

VALORIZE
HIGH
SKILLED
MIGRANTS **M**

2014-1-IT02-KA204-003515

MOSP

BUILDING A SOFT SKILLS
SELF-PROMOTION STRATEGY



Valorize high skilled migrants - Project Ref. N: 2014-1-IT02-KA204-003515.

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GRETA DU VELAY

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1. DEVELOPING A PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY

This document is directed to the migrants to help them build a promotional strategy by using a variety of different tools and approaches to promote their skills.

After you finished all the VHSM pathways you need to develop a promotional strategy to show case your skills and to increase your chances of finding an appropriate job.

1.1 Assessment of skills

VHSM provides an assessment of 12 soft skills for employment. They are the skills needed in every kind of job by the majority of employers. Through VHSM activities, you have identified these skills, you became aware of their importance, and you are developing them through specific training activities. Remember that to be employed in a job corresponding to your qualification, all skills and competences are important: the key VHSM soft skills + other soft skills + job related core skills.

To go further than the skills assessment provided in the frame of VHSM, you should enquire

about the existing skills assessment possibilities in the host country. Engaging in such an assessment can help you to have a more precise picture of all your skills and competences. A full skills assessment process will also help you target jobs that you did not think about before, because they require competences that you master. Ask the employment adviser or look on the employment agency about the jobs that are in the same area of competences than the ones required for the job you planned to do. For example, if you have worked as a cook, you could also work as a pork butcher.

1.2 Documentation of skills: your individual portfolio/E-portfolio

To start your promotion strategy you have to document your skills in general and your soft skills in particular. To do so, you have to use the tools described in the MOSP docu-

ment, E-portfolio/portfolio, video CV and social networking. When using this document you should have completed the MOSP pathway and its outcomes.

1.2.1 What you can do with a portfolio?

The portfolio is your portfolio, it shows examples of activities you are able to perform, practical experiences that you have acquired. It is your mirror. The more you can document skills and competences in your portfolio, the best. The portfolio is a useful tool:

- **To check what you have learned** - In one place, at your hand, you have the summary and the trace of your main learning outcomes.

- **To develop self-esteem and self-confidence** - The portfolio is a concrete output. It is materialised by a real object, a cardboard box, and possibly by a virtual environment on a web site. It demonstrates your pugnacity to produce it. It also shows your creativity. As a process and through its content it proves your competences. It is particularly helpful if you have little or no work experience.

- **To elaborate CVs** - The portfolio of competences is the basic source of information for elaborating a CV. You can select pieces that will be useful for the type of job application you are targeting. The CV is a one shot tool: you write a CV each time you apply for a job and each CV is different to meet the expectations of the recruiter. The portfolio is a lifelong tool. It grows with your experiences.
- To obtain an interview -If you have an online portfolio, it is useful to show the link in your CV. Not all recruiters will have a look at it but some will do, especially if your CV is short-listed. They will obtain a more concrete idea of yourself as they will visualise what you are able to do.
- To assist during job interviews -You can use your portfolio to prepare the interview, to remember previous work experiences and activities. But you can also bring your portfolio, or part of it to the interview and show it to illustrate what you are saying.
- To make the link between different periods of your working life - You portfolio will help you to maintain a link between the various steps of your vocational path. By tracing the organisations that may have accompanied you, the companies in which you have done practice periods, the steps you have undertaken, it will make more efficient the support of counsellors/tutors/trainers.
- To undertake accreditation of prior experiential learning - Little by little the concept of accreditation of prior experiential learning is spreading around the world. It allows responding more flexibly to the changes at work, in two ways: 1) by giving access to a diploma, it increases the potential for mobility and hence adaptability to change, and 2) by favouring reflection on experience and thinking in terms of transferable skills, it helps individuals get back on their feet in changing jobs. Any acquisition of knowledge or skills is accorded equal legitimacy. Your portfolio is the basic tool to undertake the accreditation process of your prior learning.

1.2.2 How to start a portfolio?

Before going online, it is important to plan your organisation. It is also advised to keep an analogue version of your portfolio in a card box. In this box you will collect every artefact (or copy of) that is relevant to your path such as diplomas, relevant letters, mem-

bership card, achievements, publications, list of contacts, CVs... For more practical details please refer to the Operational Tools part of the MOSP document.

