives and intentions of people - ***“In the end, it's all about the relationship that you build with your counterpart”***. He also seen the detrimental effect of a lack of soft skills ***‘If you have poor soft skills, you can even break a deal’***.

The interviewee cited a range of skills which are needed through the TT process. These include:

- **Trust (with the inventors)**
- **Decision making:** the skills to assess whether *“if somebody says this or that, whether that actually is true or useful”*.
- **Collaboration** (‘likability’)
- **The ability to say ‘no’ in a nice way.**
- **Understanding oneself** - strengths and weaknesses (not the same as self-awareness)
- **Ability to work in a team**
- **Customer awareness or facilitative attitude**
- **Having a service oriented attitude**
- **Understanding motives and expectations**
- **managing exceptions over a long time horizon and communications**

The interviewee perceived major barrier in the TT process to rise from a lack of clear single mission and motive for engagement for the HEI, the individual KT manager and the researcher (impact vs financial value).

The interviewee commented that existing TT training course are very much focused on specific aspects of the process and do not place as much emphasis on the SS that will be of benefit at each part of the process and that leaning such skills needs to be ‘much more interactive and confrontational’ that would occur in a MOOC.



- The interviewee suggested that in the future, a desirable set of skills for a TT professional would include personality, intuition, and a willingness to learn and inspire.

## Executive Summary

The interviewee is an experienced TT expert who has worked with HEIs and startups but from the commercial perspective of the deals.

He has not attended any training courses specifically for soft-skills (SS) but has participated in a number of workshops to develop hard TT skills (LESI, EPO, WIPO, ASTP) and recognised the value of the SSs that also emerge from these trainings. Suggested more emphasis should be put on this *“Aspects such as alliance management or managing the interactions with the counterparty are very rarely given enough time and space in those programmes”*

Was able to identify the multiple nuances the core SS of communication based on the task e.g. ‘Ability to say no and kill a project off quickly’ and “tough realism delivered gently The interviewee identified a lack of understanding of how each side fundamentally operates as a major barrier between public and private sectors. He suggested that translating skills at the interface are important and that past programmes such as ‘Entente’ have proved helpful. He felt that management of TT in HEIs was fundamentally different to the private sector because of the normal situation that the level of resources in HEIs means that TT managers have to cover many roles, disciplines and tasks and pay is not competitive.

With regard to training, the interviewee felt that a very low percent of skills are developed through formal training (10%) while 70 % are accrued by actually facing the challenge in the job and having to deal with it. While some could therefore be developed in workshops they would be best delivered by through negotiation games. But learning by doing is the optimum approach.

Core SS that emerged from this interview were:

- Stakeholder management
- Negotiation
- Analytical skills and negation

Other skills were frequently subtle variation of the above depending on the environment in which they were being applied.



## Executive Summary

The interviewee is a relatively recent addition to the KT community. She entered the field having seen a need and opportunity to create impact in the sector of social innovation and supported by her University with a small grant.

She first encountered direct soft skills (SSO training as part of a Masters course and has also taken a number of training workshops focused directly on TT skills e.g. ASTP.

The interviewee's main focus was new venture creation where she identified a number of valuable soft skills including:

- Problem solving
- Decision making
- Clarity of thought
- Empathy and communication with the team
- Ability to build trust
- Open minded
- Communication (including the ability to make cold calls)
- Resilient (to deal with cold call rejection)
- Active listening (to avoid miscommunication)
- Regular communication including social communication

The biggest barriers to TT created by in-house dynamics was identified to be *'not all team members being on the same page'* and *'deteriorating communication and trust leading to resentment'*. *SS to help overcome such barriers included 'Flexibility in personality' and leadership style' and 'Cultural' sensitivity'.*

The interviewee *felt that SS that would be important in the future would include*

- Technology skills/ tech savvy (e.g.. AI)
- High levels of self-awareness, (reflective, able to accept constructive criticism. Flexible and agile).



## Executive Summary

Interviewee has worked in TT for over 18 years having started as a lawyer with oversight of the legal contracts and having progressed to leading the team. It is worth noting that the university is undergoing a significant period of change and the current structure will be dissolved with AM's team refocusing on the early part of the process and a different group taking control of the final 'transfer'.

The university has developed and delivered courses that encompass Soft-Skills (SS) in the past. These are no longer directly delivered due to financial constraints but the learning is embedded in on-boarding for new colleagues.

**Communication skills** were a strong focus on the interview and AM spends much of a 'typical' day communicating with multiple stakeholders in different ways and via different methods to achieve a diversity of outcomes.

A number of barriers were identified in dealing with industry that included national specifics, (pricing of research vs. contract research), and modern geopolitical problems of companies wanting to have oversight of the academics being involved in 'their' research.

Important SS for TT professionals include how to '**navigate**' (negotiation 2.0), a variation of negotiation that is particularly important for repeat customers e.g. when the company may be involved in future deals.

## Executive Summary

Interviewee is by training a lawyer with a strong education and experience in international legal aspects and affairs. She was responsible for legal research agreements for many years before helping to found the Ca' Foscari University of Venice in 2018. She has had formal training from the LSE on **negotiation skills** which made strong use of soft-skills.

She currently works as an innovation promoter as an 'IPR negotiator and legal adviser'. Her typical day requires strong **communication skills** using multiple methods (phone, email, face-to-face). Her written communications need to be 'readable' by different people e.g. CEOs and she needs to be able to understand the researchers who 'speak science'.

The interviewee highlighted some barriers to TT that are specific to Italy (the bureaucracy of public sector organisations vs. the flexibility needed for KT) and one that is more universal (namely possessiveness / ownership of relationships both with internal researchers and with external collaborators).

The interviewee felt that the skills that would be particularly important in 5 years time would include:

- Adaptability
- Verbally clear (good use of language)



- Culturally sensitivity

## Executive Summary

Interviewee RTTP has worked in Tech Transfer since he joined the University of Malta TTO in 2014. Prior to that he managed EU funded projects which led him in to contact with the issues of IPR and commercialisation.

A number of the issues that the interviewee highlighted and where he saw a specific need for soft-skills, related to the particular environment at the university and the country: there is only one university in Malta and it is not specialised; research is quite recent and the TTO just 3 people; the domestic commercial sector is small necessitating a lot of focus on international companies and **networking skills**.

In this specific environment, the interviewee currently sees a strong need for skills to **motivate and inspire the rest of the team, encouraging them to get out and do the equivalent of 'cold calling' and to have the resilience to deal with lack of understanding of the actual process of TT in the university**. In this situation there is also a need to **manage stakeholder expectations** (university) and **communicate and solve problems** related to stakeholders. A lack of leadership can have a strongly detrimental effect on a small team so **leadership skills** are also needed. There is a need to be the 'super-glue' in the relationships.

The size of the team means they can only strongly support a few projects at a time. They need to be open to all but **fair and transparent** about communicating that they cannot work with all opportunities and so must priorities. **Decision making, understanding teams and communication** are important in this situation.

Andrea suggested that future skills for a job like his would include **being a self-starter**, being **willing to take responsibility, willing to ask questions to improve knowledge from experts**.

### Core skills needed for a TT professional included;

- communication skills
- Problem solving
- Self-motivated/ self-starting
- 'get things done' attitude



## Executive Summary

Interviewee has a long career in Technology Transfer with a focus on protection of results through the patenting system. He trained as an EPO examiner before moving to CSIC in the '90s. The overall CSIC TT unit is large having 45 people in the overall unit and 9 in IP protection.

Interviewee has attended courses on negotiation that utilised soft-skills. He several times made the point that many useful SS in the TT field embrace the entire process and are not specific to one particular part of activity.

