

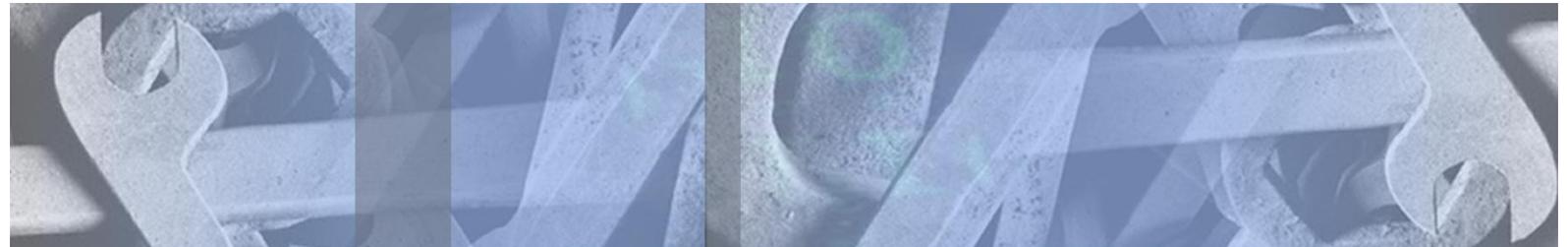


Transparency of qualifications,
validation of non-formal and informal learning,
credit transfer.

Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013)
Leonardo da Vinci Sectoral Programme

Thematic Group on

**“Transparency of qualifications,
Validation of non-formal and informal learning,
Credit transfer”**



Final report

This Report summarises the activities and achievements of the Thematic Group on “Transparency of qualifications, validation of non-formal and informal learning, credit transfer”, which was established in the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme now integrated into the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013. The Group is coordinated by the Italian National Agency for the LLP-Leonardo da Vinci Programme (ISFOL) and involves the National Agencies of Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Slovakia and Sweden, as well as the Masters of Crafts – Norway.

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For further information, please refer to the Thematic Group Website: <http://www.tg4transparency.com>

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I. Introduction: the European policy context and the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP)

I.1 Most recent developments in the fields of transparency of qualifications, credit transfer and validation of non-formal and informal learning

Due to the great variety of vocational education and training (VET) systems across Europe and the significant differences among Member States or even within countries (for instance, among regions or sectors), the objective of a mutual recognition of VET qualifications at European level would definitely be too ambitious; yet, in order to support a really free circulation of learners and workers within the European borders, to promote a society based on human capital as an asset for the economic growth and for the enhancement of social cohesion, to improve the employability of individuals and the competitiveness of the Community system, European and national (regional, local, sectoral) policy makers and stakeholders have progressively converged on the identification of more reachable goals and on a common engagement for their achievement: the promotion of transparency of competences and qualifications across Europe, through the development of methodologies and reference criteria for the description and comparison of the different professional profiles, the implementation of a common system for accumulating and transferring credits gained in VET pathways, the application of shared principles for the identification, assessment and recognition of learning experiences – in particular those acquired out of the formal context (for instance, on the job or in daily life).

In recent years, a wide variety of initiatives have been carried out at Community and international level, in order to help European citizens to communicate better their competences and qualifications when asking for admission to a learning scheme or when searching for a job. Several tools were developed to this purpose, within both the European Community¹ and the Council of Europe.² These initiatives showed the need of a common approach to the issue, but yet it was only with the **Lisbon Council** (March 2000) and then with the **Copenhagen Declaration** on enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training (November 2002)³ that a coordinated European strategy in the field started to take shape.

¹ For instance, the European format for *curricula vitae* (proposed by [Commission Recommendation 2002/236/EC](#) (OJ L 79, 22.03.2002) or the Europass Training, established by [Council Decision 1999/51/EC on the promotion of European pathways in work-linked training, including apprenticeship](#) (OJ L 17, 22.01.1999).

² For instance, the Diploma Supplement (recommended by the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher education in the European Region, adopted by the Council of Europe at Lisbon on 11.04.1997) or the European Language Portfolio.

³ Copenhagen Declaration by Ministers responsible for vocational education and training, in EU member States, the EFTA/EEA countries and the candidate countries, the Commission and the European social partners.

The common aim that governments agreed in Lisbon (and then undertook to pursue through the 10-year **work programme “Education and Training 2010”**) was to make the European Union the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. This strategy encompassed an increased investment on human resources in a lifelong learning perspective; and in this context, the implementation of common European devices and frameworks for the promotion and valorisation of skills and competences was considered as a key factor for the enhancement of human capital. In particular, among the main elements of the **follow-up to the Copenhagen Declaration** there were:

- the development of a single framework for transparency;
- the development of a European credit transfer system for VET, as well as common reference levels for VET and common principles for certification;
- the development of common principles for the validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- an increased support for the development of qualifications and competences at sectoral level.

Intense political and technical work has followed this setting of strategies.

In a chronological sequence, the first achievement has been the introduction of a **single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications (Europass)**, established through a European Parliament and Council Decision at the end of 2004.⁴ The new Europass is a coordinated portfolio of documents, which citizens can use on a voluntary basis to better communicate and present their qualifications throughout Europe. It includes and rationalises already existing instruments and in particular:

- **Europass-curriculum vitae**, which is a format for a systematic, chronological and flexible presentation of personal information, language proficiency, work experience, education and training attainments, as well as additional competences held by an individual;
- **Europass-Mobility**, which is a tool to document organized periods of learning attended in another country;
- **Europass-Diploma supplement**, which is a document attached to a higher education diploma, in order to make it easier for third persons – particularly those of another country – to understand what the diploma means in terms of knowledge and competences acquired by its holder;

⁴ [Decision no. 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences \(Europass\)](#) (OJ L 390, 31.12.2004).

- **Europass-Certificate Supplement**, which is a document attached to a vocational certificate and has the same aims of the Diploma Supplement, yet with specific reference to the vocational training area;
- **Europass-Language Portfolio**, which is a document in which language learners can record their language learning, cultural experiences and competences.

Europass is therefore a reality; now, the future challenges with respect to this arrangement concern:

- the actual and widespread application of all its tools by individuals and their acknowledgement by employers (which requires a constant information, promotion and assistance by the National Europass Centers established in the different countries);
- the possible improvements which might be introduced in order to simplify and foster utilisation;
- the need to combine the “marketing” of the arrangement with the adoption and/or enhancement of active measures to promote and support mobility;
- the need to adapt the arrangement and its tools to make them all explicitly related to the common framework for qualifications (EQF) being established;
- the coherence and possible synergies with the new system for the accumulation and transfer of credits in vocational education and training (ECVET).

The second achievement concerns the **identification, assessment and validation of non-formal and informal learning**.

Validation implies:

- the visibility and documentation of prior learning taking place outside the formal education and training context;
- the analysis and judgement of this learning experience by an independent assessor;
- and, further to positive evaluation, the grant of an official status to acquired competences.

It is therefore quite a complex process, which has an impact at formal level (award of credits or certificates), at social level (acknowledgement by economic and social stakeholders) and at individual level (awareness of possessed competences and self-empowerment).

The experiences in this area are significantly different from country to country (and might also considerably vary within a single country, for instance from sector to sector or from region to region). In particular, the scenario includes:

- countries which can be considered still at an experimental stage, where pilot initiatives on validation are being carried out in some contexts but no major reform of existing systems and structures is underway or planned;
- countries which have already taken a political engagement to shift from a pilot to a more structured organisation of validation and are therefore defining the related institutional and legal framework;
- countries with well-established national validation systems.

In general, the adoption of standards, procedures and tool for the analysis and acknowledgement of non-formal and informal learning requires strong and shared political inputs, broad technical reforms as well as appropriate methodological solutions. The challenge is in particular related to the credibility, reliability and validity of the results of validation.

In this area, the action of the European Union has concerned mainly the definition of a set of **Common principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning**,⁵ adopted by the Ministers of Education and Training in May 2004 with a view to foster a voluntary application by the Member States, the Commission and the relevant stakeholders. These common principles cover **four key areas**:

- **Individual entitlements:** the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning should, in principle, be a voluntary matter for the individual. There should be equal access and equal and fair treatment for all individuals. The privacy and rights of the individual are to be respected.
- **Obligations of stakeholders:** stakeholders should establish – in accordance with their rights, responsibilities and competences – systems and approaches for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning. These should include appropriate quality assurance mechanisms. Stakeholders should provide guidance, counselling and information about these systems and approaches to individuals.
- **Confidence and trust:** the processes, procedures and criteria for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning must be fair, transparent and underpinned by quality assurance mechanisms.
- **Credibility and legitimacy:** systems and approaches for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning should respect the legitimate interests and ensure the balanced participation of the relevant stakeholders. The process of assessment should be impartial and

⁵ Draft Conclusions of the Council of the European Union on Common European Principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning ([9600/04 EDUC 118 - SOC 253](#), 18.05.2004).

mechanisms should be put in place to avoid any conflict of interest. The professional competence of those who carry out assessment should also be assured.

Further initiatives have then been implemented at European level as a follow-up to the adoption of the common principles. First of all, the creation of a **European Inventory on Validation of non-formal and informal learning** (2005), which collects relevant practices realised in the field in the different European countries. Then, the establishment of a **cluster on “Recognition of learning outcomes”**, in the framework of the “Education and Training 2010” work programme, which has the mandate to develop methods for validating non-formal and informal learning and to support the shift from a learning inputs to a learning outcomes perspective in national education and training policies.

The challenges concerning validation can significantly vary from country to country – depending upon the existence or, on the contrary, the lack of a national system for validation. If we have to generalise, these challenges can be related for instance to:

- the actual dissemination and promotion of the common principles within the different national/regional/local/sectoral contexts;
- the shift from pilot experiences (or even consolidated but limited practices) to the implementation of institutional systems for validating non-formal and informal learning, including methodologies, procedures, standards and tools;
- the possible implementation of regulatory frameworks to support the setting up and application of such systems;
- the actual involvement of all relevant stakeholders (in particular at sectoral level) and above all of social partners in the process, in order to ensure a real and widespread acceptance of its outcomes;
- the application of quality assurance procedures and tools during the whole process;
- the professionalism and proper training of assessors.

The third and most recent achievement is linked to the **implementation of a European Framework for Qualifications (EQF)**. This device was first evoked in the Copenhagen Declaration of 2002; an Experts Group specifically established to this purpose (and consisting of representatives of the main areas of education, sectors and social partners) has then elaborated a proposal which was formalised in a **Staff Working Document of the European Commission** (July 2005);⁶ the proposal was submitted to a wide **consultation process** in the 31 countries participating in the “Education and Training 2010” work programme (July-Dec. 2005), further to which a second experts group (consisting of participants

⁶ [SEC \(2005\) 957 \(July 2005\)](#).

appointed by Member States, external experts and with specific contribution by CEDEFOP and ETF) elaborated a simplified set of reference level descriptors and of key definitions; the revised structure has been the object of a **proposal for a recommendation made by the European Commission** (Sept. 2006),⁷ that the European Parliament has adopted in Autumn 2007 and the Council is expected to adopt at the beginning of 2008.

The idea of a transnational framework for qualifications as such is not new; the main innovation envisaged by the EQF is the overarching nature of the framework, which should encompass all existing qualifications in a perspective of lifelong and lifewide learning: from vocational education and training to higher education, from initial to continuing training and adult education, from formal to non-formal and informal learning. The concept of “qualification” encompasses any formal result of an assessment and validation process which establishes that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to a given standard.⁸

The EQF is based on eight reference levels, from qualifications achieved at the end of compulsory schooling to higher academic qualifications. Each level describes what a learner knows, understands and is able to do — regardless of the system where a particular qualification was acquired. The EQF reference levels therefore shift the focus away from the traditional approach, based on learning inputs (duration of a learning experience, type of institution, etc.), to a scheme related to learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences acquired on completion of a learning pathway).

Therefore, the main features of the EQF are the following:

- its lifelong learning perspective (from general education to the highest level of academic and professional education and training);
- its approach based on learning outcomes for defining and describing qualifications;
- the promotion of the validation of non-formal and informal learning (in particular for those citizens most likely to be subject to unemployment or insecure forms of employment);
- its attention to quality assurance as a basis for ensuring mutual trust.

According to the Recommendation, Member States are invited to use the EQF, to relate their national systems of qualifications to the EQF levels by 2010 (possibly by developing national frameworks) and to ensure that all new qualification certificates, diplomas and Europass documents contain a clear reference to the appropriate EQF level by 2012. The Commission will facilitate cooperation, exchange

⁷ COM (2006) 479 final of 05/09/2006, “Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the European Qualifications framework for lifelong learning”.

⁸ Annex I - Draft EQF Recommendation.

of good practices and testing (through voluntary peer review and pilot projects under Community programmes) and will develop support and guidance material. Close links will be ensured between the EQF and existing or future European systems for credit transfer and accumulation in higher education (ECTS) and vocational education and training (ECVET).

As such, the European Qualifications Framework can be considered as a “meta-framework”, that is to say a neutral reference point for classifying qualification levels and a sort of translation device for comparing qualifications across Europe, that Member States are invited to use on a voluntary basis; it is not meant to replace existing national frameworks or systems, but only to allow a better comparison and easier communication among them. Yet, by recommending governments to relate their qualifications systems to the common framework, the EQF inevitably aims also at acting as a catalyst for national reforms and, in particular at promoting the **development of National Qualifications Frameworks** (NQFs).⁹

In this sense, it has a twofold aim: a “European” function of fostering the translation and comparison of qualifications across countries and a “national” function (which is much more controversial, in a way) of increasing the coordination and permeability of qualifications within countries.¹⁰

With respect to the implementation of NQFs there are different approaches and different national situations. In some countries, a national framework was established well before the EQF (e.g. France, Ireland, the United Kingdom) and the challenge there is therefore related to the way the existing framework can be related to the EQF (for instance, when it is built on a different number of reference levels); some countries have a national system but not a national framework (e.g. Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania and Sweden) and are considering whether implementing or not a NQF; other countries have already committed for the establishment of a NQF and have started the necessary preparation to this purpose (and among these Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Slovak Republic); a last group of countries is not doing any preparatory work and might relate its qualifications directly to the EQF and not by way of NQFs (for instance, Finland).

Whatever the approach might be, it is quite clear that the success of EQF depends upon its actual implementation within Member States and that such national application requires that all the involved

⁹ According to the EQF recommendation, a “national qualification framework” can be defined as an “instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved”. The framework is an optional part of a National Qualifications System (which embraces all structures and processes leading to the award of a qualification), designed to make levels explicit and to foster transparency, access, transfer and progression among the different levels.

¹⁰ Bjornavold J., Coles M., *Governing education and training: the case of qualifications frameworks*.

actors and stakeholders (policy makers, social partners, VET providers, enterprises, individuals, etc.) believe in the relevance and usefulness of the device. The main challenges in this process can be:

- the importance of using the implementation of EQF as a real chance for change within national systems (and not just for a “window dressing”);
- the need to reinterpret national qualifications in terms of learning outcomes, as a condition for objectivity and transparency – which in many contexts implies a deep change of mentality with respect to traditionally input-based approaches;
- the application of quality assurance approaches when referencing existing qualifications to EQF levels, as a basis for mutual trust;
- the effort of breaking down the barriers within national sub-systems (for instance, between vocational education and training on one hand and higher education on the other hand) and increasing the permeability;
- the establishment of effective links between the EQF and existing or future common systems for the accumulation and transfer of credits in VET and in higher education (in particular, the ECTS and ECVET systems), as well as with Europass.

To prepare the introduction of the new arrangement and start meeting these challenges, an **EQF pre-implementation group** is already active since March 2007. The already mentioned **Cluster on the recognition of learning outcomes** is also working, with a specific focus on national qualifications frameworks and validation. Meanwhile, the European Commission has launched two Calls for proposals in 2006 and 2007 to support pilot projects on EQF testing and guidelines for the implementation of the new arrangement are being prepared. Following formal adoption of the EQF Recommendation, a **European advisory group** (composed of representatives of Member States and involving European social partners and other stakeholders) will be set up in order to ensure an overall coherence and to promote the transparency of the process of relating qualification systems.

The last achievement – which is still underway – concerns the implementation of a **European Credit System in the area of Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)**.