1.2.3 Promoting your skills with a portfolio

The table below summarizes how the portfolio can be used to promote our skills.

To manage my employability and vocational development

Managing employability	Presenting the vocational self	Vocational development
<p>I manage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • my vocation adaptation • my lifelong career orientation • my lifelong learning <p>I organise my personal lifelong vocational environment browser.</p>	<p>I manage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • my presentation of self • my digital identity • my e-reputation <p>I valorise my contributions and I share my works.</p>	<p>I anticipate a durable vocational integration. I create my business. I manage network activities. I look for jobs. I choose my activities.</p>

For social integration

Social integration	Development of opportunities	Sharing and citizenship responsibility
<p>I give my peers the opportunity to discover me, to get to know me, so see my contributions in the various areas (vocational, social, citizenship, non-profit activities).</p>	<p>I give my peers the possibilities to recommend me, to give or ask me support and advise, to ask me for contributions, to propose me work, to bring me new opportunities.</p>	<p>I can share my resources and my works (hobbies, arts, non profit activities, resources...). I can share my competences.</p>

To facilitate the work of employers

Recruitment and internal mobility	Development of skills	Facilitating vocational transitions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • propose targeted jobs • improve the recruitment process • manage the integration process • manage mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individualise my vocational path • support accreditation of prior learning • run annual evaluation interviews and other vocational interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anticipate my objectives and needs in term of mobility • secure my lifelong vocational path

User for career development

Training advise	Coaching	Career guidance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to organise my training paths • to receive training support • to prepare accreditation of skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to support my personal and vocational development • to develop my personal learning environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to make skills assessments • to redefine my vocational projects • to benefit from advice regarding employment • to smoothen my vocational transitions

1.2.4 The specific promotion of the 12 soft skills

Soft skills	Promoting strategy	Examples	Links to portfolio
Motivation	If you can't find illustration of motivation in your working experience, you need to valorise your migration.	Something that you have learned alone Learning the language Participating in the local community Personal history of migration	Language course Course that you have attended Local clubs that you participate
Time Management		Organisation of an event Active participation in several activities (now, during studies...) Studying and working at the same time	Invitations List of participants Schedule Poster
Managing Responsibility		Organisation of an event Leading role in a community club Family responsibilities	Diagram that shows the different roles of people
Adaptability & Flexibility	Being migrant shows per se that you are able to adapt. You need to be able to value your migration history/path.	You have been doing various jobs. You have migrated: the fact that you have migrated shows that you can adapt. You may have had to manage in places where you did not speak the language and where you had no contacts.	
Team Working	You can do greater and better things in a team than alone. The difficulty resides in the right balance between your role and the role of the other members of the team.	Group report/group presentation Team sports (belonging in a team) Social or community clubs Charity events	Assign roles Setting milestones Organise group meetings to assess progress Report/presentation

Soft skills	Promoting strategy	Examples	Links to portfolio
Service Skills	Show that you take other persons into consideration. You value them, their needs and their opinion. You pay attention to what they feel.	Have you participated (or do you participate) to charity actions? Are you volunteer? In your family life? Have you undertaken commercial activities (implying a customer relationship)? If it is not the core of your skills and vocational project, it may have been the case during summer jobs (e.g. working as a barman, as a hostess...)	Reference of associations in which you are active Examples of activities showing attention to others
Communication Skills		Communication in public: have you had to speak in front of audiences? Can you use more than one language? This enriches your communication capacities (particularly in international environments or in intercultural contexts).	The portfolio shows your written communication skills. You can include videos or recording for oral communication
Conflict management		Problems you have had to solve, maybe during your studies. Focus on mathematics or applied sciences.	
Problem Solving	Being	You have	
Creativity & Innovation		In your leisure time you can participate to activities that require some creativity. Do you produce crafts? Do you develop creative products such as paintings, photography, etc.? Are you in the do-it-yourself movement?	Pictures of works (contextualised and explained)
Critical & Structured Thinking		Importance in your curriculum of areas such as philosophy Specific achievement	
Decision Making		Important decisions that you may have taken. Changes in your career.	