Interviewee highlighted in particular the core skills of:

- Conflict resolution and negotiation skills (much needed in the whole TT process)
- Leadership skills (for senior management)
- team building and relationship building skills

Also mentioned were newer skills related to

- **Open Science frameworks** and
- **gender issues./ functional diversity issues.**

Interviewee highlighted the obstacle of a lack of incentive and guaranteed rewards for researchers to enter TT, compared to those they will secure by focusing on their academic activities.

He also cited the problem of the commercial sector wishing to make changes once a project has commenced which can create problems for the research team.

Interviewee felt that soft skills that would be needed if someone were to walk in to his job today might include

- conflict resolution skills
- a awareness of context aspects. (gender / open science)

For the longer term (5 years forwards) he added the skills of

- being a person with empathy for the relationship with other people and
- awareness of this social impact of our activity. (Gender implications, functional diversity implications, open science implications).

## Executive Summary



Interviewee is the Director of Strategic Projects at the Bosch i Gimpera Foundation; this is effectively the TTO of the University of Barcelona). She had early commercial experience in the chemical sector and was exposed to Soft Skills (SS) training via an MBS. This experience left her with an appreciation for the importance of SS in team building and communication. She has also attended internal university courses for TT on commercialisation and business development that indirectly fostered SS. Originally joined the TTO to help with NVC and ultimately became the Director of the TTO with over-sight of team and tasks. The TTO has a total of 50 people with 10-12 involved in IP protection and spinoff creation.

Her role requires a lot of **‘fostering industry-university/institution relationships, building and maintaining Industrial relations’** where she highlighted the need for **communication** (including **active listening**) and **negotiation**.

The interviewee highlighted a **Lack of alignment between drivers and motives** e.g. publishing vs. confidentiality as being **one of the main difficulties encountered in interactions with industry**.

The interviewee highlighted the following SS as being core to working in TT

- Communication and team building
- Leadership

She felt that these could be developed via short trainings that were very practical oriented followed by on the job development.

She highlighted the importance of being **familiar with the ecosystem** to do her job at the moment.

In terms of future skills, she suggested that there would be a need for **an ability to adapt and to adjust to the new changes that technology may bring (AI) or the context or socially we may encounter**.

## Executive Summary

Interviewee was originally a chemical engineer who was exposed to TT during her PhD with industry. Having started as the technical director of the science park she is now the director of the TTO. There are a total of 26-27 individuals in the TTO but this team also cover research management..

She highlighted that this role requires her to have strong Soft Skills (SS) in **team-working and building, leadership and communicating**.

The interviewee has benefited from training on **team building** offered from within the university for its senior management.

She also recognises use of other SS in her daily activities including:

- problem solving
- prioritising



- projecting credibility and
- having the capacity to adapt.

She identified skills that are needed across the full TT cycle (transverse skills) rather than just at particular intervention points. These include:

- ‘translation’
- negotiation
- active listening
- open mindedness

The interviewee identified 2 main barriers created by **in-house team dynamics** and **public sector dynamics**:

- More rewards on the academic career path = Researchers not very motivated to engage in TT.
- Good people departing because the private sector is more competitive in terms of salaries.

The interviewee also identified some core skills needed for TT and suggested that these could be acquired through short trainings (3 or 3 times a year) followed by on-the-job development:

- **teamwork, social relations, work organization**

Her current role would necessitate someone with strong SS in:

- **leadership, first of all, and analytical capacity**

For the future she felt that the following would be important:

- **Not afraid of changes and not afraid of learning**

0501 – 0510

### Executive Summary

The interviewee has occupied different chairs regarding TT professional duties, and now is the head of one of the most prestigious HEIs in Italy.

Though he has a background in technical fields (engineering), his experience of managing different organisations led him to take courses or be trained in soft skills.



He acknowledges the necessity of those skills in TT programmes specifically. In particular, he highlighted the need for skills that **enhance negotiation capacity, active listening, questioning, generating empathy, understanding and using role playing** for successful negotiations and good **communication** skills.

He underscores the **raise awareness phase** of the TT process that is out of our process model, but he says it is a key part, largely forgotten by any TT programme. He also points to negotiating contracts and the **scouting activities** as the other two focal points in which soft skills are central.

He clarifies that particularly for the scouting activities the **discipline is important** for successful TT activities because the TT professional has to empathize with the researcher, generate a **trustworthy relationship** but at the same time understand **where the technology can fit the market**.

He also emphasised the **importance of the market push over the traditional market pull logic** but warns about the trap of 'being too late' with the push approach. For this he suggests investing in scouting and awareness raising phases.

For the future professional in TT he envisions a **curious person, a person that is eager to learn and work hard**. He suggests that the **relational capacity and ability to listen** will be always a plus in these kinds of professions that are in the interphase of two worlds.

Lastly, he warns about the multiplicity of actors that are appearing in the TT ecosystem and says that it is important that TT professionals learn to interact with Policy Makers, governmental and non-governmental actors, industry, intermediary organizations such as legal buffets, researchers and more and more funding organizations (e.g., VC) and investors in general.

## Executive Summary

The main difficulty in KT activities is disassembling the prejudice associated with the public university which is perceived as lacking some skills. To do this it is critical to develop specific soft skills: **listening and analysis, communication**, and seeking to approach the language of the client by **mediating prejudices**. Other key abilities are: **empathy, negotiation, and creativity**.

Basic techniques to develop soft skills can be learned. For example, how to use certain communication styles to **show care toward the user**, in order to understand each other, and create a relationship based on shared goals. Opportunities materialize when at a table a fusion of intentions is created and to make this happen there is a theme of communication, so that we speak the same language. This means learning how to reach **one type** of audience rather than another (i.e., commercial client, investor, supplier, attorney, ...), how to use **body language**, how to guide attention with tone and gaze, how to interact with others based on the specific situation, how to create **empathy in work**, both with clients, research staff and work personnel, how to generate feedback. These are skills that fall between



managerial, organizational, and work psychology domains.

### Executive Summary

Within the Technology Transfer (TT) field, the main task is to **understand user needs, listen** attentively, assist the individuals with whom there is interaction, **be empathetic**, and serve as a **bridge** between the academic and industrial worlds. It is crucial to learn the language of both realms. Without possessing soft skills, this is not possible as one cannot fulfill the role of innovation intermediary. As the interface, the process relies on **trust** and trust is built through professionalism and soft skills. Soft skills in the TT domain may be a combination of **passion, communication** skills, and **interpersonal** abilities.

The training that is generally received by TT staff is mainly focused on intellectual property, licensing agreements, commercial law, and other subjects that are relatively easier to teach. Soft skills, on the other hand, are less teachable (and more challenging to teach) as many of them develop through **learning by doing** (such as empathy, problem-solving, etc.) and are part of each individual's life experiences.

The main needs for TT staff lie in terms of proactivity, communication skills, ability to convey passion, having a **market-oriented and innovative approach**, and capacity to manage unpredictability.

### Executive Summary



The interviewee is an expert who approached the TT sector from an initial interest in valorising competencies and knowledge produced inside the university into new ventures. He is the director of the incubator, therefore, has also largely experienced many academic spinoffs and startup problems with the market.

Among the highlighted soft skills, he underscored the importance of

- Interpersonal relations management
- Understanding of team dynamics
- evaluate the different possibilities of valorisation
- the potential of the technology
- the ability of the TT professional to act as a **facilitator**, helping the group to think about prospectives that represent a win-win situation for all

He states, however, that no differences can be found in the different sectors or types of valorisation options. Still, he would frame it as a capacity to span a broader scope of other skills easily.