In the field of **higher education**, a similar device has a long-established tradition: it was first introduced in 1989 in the framework of the Erasmus Programme, for the purpose of facilitating the recognition of study periods abroad; then, with the **Bologna Declaration** of 1999, the Ministers of Education of several European countries agreed to set up by 2010 a **European Area of Higher Education**, which envisaged the formal establishment of a **system for credits accumulation and transfer** of the type already used successfully under Socrates-Erasmus (**ECTS**); finally, at the **Bergen**

Conference of May 2005, the European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education adopted a **“Framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)”**, comprising three cycles, generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the first and second cycles.

ECTS aims at promoting the transparency of higher education diplomas and fostering the international mobility of university students, by facilitating the academic recognition of study periods abroad; it is essentially based on the cooperation among higher education institutions, through a comparison of their respective study programmes and the award of credits to each component of these programmes. ECVET is intended to increase the transparency of VET qualifications and to enhance the mobility of all types of learners, by facilitating the accumulation and transfer of learning outcomes from one learning context to another; given the great variety of VET systems across Europe and the multiplicity of involved actors (in particular, the fact that training providers are not always the competent bodies for the award of a qualification), the implementation of such a system requires a cooperation among a wide range of relevant stakeholders (for instance, national and regional authorities, VET providers, social partners, sectoral representatives, enterprises, etc.)

Further to the Education Council Resolution¹¹ and Copenhagen Declaration of November 2002, the technical work concerning the elaboration of the ECVET proposal was demanded to an international group of experts coordinated by the European Commission. The group had the mandate of defining the principles and a reference framework for ECVET application¹² and then of designing a credit points scale together with a structure for the memoranda of understanding, to be subscribed between the VET providers involved in using the arrangement.¹³ The proposal was finalised in October 2006 in a **Commission Staff Working Document**,¹⁴ which illustrated ECVET underlying principles, objectives (mobility, validation of learning outcomes, transparency of qualifications, mutual trust and cooperation), methodological framework and transfer process, as well as the benefits for individuals.

According to the proposal,¹⁵ ECVET can be defined as a method for describing “a qualification in terms of units of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences), which are transferable and which can be accumulated, with associated credit points” and therefore a device for facilitating “the transfer and accumulation (capitalisation) of learning outcomes of individuals” who pass from one

¹¹ Council Resolution on promoting enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training.

¹² European Commission, “ECVET – Principles and reference framework for implementation”, 24 September 2004.

¹³ “ECVET – Technical specifications”, Report of the Credit Transfer Technical Working Group (28.06.2005).

¹⁴ “European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) – A system for the transfer, accumulation and recognition of learning outcomes in Europe” - SEC (2006) 1431 of 31.10.2006.

¹⁵ “European Credit System...”, pp. 9, 12,13.

learning context to another, from one system of qualification to another. A unit is the “smallest part of a qualification” that can be assessed, validated and possibly certified”. The features of the units which compose a qualification (content, size, total number of units, etc.) “are defined by the competent body responsible for the qualification at the appropriate level”. A “competent body” is an “authority, institution or organisation at national, regional, local or sectoral level that, according to national rules and practices is responsible for and/or involved in one or more of the functions related to the implementation of ECVET” (e.g. description and award of qualifications, allocation of credit points, design of transfer arrangements). The credit points are meant to represent “the relative value of a unit in relation to the whole qualification” and to foster the transfer of learning outcomes by providing a common European reference. The Commission’s proposal moreover envisages that the institutions involved in an ECVET-based learning experience formalise their agreement to cooperate through the signature of a memorandum of understanding and that participation to the application of the device, both at VET providers’ and at systems’ level, is voluntary.

In concrete terms, ECVET should work as follows. The objectives of a learning pathway, a training programme or units/elements of a qualification are expressed in terms of learning outcomes, i.e. knowledge, skills and competences to be mastered at a given reference level; one body/institution assesses certain learning outcomes achieved by an individual in whatever context (be it either through a formal training pathway or, for instance, on the job) and awards credits to the learner; a second body/institution –from a different country but also within the same national context – validates (accepts) the credits and recognises them for the award of a qualification.

As such, ECVET is therefore meant to contribute to:

- the geographic and professional mobility of individuals (transfer),
- the individual development and employability (accumulation),
- the transparency and comparability of qualifications across Europe,
- the validation of all types of learning in a lifelong and lifewide perspective,
- the cooperation and the promotion of a mutual trust among VET stakeholders in the great variety and diversity of VET systems.

The Commission Staff Working Document served as a basis for a **public consultation**, which was held from the end of 2006 to March 2007 and involved national authorities, social partners, sectoral organisations and stakeholders, VET providers from the European countries participating to the

“Education and Training 2010” work programme.¹⁶ The results of the consultation were presented at the German Presidency Conference held in Munich in June 2007: there was an area of broad consensus on the importance and relevance of the device and therefore a strong encouragement for its further development and implementation; at the same time, several contributions highlighted the need for a clarification of ECVET scope (education levels and types) and of the related concepts (units, transfer, etc.), as well as for a technical improvement (precision and yet flexibility of the technical specification) and testing of the device.

The key areas for further development and challenges for the future concern:

- the elaboration of tools (templates, guides) which support the use of ECVET in concrete practices;
- the choice of appropriate modalities for describing qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes and for assessing these learning outcomes (in particular when acquired out of formal contexts);
- the identification of possible modalities for the allocation of credit points to units in coherence with the learning outcomes approach (the aspect turned out to be rather controversial in the consultation);
- the areas of compatibility between Europass and ECVET (for instance, Europass mobility could be used to record ECVET components, the certificate supplement could give information on the units, etc.);
- the coherence between ECVET and ECTS (the two tools can be developed separately but with a view to seek for integration and to promote permeability, mutual recognition and transfer in a lifelong learning perspective);
- the identification and listing of the competent bodies (or more broadly, of the relevant stakeholders) in the different countries.

Further to these inputs from the consultation process, a **technical writing group** was given the mandate to rewrite the proposal with a view to come up with a final draft **recommendation** to be adopted by the Commission and then submitted to the Parliament and the Council during 2008.

¹⁶ Meanwhile, ECVET had also been the subject of two studies: “ECVET Connexion” (a study on the feasibility of ECVET system for apprentices) and “ECVET Reflector” (an analysis of the obstacles and favourable conditions for the implementation of ECVET in a national system). In addition to this, a Call for proposals was launched in 2006 in order to award grants to projects aimed at establishing an operational framework at policy level to allow experimentation and researches on ECVET, as well as at supporting transnational cooperation on design, development, testing and dissemination of methods and tools for ECVET. With the new Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013, the support to pilot initiatives on ECVET was directly included in the general Call for Proposals.

1.2 The contribution of the Leonardo da Vinci - Lifelong Learning Programme

The Leonardo da Vinci Programme (LdV), now integrated in the new Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) 2007-2013, is a crucial instrument for the implementation of the European strategies in the field of vocational training, as outlined in the Lisbon-Copenhagen process. As such, it has constantly accompanied and supported the political developments on transparency of competences and qualifications, credit transfer in VET and validation of non-formal and informal learning, by dedicating specific priorities to these themes in its Calls for proposals, both in the past (2000-2006) and in the current (2007-2013) programming period, thus stimulating the submission of project initiatives on these themes.

Through the years and in parallel with the progressive definition at European level of shared policy objectives, of a common framework for operations as well as of a kit of common tools, the contribution of the Programme Calls has become more and more closely linked to the political agenda and targeted to the achievement of the identified goals.

The first **Call for Proposal** of the second phase of implementation of Leonardo da Vinci, valid for the period **2000-2002**, contained a specific priority on “Promoting the transparency of qualifications”,¹⁷ which supported the elaboration of new methodologies for the assessment, certification and validation of competences acquired on the job and, more in general outside the formal training system, as well as the implementation of new mechanisms and methodologies for the transparency of qualifications. The Call was released before the Lisbon Council and somehow anticipated some of its conclusions. It already tackled the themes of both transparency and validation; with respect to the latter, it evoked in particular the recognition of non-formal competences (even though the term “non-formal” was not specifically mentioned), while there was yet no reference to the issue of credit transfer in vocational education and training. In a way, the idea was to stimulate the development of project practices in these fields, which could contribute to the ongoing debate and to the policy developments that the Lisbon Council was going to formalise; the range of identified areas of intervention for promoters remained quite broad, as possible inputs for reflection could also come bottom-up from on-field experiences.

The second LdV **Call for Proposal 2003-2004**¹⁸ acknowledged the importance of valuing learning as a pre-requisite for the creation of an area of lifelong learning, building on the right of free movement within the EU, and highlighted the identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning as well as the transfer and mutual recognition of formal certificates and diplomas as

¹⁷ [2000/C23/08](#) – Priority 6.

¹⁸ [EAC/15/02](#).

key issues. Moreover, it dedicated a specific priority to “Valuing learning”,¹⁹ which encouraged the submission of proposals concerning *inter alia*: the development of new approaches to valuing (formal, non-formal and informal) learning, with specific emphasis on learning within enterprises and industrial sectors; the development of certification so as to promote transparency of diplomas, qualifications and competences; the exchange of experiences and good practices in the field; the definition of quality standards of diplomas and certificates; the development of European integrated approaches for valuing learning outcomes (formal, informal and non-formal) by the identification of common denominators in terms of methodologies, standards and institutional arrangements.

The Call was more or less contemporaneous to the Copenhagen Declaration and somehow already pervaded of its spirit; even though the title of the dedicated priority contained some elements of ambiguity (the term “valuing” was somehow linked to the idea of giving a value, yet the aspects of validation and recognition were not explicitly mentioned in the title, but in the text), the specific areas of action were much more clearly identified and focused; the terminology had had an evolution and not only did it correspond to the developments of the ongoing debate (valorisation of all learning contexts in a lifelong perspective), but it also anticipated some key issues of future discussions (the focus on learning outcomes). The Call probably privileged the dimension of validation with respect to the issue of transparency of qualifications as such and evoked – though still quite generically – the topic of transferring the formal achievements of a learning pathway from one context to another (yet with no specific reference to the issue of credits in VET).

The last LdV **Call for Proposals 2005-2006**²⁰ was launched when the policy developments of the Lisbon-Copenhagen strategy could already rely upon some significant achievements (the activities of the European technical working groups on transparency and credit transfer, the adoption of common principles on validation, the preparation of the decision establishing the single Community framework for transparency - Europass) and the transparency-related issues were gaining even more political impetus. It is therefore not by chance that the Call contained three specific priorities.

One was dedicated to “Promoting transparency of qualifications”²¹ and it encouraged the submission of pilot projects concerning *inter alia*: the development of new measures and instruments to present, promote and compare qualifications and competences at European, national and sectoral level; the definition and development of quality standards of diplomas and certificates, particularly at sector level, and contributing to transparency; the development of transparency instruments and services; the

¹⁹ Priority 1.

²⁰ [EAC/11/04](#).

²¹ Priority 1.

analysis of how guidance and counselling have supported and contributed or may support and contribute to transparency of qualifications and competences; the development of sectoral networks, centres of excellence, specific structures and so on.

The other two priorities were reserved to thematic actions (which fell under the direct responsibility of the European Commission – and not within National Agencies' competences) and concerned respectively Credit Transfer in VET and Validation of non-formal and informal learning. Under the first one, the Commission intended to support: the application of credit transfer systems and the development of new approaches to credit transfer in VET; the development and application of common reference levels, and common objectives for certification for VET. Under the second one, projects had to focus on: the exchange of experiences and good practice in the field of identification, assessment and recognition of informal and non-formal learning; the development of validation methodologies and standards for validation of non-formal and informal learning; the improvement of guidance and counselling in relation to validation.

The Call perfectly outlined the possible combination and synergies which could be established between the political debate (which had grown more and more mature), the policy achievements (which were starting to get closer to the Lisbon-Copenhagen objectives) and the concrete experience of project practitioners.

The attention of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme to the issues of transparency was confirmed also in the framework of the new **Lifelong Learning Programme**. As a matter of fact, the first **LLP Call for Proposals 2007**²² with specific reference to the Leonardo Programme included two dedicated priorities.

One was focused on European credit transfer for VET (ECVET)²³ and it encouraged the submission of proposals focusing on: the application of credit transfer systems based on ECVET principles and conventions, as well as the development of new approaches to credit transfer for VET; the development and application of processes for assessment, validation, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes for VET qualifications.

²² [EAC/61/2006](#).

²³ Priority 4.

The second one concerned Validation of non-formal and informal learning²⁴ and substantially reaffirmed most of the areas of action already outlined by the last Leonardo da Vinci Call 2005-2006 (exchange of experience on validation, development of specific methodologies and standards, improvement of targeted guidance and counselling).

Also the current **Call for proposals 2008-2010** contains several references to transparency-related issues. First of all, there is a specific priority on Transparency and recognition of competences and qualifications, which is aimed at supporting the development of national and sectoral qualifications systems and frameworks incorporating common tools (such as Europass, ECVET, EQF). Projects under this priority are basically asked to support the testing and implementation of the European frameworks, for instance by designing and describing VET qualifications in terms of transferable units of learning outcomes, mapping them according to EQF levels, designing VET programmes with flexible devices for validation, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes, applying the devices in particular sectors.

Secondly, there are links to the themes also under other priorities: for instance, the priority on the development of skills and competences of teachers includes also a possible area of intervention on the new role of VET professionals with respect to systemic changes such as the shift to learning outcomes; or, the priority on developing the skills of adults on the labour market encourages actions to improve the recognition and validation of work-based learning to support career development and lifelong learning.

Finally, the Call envisages a support for networks aimed at testing ECVET in some specific sectors (for instance, automobile manufacturing and maintenance, construction, hotel and catering, craft, etc.).

All these references confirm the still high political relevance of transparency-related themes and the importance of combining and integrating policy and projects achievements in these fields.

²⁴ Priority 5.

II. The Leonardo da Vinci Thematic Group on Transparency of qualifications, validation of non-formal and informal learning, credit transfer: activities and achievements

II.1 The Thematic Monitoring initiative

Thematic Monitoring (TM) was first launched in 2002 by the **Directorate General for Education and Culture** of the European Commission. The initiative was promoted **in the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme** (LdV) and meant to pursue the following objectives:

- to broaden the set of available information about finalised and running Leonardo projects, according to a thematic-based approach;
- to allow an exchange of experience and to enhance possible synergies among project initiatives concerning same or similar topics;
- to deepen mutual knowledge and networking between policy makers, stakeholders, experts, projects promoters and final beneficiaries in the identified thematic areas, so as to increase the cross-fertilisation between policy developments and concrete practices in vocational education and training;
- to highlight the outcomes and results of interesting and relevant project experiences, also with a view to support their mainstreaming at national, regional, local, sectoral level;
- to increase the visibility of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme as a whole across the participating countries and to contribute to enhance its impact in VET systems and practices.

Thematic Monitoring could therefore work as an operational framework for enhancing the qualitative follow-up of projects, the visibility of the achievements, the networking of all the involved stakeholders, thus contributing – from Leonardo’s perspective – to the attainment of the more general policy goals the European Union had just set in the field of vocational education and training, through the Lisbon-Copenhagen process and towards 2010.²⁵

For this purpose, the European Commission established **five thematic groups** – each corresponding to an area of interest for European VET policy – and invited the National Agencies (NAs) responsible for the management of the Leonardo Programme in all the participating countries to join one or more

²⁵ See the previous chapter.

groups and to work together in order to carry out enquiries and analyses, to organise events, to identify good practices, to contribute to the valorisation and mainstreaming of results.

In the first round of activities (2002-2004), the framework for TM action was quite broad and, as a starting point, it was necessary for most groups to better define and focus the thematic issues to be specifically dealt with. Thematic studies were therefore developed, which allowed to identify more detailed topics for discussion and to analyse the contribution and relevance of LdV projects with respect to these topics. The outcomes of this conceptual work served as a basis for a further on-field activity, which envisaged the involvement of project promoters through their participation to surveys and thematic events.

After this first and “pilot” round and despite some quite relevant achievements, Thematic Monitoring came to a slow-down – if not a complete halt – of activities at the end of 2004. The design of the new programming period for education and training programmes was already absorbing most of the energies and resources at Community and national level and TM also needed to be re-thought in the new scenario. One year later, in December 2005, the initiative was then re-launched by the Commission. Meanwhile, the surrounding context had yet undergone significant changes.