1.3 Recognition and validation of skills

1.3.1 Recognition of previous diplomas and certificates

Locate the ENIC-NARIC contact point in your country on <http://www.enic-naric.net>.

ENIC-NARIC (European Network of Information Centres in the European Region - National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union) is a joint initiative of the European Commission, the Council of Eu-

rope and UNESCO that links to the competent bodies in each member country and provides information about international academic and professional mobility, as well as on procedures for the recognition of foreign qualifications.

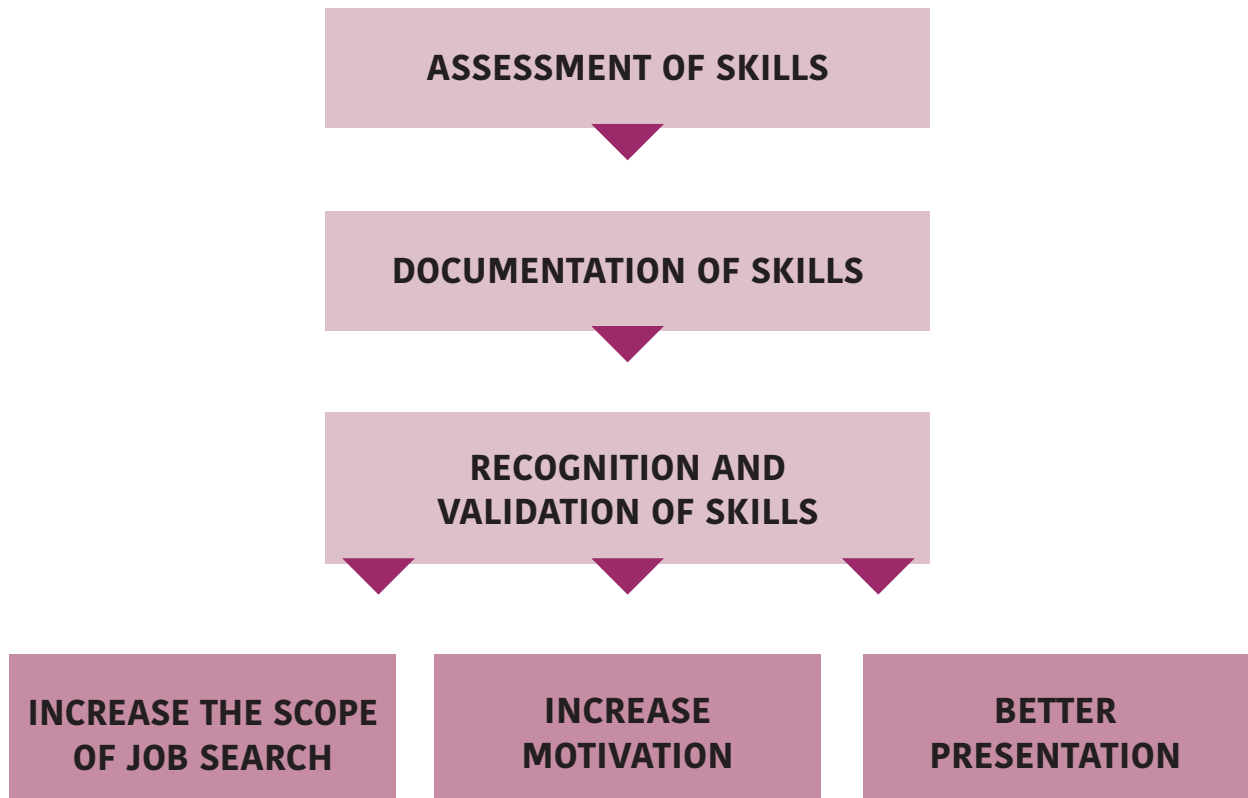
Contact them; ask for a certificate of comparability or for what is possible in your situation.

1.3.2 Recognition and validation of your experience

Note that in several countries (France, Norway...) it is possible to benefit from a validation of your skills, even if you don't have docu-

mentation. The process is long and requires a mastering of the host country language.

LOGICAL SUMMARY OF 1ST STEP



2. DEVELOPING NETWORKS AND VISIBILITY

2.1 Getting to know companies and being identified

2.1.1 Preparing yourself

Registering to the employment agency has to be the first step of any person looking for a job. It gives you access to individual advice as well as information about local companies and their employment needs.