He also says that if TT still has a role in “sustaining” the collaboration phase of the eTTO professional, that part is when the soft skills are more needed. Finally, he highlights the importance of the TTO professional in helping the team of researchers in the phase of opening the team to different profiles in the scale-up phases.

In terms of the private-public sector barriers, he references the **different speeds** and the prejudices he has found in the private sector vs the public one.

For the future KT professional, he highlights the importance of **international experience and the digital literacy** of new candidates.

### Executive Summary

The interviewee is the only “technically” skilled professional in her office. By this, she terms the ability to fill in a patent document from the administrative standing point. By “administrative”, she means the ability to fill in this document in a way that reflects a market need and not a research output. In particular, she emphasises her role in supporting the researcher to understand that the patent is the solution to a technical problem, but research only sometimes starts as the solution to a problem. In most cases, the key to the researcher should be the opposite of blue-sky research; However, in an administrative light, by looking at the market’s needs, the patent must answer a concrete problem and reflect how this solution differentiates from others.



So, according to her, the most important competency is the knowledge of the patent document, helping the researcher see it differently from research and teaching acquired in the patent office.

In order to succeed in her job, and in general in TT roles, she suggests that the most important specific skills or abilities are:

- Dialogue skills
- Knowing how to wait before responding
- Knowing how to stay calm in negotiations
- Knowing how to listen well to what the counterpart wants in a negotiation
- Responding less from the gut and reflecting a little more
- Giving more contextualised statements to make it clear that we are not “against” them
- Understanding the value for everyone and knowing how to give everyone the value they seek

Lastly, when asked for the key skills of the current and future TT professional, besides the technical skills and the above-mentioned soft skills, she underscores the need for a curious person (because asking many questions is the only way to understand the “core” of the technology) and one that is always eager to learn.

### Executive Summary

The interviewee is an Industrial Engineer that has been head of Technology transfer at the leading university in Latin America. He highlights some important Soft Skills that supported his journey in the TT sector, as such:

- Open-mindedness and flexibility
- Good ability for recognizing/feeling/sensing
- Interdisciplinary contact
- Good teamwork abilities
- Arbitration
- Recognition of the capabilities of different human beings
- Common sense more than anything else
- Integral interdisciplinary systemic vision

When asked how he learned all those specific abilities for TT processes, he says he naturally has “a soft skills set-up” and that his choice of industrial over mechanical engineering may have helped this mental setting, together with a “special freedom at home” atmosphere. He added that the many jobs he did gave him on-the-site training (“Even for setting up an industrial plant, you need transversal skills” he said).



He suggested that “**liaison processes require people who come from different places**” and for that group to work well, **the head should create a “place of peers”** because everyone comes from different worlds, it should be the less hierarchical possible.

He says the main barrier he sees for TT is the **construction of trust among the actors**. He underscores the importance of building trust over time through a series of coherent attitudes. He also says that the ability helps both industry and researchers.

In terms of what he would envision as the TT of the future, he said that it should be a person who assists in design and innovation development processes. He adds that the contingency level of the planet requires people with a lot of flexibility and grassroots capacity to understand technical issues and see their value, to be able to translate it.

### Executive Summary

Very interesting perspective from a responsible person of Ideasquare, which, in CERN value chain, comes before the Knowledge Transfer. They focus on the fuzzy front end. The main soft skills that he proposes is **IMAGINATION**, followed by patience critical questioning, empathy and market orientation. The other aspect that emerges from the interview is the need for more understanding of risk and potential, along with how the fuzzy front end works, maybe with methodology such as **DESIGN THINKING**.

List of Soft Skills:

- Imagination
- Patience
- Critical Questioning
- Empathy
- Market Orientation
- Understanding Risk and Potential
- Design Thinking (which is not a soft skill but maybe the mindset part could be interesting)

### Executive Summary



Research Manager with 11 years of TT experience within the Italian Institute of Technology. He is currently CEO and partner of an IIT spinoff in which he has invested. He believes that the main soft skills to be developed are **bargaining skills, salesmanship, and networking**. Emphasizes the importance for the TT professional to "get their hands dirty" to develop a direct sensibility toward entrepreneurship. Empathy and the ability to interact with people from different backgrounds is crucial in the team dimension. Also to be included is the ability to sell, which seems to be the most important skill to develop, along with networking skills.

List of Soft Skills:

- Bargaining skills
- Salesmanship
- Networking
- Empathy
- networking

### Executive Summary

The interviewee is the KTO Manager of one of the most prestigious HEIs in Italy. She has a technical background (PhD in Chemistry). After a long experience into academic laboratories and as researcher doing basic research, she wanted to change for more practical and impactful activities, and entered the KT sector. She had experience in another HEI before coming to the present one. She acknowledges the key relevance of Soft Skills in KT, as KT Manager are essentially **translators** of the different languages spoken by different actors. She confirms that **communication skills** are among the most important for being effective in KT activities. Training courses focusing on these types of skills would be fundamental, however different types of activities could help in acquiring soft skills (i.e., experiences in different domains). In addition to communication skills, other important skills are flexibility, curiosity, open-minded, awareness about what is known and what not. Technical skills represent the basis and are complementary to soft skills.

It is the case that different soft skills could be more important in some disciplinary sectors than others: medicine vs. engineering, etc.

She says that the public sector has huge barriers, especially in term of **rules** and **lack of incentives**. People are trained, they become good but then they leave because they are not incentivized to stay. And people make the difference in the KT domain.

She says that in order to make university more attractive for business, the KTO is working on key aspects:

- **Timing**: speeding up the process of talking each other, understanding each other, offering solutions;



- **Flexibility:** going beyond bureaucracy and use the tools that exist to get results, easily;
- **Knowing what can be done and what can't:** this allows gaining authority by solving problems and not by creating them.

The role of the KTO is considered very important and helpful in overcoming barriers in KT activities. This is why it is very much suggested to include it from the very beginning, even before the negotiation phase.

### Executive Summary

The interviewee is the KTO Officer of one of the most prestigious HEIs in Southern Italy. She has a legal background with a PhD in Innovation Taxation. Deep interest in innovation, startup creation and KT more in general since the master thesis. After some years in academia, she decided to join the KTO. Her specific task at the entrance was that of doing **internal and external scouting** to match research and market needs.

She acknowledges the key relevance of Soft Skills in KT. She did a couple of Soft Skills courses (i.e., **team building and leadership**) outside the university, as well as many **social activities in the third sector** (e.g., politics, AI), which functioned very well to improve those skills.

She assesses that a KT professional needs for sure technical abilities, but **communication and public relations skills** are important as well.

The most important soft skills in KT are the following ones:

- **Teamworking**
- **Collective leadership skills**
- Ability to **interact and communicate with different stakeholders** (e.g., high schools, researchers, companies).

University and business are very different. Business is always oriented towards time to market, and it has different language, soft skills, flexibility, dynamism with respect to university. KT professionals need to be **flexible**, have an **open agenda**, and **be smart**. To build effective relationships, companies need to be **guided through the process step by step**.

She assesses that soft skills are very important. If something is missing on the technological side, it is



possible to take intensive courses to close the technical gap. On the other hand, soft skills have to be acquired and practiced continuously. People aiming to become KT professionals need **flexibility, teamworking, smart behavior, itinerant work** (at home, outside, in the office). Promotion on this job should consider also soft skills.

0601 – 0608

### Executive Summary

■■■■■ works as a Head of Open innovation in Barilla. She has a vast background in food science and technology from various steps of the supply chain. She emphasises the importance of communication and building trust between different stakeholders, both with internal and external. Regarding the need for training, she points out that a system is needed which provides for assessing different soft skills or designed to suit people in different roles.

