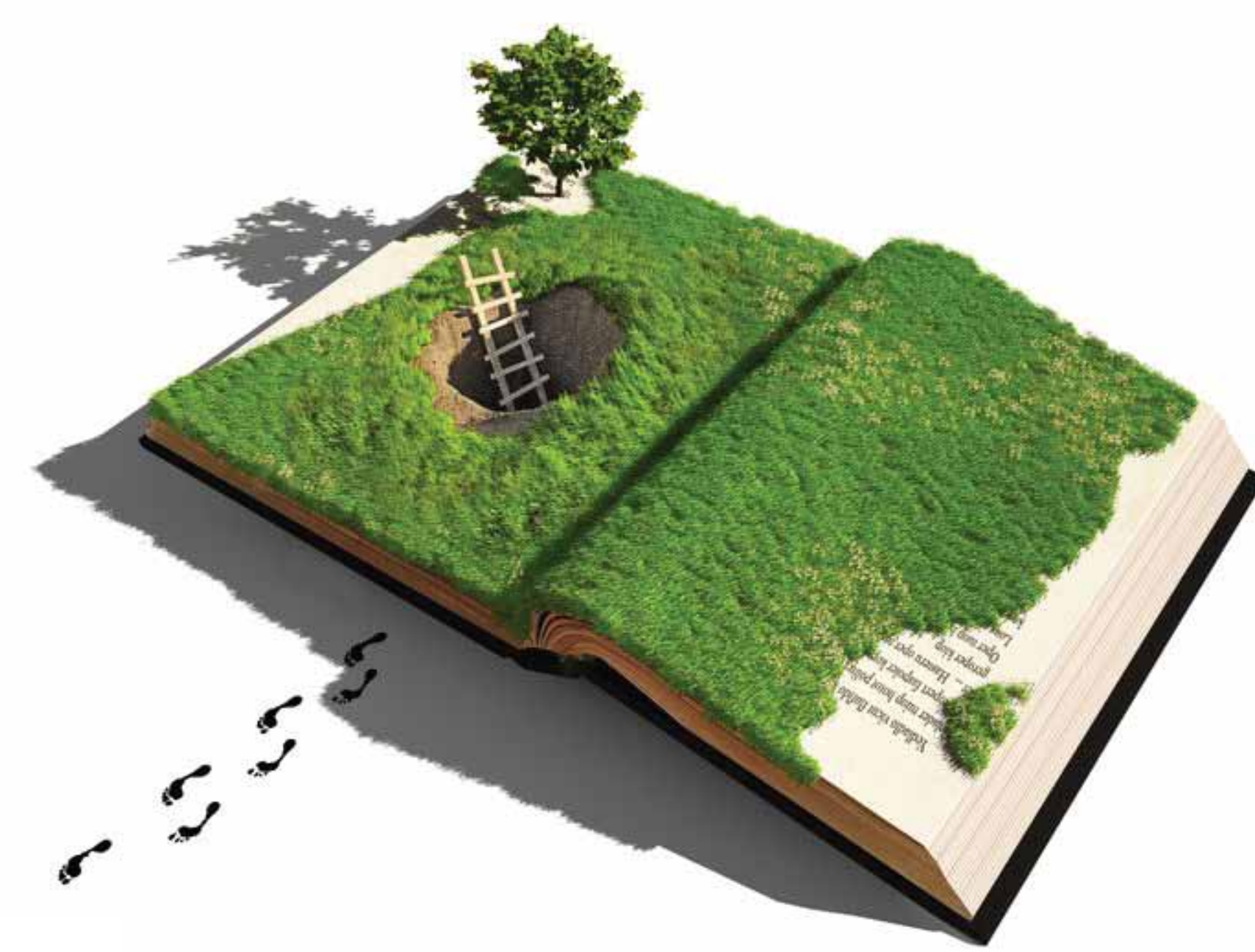


Comparison on university – industry linkages in Austria, Spain and the UK



ABSTRACT

The knowledge-based economy is widely acknowledged both in policy and practice as a 21st century reality. However there is currently a misalignment of needs and contributions concerning graduate skills, industry demands, research offerings and innovation.