By developing knowledge of companies in your area, you will prepare for future applications and interviews, and at the same time, you will identify people and you will start to be

identified. The following sources can be used to increase your knowledge about local companies:

- Online yearbooks;
- Search engines;
- Employment agencies;
- Career guidance and information centres;
- Company web sites.

2.1.2 Disseminate your CV

- Register in employment web sites;
- Register your CV in CV libraries;
- Look for thematic libraries linked to your area of expertise (or included on companies web sites);
- Send you CV by mail: When you contact spontaneously a company for a job or when you answer to a job offer by mail you don't need to write a separate letter of motivation. The mail is your motivation letter. Spelling mistakes are banned, particularly on the recipient name. It has to be concise and personalised. It is better to direct it to

someone. It is good to start by talking about the company, then by presenting yourself followed by suggesting a possible collaboration. If you don't have work experience, valorise your practice periods. Don't forget to use salutations. The CV attached must be on pdf format (take care about the size of the file that doesn't have to exceed 1 Mo). The file must be clearly named with your reference (CV Name Surname). Also choose a simple e-mail (name.surname@xxxx.ext). And be clear on the subject of the mail.

(see also chap. Creative CV)

2.2 Face to face networking

Networking can be done through the following steps:

- Identifying the supporting bodies (Employment agencies, information centres, municipalities...);
- Participating to employment fairs;
- Getting involve in associations of unemployed;
- Asking information to companies through direct contact with employers.

Don't only think about companies and professional bodies. It is important to develop your network outside of your comfort zone made by your family, neighbourhood and community. You need to participate to activities with the inhabitants in various areas in order to develop a social capital. Get involved in volunteering and other activities such as sport, citizenship and political participation, supporting school activities. It will also participate to the reduc-

tion of prejudices. Research has shown that the contact and the interdependence between individuals help them to consider them as indi-

viduals and not as representatives of a group, thus it reduces the stereotypes.

Use a table like this to track your contacts.

Date	Type of initiative (phone call, visit...)	Objectives	Company (direction, contact person, phone, activity)	Result	Observation

2.3 Online networking

By participating to online activities, you can build a positive reputation that employers will appreciate. More and more, employers make an internet search on the name of the candidates. According to Monster.com, a survey conducted among 100 executive recruiters by ExecuNet

showed that already in 2006, 77% use search engines to learn about candidates. It showed also that of those researching candidates online, 35 percent eliminated a candidate from consideration based on information they uncovered online.

2.3.1 Online forums

Participation to online forums relevant to career development or focusing on sectors

you are interested in.

2.3.2 General social networks

Take care about the information that you publish (text and photos) as they are difficult to suppress once published. Manage your e-reputation. Recruiters are more and more in-

terested by the information contained on the social networks as it allows retrieving a lot of data that helps get a good idea of the personality of a candidate before the interview.

2.3.3 Professional social networks

Take advantage of the social and communication media. For example, LinkedIn accounts and there they might have a video CV. The more links, indirectly show communication skills. Links from many different cultures show infusion and familiarity with different cultures. Comments and skill assessment from colleagues in LinkedIn can be a powerful tool. You should also link these accounts to your E-portfolio. A list of (all) social networking websites is available on Wikipedia (at <https://goo.gl/riUqN>).

Steps for action:

- Identify the main professional social networks.
- Choose one, open an account and provide a complete description of your profile, including a photography (focusing on your skills).
- Be active (15-20 min per day to enrich your profile, make new contacts, maintain existing contacts, participate to discussions, etc.
- Participate to groups, create groups.
- You don't necessarily need to active the commercial services.

3. DEVELOP A WORK EXPERIENCE

If you have no or little work experience, it is important to make practice periods in local companies. You will have the opportunity to discover the jobs and the working context in the host country. It will be a good way to test your skills in a real work environment. And it will give you the opportunity to be known by companies. It develops your local network. Contact the employment agency to enquire about this possibility.

If there is no possibility for a work experience in the competitive market, still you can try to develop volunteering activities outside of your community.

In annex 3, you will find a tool to help you valorising your previous work experiences or practice periods in companies. You don't need to answer all questions. Adapt the tool to your needs and to your situation.