### Executive Summary

■■■■■■■■■■ is a commercialisation officer working in Helsinki Innovation Services (HIS). Her background is in microbiology and molecular biology. Working also as a scientist in various projects, now working as a commercialisation manager and coordinating all ongoing innovation processes which in our case are using tools like business funding.

She sees that the most important things are to help scientists with commercialisation with their products and knowledge in IP is especially important. As a soft skill, she thinks that communication plays a key role while making connections and also helping people develop their innovations and products for companies. Andrea sees that building connections and lowering the barriers between the industrial side and academia. People skills and negotiation skills are the most important soft skills in her field of work.

### Executive Summary



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██████████ is Head of Enterprise Services in the University of Edinburgh. His background is in engineering and industrial management, PhD in research of entrepreneur field. Now working also as a professor for innovations and leadership for commercialisation and innovations. His work consists of supporting and helping scientists with commercialisation, IP protection and fundings. Searching potential clients for their new products and searching for the right markets.

John points out in the interview that common trust between and has the ability to commercialise. Also communication, listening and empathy towards others are skills that ██████ sees as necessary, so are management, leading and problem solving. John highlights the ability of connecting people from different sides together and helping them to find common ground. That requires soft skills such as listening, communicating and problem solving.

**Executive Summary**

██████████ is Commercialisation Officer at SPARK Finland and her background is in industrial engineering and neurosciences. ██████ work consists mostly of working with startups and innovations. Connecting and communication are important in the TT field, and also helping scientists with commercialisation and IP rights. In many ways ██████ sees that teaching communication skills is the key thing in the TT field, especially with scientists. How to build networks and connections inside and outside the academic field. Also market conceptualising is a very important skill within the field of science. Understanding others and the ability to put yourself in other's shoes and empathy towards others are also key skills that Anu points out.

**Executive Summary**

██████████ is a Commercialisation Specialist working for Tampere University. He has a background in economics and international business, and has been working in the pharma industry for over 25 years. Now he works as an independent consultant and helps university innovations in commercialising. ██████ main work consists of helping scientists and new start ups with commercialisation of their product or idea, and mentoring in SPARK projects. He thinks that having large and wide networks are necessary in the TT field, as well as understanding of the private and public sector and academia. Having experience of all of those makes it easier to make connections and strengthen your network. ██████ also points out that communications, marketing, negotiation skills as well understanding selling and how to sell are something that should be taught more and necessary. Also knowing



when to listen, and taking advice from others is the way to succeed. He thinks that we should use the knowledge of people who have already retired and have a lot of experience and time to mentor and help new startups and scientists with developing their product.

### Executive Summary

██████████ is a KT professional with vast experience working in different fields and with diverse people. She has acquired good set of soft skills during her professional career, by trainings and by learning from others. ██████ is running an incubator program for social entrepreneurs. In her role she feels that she has an important role in creating psychologically safe space and include soft skill to each activity that is present in the incubator. In her daily work, she recognises the need of soft skills in meeting her clients, stakeholders and possible partners, even though the field wouldn't be as open to soft skills than she is.

### Executive Summary

██████████ has a background in the technology industry and does product training in his own company called Ubi Secure, also has a day job, working as a KT professional in both jobs. In his interview ██████ sees that how you communicate, which type of language you use is the most important soft skill. Using concrete and simple language is the key for making connections and humanising technology. ██████ points out that communication plays a major role in building new relations in the industry and outside of it, and everyone should be putting effort in it. Knowing how to communicate you can build large networks which are also necessary in the TT field. He sees that also team building, listening and public speaking are key skills that many people need more coaching. Being able to communicate in different situations to different audiences is something that Oscar brings up the whole interview, because that is how you build bridges to others and make broad networks and success.

### Executive Summary



■■■■■ works as creativity coach in her own company ■■■■■. Her company designs training packages for different soft skills such as empathy thinking, listening. Those trainings are designed especially for the university and corporate world. Her background is in psychology, starting her PhD studies. She highlights that the most important soft skills are communicating your message and your innovation to others. The ability to give and take feedback, listening, also team skills, psychological safety. As a team leader it is important to empower others, give space and flexibility when something needs improving. Being resilient and self confidence are important in business innovation and in the TT field. In academia there's a problem of communication, what words we are using. For example, those who are coming from academia have a different typology than people in the private sector. We are using different words to make it more accessible. All in all she points out that communicating and team skills, caring for people and helping them to improve their professionalism are all necessary soft skills in every area of TT.

Desk Research examples



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# Master in intellectual property valorisation for knowledge exchange & impact (kei)

Netval, Università di Bologna and MIMIT (Italy)

## Abstract

Netval's main goal is to enhance public research: to achieve this goal, Netval created a community of professional TTO Managers. Thus, the need to create a training path, dedicated to increasing skills on the management of intellectual property, technology transfer and impact. Innovation generation and protecting inventions, the creation of enterprises from research activities and impact management dynamics are indeed the most in-demand activities in both the national and European contexts. The "Intellectual Property Valorisation for Knowledge Exchange Impact" (KEI) Master course addresses these issues training participants in the skills required for IP management; it also introduces participants to the national innovation ecosystem through visits and events held by partner universities throughout Italy; finally, it enables participants to deepen their knowledge in projects on a topic of interest, accompanied by experts.

## Descriptive characteristics of the training programme

Training name:	Intellectual Property Valorisation For Knowledge Exchange Impact (KEI) Master
Delivery type:	Face-to-face training up to 3 times on monthly basis
Duration:	15 Months (April - July)
Location:	7 lessons hosted at Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna. 8 lessons hosted by partner universities across Italy.
Level:	Intermediate
Audience:	Officials and managers who have responsibility for TT activities and public engagement; executive officials of the PA; professionals in innovation and third mission; innovation managers of private companies
No. of attendees:	20, 25 max
Format:	Seminar style presentations, interactive workshop style and group exercises
Materials:	Presentation slides, handouts, and real-life case studies



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## Body

The course leads to the achievement of the "second-level postgraduate University Master degree" granted by the Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna through the defence, after intermediate checks, of a project work and through the positive evaluation of the activities carried out.

A Master's degree is required for access to the course. In addition, knowledge of English is essential: one training module will be delivered entirely in English, dealing with international case studies.

The Master is organised in 15 weekend modules (Thursday, Friday and Saturday) starting from April. The teaching methods are designed to encourage interaction and exchange of practices among participants through a practical experiential approach involving individual study, group work and discussion of case studies.

The course involves students from various research organisation, both public and private, and brings together profiles with very different backgrounds and people with extremely different roles even within similar research organisation.

The continuous exchange with lecturers coming from similar realities to those of the students allows them to improve not only specific hard skills, but also relational and communication skills, also creating opportunities for growth through group work and participative teaching lessons.