First of all, the pathway towards the achievement of Lisbon goals had made some significant steps forward, which have been broadly illustrated in the previous chapter and that can be just very briefly reminded here: the adoption of the common European principles on the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning (May 2004); the Commission’s proposal on principles and a reference framework for the implementation of a European credit system in VET (Sept. 2004), in parallel with the process which would lead to the corresponding framework for higher education (Bergen Conference, May 2005); the establishment of a Community single framework for the transparency of qualifications – Europass (Dec. 2004); the Staff Working Document of the Commission on EQF (July 2005) and the launch of the consultation process.

Secondly, the re-organisation of European instruments supporting education and training in the programming period **2007-2013** was leading the Leonardo Programme to become part of a wider arrangement: **the new Programme for Lifelong Learning (LLP)**, which was supposed to include also all the Socrates actions – Comenius, Erasmus and Grundtvig –, the Jean Monnet Programme, as well as a new transversal Programme aiming at supporting key activities of common European interest (policy cooperation, new technologies, language learning and dissemination of results).

The new LLP envisaged also new typologies of action within the already existing sectoral programmes: for Leonardo in particular, the establishment of a completely new measure was foreseen (transfer of innovation projects), which aimed at supporting the further dissemination, exploitation, integration and impact of already available project results within the training systems and practices of the Member States.

The changed context had of course an impact on the design and the implementation of the new Thematic Monitoring. On one hand, with respect to policy developments, it could be more focused in terms of targeted themes and more functional to support European VET strategies. On the other hand, with respect to programming developments, TM needed to cross the borders of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme and more in general of vocational training, to open to all the other arrangements and experiences in the field of education (from pre-school activities to adult learning): in other words, it had to encompass a wider lifelong learning perspective.

In addition to this, the introduction of such an action as the Leonardo transfer of innovation made the knowledge about implemented good practices even more strategic than in the past. Thematic Monitoring could of course usefully contribute to gather and analyse information on the experiences carried out in the second phase of LdV implementation (2000-2006); by the way, it is not by chance that TM was initially introduced as a fully voluntary initiative for National Agencies and then it has gradually become – at least at national level – a mandatory activity to be included in the NAs work programme.

The second round of Thematic Monitoring basically shared the same objectives of the first phase. Despite several discussions, the name of the initiative remained unchanged;²⁶ yet some other elements were improved or revised after the pilot experience of 2002-2004.

First of all, the concept of Thematic Monitoring was better focused and its borders more precisely defined, in particular versus Valorisation. Valorisation is now definitely associated with the aims of disseminating and exploiting projects results, with a view to support the integration and mainstreaming of good practices into national/regional/local/sectoral VET systems; while Thematic Monitoring can be considered as:

²⁶ For some, the term “Monitoring” had always been misleading because it evoked some sort of control and checks on projects which was completely out of the objectives of the initiative. The alternatives “thematic cooperation” or “thematic networking” had therefore been suggested; yet changing a “brand” which was starting to get known by promoters was not felt as a good option and in the end the name TM was maintained.

- an information-gathering activity, aimed at highlighting the relevance of projects – including ongoing initiatives – with respect to policy developments,
- a networking tool for policy makers, stakeholders, programme managers, project promoters and final beneficiaries,

with a view to facilitate and enhance the dialogue among all relevant actors, as well as to provide the basis for further valorisation.

At the same time, the main mandate given to the groups in this new round was slightly shifted with respect to the past: networking was supposed to become the core activity, which the European Commission wanted to be carried out basically through the arrangement of thematic events. The framework-setting, the overview of the state of the art of European debate and achievements in each area, as well as the analysis of projects contents had to be preliminary and however ancillary with respect to the primary focus of organising broad international conferences.

Then, the titles (and therefore the areas of intervention) of the five different Thematic Groups (TGs) needed be redefined. As a matter of fact, some of them had proved to be too broad and therefore too general; moreover, the policy developments occurred since the first establishment of the groups (and the new priorities meanwhile included in the calls for proposals of the programme) had led some of them to become less politically relevant or, however, to need a re-adjustment. New titles were therefore defined as follows:

- 1- **VET and the labour market, guidance, target groups;**
- 2- **Development of competencies and skills within companies, SMEs, competences at the sectorial level;**
- 3- **Quality of VET systems and practices, continuous training of teachers and trainers;**
- 4- **Transparency of qualifications, validation of non-formal and informal learning, credit transfer;**
- 5- **E-learning.**

As for the structure of the groups, no major change occurred. Each team kept on being coordinated by a lead National Agency (with only some shifts in the responsibilities among NAs) and had to include a significant and representative number of participating Agencies. At European level, the general coordination of the initiative within the Directorate General for Education and Culture was once again and definitely attributed to the Leonardo da Vinci unit, yet with the mandate of encompassing a wider lifelong learning perspective.

The second round of Thematic Monitoring is now almost over. NAs from 29 different countries participating to the Lifelong Learning Programme have actively contributed to the initiative; international conferences and seminars – involving a broad audience of relevant stakeholders – have been arranged by each group.

This chapter of the Report is intended to provide a description and to allow a balance of the work carried out, from the perspective of one of the groups and namely the one dedicated to transparency, credit transfer and validation. It hopefully provides with some elements of reflection for the future, given that the definition of a new European framework for the continuation of this initiative is still to come and at the moment rather uncertain.

II.2 The background of the Thematic Group and its new start-up

The Leonardo da Vinci Thematic Group was first established in 2002 and it was named “Transparency, assessment and validation knowledge”. It was led by the French National Agency and included the NAs from Bulgaria, Italy, Norway, Romania and Sweden, as well as the CNCP (*Commission Nationale de la Certification Professionnelle* – France) and other national experts; at European level, it involved of course the European Commission – Directorate General for Education and Culture, the Technical Assistance Office in Brussels and CEDEFOP.

As already outlined in the previous chapter, at that moment the “Copenhagen process” had just been launched and the issues of transparency of competences and valuing learning were gathering large political support at both European and national level; the 10-year work programme “Education and Training 2010” was being adopted and the first initiatives (establishment of a European Forum on the Transparency of Qualifications and of technical working groups on transparency, on credit transfer in VET and on validation of non-formal and informal learning) were starting; the new Call for proposals of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme for 2003-2004 had already been designed and included significant links with the Lisbon objectives. In other words, transparency and validation were already a priority (for the political process and for Leonardo), but their meaning and implications were not yet fully shared neither at policy level nor among practitioners.

Setting the framework was therefore necessary. To this purpose, the first steps of the Thematic Group were:

- identifying its main themes of interest (Transparency and Validation);

- investigating, through an on-field survey,²⁷ the contribution of LdV projects to such issues.

Potentially, the Programme could usefully contribute to pushing the process forward: in particular, for the typology of measures it funded and for the structure it required to partnerships for application. As a matter of fact, on one hand Leonardo pilot projects supported the design, development and testing of innovative approaches, methodologies and tools for the identification, description, valorisation and possibly recognition of competences; on the other hand, mobility programmes for students and workers allowed a pilot application of elaborated devices at least for the documentation of training experiences abroad. Finally, multiplayer partnerships required by the Programme to support project initiatives could stimulate a cooperation among all those actors who play a role in the formalisation and recognition of competences.

In practice, the experience of funded projects allowed to identify some areas of improvement. Just to mention some concrete examples, many initiatives associated transparency with the definition and description of a professional profile, but the methodologies and tools for identifying and mapping competences could significantly vary from project to project and minimum standards to support comparability of qualifications could not easily be defined; the construction of *curricula* and related training pathways based upon “capitalisable training units” or training credits was definitely a significant step forward, but not in all cases a guarantee of transparency, above all given the still great differences in terms of methodologies, contents, geographical or sectoral context of reference; therefore, many *curricula* were made of core common elements (European in the sense of transnational and shared by partners coming from different countries), but had to envisage broad parts representing needs and specifications of each context; some initiatives actually achieved a “transparent” description of competences, but very few actually came up to build a formal qualification; in the same way, several partnerships worked on the identification or even the assessment of competences acquired out of the formal learning context, but very few elaborated structured methodologies and devices for the recognition / certification of these competences.

After having set the framework and investigated on projects’ contributions, the Group then arranged several thematic events, involving project promoters and end users, stakeholders, experts, policy makers at European, national, regional and sectoral level: a meeting on “Validation of competences” (Brussels, June 2003); the conference “Leonardo’s Europe” (Bordeaux, March 2004); a seminar on “The needs of individuals and guidance as regards transparency tools” (Brussels, November 2004).

²⁷ The survey was carried out jointly by CEDEFOP and CNCP.

As already mentioned, 2005 was a year of transition for TM and the Group, as most of the other TGs, actually suspended its activities.

When Thematic Monitoring was re-launched, work started again. Even if a continuity with the past was clearly pursued, yet several features changed:

- The Group was renamed “Transparency of qualifications, validation of non-formal and informal learning, credit transfer” (TG4). This change of title and better focus was the result of the more targeted European approach to the concerned issues, which had several implications:
 - the title did no more evoke transparency in general, but a clear reference was made to qualifications (even though to be intended in a broad sense);
 - the issue of validation was connected not to “knowledge” but to “learning”, and in particular to those competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts;
 - the issue of credit transfer in VET was introduced;
- The Italian National Agency responsible for the management of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme (ISFOL) took the lead of the Group;
- The Group was enlarged, further to an invitation to all interested National Agencies to join, and currently includes 11 members;
- The mandate for all Thematic Groups, as already highlighted in the previous chapter, was focused on promoting the networking among all relevant actors through the organisation of thematic events aiming at a wide European audience.

At its start-up meeting (Rome, April 2006), the Thematic Group then defined the first pillars upon which future work was to be built:

- the enlargement of the team allowed different national contexts, systems and practices in the European scenario to be represented within the Group: North (Norway and Sweden), South (Italy and France), East (Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia), Mid-Europe (Austria, Germany, the Netherlands);
- at the same time, the involvement of other National Agencies not members of the Group was deemed to be essential, in particular insofar as they could bring in relevant experiences in the fields

of transparency and validation; for this reason, some of the members took the responsibility of acting as “area leaders” and constantly liaising with the non-member NAs of their area;²⁸

- the contribution from other relevant actors, even though not formally involved in the Group, could be extremely helpful, for instance: those DGEAC units entrusted with specific responsibilities linked to the implementation of the Lisbon process (and belonging to the Directorate A); other Directorates General of the European Commission having an interest in the themes (e.g. DG Employment, DG Enterprise); the Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture, which was responsible for managing the centralised actions of the former sectoral programmes and of the new Lifelong Learning Programme; CEDEFOP (and also the members of its virtual communities dedicated to the concerned themes) – just to mention some of the possible stakeholders;
- the cooperation with other Thematic Groups was also felt as important for the success of the whole exercise: the still broad definition of the areas of competence for each TG allowed to identify issues of common interest (for instance, qualifications and competences at sectoral level was a relevant topic for both TG2 and TG4); and such a cooperation would have contributed both to enhance synergies and to avoid possible duplications;
- even if the mandate was focused on the organisation of events, yet some preliminary and parallel activities were deemed to be essential for the success of the events themselves:
 - on one hand, an overview on the state of the art of policy developments in the concerned fields (so as to share knowledge among TG members and spread it to the beneficiaries of the initiative)
 - and on the other, an analysis of the contribution of projects to the issues, so as to design the planned conferences in a tailored way on the basis of existing experiences;
- as for initiatives and partnerships to be involved in the exercise, first of all it was clear that they should not only represent the Leonardo pilot or network projects (more in general, those initiatives managed under the so-called Procedure B of the Programme) but also mobility projects; moreover, it was necessary to go beyond the Leonardo borders to involve some experiences carried out in the framework of the Socrates Programme (Comenius, Erasmus and Grundtvig in particular) and also,

²⁸ Norway and Sweden for Northern Europe; Austria for Mid and Western Europe; France for Southern Europe; Slovakia for Eastern Europe.

for instance, those pilot initiatives that the European Commission was financing, through specific Calls, to support the implementation of the EQF and the ECVET;

- if a lesson could be drawn from the first round of activities, it concerned the strategic importance of disseminating and promoting the activities of the Thematic Group towards a wider audience; to this purpose, creating a Group “brand” – easily recognisable and marketable – would contribute to increase the visibility and impact of the thematic activities;
- the main aim of the exercise was of course facilitating the networking and exchange of experience among relevant actors (policy makers, stakeholders, experts, promoters, end user), with a view to foster synergies among policy and practices; yet TM could also be considered as a chance for NAs for networking and mutual learning on themes and contents and not on procedural and administrative aspects.

II.3 The approach: a focus on mobility and employability

The topics that the Group had to approach for its thematic work were quite complex and articulated; at the same time, as already outlined in the introductory chapter of this report, they were very strictly linked to the objectives of the Lisbon-Copenhagen process and the related key issues were already clear (e.g., as mentioned, the link between existing qualifications and the levels of the European framework, the different perspectives of Member States on the implementation of national frameworks, the actual shift towards an approach based on learning outcomes, the challenges of a European credit system in VET and the possible synergies with the arrangement already applied for higher education, the actual implementation of methods and procedures for the assessment and validation of non-formal and informal learning and so on).

To this purpose, the work of the Group in terms of setting the framework and identifying the related issues was quite easy. It was more a matter of finding the right, relevant and original key for reading the phenomena and contextualising them in the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci – LLP Programme; in other words, for ensuring the added value of the contribution of the Thematic Group to the ongoing developments.

This key was found in the decision to concentrate the analysis not on transparency, credit transfer and validation as such, but from the specific perspective of how existing European policies, arrangements and tools as well as project practices in these fields can contribute to:

- **foster the mobility of learners and workers**, on one hand,
- and **improve the employability of all individuals**, on the other hand.

The approach (transparency/mobility and transparency/employability) could find relevant grounds both in education/training and employment strategies of the European Union and in the concrete implementation of the Leonardo da Vinci and now LLP Programme. To this purpose, some brief conceptual references can help better understand the specific focus that the Group intended to adopt.

Mobility and employability of individuals within the European Union are two key factors for achieving the objective of a more competitive, dynamic and knowledge-based economy and are both at the centre of the renewed Lisbon agenda. As such, they have been also strategic pillars of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme since its first establishment and are now fully integrated in the new Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013, through dedicated objectives of the framework arrangement and of its sectoral programmes, specific actions to be funded and relevant references in the calls for proposals so far released.

The concept of “mobility” includes any transition of a European citizen (be him/her a learner or a worker), for any purpose (in particular, for educational/training or professional reasons), from one context to another. It therefore encompasses:

- *geographical mobility* (between countries but also within the same country),
- *professional mobility* (from initial entry into the labour market to lifelong career development, between different areas and between different economic positions in the labour market, within an organisation and cross-organisations),

which are two different but sometimes interrelated processes. In its analysis, the Thematic Group has decided to consider both dimensions of the phenomenon – and therefore all “mobilities” – even though with a more marked attention to the geographical aspect which is by the way strongly emphasised within the Community Programmes on education and training.

Geographical mobility is basically linked to the rights of free circulation, free establishment and free performance of services of European citizens, which are fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the Community Treaties as well as essential conditions for the establishment of a single market and for the achievement of better living conditions. Professional mobility can depend upon an effective transition from school to work, the flexibility of the labour market, the security of a job and a successful career management. Individual self-awareness and drive can be the initial lever for the process, but external factors (difficulty to find a job, to maintain it or to change it, unfavourable working conditions, lack of career perspectives, etc.) can be equally or even more decisive to this purpose.

In a world which is constantly and rapidly changing (globalisation, international competition, fast technological development, ageing of the population, migrations, lifelong learning), “mobile” workers can have a competitive advantage, because they tend to be more open to the acquisition of new skills and more adaptable to new working environments. Yet, mobility is not always an individual decision: it can be voluntary or forced, it depends on the drive of the single person, but also on the features of the surrounding environment. The removal of all existing barriers and the active promotion of geographical / professional mobility through specific supporting measures are bound to have an impact on both individuals (enhancement of active citizenship) and the labour market (matching of skills gaps and labour force shortages in some contexts).

The concept of “employability” is instead related to the capability of an individual of finding, maintaining and, where necessary, changing a job (not any job, of course, but hopefully a job which is coherent with the possessed competences and corresponding to the achieved qualification level). This capability depends upon several factors:

- knowledge, skills and competences actually possessed and accumulated by the individual lifelong and lifewide (not only those possessed after completion of a formal education and training pathway, but also those gathered through work and daily-life experience; not only technical/vocational skills linked to a specific profession, but also “soft” and transversal skills and so on);
- awareness of these assets by their “owner”, capacity to present them to employers and to exploit them effectively (guidance and career guidance can play a strategic role to this purpose);
- acknowledgement by the labour market (by whatever means, and in particular either by testing or by trusting the individual’s ability to perform a given task);
- transferability of these assets from one context to another.