Main Issues

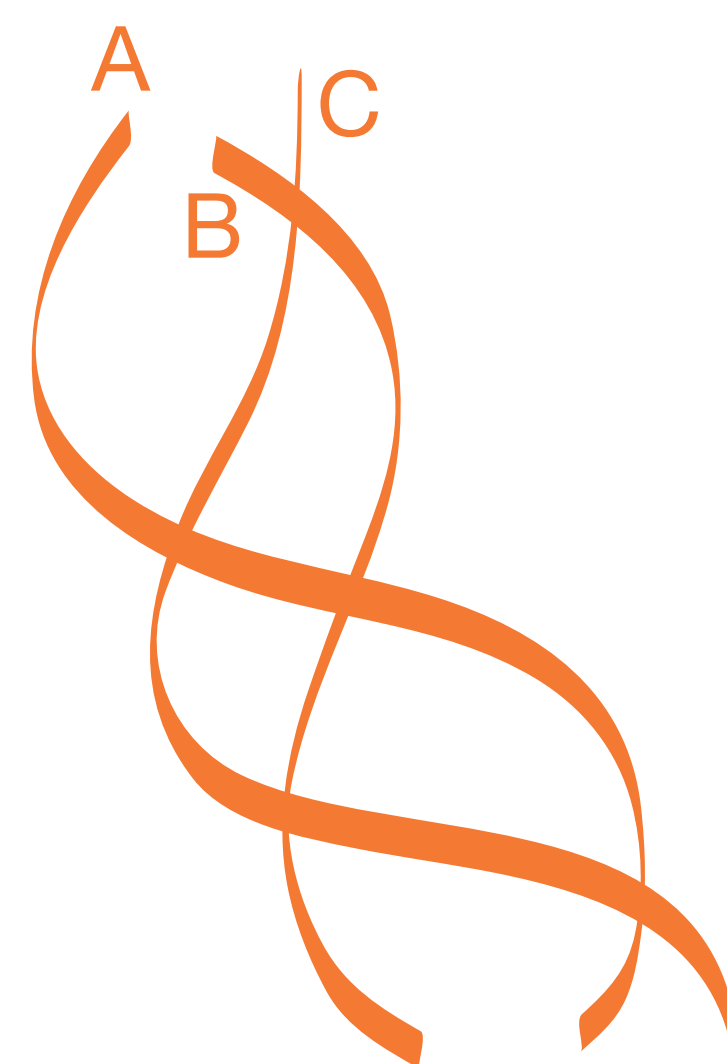
- ▶ traditional education needs to address the demands of changing societies
- ▶ research activities should ensure there is a strong industry focus
- ▶ regular, open and relevant communication is an essential element for success
- ▶ policy and economic development initiatives should enhance facilitation and enablement

To address these issues, it is fundamental to integrate a triple helix of actors

A - research and education

B - industry

C - intermediaries



The **GADGET** project, financed by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission, examines through an analytical, implementation and exploitation methodology these misalignments, proposing specific improvement schemes and policy influence.

METHODOLOGY

The needs and process identification was carried out in the form of an online survey directed towards 3 sets of target groups engaged in the energy and environment sector in Austria, Spain and the UK, namely **companies, intermediaries and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)**. The objectives of the survey were manifold:

- ▶ to identify areas of collaboration between companies and HEIs
- ▶ to evaluate the level of involvement of intermediaries in HEI-company cooperation
- ▶ to identify possible mismatches between HEI graduates' skills and requirements in the market
- ▶ to analyze the placement situation of graduates in the market
- ▶ to assess the level of training provided by HEI to companies

RESULTS

A total of 129 surveys were returned and analysed. The following are the common findings in the three countries:

Companies – Demand side (104 respondents):

- ▶ Disorientated in the HEIs (who to contact and what is offered)
- ▶ Dissatisfied with graduates' complementary skills

HEIs – Supply side (14 respondents):

- ▶ Recognised the shortage of training in complementary skills
- ▶ Revealed the crucial role of intermediaries as a contact point

Intermediaries (11 respondents):

- ▶ Acknowledged the importance of complementary skills for graduates in the labour market

Companies – demand side (104 respondents)	HEIs – Supply side (14 respondents)	Intermediaries (11 respondents)
Disorientated in the HEIs (who to contact and what is offered)	Recognised the shortage of training in complementary skills	Acknowledged the importance of complementary skills for graduates in the labour market
Dissatisfied with graduates' complementary skills	Revealed the crucial role of intermediaries as a contact point	

The 3 poorest performances of graduates as rated by employers



ACTIONS:

In order to rectify the mismatch between the supply and demand side, the 3 universities have drawn up an improvement plan with 3 schemes:

- Lifelong learning training scheme for industry employees
- Matching exercises between industry and research groups
- Visiting professors to incorporate industry focus in teaching

DISCUSSION:

- ▶ How to incorporate complementary skills in the curriculum?
- ▶ How to effectively involve specific industry sectors at the planning or development level of curricula?
- ▶ Do intermediaries duplicate the role of Technology Transfer Centres in the HEIs?

CONCLUSIONS

GADGET hypothetical mismatch is a reality in all areas:

- Skills and Training
- Research and University – Industry Interaction

CONTACT:

Spike Tang
University of Alicante
Email: spike.tang@ua.es
Phone: 0034 965 90 97 18
Website: <http://www.gadget-project.eu/>



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