### Course topics:

- Research Valorization, Knowledge Transfer (KT) and Third Mission
- Innovation management and impact
- KT Internationalization and best practices
- IP (Intellectual Property) Protection and IP Valorization
- Student entrepreneurship, training and facilities at support
- The relations with corporates
- KT organizations and stakeholders (incubators, accelerators, foundations)
- Public and private funding to Research and KT
- Legal aspects and contractual nature of KT
- The communication of Research and Public Engagement
- Open Science/Research and Open Innovation

### What participants will learn from this course:

- Research opportunities/needs (academic and non-academic)
- Role and positioning of TTOs
- How processes change respect to different stakeholders
- What is innovation and business models
- Analysis of external context and trends (technological, social, economic, cultural, demographic)
- What is Technology Transfer(TT), Knowledge Exchange, Knowledge Transformations
- Why we are doing technology transfer
- Universities responsibilities/goals



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- Knowledge of principal technology transfer European communities and associations
- License fee/equity
- Spin-off equity models
- University Business Cooperation (UBC)
- TT and Government
- Protection of IP, Italian regulatory sources
- Electronic databases
- Documentation in Industrial Property: patents, models and trademarks
- PCT procedure and European patent
- Commercial and legal due diligence
- Discounted cash flow, Relief from Royalties and Excess Earnings
- Typical features of technology transfer contracts and barriers to licensing
- What is licensing and different types of licenses
- Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial mind set
- The regulations underlying student start-ups
- Opportunities - policy and funding public for student start-ups
- The evolution of spin-offs
- Policies, regulations, procedures and tools to support the creation of ip based spin-off companies and relations with existing companies
- The new structures of the PNNR and PNRR implementation
- Organizational forms of incubators, accelerators and other intermediaries
- Placements and roles of the different actors in the chain of the creation of businesses
- Who pays for public research
- Overview of Horizon Europe opportunities for TT
- EIC and EIT
- Private VCs operating in seed phase and poc
- Engagement and investment models

## Implications for Project

The KEI Master's programme aims to train professionals with a broad range of skills, thanks both to the high-level trainers and to the extended duration of the course.

The course establishes itself within the Italian scenario as one of the most innovative high level qualification courses (EQF 8) in the area of intellectual property, with specific modules focusing on internationalisation and with the potential recognition at international level of credits for professional qualifications related to technology transfer.

The wide range of topics and the teaching activities, which are not only face-to-face but also collaborative, allow the development of soft skills also through peer-to-peer exchanges.

The course aims to develop stronger interpersonal skills through participative exchange in the classroom and during the creation of the final project work.



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In order to create a better programme, the course should add more knowledge transfer expert meetings to gain better understanding of the knowledge transfer world and creating exchanges with high-professional profiles.



# Fundamentals of Technology Transfer Training Course

Association of European Science & Technology Transfer Professionals - ASTP (The Netherlands)

## Abstract

This course guides participants through the basic processes of technology transfer - from receiving and evaluating an invention disclosure to pitching for investment and negotiating deals. Training is delivered by experienced knowledge/technology transfer professionals and offers an opportunity to network with peers.

Through a mixture of seminar-style presentations, case studies, interactive analyses, and discussions, participants will learn the fundamental skills of a technology transfer professional. This is a great opportunity to learn in a small collaborative group from experts who have accumulated decades of insights and specialist knowledge. Over three days, participants will develop skills and acquire the know-how vital to becoming a successful knowledge/technology transfer officer.

## Descriptive characteristics of the training programme

Training name:	Fundamentals of Technology Transfer (FTT)
Delivery type:	Face-to-face training up to 3 times a year
Duration:	3 days
Location:	vary across Europe
Level:	Beginners
Audience:	Those relatively new to Knowledge/Technology Transfer (K/TT) with less than 2 years' experience
No. of attendees:	max 40
Format:	Seminar style presentations, interactive workshop style and group exercises
Materials:	Presentation slides, handouts, and real-life case studies

Event statistics for the last 4 years (pre-, during and post-pandemic):

- March 2023 | Vilnius, Lithuania | 36 participants from 10 countries
- November 2022 | online | 31 participants from 16 countries
- September 2022 | Prague, Czech Republic | 32 participants from 9 countries
- March 2022 | online | 24 participants from 14 countries
- December 2021 | online | 22 participants from 9 countries
- September 2021 | online | 24 participants from 9 countries
- February 2021 | online | 22 participants from 13 countries
- October 2020 | online | 17 participants from 11 countries



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- September 2020 | online | 20 participants from 8 countries
- January 2020 | Sitges, Spain | 32 participants from 13 countries
- November 2019 | Leiden, Netherlands | 25 participants from 11 countries
- September 2019 | Prague, Czech Republic | 34 participants from 12 countries
- March 2019 | Budapest, Hungary | 27 participants from 11 countries

## Structure of the Course

This three-day course is for people relatively new to technology and knowledge transfer with less than two-years' experience. The course is developed for professionals, from both public and private institutions, entrepreneurs, and consultants. Designed for those working within a university TTO/KTO, linked directly or indirectly to technology transfer activities and wishing to learn more about knowledge and technology transfer. This is a great way both to develop a strong foundation of knowledge and also to advance career opportunities. Many TTO/KTO professionals have benefited from this powerful professional development launch pad.

Course topics:

- Evaluation of exploitation strategy and options
- Patenting: what you should know
- Introduction to licensing
- Introduction to academic spin-offs
- Basics of spin-off financing
- Technology transfer through research collaborations
- Collaboration and negotiation strategies

After completing this 3-day training, participants will acquire the following:

- A broad overview of the fields covered by Knowledge Transfer Officers and offices
- Cover the basic output of a KTO / TTO
- Gain insights into patenting and patent evaluation, and the licensing process
- Develop the rudimentary tools for dealing with inventions, inventors, licensees, founders and potential cooperation partners
- Increase knowledge on setting up a spin-off company, including the broad financing possibilities
- Tips and tricks on negotiation a successful deal (with a collaboration partner, a spin off or a licensee)

## Implications for Project

ASTP has been delivering versions of an FTT course since 2005. Developed by K/TT practitioners, being members of the ASTP Professional Development Committee, the programme has evolved throughout the years following the current trends and developments to ensure its relevance. Members of the Professional Development Committee are the primary trainers, being senior K/TT experts with at least 10-15 years' experience in the field.



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As a result of the pandemic, ASTP now delivers an online version of the FTT training. As online attention span is more limited, the online version of this training is delivered in shorter sessions, across 5 days.

The FTT Training is recognised by the Alliance of Technology Transfer Professionals (ATTP), who promote and maintain global standards in knowledge and technology transfer by designating the title Registered Technology Transfer Professional (RTTP), currently the only global professional standard for knowledge transfer and commercialization practitioners.

Successful attendees to ASTP FTT training are awarded 17 Continuing Education (CE) points, recognised by ATTP toward individuals acquiring RTTP status (the Registered Technology Transfer Professional status which is one of the few recognition schemes available for technology/knowledge transfer professionals. Others relevant for part of the K/TT community include CLP offered by LESI for those with specific legal/patent expertise roles see e.g. [CLP - Les Benelux \(les-benelux.org\)](http://les-benelux.org).

Relevance to KT Skills Project: Given the aim of this project to develop and make available additional tools to enhance the skills and competences of Knowledge Transfer professionals, understanding the scope of roles, competencies and existing training approaches via analysis of some current training approaches is essential.

Methodological lessons: This case example of training for professionals currently working in the KT role demonstrates a number of useful ingredients which could inform the approach to developing additional tools.

**Participant status:** this training is targeted at those working already in this space, albeit near the start of their careers. It is different from other training or education courses which are aimed at full-time students. The increasing recognition that across all professions, not just KT, enhancing skills to both develop new ones, but also to enable adaptation of current skills to address changes in the landscape, render CPD (Continuing Professional Development) a critical part of the employment structures in many public and private sector organisations. This means that both time and financial support to participate in third party training is available for many participants. However, the time investment enabled is preferably one which allows for short bursts of training, to be managed alongside regular working weeks. Hence the structure of this course by ASTP is fitted into a 3-day face to face meeting or the online version which takes place over a similar number of hours.

**Trainer status:** The role of ASTP has been to evolve a community of peers-willing and able to share their experience-based knowledge to enhance both the substantive knowledge and transferable skills of the participants. Practical experience of combining complex areas of knowledge- across a spectrum of scientific understanding, intellectual property rules, commercial and financial strategies and negotiating with different organisations can be well shared by those who have made the same journey. Some specific specialist knowledge is also offered by experts in those fields, including service providers such as patent agents or lawyers. Sources of materials for a new toolkit should be provided by both specialist experts and KT practitioners.