These are crucial elements first of all for youths entering into the labour market, but also – and more and more – for adults wishing to maintain or to improve their position (and in particular for those at risk of exclusion: disadvantaged groups, low-qualified workers and adults with no education, older workers, re-entrants into the labour market, etc.). In other words, in a global and flexible market, employability is not a feature which can be gained once and forever but rather a continuous challenge for both individuals and systems.

From this overview, it looks therefore evident that one of the ways to create favourable conditions for both mobility and employability – as well as to remove the existing hindrances and barriers – is to ease the “portability” of gained knowledge, skills and competences throughout all contexts. A student who

follows part of his/her educational pathway abroad should gain a recognition in the home country of his/her learning achievements, further to a positive assessment; a young drop-out who wishes to complete his education/training pathway or, on the contrary, to enter the labour market, should have his/her prior learning acknowledged; an apprentice who integrates his/her training with a practical work experience in another country should have this accepted with a view to obtain a qualification in his/her own VET system; a worker – and in particular a low-qualified worker – who has yet achieved significant skills in a given professional situation should be enabled to document and receive acknowledgement of his/her past experience when applying for a job or for a better position.

A better portability therefore requires:

- making education and training systems more suitable to individual needs, through individualisation, flexibility and “permeability” of pathways;
- making education and training systems more tailored to the needs of the labour market and in particular more capable to match the demand of competences, qualifications and profiles;
- making competences and formal qualifications more transparent, i.e. more easily “readable” by different actors and in different contexts;
- facilitating transfer of these competences in any transition from one context to another;
- ensuring proper methodologies and procedures for the identification, assessment and recognition of competences acquired by individuals lifelong and lifewide (in particular out of the formal education and training pathways and through non-formal and informal learning).

Transparency of competences and qualifications, credit transfer and validation of prior learning are therefore key elements to foster the mobility and to improve the employability of individuals; the objective of the Thematic Group was to analyse how this contribution has been concretely expressed in the development of European policies on vocational education and training, in the design and implementation of the Community Programmes supporting VET strategies (and in particular within the Leonardo da Vinci and now the Lifelong learning Programme), in the projects financed through these arrangements.

This approach has guided the Group through the framework setting activity (which has originated a Background Report summarising the main policy developments related to transparency, credit transfer and validation), the identification and classification of relevant projects, the design and organisation of the two thematic events – focused respectively on transparency versus mobility and transparency versus employability.

II.4 The identification and classification of relevant projects

An essential step in the work of the Group was of course the identification and classification of Leonardo projects, as well as of other initiatives, contributing in a relevant way to the concerned themes. As a matter of fact, this would have allowed:

- to verify the sustainability of the “Mobility vs. Employability” approach;
- to analyse the specific inputs to the themes coming from concrete practices, thus considering the other side of the coin with respect to the overview of policies already made in the Background Report;
- to design the detailed structure of the two planned events according to the actual content of projects and not the other way round (to pre-determine the framework of the events and to involve promoters regardless of their possible contribution), thus ensuring their relevance with respect to existing experiences in the concerned fields;
- to build up a Compendium of relevant initiatives, which could serve not only as a mailing list of potential invitees to the events, but also as a future reference for all those interested in knowing experiences carried out in relation with the concerned themes.

To this purpose, several already available sources of information could serve as a starting point:

- the database of the former Technical Assistance Office in Brussels, which included all the Project Information Sheets (PISs) of Leonardo initiatives funded from 2000 to 2003; these had been collected in the framework of Thematic Monitoring and were clustered according to projects’ relevance with respect to one or more thematic groups;
- the Compendium of projects financed all over Europe under the second phase of implementation of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme, realised by the Commission;
- the database of Leonardo products, implemented in the framework of Valorisation activities and containing updated information of projects’ actual achievements;
- the projects/ products database realised by the Austrian and German National Agencies and also designed to be focused on project outputs rather than inputs.

Each of these sources could provide with useful information, which was yet partial for the purpose of the thematic work (for instance, the TAO database already included thematic clusters, but it was neither exhaustive nor updated; the EC Compendium of projects was broader but referred only to project applications and not to actual achievements, and so on).

The Group therefore agreed that it was necessary to elaborate a new tool of its own for collecting information about relevant projects (a sort of updated project information sheet) and to then circulate it to all National Agencies.

Concerning the identification of projects to be involved in the exercise, two were the basic alternatives:

- build a compendium inclusive of all projects somehow related to the identified themes, regardless of their actual quality and of their level of development (therefore comprising initiatives which were just started, ongoing and already finalised);
- select some projects only, and in particular focus on those showing actual (and not just potential) relevance with respect to the themes and a good quality as for their outputs and achievements.

This second option was chosen, as it seemed to be better tailored for TM purposes and for avoiding any possible duplication between the TG4 Compendium and already existing projects and products databases.

The definition and application of a methodology / principles for selecting these “good practices” would have led the Group far beyond its mandate; the only reliable and immediately available criterion to this purpose was the information already available within each National Agency. It was therefore decided to ask each NA (within and outside the Thematic Group) to provide information about a given number of projects to be included in the TG4 Compendium and involved in TG4 events. In particular, the choice should fall upon projects

- related to the concerned themes (for instance, targeting the priorities of different the calls for proposals concerning transparency, validation and credit transfer) and also actually relevant with respect to those themes (providing a pertinent contribution to the ongoing developments in the fields);
- having achieved a significant level of implementation (=availability of concrete results/ products / deliverables to be disseminated and valorised);
- having expressed satisfactory quality standards according to the NA of reference (for instance, after final or at least interim evaluation of activities and outputs), so as to allow them being considered as good practices in their respective context.

As for the Project Sheet for gathering information, these were identified as its essential features:

- it had to be “light” and not as long and structured as the PIS previously used for TM purposes – as the collection of sheets was to be run independently by the Group, an acceptable response rate could be achieved only if compilation was not too demanding;

- it had to contain some basic information about each project and also a synthetic and precise description of the main outputs realised (or being realised);
- it had to include a classification of each initiative according to the main clusters and themes identified by the Group;
- it had to provide with helpful references to allow more in-depth analyses by any interested user.

The sheet structure was therefore agreed as follows:

- project title;
- contracting organisation;
- contact details (name, address, telephone, fax, e-mail of project manager)
- selection year;
- project identification number;
- project abstract;
- project website;
- theme of reference (to be chosen among: Transparency of competences and qualifications, Credit transfer, Validation of non-formal and informal learning)
- cluster of reference (to be chosen between Mobility and Employability).

In order to support compilation and to collect uniform and comparable sheets, a guide and a pre-filled in sheet were prepared to be circulated. The time constraints (collection through promoters would have been quite long, while there was a need for a quick availability of information in order to start designing the contents of each event) and the necessity of a comparable, focused and synthetic information led the Group to ask preferably for compilation by National Agencies and not directly by project promoters.

Thanks to the support and follow up by all TG4 National Agencies and in particular by those acting as area leaders, 108 PISs have been collected so far through several rounds. The included initiatives represent more than 20 European countries participating to the Programme, all the years of the second phase of implementation (from 2000 to 2006) and all the Leonardo da Vinci measures (not only pilot projects, but also networks, language competences and mobility initiatives, as well as thematic actions and research projects funded in the framework of the centralised actions).

The Project Information Sheets have then inserted in a paper Compendium – distributed in the two events – and also made available in an on-line database,²⁹ hosted in a dedicated section of the TG4 website. This database is built as an open platform, which can be continuously updated and allows multiple searches of projects, according to the following criteria:

- country of the promoting organisation;
- year of approval;
- theme of reference;
- cluster of reference.

The tables here below give an overview of the distribution of collected projects according to these criteria; they are just meant to summarise the data available in the database and will not be commented here. Some of the included projects have been analysed more in detail through an additional survey, which is presented and described in detail at Chapter III of this document.

Table 1 - Distribution of projects per country³⁰

AT	5
BE	1
BG	4
CZ	2
ES	5
EU (Proc. C)	8
FI	3
FR	7
DE	10
IE	3
IS	6
IT	11
MT	1
NL	4
NO	2
PL	5
PT	2
RO	9
SE	9
SK	5
TK	1
UK	5
Total	108

²⁹ Available at http://www.tg4transparency.com/projects_01.asp.

³⁰ Missing countries can be either countries not having replied to the request of PiSs or countries having declared no relevant experience in the concerned fields.

Table 2 - Distribution of projects per year

2000	2
2001	3
2002	7
2003	25
2004	22
2005	36
2006	13
Total	108

Table 3 - Distribution of projects per theme

Transparency of competences and qualifications	56
Credit transfer	11
Validation of non-formal and informal learning	32
Transparency of competences and qualifications / Credit transfer	5
Transparency of competences and qualifications / Validation of non-formal and informal learning	4
Credit transfer / Validation of non-formal and informal learning	0
Total	108

Table 4 - Distribution of projects per cluster

Mobility	26
Employability	50
Mobility / Employability	32
Total	108

As already mentioned, the database first of all served as a basis for designing the detailed structure of the events and for identifying relevant actors to be involved at projects' level.

The tool is also meant as a multifunctional source of information for promoters and for any interested stakeholder, who can use it for instance:

- for knowing which LdV projects have been financed in a certain country, in a particular year and/or on a given theme (as already pointed out, these elements can be combined through a multiple search),
- for better understanding the contribution of LdV projects to such transversal policy issues as mobility and employability of individuals,
- for finding partners,
- for learning more about interesting experiences by exploring directly the website of each initiative,
- for identifying good ideas and products to be transferred in one's own context.

II.5 The thematic events: objectives, development and conclusions

“Mobility Beyond Borders: the Contribution of Transparency of Qualifications and Credit Transfer in VET”³¹

Objectives

The first event organised by the Thematic Group was held in Bucharest on 23 March 2007 and was entitled “Mobility Beyond Borders: the Contribution of Transparency of Qualifications and Credit Transfer in VET”.

As already anticipated, the first and main objective of the Conference was to explore European policy developments and project practices concerning transparency of competences and qualifications, credit transfer in vocational education and training and validation of non-formal and informal learning, from the specific perspective of how existing arrangements (as well as future devices) and experiences in these fields could support and facilitate the mobility of learners and workers across Europe.

In other words, the Conference meant to highlight how the identification, description, documentation, assessment, recognition, accumulation and transfer of competences – in whatever context they might have been originally achieved – can help individuals in their personal and professional growth and ease all kinds of “mobilities” (in particular, geographical mobility – cross-borders as well as within a single country – and professional mobility – internal to an organisation as well as cross-organisations, sectors and contexts).

Secondly, the aim of the event was to stimulate a networking among all the involved participants, also in view of building together new project ideas to be submitted in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme. The first deadline of the new LLP device was probably too close (the Call for proposals envisaged a closing date for submission at the end of March 2007), but yet the idea was to encourage future and more long-term cooperation.

Thirdly, and also in connection with the second objective, the Conference intended to valorise interesting practices in the concerned fields, not only by giving some of them the possibility to present

³¹ All documents and materials of the event are available at http://www.tg4transparency.com/events_3.asp.

their experience in thematic-based workshops, but also by arranging an exhibition area which was open to a larger number of promoters for show-casing their projects and products.

The actors involved in the event were policy makers in the field of vocational education and training at all levels (European, national, regional/local), social partners and stakeholders, representatives of European and national bodies responsible for the management of the LLP – Leonardo da Vinci programme, experts and practitioners, actual and potential project promoters and final beneficiaries.

Development

Plenary session	
Chair	<i>Ms Monica Ileana Calota</i> Director National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training – NACPF EVT (RO)
Welcome address	<i>Ms Luminita Matei</i> Director of International & European Relations Unit Ministry of Education & Research (RO)
Speakers	<i>Mr Joao Delgado</i> Head of Unit B5 “Leonardo da Vinci” European Commission– Directorate General for Education and Culture (EU) ⇒ "European Mobility – The Leonardo da Vinci Programme’s contribution”
	<i>Mr Michel Aribaud</i> Unit A3 “Vocational training and adult education” European Commission– Directorate General for Education and Culture (EU) ⇒ “The European Credit Transfer System in VET as a support to transnational mobility Quality in mobility: Certification of the mobility periods and accreditation of the organisations”
	<i>Ms Theresa Fleidl</i> Head of Human Resources Munich Airport (DE) ⇒ “European Mobility: the Perspective of an Enterprise”

The Conference was chaired by the Director of the Romanian Agency responsible for the management of Community Programmes in the field of education and vocational training. After the welcome address formulated by the representative of the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, the plenary session was articulated in three interventions.

The first speech was aimed at giving the audience an overview of the European mobility funded by the programme dedicated to vocational education and training. The intervention concerned in particular:

- an introduction to the Thematic Monitoring initiative, in the framework of which the event was organised, and its possible opening also to mobility projects;
- a presentation of the Mobility measure as foreseen in the Leonardo da Vinci Programme and re-organised within the new Lifelong Learning Programme;
- an overview of the achievements of mobility initiatives in the past programming period (2000-2006), in terms of volume of involved people and engaged resources, as well as of impact produced according to a specific study carried out by the European Commission (e.g. in terms of internationalisation of VET institutions, cooperation between school and industry);
- a presentation of some European tools for documenting mobility experiences abroad (Europass and in particular Europass-Mobility) and for ensuring the quality and relevance of EU-funded mobility programmes (the Quality Charter for Mobility);
- an outline of the challenges for the future.

Shifting the focus from Programme management to political debate, the second intervention illustrated the main policy issues related to European mobility and concerning in particular:

- the identification and sharing of quality criteria for mobility programmes;
- the accreditation of the organisations involved in mobility programmes;
- the certification of the learning experience gained through mobility periods;
- an introduction to the European credit system for vocational education and training.

The third speech was aimed at giving a different perspective, the one of an enterprise considering international mobility as one of the pillars of its human resource development strategy and therefore using the opportunities offered by the Leonardo Programme for implementing a placement strategy for its staff. In particular, the intervention included:

- an introduction to the main features and objectives, HR and training policies of the Munich Airport;

- a description of the typologies of mobility programmes implemented in the company (functional levels involved, duration, type of projects) and of the network of partners;
- a presentation of the outgoing exchange programmes offered to trainees and to permanent staff, as well as of incoming mobility;
- some considerations on the added value of European mobility measures, based upon the company's experience.

Participants then were split into three workshops, each chaired by one of the members of the Thematic Group and envisaging:

- an introduction to the theme and to the main related issues made by an expert,
- the presentation of two relevant experiences in the field realised in the framework of the LLP - Leonardo da Vinci Programme,
- discussion.

Workshop session Workshop A – “Quality tools for mobility”	
Chair	<i>Mr Claudio Vitali</i> ISFOL - National Agency for LLP – Leonardo da Vinci (IT)
Expert	<i>Mr Gerhard Volz</i> Europass Department – National Agency for Lifelong Learning (AT)
Projects	<i>Ms Magdalena Zaharescu</i> Industrial Chemistry College – Pitesti (RO) ⇒ Leonardo placement project “Developing of transnational comparable criteria of initial vocational training chemical profile”
	<i>Ms Marja-Leena Stenström</i> University of Jyväskylä (FI) ⇒ Leonardo reference material “Quality Assurance and Practice-oriented Assessment in European Vocational education –QUAL-PRAXIS”

The workshop had the objective of exploring existing European tools and specific practices for a quality management of mobility projects, with particular reference to the issue of how to achieve

transparency of the whole process (selection and preparation of the beneficiaries, content of delivered training, tutoring within the enterprise, etc.) and of its outputs (assessment and documentation of the learning experience abroad).

The workshop opened with a presentation of the Europass device: its background and definition; its aims, target groups and benefits (for instance, support to job search, to a better matching between supply and demand and to mobility for training or professional purposes through a clear presentation of competences and qualifications and by removing the barriers to transferability and recognition); its main instruments (as already known, Curriculum Vitae, Language Passport, Europass Mobility, Certificate and Diploma Supplement); the tasks and duties of NECs (National Europass Centres). The presentation of course aimed also at spreading the knowledge about the Single Framework for Transparency and at promoting the extensive application of its tools by training providers and individuals.