4. IMPROVE YOUR PRESENTATION

4.1 E-portfolio

An E-portfolio is a collection of digital files that are shared electronically for the purpose of reflection, comment, evaluation and to increase your visibility. It is supported by a website that enables users to collate digital evidences. E-portfolios can contain a wide range of digital files, including but not limited to, text or PDF documents, videos, sound files,

images and links to other websites or online resources. Some parts of the portfolio can remain private before being published (or even can never be published); if you estimate they are not "finished" or not relevant to your current objective. For more details please refer to the Operation Tools section in the MOSP document, segment 3.1.

4.2 Content management tools

According to Edumic ¹, five easy to use tools are available together with a large number of tutorials.

Google Sites proposes several templates and uploading files in many formats to show-case example of works. There are several on-line tutorials available to support the creation of a Google site (eg. <https://goo.gl/505noJ>).

Evernote is easy to use and offers a lot of functionality within its free version. For more in-depth tips, check out one Portland teacher's

experience using Evernote for digital portfolios.

WordPress. You can install your own or use the Wordpress platform. Tutorials can be found here: <https://learn.wordpress.com/get-started/>

Weebly is another platform that makes it easy for people to create a portfolio or a website using the visual template of their selection.

For more information please refer to the Operational Tools section in the MOSP document, segment 3.1.3.

4.3 Specialised E-portfolio tools

On <https://eportfolioireview.wordpress.com/eportfolio-list/> you will find a list of portfolio

tools (including content management tools).

4.4 Social networks

Even if you manage your own blog, we advise that you create a detailed profile on a

professional social network important in your country such as LinkedIn, Xing or Viadeo.

4.5 Video CV

Video CVs are becoming popular with job-seekers. Rather than replacing traditional paper CVs, videos enhance job applications by providing employers with more insight into what an individual has to offer. A traditional CV outlines your skills, qualifications and experience, whereas a video CV enables an employer to get a feel for your personality. Video CVs are a great opportunity to show presentation and communications skills and other soft skills which is not easy to showcase through a traditional CV. Furthermore, purely having taken the time to prepare a video CV shows the employer you are prepared to go the extra mile to succeed.

Video CV will be included in your portfolio. Depending on the employment that you target, in the same way that you will make several CVs adapted to the need of the moment, basing yourself on your portfolio, you can make several video CVs. Then you have to take care to manage appropriately what content you make 1 5 Free Tools For Making Digital Portfolios by Kristen Hicks on February 9, 2015 (<http://goo.gl/uB19YY>)public, versus what content you keep private or only share with a selection of persons such as employment advisors.

For practical guidelines on how to make a video CV, tips and equipment you need to create a video CV you can refer to Operational Tools section of the MOSP document, segment 3.3.

¹ 5 Free Tools For Making Digital Portfolios by Kristen Hicks on February 9, 2015 (<http://goo.gl/uB19YY>)

4.6 Creative CV

The use of digital technologies has opened a field to elaborate creative CVs.

Online tools are available for a better visualization and overview of CV: re.vu, virtualize.me, resumup.com.

Look at them and others, try them and see if there is something that suits you. Test and

implement different layouts that may show your creativity and your capacity to use digital technologies. Online tools like Prezi are also used to produce CV.

Note that these CVs do not always replace the traditional CV following the norm of the host country. They may only be a plus.

5. PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW

5.1 Prepare a pitch

Prepare a pitch, keys to convince and negotiate (it will be useful for the application and for the interview).

By preparing the job interview and knowing the characteristics of the company in which we are looking for a job, it is possible to detect details that can be used to fight prejudices. It is also possible to valorise specific experience or knowledge. It is not easy to give tips.

You person can try to evidence the opposite of the stereotype taking as example her history and experience. It is also possible to explain that the features concerned by prejudices are at the level of the individual, and not at the level of the group. But by definition, prejudices are very difficult to change and to eradicate. Indeed, they are the main barrier to employment that immigrants face in EU countries.

5.2 Anti-discrimination laws

Be aware that each EU country has integrated the EU anti-discrimination laws in its own legislation. If you estimate that you are victim of prejudices when applying for a job or during a job interview, do not hesitate to contact

the supporting body in your country. In France, there is one contact point per “Département”. It is called COPEC: *Commission pour la promotion de l'égalité des chances et de la citoyenneté*. The Préfecture will give the data.