**Teaching methodology:** the whole approach of this training is that it is delivered in real time- either in-person or online. While course materials including reading materials, slides and sometimes video recordings of some exercises remain accessible by the participants for their own use afterwards, the learning process here is one delivered by a combination of lecture-style information -sharing interspersed with many real-life case studies as well as practical training exercise for example mock negotiations or pitching technologies to a company. Assessment does not include formal examination or written feedback per student. Rather the advantages gained by the participants are evidenced by their utilisation of new skills and knowledge in their daily work. Formal advancement based on attendance of ATTP CE accredited



training course such as this one is also useful to build required evidence to enable application for RTPP status.

**Feedback gained:** All participants provide feedback on all aspects including content/structure/ teaching style/quality of trainers and overall relevance to their career development. The fact that this course has been adapted and offered for many years is evidence that it meets a need in the profession. Many attendees join based on personal recommendations and KTOs often routinely send all new recruits. The benefits are acknowledged in feedback around both the content and network of peers gained.

**Context/recognition towards accreditation:** for many regions such professional recognition is important (such as Turkey) hence access to CE points, awarded only to those to attend in full and complete all required engagement in exercises, is a significant driver to participate.

**Synergy with other Cases:** many national associations of KT professionals offer similar types of training, such as Netval and PACTT and so there is the possibility to share substantive knowledge specific to the region where the KT professionals are based, together with a cross-border approach which reflects the cross-border reality of many of the collaborations and deals done by the KT professionals.

**Skills missing (or requiring further materials) for this training:** feedback gives the chance to hear what else would be useful under this theme. Where substantive knowledge topics are requested -they are added to later versions of the course. However, for soft skills- feedback demonstrates that the following skills could use more time/materials:

- a) ability to effectively understand and share the perspective of academic researchers or of industry-based colleagues
- b) range of practical negotiation cases studies to develop skills across each of the elements of a collaboration/tech transfer deal (recognising most professionals will conclude maximum 5-6 exclusive licence deals per annum-thus it takes a long time to develop wide experience).



# Diploma in “Development of Transversal Competencies”

University of Blass Pascal (UBP) in Cordoba (Argentina)

## Abstract

The University of Blass Pascal (UBP) is a relatively ‘new’ university born in Cordoba, Argentina, in the 1980s. This document analyses one of their core programmes: the DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCIES postgraduate course for professionals. Their offer is designed to develop individual social skills and management tools. We investigated this course because the UBP has a well-known long tradition in soft skills training in the region. Moreover, the rich syllabus and their innovative teaching methods endow the case with a compelling mix of training modalities that may result in relevant insights for our project. After participating in the course, the participant is expected to develop interpersonal skills to work in a team, the techniques and skills to solve problems and make decisions in changing environments, and to learn how to use and master new methodologies and agile work designs. By the end of the course, the participant is expected to be able to integrate all the transversal competencies studied, developing a personal development plan for their personal career path. Added to the content of the course, we considered this case relevant because UBP has more than 20 years of experience delivering courses online. This uninterrupted presence in the digital academic market allowed them to develop a successful model of teaching soft skills through online platforms that we further analyze in this document.

## Descriptive characteristics of the training programme

The UBP is a private institution that offers this course at a market price in line with similar post-graduate specialization or programmes. Their scope is regional; the language is Spanish (to cover all the south American continent except for Brazil); also, being one of the most popular universities for post-graduate soft-skills training in the Latin American region, they take advantage of online format to cover a significant share of the south American post-graduate professional and corporate market of soft skills traineeship. The programme is developed in at least 200 hours of lessons, plus the work that students do to fulfill all the curricula, particularly the Final Integration Work, which depends on each student’s personal development plan. The lessons are structured in two different approaches: Seminars and Modules. The difference between them is the length and type of content delivered. The academic staff comprises six permanent professors with a hybrid profile: business (more than 30 years of experience) and academics, with a mixed disciplinary background (psychology, business, sociology, Industrial Relations, Education Science, etc.).

### General Objectives of the Programme

The programme attendees are expected to acquire knowledge and personal skills that allow professional growth, greater employability and the development of transversal competencies to respond to future labour demands.

### Specific Objectives

More specifically, participants are expected to:



- Undertake a process of self-knowledge on the mastery of personal skills from which they can describe the strengths and weaknesses defining an action plan.
- Acquire knowledge about emotional intelligence, in order to be more empathetic, improve interpersonal relationships and know how to manage one's own and other people's emotions.
- Understand the importance of active learning as a lever and driving force in the processes of transformation and personal improvement.
- Learn to communicate effectively, valuing the use of verbal and non-verbal language, incorporating tools for appropriate feedback.
- Develop interpersonal skills to be able to work in a team.
- Incorporate negotiation skills, learning to reach consensual and lasting agreements between the parties involved.
- Understand the innovation process, developing the skills of initiative, entrepreneurship and self-confidence.
- Incorporate concepts to be able to elaborate and tell powerful stories, involving and exciting the audience.
- Acquire knowledge and understand the principles of ethics, transparency and compliance.

### Descriptive case characteristics

In a nutshell, the programme has the following characteristics:

- Mode: Online
- Duration: 8 months
- Time load: 200 hours
- Target: professionals in their 30s with a working experience of at least five years in industry.

## Body

### History of the programme

The development of soft skills has taken a leading role worldwide as a response to the dynamics of an increasingly technological and globalised world, where the focus of prominent world leaders is mainly on the concern about the future of work. Governments, non-governmental organisations, business chambers, civil society and workers' groups are looking at and projecting how new jobs and professions will disappear and how new ones will be created, predicting that routine and repetitive jobs will be replaced by technology and robotics in the coming years. This is confirmed by research conducted by the World Economic Forum on the future of work in 2018, as well as the 2017 report of the Global Commission for the Future of Work (ILO), which studies the skills gap for work in Latin America, added to the report on the future of work in Latin America, prepared in 2018 by the Inter-American Development Bank. The prognosis of these studies is convincing; technology will replace current jobs between a minimum of 47 % and a maximum of 70 % in the next 10/15 years. At the same time, they visualise that technological progress, together with the ageing of the world's population, will generate new professions that are not yet known and for which new skills will be required.

As if this were not enough, **Argentina leads the Latin American ranking of talent shortages** according to the 2018 annual report of the Human Age of Manpower Group, and the global projection of talent shortages made by the Korn Ferry Institute for the year 2030 predicts that it will be 85.2 million people. Technological advances, job losses, population ageing, talent shortages, generation of new professions force us to rethink



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the job profile and the development of the skills that will be required to be employable and competitive in the future of work.

The **demand for specific soft skills in the labour market is beginning to flourish to respond to a dynamic, globalised and technological world, which will require added value from people who are integrated into the future of work.** Collaborative models, agile working methods, assertiveness to connect ideas, creation of conversational spaces that facilitate teamwork, mastery of emotional intelligence, and management of creative tools are some of the skills that awaken a greater presage of trends towards a more participatory, ecological and sustainable world that will demand a strong performance of ethics and personal and business reputation. In this context, Blas Pascal University has created the Diploma in Development of Transversal Competences to respond to the current and future needs of the world of work, becoming one of the first universities to offer contents that will be the protagonists of the labour trends of the coming decades.

## Skills and abilities to be acquired

### *Contents*

The programme is articulated in two learning formats: Seminars and Modules and a Final Integration Work. The difference between them is the length and type of content delivered.

#### **Seminar: Process of Self-knowledge.**

- Introduction to the world of interpersonal skills.
- Self-knowledge - Personal test on Soft Skills.
- Action plan and roadmap to develop Soft Skills.