The first project was a mobility initiative, concerning in particular a placement of young trainees in the field of chemistry and environmental protection. All the issues related to the implementation of a mobility project were presented (identification of selection criteria, theoretical and technical preparation of beneficiaries, contents of delivered training, monitoring and evaluation of the activities, key results), on the basis of the specific experience of the promoting organisation.

The second project provided with more theoretical elements on the methodologies and tools for the assessment of work-related learning in vocational education and training; the elaborated model envisages the authenticity of context, the multiplicity and combination of methods, the transparency of criteria and documentation of results, the joint and tripartite assessment involving students teachers and workplace instructors, the training of assessors; such a model can of course be helpful for assessing competences acquired through a mobility experience.

The main key issues debated and conclusions achieved within the workshop were the following:

- there is a need to reinforce the assessment of mobility experiences, as an essential process which has to take into account the ex-ante, ongoing and ex-post dimension of evaluation, and must include reflection, peer review, self-assessment and context-based evaluation considering cultural/national aspects;
- objective criteria have to apply in relation with the selection of mobility beneficiaries (in order to ensure equal access and fairness);

- an active involvement and full commitment of all the partners of a mobility project is necessary since the definition of the objectives of the experience, as a way to ensure a shared responsibility in the implementation;
- additional attention has to be paid to the multiplier (“cascade”) effects of each experience.

Workshop session Workshop B – “Credit transfer in practice”	
Chair	<i>Mr Erik Hess</i> National Agency Education for Europe at BIBB (DE)
Expert	<i>Mr Michel Aribaud</i> Unit A3 “Vocational training and adult education” European Commission– Directorate General for Education and Culture (EU)
Projects	<i>Mr Didier Gélibert</i> ANFA (FR) ⇒ Study “ECVET Connexion”
	<i>Mr Christer Bergquist</i> Kalmar Maritime Academy (SE) ⇒ Leonardo pilot projects “Securitas Mare I” and “Securitas Mare II”

The workshop had the objective of debating on the transfer of credits in vocational education and training, by considering the developments of European policy and of concrete practices in this field.

The workshop opened with a presentation of the device for the accumulation, transfer and recognition of credits in VET (ECVET), elaborated at European level and subject to a Europe-wide consultation process at the moment when the Conference was held. In particular, the main pillars of the ECVET system (transfer process, units – made of knowledge, skills and competences – and credit points), its basic purposes (allowing the recognition and accumulation within one’s own training system of learning achievements gained in a different context and mainly abroad), its areas of complementarity with EQF (learning outcomes approach, focus on qualifications, lifelong learning perspective, etc.) were outlined. The intervention was of course aimed at informing participants about the features of this device, with a view to promote its application.

The first experience concerned a study on the feasibility of ECVET system for apprentices, financed by the European Commission.³² The survey was meant to analyse European systems for initial VET from the angle of training design and provision, to identify existing obstacles to the implementation of the ECVET method in the different contexts and to formulate proposals for overcoming possible hindrances and for fostering an extensive application of the device. Several suggestions were made after the analysis and among these: exchange good practices, develop further experimentation, support the setting up of units, foster the creation of training modules adapted to recognised mobility, develop expertise on qualifications, assessment, project design among ground stakeholders, train teachers and trainers in the practice of learning outcomes.

The second experience was a pilot project aimed at sharing among the partners common standards for training in the field of Crowd and Crisis Management (CCM), and trying to expand these standards to a larger group through the International Maritime Organisation as well as the tested methodology to other types of mandatory training which are required for several qualifications. Three course concepts have been developed (for seafarers, for shorebased staff and for other professionals), which are now recognised and accepted as the standard for CCM training by the national authorities of six partner countries (thus allowing an easier recognition of credits and qualifications cross-borders).

The main key issues debated and conclusions achieved within the workshop were the following:

- ECVET can be a useful tool to foster mobility;
- Yet, it is based upon a complex approach and it raises several related questions, many of which still need to be solved (e.g. the competent bodies for releasing the recognition, the identification of European standards for assessment, the validation aspect and the relationship between formal and informal learning);
- There is a need to match the different definitions of units adopted within and between countries/sectors (and sectoral perspectives seem to be significantly different).

Workshop session	
Workshop C – “Validating non-formal and informal learning”	
Chair	<i>Mr Rolf Kristiansen</i> Masters of Crafts (NO)

³² To this purpose, please refer to footnote no. 16 in Chapter I.

Expert	<i>Ms Florentina Anghel</i> Grundtvig Department - National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training – NACPF EVT (RO)
Projects	<i>Ms Gabriele Fietz</i> Bfz Bildungsforschung (DE) ⇒ Leonardo pilot project “Assessment of non-formally acquired competences of EXperienced EMPLOYees - EXEMPLO”
	<i>Mr Saul Meghnagi</i> Provincia autonoma di Trento – Dipartimento Politiche sociali e del lavoro – Ufficio Fondo Sociale Europeo (IT) ⇒ Leonardo pilot project “Governance of continuing education and training. The relevance of social partners and public authorities in managing VET systems”

The third workshop was aimed at providing an overview of the principles, approaches methodologies and tools for the validation of competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts, as elaborated at European level and in some concrete project practices.

In the introduction to the theme, the expert illustrated the European developments on validation of non-formal and informal learning (from the Copenhagen Declaration in 2002 to the Oslo Conference in 2004) and the main related concepts (non-formal and informal learning, identification, assessment, recognition and validation). The common European principles were then presented according to their six pillars (purpose of validation, individual entitlements, responsibilities of institutions and stakeholders, confidence and trust, impartiality, credibility and legitimacy). Some final questions were then addressed to the audience so as to stimulate the debate (which are the possible benefits and who are the beneficiaries of validation?).

The first project was aimed at providing a set of tools to support SMEs and their employees in assessing non-formally and informally acquired competences, elaborated on the basis of good practices already existing in some countries to this purpose. In particular, three examples were given: the German instrument on “Transparency of Competencies”, for transferring training results into professional practice; the British “Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement in Learning” for in-house development of competences in SMEs; the Norwegian “Competence Card for Workplace” for the (self) assessment of actual level of competences.

The second project offered a different perspective to the issue: the one of stakeholders (public authorities and social partners) involved in the management of VET systems and having a role in the acknowledgement and validation of non-formally and informally acquired competences. The project elaborated a guide for decision makers, based upon analysis of national systems and of empirical case studies and including indications and recommendations for the recognition of on-the-job learning (e.g. definition of clear, realistic and usable validation procedures, shared by all relevant actors; focus on training and not only on validation; importance of awarding a legal value to validation; validation as shared recognition of the educational and contractual importance of work experience).

The workshop identified the main challenges related to validation, as follows:

- Establish better tools, more effective methodologies, more concrete standards and criteria for validation;
- Harmonize the terminology and methodology;
- Assure the balance between theory/ practices (good practices), ‘testing’ and ‘trusting’ in respect of national entities, cultures and traditions and European common principles;
- Share better existing experiences and develop a real social dialogue at different levels;
- Link the political issues and the real and concrete, ‘day by day’ challenges.

Conclusions

Final round table “Open Challenges for Mobility”	
Chair	<i>Ms Luminita Matei</i> Director of International & European Relations Unit Ministry of Education & Research (RO)
Facilitator	<i>Ms Irina Severin</i> National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training – NACPF EVT (RO)
Participants	<i>Ms Catherine Guy-Quint</i> Member of European Parliament (EU) <i>Mr Joao Delgado</i> Head of Unit B5 “Leonardo da Vinci” European Commission– Directorate General for Education and Culture (EU) <i>Ms Marianna D’Angelo</i> Head of Unit

	Ministry of Labour and Social Security - Directorate General for Guidance and Training Policies (IT) <i>Mr Philippe Perfetti</i> Deputy Director in charge of Education and LLL Permanent Association of French Chambers of Skilled Crafts (FR) <i>Ms Madlen Serban</i> Director National Centre for TVET Development/ Project Implementation Unit for PHARE (RO)
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The conclusions from all the workshops were reported back to the plenary session by a facilitator and constituted the starting point for a debate on the open challenges for mobility, which involved European authorities (representatives from the European Parliament and European Commission), national authorities (representatives from the Romanian Ministry of Education and the Italian Ministry of Labour), stakeholders at sectoral level and experts.

Evaluation of the event

The opinion of delegates on the contents, potential impact and logistics of the event has been collected in a classical way, by asking them to fill in and return anonymous evaluation sheets. A structured analysis of the responses was carried out by the Romanian National Agency and then shared with the other TG4 members on the occasion of the successive Steering Group meeting.

In general, participants appreciated the event and considered it a useful contribution to a long-term process, i.e. the European pathway towards transparency of qualifications and validation of non-formal and informal learning. For most delegates, the Conference managed to meet their expectations to a good extent. As for its potential impact, the majority of participants felt that the event had positively contributed to increase their knowledge on the issue of transparency and to allow an exchange of views and practices in this field; they stated that the experience could have positive spin-offs on their daily work; finally, they felt a satisfactory improvement of their knowledge about Leonardo da Vinci projects.

As for the organisational aspects, positive comments were made in particular on:

- the provision of an exhibition area, which allowed promoters to showcase their experiences;
- the contents of the delegates' folder and above all the broad list of reference documents distributed to participants (the Decision establishing Europass, the Commissions' Staff working document containing the ECVET proposal for public consultation, the Commission's proposal for

Recommendation on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework, the Council conclusions on common European principles on validation of non-formal and informal learning and the presentation of the European inventory on validation);

- the efficient organisation and management of the event.

Suggestions concerned:

- focusing more on practical information;
- giving more room to the presentation of good practices;
- envisaging more time for discussion.

As for the content of the Conference, positive comments were made in particular on:

- its capacity to meet a need for information on European devices and concrete experiences in the concerned fields;
- its timely organisation, which made it extremely relevant in the light of the ongoing debate at European and national level;

Suggestions concerned:

- the importance of understanding the impact of projects with respect to the concerned themes;
- the stress on such events also as opportunities for collecting feedbacks by project beneficiaries.

The conclusions and lessons drawn served of course as a basis for designing the second event.

**“Competences, Learning outcomes, Qualifications:
Transparency contributing to Employability”³³**

Objectives

The second event organised by the Thematic Group was held in Rome on 5-6 July 2007 and was entitled “Competences, Learning outcomes, Qualifications: Transparency contributing to Employability”.

As already anticipated, the first and main objective of the Conference was to explore European policy developments and project practices concerning transparency of competences and qualifications, credit transfer in vocational education and training and validation of non-formal and informal learning, from the specific perspective of how existing arrangements (as well as future devices) and experiences in these fields could support and facilitate employability, thus contributing to the Lisbon objective of “more and better jobs” through a better matching between supply and demand in the labour market.

In other words, the Conference meant to highlight how the identification, description, documentation, assessment, recognition, accumulation and transfer of competences – in whatever context they might have been originally achieved – helps:

- individuals, who can gain greater awareness about owned competences and be stimulated to undertake or complete their education/training pathways, while being also better placed for job searching or for improving their professional position, if already integrated into the labour market;
- guidance and VET providers, who can share and apply common quality standards for their activities/programmes and be able to offer more customized services, in response to specific individual and market needs;
- enterprises and employers, who can gain greater awareness about actually needed competences and improve their capacity of analysing/anticipating skills gaps, while managing at the same time to valorise the knowledge and capacities of the employed staff;
- education and vocational training systems, for instance in terms of improvement of their comparability at European level.

³³ All documents and materials of the event are available at http://www.tg4transparency.com/events_4.asp.

The identified themes highlighted several areas of common interest across the different Thematic Groups (e.g. the role of guidance services, the quality of training provision linked to its capacity of matching labour supply and demand, skills and qualifications gaps within sectors and enterprises, in particular SMEs). The Conference as such was therefore also meant as a chance for bringing in and involving in the debate representatives of other TGs, so as to widen the perspective and develop further “transversal” cooperation.

Once again, the aim of the event was also to stimulate a networking among all the involved participants, also in view of building together new project ideas to be submitted in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme.

The objective of valorising interesting practices in the concerned fields was of course maintained and even increased, further to the suggestions formulated by participants to the Bucharest Seminar. The bigger dimensions of this second event allowed to envisage more room for project presentations within the workshops and also a broader exhibition area, which was kept open to all those promoters who had expressed their willingness to show-case their projects and products.

The actors involved in the event were policy makers in the field of vocational education and training at all levels (European, national, regional/local), social partners and stakeholders, representatives of European and national bodies responsible for the management of the LLP – Leonardo da Vinci programme, experts and practitioners, actual and potential project promoters and final beneficiaries.

Development

Plenary session – 5 July	
Chair	<i>Ms Marina Roșera</i> Director ISFOL - National Agency for LLP – Leonardo da Vinci (IT)
Welcome addresses	<i>Mr Sergio Trevisanato</i> President ISFOL (IT) <i>Ms Vera Marincioni</i> Director General Ministry of Labour and Social Security - Directorate General for Guidance and Training Policies (IT)

Speakers	<p><i>Mr Joao Delgado</i> Head of Unit B5 “Leonardo da Vinci” European Commission– Directorate General for Education and Culture (EU)</p> <p>⇒ “The contribution of the Lifelong Learning – Leonardo da Vinci Programme to promote employability”</p>
	<p><i>Ms Marta Ferreira</i> Head of Unit A3 “Vocational training and adult education” European Commission– Directorate General for Education and Culture (EU)</p> <p>⇒ “Transparency of qualifications and competences to support employability”</p>
	<p><i>Mr Domenico Mauriello</i> Senior researcher Study Center of Unioncamere (IT)</p> <p>⇒ “Skills and qualifications: the needs of the labour market in Italy”</p>

The Conference was chaired by the Director of the National Agency responsible for the management of the LLP – Leonardo da Vinci Programme in Italy, which is hosted within ISFOL (a public research body in the field of education and vocational training). Welcome addresses were formulated by ISFOL President and by the Director General of the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Security - Directorate for Guidance and Training Policies, which had co-financed the event and the whole activity of the Thematic Group.

The plenary session of the first day was then articulated in three interventions. The structure of this session, the same as the one adopted in Bucharest, was aimed at illustrating the theme of “transparency versus employability” from three different perspectives:

- the contribution of the LLP-Leonardo da Vinci Programme;
- the main related policy developments at European level;
- the needs and expectations of the labour market.

The first intervention gave an outline of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme (now part of the LLP) in connection to the issues of employability and transparency/validation of competences. Leonardo has been one of the main instruments for supporting the implementation of the Lisbon-Copenhagen process and promoting employability (in particular by facilitating transition from school to work). The

presentation then highlighted how the issues of transparency, credit transfer and validation were dealt with in the different calls for proposals of the second programming phase (2000-2006) and in the first call of the new LLP (2007-2013); an overview of the projects presented and approved under the centralised measures in connection to the themes was also provided. Finally, the presentation illustrated the conclusions of a study on the impact of mobility, carried out by a research institute on behalf of the European Commission (with particular reference to employability-related results).

The second intervention illustrated the current policy framework for education and training at European level (the 2010 work programme and the benchmarks to be achieved by that date, the Copenhagen process, the re-launched Lisbon strategy and the Maastricht Communiqué). Then the progresses towards the implementation of a European common “tool-box” for supporting transparency of qualifications and competences and employability were presented (the “tool-box” consisting of Europass, ECVET, EQF, Common principles on validation, Common Quality Assurance Framework, Recommendation on lifelong guidance, Reference framework for key competences). In conclusion, possible future priority areas were highlighted.

The third intervention illustrated an Italian experience in identifying and measuring the demand for skills and qualifications expressed by private enterprises, carried out by the Chambers of Commerce through the forecasting tool known as “Excelsior Information System”. This permanent system is based on a survey on about 100.000 enterprises in industry and service sectors, aimed *inter alia* at outlining the main skills of professional figures required by private enterprises. The collected data concern the profile of new recruits and post-entry training needs (educational qualifications, work experience required, knowledge of languages and computing), the type of training required, the related themes and methods (on the job, external and internal courses, etc.) and lifelong learning training programmes (methods, objectives and costs). Excelsior can therefore help identify possible mismatches between the demand and offer for qualifications and provide with useful indications for the training system.

Plenary session – 6 July	
Chair	<i>Ms Sveva Balduini</i> ISFOL - National Agency for LLP – Leonardo da Vinci (IT)
Speakers	<i>Mr Loukas Zabilas</i> Project Manager CEDEFOP

	⇒ “Introduction to the main issues of the workshop session”
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The plenary session of the second day was dedicated to illustrate some of the main key issues to be then debated in the workshops.