5.3 Valorising the migrant background

Many features that can be emphasised when searching for a job or when someone has the project to create a company. They are:

- The knowledge of various languages, some of them being sometimes not very usual and looked for by companies.
- The knowledge of other cultures.
- The knowledge of other countries can be useful for sales and marketing purposes: open-

ing of new markets, knowledge of potential customers needs or preferences, use of foreign networks, adaptation of marketing.

- The knowledge of different working techniques that can pas from one country to another as an example was given by one of the participants in the construction sector (some construction techniques can help to reduce the cost).

The experience of migration and the migration path is the proof that the person is able to adapt and that she is able to cope with various situations (risky and difficult situations in some cases). These soft skills are useful in most of the companies: ability to work in team, ability to adapt to a changing environment, flexibility in the working conditions.

Other attitudes and soft skills such as motivation (immigration is a process that shows the determination of a person to reach a better life, to improve the living conditions) or the capacity to work hard (this being one of the most wanted characteristics by companies according to a survey conducted by Greta among local companies in Velay in 2012). By learning a new language (the one of the welcome country) and new cultural codes, the migrant shows her/his ability to learn and to manage lifelong learning processes. Being able to learn permanently at all ages is key for any worker.

Innovation

Seeing things from a different perspective, another culture, another history, others values, may facilitate the development/introduction of innovation within a company. A little bias is often needed to introduce changes in a process.

You should be aware that highly skilled immigrants with advanced degrees actually create jobs for nativeborn workers. According to a December 2011 study from the American Enterprise Institute and the Partnership for a New American Economy, which analysed state-level employment data from 2000 to 2007, every 100 foreign-born workers who worked in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and who had advanced degrees, were associated with an additional 262 jobs for nativeborn workers. Furthermore, immigrants are more likely than natives to start their own businesses. According to a report from the Kauffman Foundation, “immigrants were more than twice more likely to start businesses each month than were the native-born in 2010.”

Immigrants also boost technological and scientific innovation. According to a report from the Brookings Institution, among people with advanced degrees, immigrants are three times more likely to file patents than U.S.-born citizens. Such investments in new businesses and in research may provide spill over benefits to native-born workers by enhancing job creation and by increasing innovation among their native-born peers.

6. YOUR PROMOTIONAL PLAN: CHECKLIST

Action	Yes	No	Not completely What is missing?
Skills and competences			
I have understood what is a skill or a competence			
I have evaluated my key soft skills			
I have documented my key soft skills			
I have evaluated other skills			
I have documented my other skills			
I understand what is a portfolio			
I have seen examples of portfolios			
I have made a plan for my own portfolio			
I have started my own portfolio			
I have discussed about my portfolio with third parts (colleagues, tutors...)			
Recognition and validation			
I know if it is possible to get my diplomas and certificates recognised			
I have had my diplomas and certificates validated			
I know what I need to do to have my diplomas and certificated validated			
I have enquired about the possibility to recognise and validate my experience			
Developing networks and visibility			
I am registered at the employment agency			

Action	Yes	No	Not completely What is missing?
I am aware about the existing supports towards employment			
I have made a plan to develop my professional contacts			
I am involved in activities outside of my community group			
I have identified the fairs and events in which I can meet companies			
I have met employers and workers			
I have identified web sites, forums and social networks that could be interesting for me			
I keep track of my contacts including the results			
I have organised my presence in a professional social network			
Improving my presentation			
I have looked at examples of E-portfolios			
I have planned to make a portfolio and I have selected the tool I will use			
I have started an E-portfolio			
I have looked at examples of video CVs			
I have planned to make a video CV and I have selected the tools I will use			
I have implemented a video CV			
I have looked at examples of creative CVs			
I have experimented creative CVs			
I have prepared topics to valorise when writing an application or during an interview			
I am aware about the anti-discrimination laws			
I am aware that being a migrant can be valorised in a company			

VALORIZE HIGH SKILLED MIGRANTS



VALORIZE HIGH SKILLED MIGRANTS PARTNERSHIP



This publication is supported by **Programme Erasmus+**



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