#### **Module: Emotional Intelligence**

- Emotional intelligence, a pillar for interpersonal relationships. Emotions and feelings vs. rationality.
- Training empathy. How to put yourself in the other person's shoes. The ability to understand and generate bonds.
- Managing one's own and other people's emotions so as not to be reactive.
- Emotional literacy to achieve full and personal mastery in the relationship with others.

#### **Seminar: Active Learning / Self-Development**

- Knowledge and personal learning as a source of knowledge and know-how.
- Self-awareness and self-knowledge for further education
- Sources and experiences of learning and personal development Goal setting and learning objectives.
- The mind of the active learner. Curiosity, tenacity and discovery

#### **Module: Interpersonal Communication**

- Effective communication. The communication process. Stages of communication
- Communication as a key competence in the professional profile.
- Tools for better conversation. The transforming power of words. The use of body language.
- Feedback as a key tool for assertive communication. Requests, promises and commitments.



**Module: Teamwork**

- Teamwork. Functions, scope and fundamentals of teamwork.
- Roles in a team. Assigned roles, expected roles, assumed roles and legitimised roles.
- Setting goals and objectives in the team. SMART methodology (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and temporary).
- Group dynamics. Characteristics and functioning of high-performance teams.

**Seminar: Problem-solving and decision-making.**

- The use of techniques to diagnose and solve problems. Steps to solving problems. Diagnostic and problem-solving tools.
- Interpersonal problem-solving skills. Mastering tolerance, handling frustration and decision-making skills.
- Development of proactivity to anticipate problems. How to manage and prevent problems.
- Self-confidence in decision-making and analysing challenges and opportunities. Criteria for decision making. Types of decisions. Planned and unplanned decisions.

**Module: Negotiation**

- The negotiation process. Planning, conducting and closing a negotiation.
- Conflicts. Typology of conflicts. Individual and group conflicts. Sources of conflicts.
- Schools of negotiation. The classical school, the Harvard school. The win-win principle
- Applied negotiation. The 7 tools of negotiation. The use of a positive No in negotiation.

**Module: Agile Methodologies**

- Introduction to Agile Methodologies.
- Introduction Scrum, XP, Kanban, Lean. Agile Manifesto and its principles. Value-based prioritisation. Value Chain Analysis. Lean Portfolio Management. Planning, Monitoring and Adaptation.
- Agile Estimation. Engagement and Stakeholder Management. Agile Contracts. Communication Mechanisms. Agile Analysis and Design. Agile Verification and Validation.
- Impediment Management and Risk Management. Retrospectives.

**Seminar: Storytelling**

- What is storytelling, what is it for and how is it used?
- The technique of storytelling
- The importance of involving and moving the target audience.
- How to develop a contagious and viral effect of the content.

**Module: Innovation**

- Introduction to innovation. Concepts. Fundamentals. The systemic approach to innovation.
- Methods to innovate. How to organise the innovation process. Individual and group innovation methods.
- Innovation in organisations. Analysis, strategy and actions to innovate.
- Social innovation. Principles, objectives and scope. Actors and projects of social innovation.



## Seminar: Ethics, transparency and Compliance

- Development of personal and professional ethics and transparency.
- Concept and scope of compliance
- The culture of compliance
- How to identify risks, develop preventive measures and safeguard one's own reputation and that of others.

## Final Integration Work

### Target of the programme

The BPU promotes the course among professionals in their 30s with a working experience of at least five years in the industry. More specifically, they target:

- Management levels that require developing personal skills to lead the change processes that the future of work in their organisations demands.
- Company owners and partners going through organisational change processes or shareholder transfer to other generations, for which the development of interpersonal skills is necessary.
- University students and graduates who, due to their current and future roles, need to acquire and/or deepen their mastery of soft skills.
- Analysts and executives who work in different areas and require professional development of personal and interpersonal skills.
- Entrepreneurs who need to have a global vision and mastery of the skills and competencies to manage their collaborators.
- University teachers who need to deepen or acquire specific soft skills knowledge and skills.
- Leaders, Opinion Formers and People who develop activities with other people and who need to understand human behaviour at work and acquire tools that facilitate the management of their activities.

## Innovative mode of class delivery

The UBP is a pioneer in online education. It began its activities in distance education in 2000 with a series of primary objectives: to allow access to university education to people who cannot join the system for economic, family, work or geographical reasons; to democratise access to higher university education. Over the years, UBP has become one of the most important universities offering distance learning degree courses. To this end, it has established a network of more than 170 Education Centres throughout Argentina. These centres do not have an academic function but rather disseminate the educational offer in each region and provide technological support to distance students (PC, chat, Internet, videoconferencing) to connect with their tutors.

For this course in particular, UBP counts on a set of digital products and services that are used in this course:

- Live videoconferences.
- Didactic and pedagogical design for autonomous learning with the permanent support of a specialised team of teachers and tutors who accompany the student in the process.
- Access to UBP's LMS (Learning Management System).



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- Networking.

**Figure 1**

*UBP Online Learning Framework™*



## Relevant links

- <https://landings.ubp.edu.ar/diplomatura-en-desarrollo-de-competencias-transversales/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MiaFXe8LNWA>
- <https://www.ubp.edu.ar/universidad/historia/>

## Implications for Project

We decided to focus on this course among other international examples because it represents an ideal example of the Latin American region. First, because the UBP has a well-known long tradition in soft skills training in the region. Moreover, the rich syllabus and their innovative teaching methods endow the case with a compelling mix of training modalities that may result in relevant insights for our project.

From the content of the programme, we can take advantage of many interesting insights for our project, for example:

- The seminar on storytelling could be helpful for KT professionals to enrich their toolkit for presenting a new technology to the market, targeting their audience better and translating difficult-to-grasp knowledge into more compelling business cases.
- Within the “innovation” module, the students should learn about social innovation: its principles, objectives and scope, and its actors and projects social innovation. We consider that to get the TT professional nearer to society at large (and not only to Business), an introduction to what is needed to capture and codify the needs of society is also essential. In this sense, information and the skills to be learned in this module can inspire our case.
- In terms of the **team-level soft skills**, students are expected to acquire knowledge and *practice* teamwork and team dynamics, setting goals and objectives, and the characteristics and functioning of high-performance teams. In this same level, how to solve problems when they arise and prevent them: interpersonal problem-solving skills. Mastering tolerance, handling frustration and decision-making skills
- In terms of **individual-level soft skills**, the course starts with a provocative seminar on the process of self-knowledge, in which they acquire tools to understand and articulate what are



interpersonal skills, they map their own and design an action plan and roadmap to develop their Soft Skills. This seminar is followed by a module on Emotional Intelligence, which is depicted as a pillar for interpersonal relationships and to develop emotional literacy. Importantly, they are taught how *to train their empathy* and within that, the ability to understand and generate bonds and how to achieve complete mastery in the relationship with others.

Lastly, we want to highlight the 'effective communication' module because it emphasises the importance of communication as a key competence in the professional profile.

To the best of our knowledge, this course is one of the best quality exemplars of Latin American education in Spanish. This is an excellent example of how worldwide the need and training of soft skills for professionals involves a deep primary immersion in self-knowledge and a serious insistence on *-first-* developing the emotional literacy of the participants. **We consider this essential for our project since developing soft skills begins by investing a considerable part of the programmes in acquiring emotional literacy.** The fact that KT professionals (or professionals in general) may be lacking emotional literacy in the first place, is an issue that may be taken as input to be confirmed or corroborated by the interviews that will be conducted in WP2 with KT experts.