The presentation started by outlining the features of the European Qualifications Framework (the focus on learning outcomes, the eight levels, the state of the art of the political process, the contribution to cross-border mobility and to lifelong learning strategies) and the approaches of the different countries with respect to the implementation of National Qualifications Frameworks EQF-related. Complementarities between the EQF and ECVET were highlighted and the main features of ECVET were then introduced (unit-based structure and necessary requirements for implementation). The presentation ended with a description of the role of CEDEFOP in the whole process.

Participants then were split into six workshops, each chaired by a representative of a TG4 member National Agency and envisaging:

- an introduction to the theme and to the main related issues made by one/several expert/s,
- the presentation of relevant experiences in the field realised in the framework of the LLP - Leonardo da Vinci Programme, within the specific Community calls for EQF and ECVET testing, or at national level,
- debate.

In order to support the debate, key issues were defined for each workshop and made available to all participants. Project promoters presenting their work were asked to highlight in particular the objectives and outcomes/outputs of their initiative, as well as the specific contribution to the focus identified for the workshop. Rapporteurs were also identified among TG4 members – so as to ensure common approach and structure of reporting back to the plenary session.

Workshop session Workshop 1 – “Towards National Qualifications Frameworks: challenges and perspectives”	
Chair	<i>Ms Karine Jacques</i> ECOTEC - National Agency for Leonardo, Grundtvig & Transversal Programmes (UK)
Expert	<i>Ms Gabriella Di Francesco</i> Department of Learning Systems and Methodologies - ISFOL (IT)
Experiences	<i>Mr Eduard Staudecker</i> Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture (AT) ⇒ The Austrian experience
	<i>Ms Linda Betraoui</i> CNCP (FR) ⇒ The French experience
Rapporteur	<i>Ms Marianne Feldt</i> Leonardo da Vinci National Agency – Internationella programkontoret för utbildningsområdet (SE)
Workshop key issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Analyze and compare institutional responsibilities and involved actors (including social partners) in the process of implementing NQFs ✓ Explore the status and approaches concerning NQFs implementation through national experiences of different countries (representing different implementation levels and perspectives) ✓ Explore ways of connecting NQFs and EQF ✓ Bring in on-the field experience of EQF projects (funded through specific DGEAC Call)

The workshop had the objective of stimulating a discussion among relevant stakeholders from different countries on the implementation of national qualifications frameworks EQF-related.

The expert introduced to the theme by explaining the reasons underlying the current European trend towards the development of qualifications frameworks and standards based on competences and the forces driving to implement lifelong learning strategies within the different countries. The main common challenges for establishing a national framework for qualifications were then illustrated (managing learning outcomes, shifting from input to output-based approach, developing devices for

validation of non-formal and informal learning, integrating EQF and ECVET into NQFs) and indications were given on possible key conditions for success (e.g. inclusion of all relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process, coordination among authorities at national, regional, sectoral level, implementation of quality assurance mechanisms).

The successive presentations highlighted two different national experiences concerning NQFs: a country having committed to its implementation and preparing for this (Austria) and a country with an already established framework (France); both presenters and their respective organisations were also involved in specific projects for EQF testing funded by the European Commission.

The Austrian experience was presented starting from the European context and the specific national needs (and goals) which have led the country to commit to the implementation of a national framework by 2010. The Austrian so-called “NQR” is being designed as an overarching framework which includes the whole education system. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour are responsible for the strategic planning and overall coordination of the work; all relevant stakeholders are involved through a National Steering Group, while an Experts Group provides with methodological and scientific support; these bodies of course liaise with the preparatory group for EQF set up at European level. A national consultation process is envisaged and parallel research and dissemination activities will be carried out.

The French experience is based upon the *Répertoire National des Certifications professionnelles* (RNCP) – which can be considered the French NQF - and a formalised procedure for validating the conformity of achieved learning outcomes to national standards and for awarding certifications. The framework includes three categories of certification (vocational diplomas and high education degrees delivered by the State; vocational qualification certificates released by sectors /social partners; titles and certificates autonomously delivered by chambers, public or private institutions), which are inserted in a five-level grid: registration is automatic for the first typology of certificates and subject to the advice of a specific commission (CNCP) in the other two cases.

The following issues were debated during the workshop:

- there are different ways of assessing the non-formal and informal learning outcomes (i.e. testing the individuals knowledge or letting the individual prove their experience);
- approaches are different among Higher Education and VET providers;
- there is a need to involve in the process all relevant stakeholders, especially employers.

The main challenges for the future concern:

- the adoption of a common language and common descriptors (how can “learning outcomes” be defined in order to be used as the basis of NQFs?);
- the identification of effective solutions to ensure the credibility and quality of learning outcomes within training contexts and outside the formal learning system;
- the construction of a system to validate non-formal and informal knowledge;
- the quality assurance in assessing competences;
- the ways to facilitate the concept of “mutual trust” (within countries, between system and between countries);
- the ways to link NQFs to EQF, ECVET and CQAF (Common Quality Assurance Framework);
- Level 1 of the EQF.

With respect to the debated issues and identified challenges, the workshop expressed the following recommendations:

- include all national stakeholders in the decision to build a NQF and in the consultation process, so that it will be a bottom-up approach, trusted by all;
- build flexible NQFs so as to be able to take into account future developments in the labour market and in training systems;
- consider the NQF as a driver for reforming and improving training systems, at both national and European level;
- use the NQF to stimulate discussions and reach agreements on the whole span of education and training in a lifelong learning perspective;
- envisage a legal framework to support the establishment of the NQF.

Workshop session Workshop 2 – “Learning outcomes as a basis for credit transfer”	
Chair	<i>Mr Klaus Fable</i> National Agency Education for Europe at BIBB (DE)
Experts	<i>Ms Gabriela Ciobanu</i> National Center for TVET Development (RO) <i>Mr Jean-Luc Lamboley</i> Université Pierre Mendès France, Bologna Experts Network (FR)

Experiences	<p><i>Mr Philippe Perfetti</i> Assemblée Permanente des Chambres de Métiers (FR)</p> <p>⇒ ECVET project “S-M-E Master” (DE)</p>
	<p><i>Mr Hans Thormählen</i> Arbeit und Leben Hamburg (DE)</p> <p>and <i>Mr Norbert Reimer</i> Airbus Germany (DE)</p> <p>⇒ Leonardo mobility project “Developing common modules.. for mechanics and electronic engineers...”</p>
Rapporteur	<p><i>Mr Rolf Kristiansen</i> Masters of Crafts-Mesterbrevnemda (NO)</p>
Workshop key issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reflect on the concept of learning outcomes, its meaning and the progressive shift towards its extensive application ✓ Compare ECVET vs. ECTS approaches (focus on learning outcomes vs. focus on workloads) ✓ Explore the competence-based approach from the specific perspective of how it can support the transfer of credits ✓ Bring in on-the field experience of projects based on learning outcomes (considering ECVET and not only), as well as of ECVET projects (funded through specific DGEAC Call)

The workshop had the objective of exploring and comparing the different systems/approaches for the accumulation and transfer of credits in vocational education and training (ECVET) and in higher education (ECTS). These two perspectives were represented by the two different experts involved in the workshop.

The first expert highlighted how the approach based on learning outcomes is the core of ECVET and the basis for accumulating and transferring credits. As a matter of fact, each of the units which constitute part of a VET qualification must be defined through a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competences (=outputs of the learning process) and weighed with the attribution of credit points; the assessment of the learning outcomes achieved by an individual in a given context leads to the award of credits, which can then be accumulated and transferred in a different context, validated and recognised as a part of the qualification to be obtained. The example of the Romanian system for TVET qualifications was then provided; this system is based upon: qualification levels (with key common units

of competences); training domains (featured by common general technical competences); qualifications (featured by specific technical competences). A complete qualification is a sum of units of competences; one unit corresponds to one training module, that is to say one learning and evaluation unit, which is described in terms of learning outcomes and associated with a given number of credits.

The second expert illustrated ECTS, which combines the traditional approach based on workloads (credits correspond to hours of student workload) and the approach based on learning outcomes (credits are allocated only when the assessment has checked actual learning achievements). The workload approach has the advantage of being student-centred and quantitative (easy to calculate) and therefore it has become a universal tool for designing curricula and a common international academic currency; yet, it does not consider the content side nor does it take into account possible differences among students' performances or different lengths of the academic year. The learning outcomes approach allows to specify the requirements for awarding credits and in particular to focus on the competences achieved. A case study was then presented, concerning the award of credits for a course on "Intercultural communication and multicultural societies" according to the combined approach.

The first experience concerned a project financed by the European Commission in the framework of the specific Call for the testing and implementation of ECVET. The project is aimed at implementing a common "Master Craftsman Degree" among the partner institutions; the process leading to this qualification is being built so as to integrate non-formal and informal learning, to develop the competence-based approach and to ensure ECVET-compatibility. The expected outcome include recommendations and tools to develop ECVET in Master Craftsmen qualification, as well examples of units (including both transversal contents related to human resources and entrepreneurship and technical contents in the sector of bakery).

The second experience was a Leonardo mobility project in the aeronautic sector. This initiative was launched in the framework of the declaration of co-operation between the City of Hamburg, Midi-Pyrénées and Aquitaine of 2004. The mobility aimed at embedding phases of practical experience in the partner's country during initial vocational training; offering further education for qualified employees (electrical engineers, mechanics, technicians); developing modules for further education in the partner's country and exchanging trainers and experts. The main results consist of the development of common modules cross-borders and the integration of the mobility experience abroad (and related learning acquired) in the training pathway followed in participants' home country.

The following issues were debated during the workshop:

- accumulation and transfer of credits from the two perspectives of Mobility (Revival of the “Wandergesell”) and Certification (Validation and recognition of learning outcomes);
- transparency, harmonisation and reciprocity (through deconstruction to reconstruction of learning pathways);
- examination as a control of learning outcomes for certification (e.g. in Crafts and in the Airline Industry) and also for risk assessment purposes.

The main challenges for the future concern:

- the existence of an internal contradiction in ECTS (Curricula/workload versus learning outcomes approach);
- the actual achievement of mutual trust (through learning agreements and procedures for validation and recognition);
- the generalisation of European devices across institutions and training providers, competent bodies and enterprises, national and sectoral borders;
- the acceptance of the new “currency”.

With respect to the debated issues and identified challenges, the workshop expressed the following recommendations:

- implement a “vocabulary” for comparison and compatibility between systems;
- carry out further experimentation of the learning outcomes approach;
- generalise the examples into other fields of competence/training/certification;
- tune methodologies to increase/ease acceptance among providers and enterprises;
- stimulate individuals to engage into and profit from the new currencies.

Workshop session Workshop 3 – “Methods and tools for the assessment of competences”	
Chair	<i>Ms Sonia Dubourg-Lavroff</i> Agence Europe Education Formation (FR)
Expert	<i>Mr Tijs Pijls</i> CINOP (NL)
Experiences	<i>Mr Håkan Linde and Mr Ingemar Andreasson</i> Utek (SE)

	<p>⇒ Leonardo pilot project “VOMTE; IT-based Validation and Certification System for practical working Maintenance Technicians”</p>
	<p><i>Ms Barbara De Micheli</i> EXA TEAM (IT)</p> <p>⇒ Leonardo pilot project “VAI – Valorising non-formal and informal learning within SMEs”</p>
Rapporteur	<p><i>Ms Daniela Staneva</i> Human Resource Development Centre (BG)</p>
Workshop key issues	<p>✓ Explore methodological and technical solutions (also IT supported) adopted in different countries and contexts for identifying and assessing prior learning and competences acquired on the job, for the purpose of validation</p>

The workshop had the objective of discussing and comparing different systems, practices, methodologies and tools for the assessment of competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts, for validation purposes.

Two systems implemented at national level were illustrated: the French *validation des acquis de l'expérience* and, more extensively, the Dutch quality assurance framework for the accreditation of prior learning (APL). In the Netherlands, further to a process started in the early 90's, all relevant stakeholders have recently signed an APL Quality Code, which is being implemented on an experimental basis. The code sets up standards and provides tools (checklists) for providers; its application is voluntary (though strongly encouraged by the signing parties), but adherence to it implies submission to periodical checks of compliance. In this way, the system allows on one hand the quality assurance of APL procedures (professionalism of supervisors and assessors, continuous improvement of procedures) and on the other hand the accreditation and registration of compliant providers. APL is open to any potential beneficiary, yet its main targets are people without any formal qualification, people with a VET qualification wishing to progress to higher education level and people who want to change their profession.

The first project envisaged the creation of European Test Centres for the validation of practical working for maintenance technicians; with this objective, the initiative elaborated an ICT-based tool for verifying and validating competences, which can be used for recruitment (matching between the person and the profession), for mapping of training needs and for certification purposes. The tool includes

tests with multiple-choice questions and provides a direct judgement on the results; it is cost-effective and easy to expand with additional subjects or questions.

The second project elaborated a methodology and a set of tools aimed at supporting the assessment of non-formal and informal learning practices within small and medium enterprises and especially micro-companies. The tools include a methodological guide, instruments for managers involved in the assessment, a handbook helping individuals describe their learning pathway, a grid for self-evaluation, the profile and related training pathway of the informal learning facilitator. The underlying model is based on a four-step approach (information, identification, evaluation and valorisation of non-formal and informal learning practices).

The main challenges for the future correspond to the recommendations expressed by the workshop, which are the following:

- enhance guidance as a way of helping people be aware of their knowledge;
- define European standards for assessors and advisors;
- develop specific guides as well as a common “Dictionary” with explanation of the different roles (the people involved in the process need to have very clear roles);
- use Leonardo da Vinci projects for further development of tools and instruments, as well as for supporting a progressive harmonization of national standards.

Workshop session Workshop 4 – “The role of guidance to foster employability”	
Chair	<i>Ms María Kristín Gylfadóttir</i> Leonardo da Vinci National Agency (IS)
Expert	<i>Ms Elisabeth Gros</i> Centre Euroguidance (FR)
Experiences	<i>Ms Anna Maria Ajello and Ms Cristina Belardi</i> Università Roma 1 (IT) ⇒ Leonardo pilot project “EGEIS - European guidance and the evaluation of informal skills”
	<i>Ms Teresa Hemar</i> Centre Interinstitutionnel de Bilan de Compétences (FR)

	⇒ Leonardo thematic action “EuroguideVal” (SE)
Rapporteur	<i>Mr Gerhard Volz</i> National Agency for Lifelong Learning (AT)
Workshop key issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Explore the different contributions that guidance services give in the different countries to support the employability of individuals, by providing information and support (on existing qualifications, training opportunities, needs of the labour market, career opportunities), as well as by contributing to the assessment and validation of prior learning ✓ Bring in experiences representing different typologies of users of guidance services and related to training of counsellors (in particular with respect to validation)

The workshop had the objective of discussing about guidance strategies to promote employability implemented within national systems, useful tools and good practices with respect to guidance and validation of prior learning, competences and skills required to guidance counsellors for implementing an active career guidance (and not simply information activities), ways of involving and motivating users and all relevant stakeholders, supporting activities needed at European level.

The expert introduced to the theme by stressing the close link between lifelong guidance and lifelong employability. The changing world implies new challenges for the individuals and therefore new stakes for guidance (emphasis on client-centred approach, more dynamic counselling, focus on social responsibility and ethics) and new issues for guidance practitioners (counselling on mobility, working on transparency of qualifications and accreditation of prior learning, targeting public with special needs, encouraging networking). This has brought about a progressive expansion of the job profile of guidance counsellors (career advisers, coaches...) and the introduction of new methods of guidance provision (virtual counselling, mentoring, career coaching, etc.). Some challenges are yet still ahead and these include: the promotion of a culture of evaluation and definition of quality criteria; the development of a common professional profile - or even of a regulated profession – of guidance practitioner; the adoption of accredited common methods and tools. Through the impulse of the European Union and OECD (specific studies) or through the initiative of practitioners (European projects, IAEVG initiative), some answers are being found.

The first pilot project was aimed at improving guidance systems within partner countries and overcoming the heterogeneity existing in the different countries. The desk and field research (analysis of skills and training needs of counsellors) carried out in the project highlighted the lack of a common

educational background of counsellors all over Europe, the many different ways of working, the different tools used and the limited experiences concerning validation of non-formal and informal learning and information about employability abroad. As a possible answer to this scenario, the project then developed a standard curriculum, a training model for the qualification of guidance counsellors and a pilot training course.

The second project was a thematic action aimed at identifying the training needs of professionals involved in each stage of the APEL process (information, guidance, assessment, certification and implementation) and providing a framework for initial and continuing training of such professionals, with particular reference to guidance counsellors. After desk and field research on training needs, several training outputs have been implemented to be used in the different partner countries: a university pilot course for a wide range of practitioners; a module for university staff; a short “taster” course and an additional module for guidance practitioners; a handbook containing occupational, training and certification framework.

The following issues were debated during the workshop:

1. Concerning guidance strategies and tools to foster employability:

- The need of a holistic strategy: lifelong (= school/university/workplace guidance) and “mobile services”;
- ⇒ *General difficulty*: the limited “attractiveness” of the profession;
- The importance of elaborating a Guidance Charter (common agreement on quality criteria, tools, etc.), including a development strategy;
- The promotion of Accreditation of Prior Learning (competence check, visibility of skills, accompanying the process of accreditation);
- ⇒ *Limits*: how to assess/check the skills; how to work with intercultural difficulties, migrants, minorities, etc.;
- The role of regional guidance networks (using a strictly customer-oriented approach, and exploiting synergies to a maximum extent);
- The potential of Virtual Counselling/Mentoring;
- ⇒ *Limits*: no appropriate access to IT; restricted to young, rather well-educated people – sceptical view in general (no interaction, little immediate reaction);
- The need of a legal frame to secure access to guidance;
- ⇒ *Limits*: hardly any legal basis anywhere, particularly considering disadvantaged groups like drop-outs, elderly, migrants, etc.

2. Concerning ways to motivate and involve different stakeholders:

- Ensuring common general understanding of the issues involved among stakeholders;
- Showing to companies the advantages of having people developed and trained;
- Mainstreaming guidance provision instead of adopting a “fire brigade” approach;
- Make use of peer learning.

3. Concerning competences and skills needed by counsellors, these were listed as follows:

- Sound interaction competences;
- Well developed intercultural skills;
- Capacity to define and provide information in a clear and structured manner;
- Awareness of the benefits of prior (informal, non-formal) learning;
- European dimension;
- Continuous training;
- Proper and efficient networking.

The main challenges for the future correspond to the recommendations expressed by the workshop, which concern initiatives which would support development of guidance services at European level.

- Develop a Guidance Charter (bottom-up, through the involvement of professionals and users);
- Make more efficient promotion of existing initiatives (e.g. Guidance Fora, Guidance Handbook);
- Improve communication/facilitation among all stakeholders involved.

Workshop session Workshop 5 – “Sectoral approaches to qualifications”	
Chair	<i>Mr Siegfried Willems</i> National Agency Leonardo da Vinci (NL)
Expert	<i>Mr André Richier</i> European Commission - Directorate General Enterprise and Industry – Innovation Policy Directorate (EU)
Experiences	<i>Ms Clementina Marinoni</i> Fondazione Politecnico di Milano (IT) ⇒ Leonardo pilot project “EURO ICT LANE” (DE)

	<p><i>Mr Gerald Thiel</i> Dekra Academy (DE)</p> <p>⇒ Leonardo pilot project “Embedding standards”</p>
Rapporteur	<p>Ms Siv Andersen Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (NO)</p>
Workshop key issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Explore specific experiences carried out at sectoral level for the definition and formalization of qualifications (bringing in the experiences of specific sectors) ✓ Analyze the contribution of the different actors, including social partners, involved in this process

The workshop had the objective of exploring the development of qualifications at sectoral level, with particular reference to the role of social partners, the evidence-based structure for the specific sector, the mandatory or recommendatory/ voluntary character of the qualification, the development of common assessment tools in a sector to create trust, the assessment authorities for the different sectors.

The expert illustrated the European strategy concerning e-skills, which is a significant example of a EU-driven process for the definition of common competences in the ICT sector. This process has envisaged several initiatives: the setting up of a European e-skills Forum; the organisation of a European e-skills Conference in 2006; the ICT Task force Report (which has called upon the Commission to present a policy communication to Member States concerning a long-term strategy and related action plans); the launch of an e-skills Industry Leadership Board (with the mandate of leading the ICT sector towards the implementation of a digital literacy agenda). The main action lines concern: promoting a long-term cooperation; developing supporting actions and tools; raising awareness; fostering employability and social inclusion; promoting e-learning. One of the initiatives taken on this basis concerns the implementation of a European e-Competence Framework which is conceived as a neutral reference tool specific for the ICT sector (but coherent with the EQF).

The first project was strictly linked to this political process, because its objectives concern the development of a European competence-based ICT Qualification Framework (consistent with the e-Competence framework) for three competence areas: project management, software development and administration; the set of outputs is completed by competence level descriptors (where the definition of levels is based on ICT key-action verbs and descriptors are inputs to learning outcomes), a pilot

software for identifying and comparing ICT qualifications and guidelines for using the model and the tool.

The second project aimed at contributing to overcome the “standardisation-divide” in Europe, by developing and piloting sector-oriented qualification approaches, in particular in the field of ICT and multimedia. The activities carried out included: identification of a grid of profiles and curricula existing in the sector; definition of usable reference profiles and qualifications; identification of smallest assessable units; assignment of credit points to units; definition of modules and learning pathways; performance evaluation of training (leading to the establishment of zones of mutual trust). The partnership has also reflected on the obstacles and conditions to establish sectoral qualifications (a common understanding of job profiles and their description through work elements from which competences can be derived as learning outcomes are crucial factors to this purpose).

The following issues were debated during the workshop:

- driving forces of sectoral approaches to qualifications;
- elements of the qualifications to be defined at sectoral level;
- competent bodies for the definition of qualifications.

The main challenges for the future correspond to the recommendations expressed by the workshop, which are the following:

- Ensure common understanding within sectoral frameworks;
- Ensure flexibility of sectoral frameworks;
- Remove the gap between the competence needed at labour market and the training offered.

Workshop session Workshop 6 – “Mobility as an asset for professional development”	
Chair	<i>Ms Irina Severin</i> NACPF EVT – Agentia Nationala Pentru Programe Comunitare (RO)
Expert	<i>Mr Saul Meghnagi</i> Istituto Superiore di Formazione (IT)
Experiences	<i>Ms Janka Fedorova</i> Secondary Agricultural School in Pruske (SK)

	<p>⇒ Leonardo mobility project “Teachers exchange of the FLORNET network”</p>
	<p><i>Mr Kaspar Fischer</i> MAN Diesel SE (DE)</p> <p>⇒ Leonardo mobility project “Industrial-technical trainees are trained in Danish companies”</p>
	<p><i>Mr Ulisses Garrido</i> CGTP (PT)</p> <p>⇒ Leonardo project “European Passport of trade union skills” (FR)</p>
Rapporteur	<p><i>Mr Cristian Popescu</i> NACPF EVT – Agentia Nationala Pentru Programe Comunitare(RO)</p>
Workshop key issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Briefly highlight the European political support for mobility – European Charter for Mobility, Quality Assurance for mobility under the LLP – in order to continuously improve the mobility impact on organizations and individuals, ✓ Reflect on the different meaning of mobility and types of “mobilities”, geographical, but also inter-organisational, and internal to an organisation, ✓ Focus on mobility as a change of organizational context of reference and reflect on the spin-offs of mobility experiences at organizations’ and individuals’ level (=acquired transversal competences) ✓ Reflect on how these spin-offs can be acknowledged and made visible (e.g. mapping of individual skills within the enterprise, not necessarily for the purpose of validation) ✓ Bring in experiences related to such mobility by considering different perspectives (enterprises and training organizations, individuals, VET professionals, people on the labour market or undergoing initial vocational training)

The workshop aimed at discussing on “mobilities” as learning experiences, on the inputs (organisational context, individual needs, objectives setting) and the outputs (acknowledgement of the competences acquired) of a mobility process, on its spin-offs in terms of career and organisational development.

The expert introduced the theme from two different perspectives: the institutions / social partners and the individuals involved in a mobility process. Mobility is of course related to both the context where it takes place (social welfare, employment services, conditions for qualification...) and the people moving. The first key issue concerns the minimal necessary conditions to prevent mobility from being just a synonymous of unemployment – which is for sure a challenge for institutions and social partners. As

for individuals, their propensity or resistance to mobility depends upon their professional competences and chances. The second key issue then concerns the appropriate modalities for offering and granting mobility as well as for allowing capitalisation of the experience.

Three projects were presented in this workshop and the underlying idea was to give representation to three different approaches: a mobility programme envisaging an exchange of VET professionals, a mobility programme for young people undergoing initial vocational training and a pilot initiative elaborating tools for the evaluation of a particular experience of professional mobility.

The first project concerned an exchange of teachers of floristry schools from five different countries (Slovakia, Germany, Norway, Finland and Italy). This experience had an impact on the individual beneficiaries of mobility, which could gain an insight into other teaching programmes and models, improve their intercultural knowledge and social skills, develop their craftsmen abilities. It also had spin-offs on the involved organisations, in particular in terms of enhanced European dimension and increased prestige of the schools, support to convergence of training programmes, dissemination of innovative training methods.

The second project concerned the placement of German apprentices working for a company which produces engines, in its Danish branch. Through the mobility, the participants have gained more self-confidence, experience in the Danish work organisation and an improvement of competences; the experience has been documented through the Europass Mobility certificate and the statement of ability to become an “International Service Engineer” in a four-year training. For the sending organisation, the international competence of the staff is strategic, because it has a worldwide service and distribution market.

The third project addressed workers temporarily acting as trade union representatives (TU) and then needing an acknowledgement of the competences acquired (communication, negotiation, labour law) for their professional reconversion. To this purpose, the project has elaborated a tool for the assessment and validation of the abilities arising from TU responsibilities and a passport for their certification (PECS – *passport européen de compétences syndicales*).

The following issues were debated during the workshop:

- the different types of mobilities (geographical, inter-organisational and internal to an organisation);
- the different mobility contexts and learning achievements (formal / non-formal / informal);

- the skills and competences acquired through a mobility experience and their relevance in different contexts (labour market, work environment, social activities, etc.);
- the importance of soft skills, which can be acquired through a mobility experience and are strongly demanded by employers (even though this need is not always clearly expressed);
- the responsibilities and purposes when assessing a mobility experience;
- the boundaries of assessment (it is not possible to assess everything, mobility should be trusted as a positive experience in itself);
- Leonardo mobility as an incentive to develop programmes for mobility within participating organisations;
- the appropriate length of the mobility experience (different according to topics, sectors, etc.).

The main challenges for the future correspond to the recommendations expressed by the workshop, which are the following:

- Increase the research and reflection on the validation of learning achievements outside formal systems (in particular in non-formal/informal contexts – which is frequently the case of mobility experiences);
- Valorise the specific competences required for “atypical” professions (i.e.: trade unionists, professional sportsmen, etc.) and their added value for employers in other contexts;
- Involve reliable partnerships in mobility projects – it is the key for success;
- Address mobility as a national policy (and not only a strategy for single enterprises / professionals), integrate it into national training systems, complement EU programmes with additional national funding.

Plenary session Final round table – “Transparency of Qualifications and Employability – Bridges and Challenges in Europe”	
Chair	<i>Ms Alessandra Tomai</i> Head of Unit ESF Coordination Ministry of Labour and Social Security - Directorate General for Guidance and Training Policies (II)
Participants	<i>Mr Wilhelm Vukovich</i> Unit B5 “Leonardo da Vinci” European Commission– Directorate General for Education and Culture (EU) <i>Mr Michel Aribaud</i>

	<p>Unit A3 “Vocational training and adult education” European Commission– Directorate General for Education and Culture (EU)</p> <p><i>Mr Loukas Zabilas</i> CEDEFOP</p> <p><i>Mr Peter Thiele</i> Federal Ministry of Education and Research (DE)</p> <p><i>Mr Roberto Pettenello</i> European Trade Union Confederation (EU)</p> <p><i>Mr Octavian Bojan</i> Employers Association of Bucharest (RO)</p>
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The conclusions from all the workshops were reported back to the plenary session by the rapporteurs and constituted the starting point for a debate on the bridges and challenges for transparency and employability, which involved European authorities (representatives from the European Commission), national authorities (representatives from the Italian Ministry of Labour and the German Ministry of Education), social partners at European and national level, experts (CEDEFOP).

Evaluation of the event

The opinion of delegates on the contents, potential impact and logistics of the event has been collected in a classical way, by asking them to fill in and return anonymous evaluation sheets. A structured analysis of the responses was carried out by the Italian National Agency and then shared with the other TG4 members on the occasion of the successive Steering Group meeting.

In general, there was a wide and deep appreciation of the event from participants. The Conference was considered very well organised, extremely relevant and focused, with well-structured documentation for delegates, as well as useful, informative and interesting presentations and transversal participation of VET stakeholders. According to participants, it had a very good impact in terms of awareness raising, definition of common needs, launch of possible solutions, ideas for further project proposals.

Several interesting suggestions were made for future activities:

- Replicate the event in other countries to widely disseminate information and strategies and to motivate stakeholders in this long-term process;
- Organise contact seminars to promote transfer of innovation projects on the theme;

- Develop related devices (EQF, ECVET, etc.) from a sectoral perspective and ensure dissemination to stakeholders at European and national level;
- Continue the discussion on specific issues, e.g.:
 - the perspective of end-users (needs, expectations, etc.);
 - the development and recognition of competences acquired through informal and non-formal learning;
 - transparency of language competences;
 - education of adults;
- Continue the work of the Thematic Group on Transparency and Validation.

II.6 The dissemination and follow-up

Awareness raising, information and promotion were essential for the success of the thematic work. The Group's strategy was based in particular upon:

- the design of a "TG4 brand" (name, logo, graphic image);
- the design and implementation of a dedicated website, which had to serve not only as a dissemination channel but above all as a thematic platform containing several resources (reference documents, examples of relevant projects, events proceedings, useful links, etc.);
- the production of traditional information material (leaflets, presentations, reports);
- the experimentation of innovative technological solutions, such as the live streaming on the Internet of the Rome Conference, in order to achieve a wider audience;
- the exploitation of all already existing dissemination channels within the National Agencies (websites, newsletters, other publications) and at European level (in particular, the CEDEFOP virtual communities).

The follow-up of the action and in particular of the two organised conferences was as strategic as a constant dissemination of the activities and products. This follow-up was carried out mainly through:

- the collection of feedbacks by participants to the events (at the conferences through the already mentioned evaluation sheet, but also after and on an ongoing basis, for instance through the "post-it" function of the TG4 website – which allows all visitors to make comments and to have them published);

- further dissemination of the conferences' contents and outcomes, by posting all the presentations and the reports on the TG4 website, as well as by realising and distributing additional products (a video of the event in Rome, for instance);
- exploitation and integration of the achievements of the two conferences into other national-based events organised by TG4 National Agencies in the framework of their respective work programmes (for instance, the VET-day “The road of Europe - to increase mobility and development”, Stockholm (SE), 11-12 October 2007; the Days of Lifelong Learning, Sofia (BG), 18-20 October 2007; the Lifelong Learning Programme Launch Conference in Germany, Bonn, 25-26 October 2007);
- organisation of a follow-up event specifically focused on ECVET: the workshop on “Cross-border accreditation of skills and competences”, planned for the beginning of January 2008 and arranged with the own resources of TG4 National Agencies.

In addition to these activities, it was felt necessary to develop and exploit the data already gathered on relevant projects in the fields of transparency, credit transfer and validation. 45 initiatives among those included in the general Projects Database were therefore selected for further investigation and asked (through an on-line questionnaire) to provide with more in-depth information their background, objectives, implemented results and perspectives for the future. The methodology, tools and outcomes of this field survey are presented in the following chapter; here it is just worth mentioning that this activity has also originated a specific follow-up product – the Brochure “A focus on project practices” – which is aimed at giving visibility to these relevant and interesting project experiences thus contributing to support their valorisation, transfer and mainstreaming into training systems and practices.

III. Analysing relevant Leonardo da Vinci projects: the on-field survey

The overview on the issues of transparency, certification and acknowledgement/validation of non-formal and informal learning, which was carried out through an analysis of the available official documents – with inevitable limitations in terms of in-depth reflection and synthesis – has yet shown the complexity of these concepts.