# Boosting Your Negotiation Skills

Aalto University Executive Education (Finland)

The Aalto University Executive Education's negotiation skills course is a comprehensive program designed to teach individuals and businesses the necessary tools and techniques to succeed in negotiations. This course is given by the leading Executive Education provider in Finland. Therefore, it's one of the gold standards of corporate programs in the country. The course covers topics such as understanding the basics of negotiation, preparing for negotiations, conducting negotiations, and closing and implementing negotiations. The aim of the course is to equip participants with the skills and strategies needed to achieve their desired negotiation outcomes. The course is designed for individuals and businesses looking to improve their negotiation skills and achieve better outcomes. Participants will benefit from enhanced communication skills, a greater understanding of the negotiation process, increased confidence, and improved problem-solving skills. Soft skills recognized in the course include effective communication, building rapport, managing conflict, problem-solving, and creative thinking. By improving these soft skills, participants will be better equipped to approach negotiations with confidence, navigate complex problems, and develop innovative solutions.

## Descriptive characteristics of the programme

The program offers a comprehensive overview of the negotiation process, from understanding the stages of negotiation to managing and implementing negotiations successfully. This program has been delivered multiple times, and it has gained a reputation as one of the most effective negotiation skills training courses available because of its structured process: APEC+R. APEC+C stands for analyzing the situation systematically, preparing a deal with clear strategy, executing effectively, closing a deal with a clear implementation plan and reviewing the process. Also, the program is offered in a variety of formats such as classroom-based learning and online courses. Specifically, this is an intensive 2.5-day course and the Finnish version of it will be conducted on-site at Aalto University Töölö in May 2023. On the other hand, the English version of the program will be delivered through a live online format consisting of five half-day sessions in November 2023. So, it is available internationally and designed to meet the needs of professionals working in a range of different countries and cultural contexts and looking to improve their negotiation skills and achieve better outcomes. Participants may come from a variety of backgrounds and industries, including business, law, government, and non-profit organizations. The funding for the program is primarily provided by private organizations and individuals, although there may be some scholarship opportunities available for eligible participants.



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## Structured schedule of the program:

### Day 1 / Session 1: Analysis

#### Introduction to the Program: Negotiation Process

- Understanding the stages of a successful negotiation process

#### Analysis

- Creating an action plan for the negotiation process based on the information available and what additional information is required for the preparation phase
- Understanding the Under what conditions -approach for successful negotiators

### Day 2 / Sessions 2-3: Preparation and Execution

#### Preparation

- Creating a roadmap for the deal
- Establishing objectives, strategy and key issues
- Preparing for alternatives and understanding BATNA (best alternative to a negotiated agreement)
- Defining team roles

#### Execution

- Taking initiative in the negotiation situation through structured proposals

#### Negotiation Exercises to Practice the Tools and Insights

### Day 3 / Sessions 4-5: Negotiation Styles, Closing & Review

#### Execution Continued

- Using summaries and time-outs as a way to manage the flow of the negotiation

#### Negotiation Styles

- Managing different negotiation styles and types of negotiators
- Dealing with difficult people

#### Closing & Review

- Ensuring commitment and implementation and verifying that the objectives are met
- Creating a continual improvement culture

#### Optimising On-Line Negotiations

- Best practices for online negotiations and sales meetings

#### Negotiation Exercises to Practice the Tools and Insights



## Finland's leading negotiation program for executives

Aalto University Executive Education's negotiation skills course was developed in response to the growing demand for professionals to be able to negotiate effectively in their respective fields. The course was designed to equip individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to negotiate successfully in a variety of settings. The development of the negotiation skills course began with extensive research and analysis of best practices in negotiation. The course was then designed to incorporate these practices and provide participants with practical tools and techniques to apply in their negotiations. Over time, the course has evolved and adapted to meet the changing needs of professionals in various industries. It has been refined through continuous feedback and evaluation from participants, resulting in a highly effective and practical program. So, it is developed in the context where increasing globalization and the need for professionals to manage complex negotiations with diverse stakeholders is necessary. As businesses and organizations became more globalized, negotiation skills became increasingly important in achieving successful outcomes in a variety of contexts.

At the end of the negotiation skills program, attendees should acquire several skills and abilities that are essential for KT (Knowledge Transfer) professionals. These skills and abilities include:

1. **Effective communication:** Participants will learn how to communicate effectively with stakeholders, understand their interests and concerns, and build rapport to establish a positive relationship.
2. **Preparation and planning:** Attendees will learn how to prepare for negotiations by identifying objectives, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of both parties, and developing a clear negotiation strategy.
3. **Problem-solving:** Participants will learn how to identify and solve problems during negotiations by exploring various solutions and finding mutually beneficial agreements.
4. **Assertiveness:** Attendees will learn how to assert themselves during negotiations while still maintaining positive relationships with the other party.
5. **Adaptability:** Participants will learn how to adapt their negotiation style to different situations and personalities, allowing them to achieve successful outcomes in diverse contexts.

The type and style of class delivery for the negotiation skills program offered by Aalto University Executive Education vary depending on the language version of the program. For the Finnish version of the program, it is delivered as an onsite program, meaning it is conducted in person in a classroom or training room setting. On the other hand, the English version of the program is delivered in a live online format. This means that participants attend the program virtually, using their computer or mobile device to access live sessions. The program consists of five half-day sessions that are spread over a period of time. The negotiation skills program is not offered in a modular or MOOC format, which typically involves self-paced learning through pre-recorded video lectures and interactive materials.



Instead, the program is delivered through live instruction and interaction with the instructor and other participants, allowing for real-time feedback and discussion.

Aalto University Executive Education's negotiation skills program is designed for professionals from a wide range of industries and backgrounds who want to develop their negotiation skills. The program is particularly relevant for professionals involved in KT, innovation management, strategic sourcing, procurement, and sales. Attendees of the program typically have diverse professional backgrounds, including but not limited to: business development, project management, R&D, legal, finance, and consulting. Upon completion of the program, attendees can expect to have acquired practical skills and knowledge that they can apply in their work. While Aalto University Executive Education does not provide job placement services for program graduates, attendees can leverage their newfound negotiation skills and knowledge to enhance their job prospects and pursue new career opportunities in their respective fields. Incorporation of various delivery methods, including both online and on-site components could inspire a Soft Skill programme. This hybrid approach can provide flexibility and convenience for participants while also ensuring opportunities for face-to-face interaction and experiential learning.

As a note, there is a structured schedule of the program in this link:

<https://www.aaltoee.fi/en/programs/negotiation-skills#contents-and-schedule>

## Implications for project

The Aalto University Executive Education's course incorporates several innovative teaching methods to provide an effective and comprehensive learning experience. The program emphasizes the development of communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills, which are essential for KT professionals. Moreover, the course highlights personalized, active learning through practical exercises and tools, role-playing exercises, and simulations. More importantly, it points out emotions in negotiation for handling difficult situations better. Also, the program incorporates individual feedback and coaching to help participants improve their skills continuously. Participants learn to analyze negotiation situations, identify key issues, establish objectives and strategies, and manage different negotiation styles and types of negotiators. Specifically, the course provides valuable insights into online negotiation best practices, which are becoming increasingly important in today's remote working environment.

This program is synergistic with other relevant cases at the international/regional level that emphasizes the development of soft skills and active learning. Many programs in different countries provide practical training in negotiation skills, emphasizing active learning through role-playing exercises, simulations, and case studies. A one-to-one coaching session is offered following the workshop to support the implementation of the tools and methods in actual upcoming negotiations. Some programs incorporate innovative delivery formats, including online and hybrid options, to provide greater access to learners. Other programs focus on the development of specific soft skills, such as communication, collaboration, and problem-solving, which are critical for effective negotiation. **The Aalto program's emphasis on personalized feedback and coaching also reflects a broader trend toward individualized learning approaches in professional education.**



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