At the same time, it highlights a “historical” tension of institutional systems and actors towards the need of a dialogue on issues which surely have a potential impact on several and related areas: the concrete application of the rights of free circulation and establishment, through the creation of real opportunities to enjoy such rights, the portability of competences and knowledge together with the satisfaction of salary expectations and the formal recognition of European placement systems, the social inclusion of individuals within their primary and secondary groups, the need to enhance and share basic principles such as European citizenship and European dimension, which should permeate the educational processes and the related learning outcomes (though respecting diversity and specific national features).

The definition of a European strategy in these fields has of course implied formal steps of engagements and objectives setting; yet it is true – as history teaches – that the institutionalisation often follows and “ratifies” accidental practices, developed as an endogenous response – more or less aware – to demands and problems which cannot be avoided any more.

When analysing the set of experiences included in the Thematic Group database, the first question actually concerns the level of awareness of the Leonardo da Vinci partnerships³⁴ which operated and worked on the concerned themes. As a matter of fact, at the moment when these initiatives were designed – and in some cases even after their completion – the involved concepts had not yet been directly related to the implementation of ECVET or EQF, and they certainly could not refer to the solution between the “test or trust” options, either.

³⁴ This term is reductive and does not represent the qualitative and quantitative dimension of the phenomenon: we are talking about hundreds of organisations and thousands of people (the word “person” must be preferred and is more appropriate than “expert”, as the concerned initiatives imply “frontier” and advanced experimentation and have often actively involved also beneficiaries and peer groups).

In other words, the thematic group was somehow obliged to make an *ex post* clusterisation of projects, with the aim of identifying evidence and hints of coherence and relevance with respect to policies and strategies, which were actually named and included in the European political agenda only at a later stage. This approach was highly risky, above all in terms of scientific correctness, and basically lied upon the “empathy” and direct knowledge of projects by National Agencies, which was originated by the qualitative monitoring and, more often, the technical assistance, counselling and control of procedures carried out through more sophisticated tools than an Excel sheet or an interim or final report written on the European models.

The conferences on one hand (with their related positive feedbacks) and the utilisation of the database, on the other, seem to have confirmed the relevance of the selected panel of about one hundred projects; yet, it was deemed appropriate to increase the sensitiveness and awareness on the themes of transparency, validation, certification of competences, valorisation and validation of non-formal and informal learning, by creating another opportunity for a further and later reflection on the quality of the contribution that each partnership provided to the implementation of those European strategies which only nowadays are clearly defined, linked to quantified objectives, enriched by indicators and descriptors, supported by criteria and tools.

Carrying out only a one-way action of dissemination and information was considered to be reductive; on the contrary, it seemed more effective *to launch an in-depth survey* directly involving the leading actors of each experience. Such an enquiry could actually allow to explore more in detail both the processes implemented by the concerned initiatives and their potential and current developments, their indirect effects as well as, last but not least, the achieved results and products in a perspective of transfer, adaptation and concrete exploitation. To do this, a common descriptive grid was designed, the structure of which might appear somehow stiff and was yet necessary to carry out a proper comparison and analysis of possible common elements.

When setting the hypotheses underlying the decision to launch such an in-depth survey, a further step concerned the question of how a “practice” can turn into a “procedure”, that is to say how those projects that have been selected for their coherence and relevance can really contribute to the ongoing debate and to the implementation of European strategies.

Once the mandate of disseminating and valorising the results was already achieved through the implementation of an accessible database, the challenge then concerned the ***analysis of the potential usefulness*** of these experiences, leaving aside the initial descriptive objectives of each project.

If we consider the Calls for Proposals 2007 and 2008-2010 of the Lifelong Learning Programme, with particular reference to the priorities set therein for Development and Transfer of Innovation actions, a reflection on the sustainability of the solutions already tested with Pilot Projects and Transnational Networks implies the identification of new functions and new objectives for thematic monitoring: first of all, allowing technical assistance structures to provide information and counselling on the basis of concrete examples and data, so as to ensure a full understanding of the actual meaning and aims of Priorities which are very often set out in a generic and little defined way; secondly, switching the perspective, from the response to *a need of knowledge* to the response to *a need of analysing, understanding and measuring the objectives* which were actually and usefully achieved with the investments made.

III.1 The survey: objectives and development

During the meeting in Bratislava it was decided to carry out an in-depth survey, in order to integrate the already collected information with more analytical data. On that occasion, the Steering Group members considered that such an enquiry could give the opportunity of gathering not only a “picture” of the activities carried out by the projects inserted in the database (and therefore elements for further valorisation) but also, and above all, an idea of the contribution of these initiatives, more or less intentional, to the ongoing debate and to the implemented policies on transparency and certification.

It was therefore unanimously agreed to launch a survey, the implementation of which had to be:

- fully shared by all involved actors;
- aimed at involving also National Agencies from other countries than those involved in the Thematic Group;
- focused on a limited number of areas of investigation, so as to avoid redundancies and excessive workloads for project promoters;
- based on the perceptions and descriptions of the organisations involved in projects implementation.

During that same meeting, a first list of key issues was also drafted. The topics to be explored focused more on the pathways for development and utilisation of achieved results and products than on the description of implementation processes. This list was then circulated to the other Agencies which did not attend the meeting, for the purpose of integration and validation of its contents. The Italian National Agency took the responsibility of drafting the questionnaire in its final version (see Box 1).

According to the research project which was commonly defined and regularly realised, the collected responses would originate:

- a dissemination brochure, presenting only the more descriptive answers (Items 1, 2 and 3 of the questionnaire) and
- a more in-depth reflection on the relations and perceptions of the involved partnerships concerning the concrete exploitation of results and products, as well as the usability and sustainability of the outcomes and the strategies to implement in order to make these outcomes more “stable” and functional for the need of renovating and improving the training supply (all the Items).

BOX 1 – The survey tool

1. What kind of needs did your project intend to meet? (max 10 lines)

Describe the **background of your initiative**, in terms of:

- **reference context** (please focus on the connection of your project with the issues of interest for our Thematic Group and namely: transparency of competences and qualifications, credit transfer in vocational education and training, validation of non-formal and informal learning. For further information, you can refer to our website: www.tg4transparency.com);
- concerned **target groups and sectors** (if appropriate) and related exigencies

2. What was the contribution of your project to solve these problems? (max 10 lines)

Describe the **project objectives** with respect to the highlighted needs, as well as the **approach** and **methodological solutions** envisaged

3. What outcomes and products did you develop/are available? (max 15 lines)

Describe the achievements of the project, focusing on **the results and concrete outputs** implemented.

For each of the final products, please specify:

- **title and typology of product** (i.e.: curriculum, training pathway, research report, handbook, etc.);
- **typology of support** (i.e.: website, CD-Rom, paper, etc.);
- **languages** available,

and provide with **short description** of main features.

4. Where and how are your results put into practice? (max 10 lines)

Describe the **concrete application** of the implemented products within the training systems and practices of partner countries and organisations.

Mention also any further **piloting and follow up** of projects results carried out at national / regional / local / sectoral and international level.

5. Which challenges do you see ahead of you? (max 10 lines)

Describe **open issues** (content-related) for the partnership and/or areas for further **developments** identified; provide your perspective and **suggestions**, if any, for future work on the concerned issues.

National Agencies were involved also in the identification of the sample of projects which had to reply to the questionnaire. The objective was to define a list including from three to five projects for TG4 countries and up to a maximum of three experiences realised in the other countries. Those National Agencies participating to the survey, on the basis of the existing database, have chosen the projects representing their country; the Italian National Agency has then sent to each identified promoter the details of the restricted area of the Internet site to be used for sending on line the filled-in questionnaire.

During the period devoted to questionnaire compilation, TG4 partner Agencies have ensured briefing and follow up, by supporting and reminding their respective promoters to answer quickly and exhaustively to the proposed grid. The filled-in questionnaires were subject to a first quality check, in order to start the analysis of results on the basis of comparable data³⁵.

The whole set of responses to the questionnaire was recorded in a database, which allowed an easier analysis and a focused utilisation of data for realising and publishing the Brochure “*A focus on project practices*”.

III.1.1 The sample of analysed projects

Hereafter are some short remarks on the sample of projects which were involved in the in-depth survey. As already mentioned, the selection was made by TG4 National Agencies and by other Agencies which have replied to the call for cooperation on this initiative.

Well, if we consider that no criteria and weights were established in advance to determine a proper representation of all the different actions eligible within the Leonardo da Vinci Programme, it is interesting to remark that a collective and “casual” conclusion emerged, and namely that above all those initiatives realised within the action Pilot Projects and more in general in the framework of the so-called Procedure B could be the most relevant and interesting for the survey.

In our view, the limited representativeness of Mobility projects and Reference Materials is not due only to the fact that the actions carried out within Procedure A (Mobility) or Procedure C (Reference Material) are less relevant with respect to the issue of transparency.

There is at least another element which is worth being considered to this purpose, that is to say the smaller investments made on monitoring and qualitative evaluation of the outcomes of mobility and

³⁵ It has to be underlined that the quality of collected data was satisfactory and only in a limited number of cases it was necessary to ask for supplementary information. This was basically due to the quality of the briefing that the different National Agencies carried out locally and to the effectiveness of their support to involved promoters.

research projects, which have implied a difficulty to highlight the coherence and relevance of achieved results with respect to the concerned themes.

As a matter of fact, there is no doubt that the transparency of didactic contents, of the adopted or tested solutions for validating and valorising the placement experience, as well as the issue of non-formal and informal learning, which is quite typical of these experiences, were somehow taken into account, at least when evaluating the results with respect to beneficiaries.

The following Table highlights that more than 90% of the analysed projects belong to Procedure B actions and 6,6% belong to the other decentralised Procedure (A), which applies to Mobility projects.

The presence of projects on Reference Material shows an attention to the themes also by those initiatives which are developed in the framework of a measure entirely managed by the European Commission³⁶.

Table 5 – Sample projects

Project typology	A.V.	%
Pilot Projects	37	82,2
Language Competences	2	4,4
Mobility – exchanges	2	4,4
Mobility – placements	1	2,2
Reference material	2	4,4
Transnational networks	1	2,2
Total	45	100

As for the geographical origin of the promoting organisations involved in the survey, 17 countries are represented in the sample; yet, it has to be specified that in most cases the examined practices have been implemented by extremely large partnerships and for this reason the contracting organisations can be considered as having a merely formal and administrative role.³⁷

Even though not exhaustive, the coverage is yet extremely satisfactory, if we consider that 7 countries not directly involved in the Thematic Group in charge of the initiative are represented.

We can highlight that the southern and Mediterranean area of the European Union is little represented, as there are no practices (which certainly exist and have good quality) from Malta, Portugal and Cyprus and there are not so many Spanish, Italian and French projects.

On the other hand, it is interesting to remark the significant presence of experiences realised by organisations from new member countries, and in particular from Middle-Eastern countries.

³⁶ It is useful to stress, also on this occasion, the importance of a deeper and deeper dialogue between the Executive Agency and the National Agencies, in order to improve the cooperation and the shared design of operational tools, in particular those having information and knowledge purposes.

³⁷ As a matter of fact, the project recorded as BE is actually promoted by a “EUR” organisation with legal premises in that country.

Table 6 – Analysed projects per country

<i>Country</i>	<i>Projects</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Projects</i>
AT	3	IS	2
BE*	1	IT	4
BG	3	NL**	2
CZ	2	NO	2
DE	4	PL	1
ES	1	RO	3
FI	4	SE	4
FR	3	SK	3
IE	1	UK	2

* Project promoted by a EUR organisation

** One of the two projects was promoted by a EUR organisation

III.2 The results of the survey: analysis and reflections

The chapters which follow include two levels of analysis: a mere description and an interpretation of results.

First of all, we have verified the contents of the selected projects with respect to the responses given to the first questionnaire items and we have then elaborated some reflections through the analysis of the answers to the final questions.

III.2.1 The underlying needs: contexts and target groups

Our analysis starts from the detected needs, perceived as such by the partnerships and that the selected initiatives tried to meet.

The specific item of the questionnaire asked to connect the actions carried out with the three main areas of interest for the TG4.

What kind of needs did your project intend to meet? (max 10 lines)

Describe the **background of your initiative**, in terms of:

- **reference context** (please focus on the connection of your project with the issues of interest for our Thematic Group and namely: transparency of competences and qualifications, credit transfer in vocational education and training, validation of non-formal and informal learning. For further information, you can refer to our website: www.tg4transparency.com);
- concerned **target groups and sectors** (if appropriate) and related exigencies

To introduce the analysis, we can highlight once again that the Group has concentrated on a very complex theme, which has several possible and equally interesting focuses.

The partnerships have actually dealt with the different issues concerned – which makes their relevance with respect to the theme – yet in different ways, from both a qualitative and a quantitative point of view.

The Table below shows that most projects of the sample concern in particular the topics of transparency of competences and qualifications (two-thirds of the initiatives) and validation of non-formal and informal learning (more than 25%).

Table 7 - Projects distribution with respect to thematic clusters

Thematic clusters	Projects no.	%
Transparency of competences and qualifications	30	66,6
Credit transfer	3	6,7
Validation of non-formal and informal learning	12	26,7
Total	45	

The small concentration on the theme of credit transfer can have several explanations: above all, the fact that when the concerned projects were designed and realised, the related arrangement for vocational training (ECVET) just started being conceived; while for the other topics, the reflection on the portability and comparability of diplomas and vocational qualifications, as well as the attempts to valorise the skills of disadvantaged people on the labour market (for instance through the long and consolidated experience of the *bilan des compétences*) had been part of the European debate for years and had already produced some important applications within the educational and training systems of several European countries.

It is interesting to remark that the three projects on credit transfer (see table below) concern sectors which can rely upon their own and consolidated training provision in several national contexts.

As for trade and mechatronics, for instance, many European countries have not only the national or regional education system, but also a private provision in the field, with a high level of specialisation and customisation (for instance, the training activity which is often realised and coordinated directly by the Chambers of Commerce).

Table 8 – CREDIT TRANSFER: the sectors within the sample

SECTOR	PROJECT NO.
MECHATRONICS	1
TRADE	1
MARITIME	1
TOTAL	3

As for the maritime sector, there are countries where the private provision is almost the only one and is entitled to release qualifications and diplomas without any other institutional intervention.

This can help better understand why the concerned initiatives could somehow “anticipate” ECVET; as a matter of fact, this arrangement was being conceived and developed in the same period as, or even later than the start-up of these Leonardo da Vinci projects.

Sheet 3

“The courses developed has been recognized and accepted as the standard for CCM-training (Crowd and Crisis Management training) by the national authorities of six of the participating countries and accepted as an alternative in some of the other participating countries.

The shipping industry is using English as the only recognized working language, thus the basic course concepts have been developed in English, with national translations for the participating institutions in Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Spain, Germany and the Netherlands...”

Sheet 23

“Training for maritime and port related professions is realised at national levels, whereas the job is performed in an international environment and it is expected that people with the same job carry out their activities in the same manner. In order to achieve this goal, there is a continuous need of standardisation and cooperation at international level. E-Marine project can be considered as one of the few initiatives in the field of maritime and port activities and its main goals can be resumed as follows:

- generation of an electronic environment for training and competence evaluation;
- developing of occupational standards for certain port and shipping professions.

The main target groups of the project are: crew on board ships, ship and port management companies, port workers, students in maritime and port related studies, high school students willing to pursue a career in the maritime or port industry...”

As for the theme of transparency of competences and qualifications, we can highlight a marked sectoral approach; yet there are also several initiatives (little less than 30%) which tested exemplary solutions and provided models to be applied at systems’ level.

By the way, the links to crafts and professions are absolutely necessary to ensure concreteness to the experiences.

Table 9 – TRANSPARENCY OF COMPETENCES AND QUALIFICATIONS: the sectors within the sample

SECTOR	PROJECT NO.
Education and training	9
ICT	3
Social services	1
Tourism	2
Health	5
Public administration	2
Agriculture/ nursery gardening	2
Trade	3

Textile	1
Culture	1
Environment	1
Credit	1
Fishing (aquaculture)	1
Mechanics	2
Building	1
Maritime	1
Manufacturing (explosives)	1
Third sector	1
TOTAL	38

The relative majority of projects can be placed in the so-called medical and paramedical sector. This can probably be explained because this sector has a long-established tradition of ruled professions, with the recognition of some vocational qualifications, and can therefore be more inclined to progress in the field.

Sheet 7

“Indeed, training in clinical nutrition remains inadequate in medical education throughout the world preventing good nutritional care of patients.

There is an insufficiency of specialists transferring the knowledge about nutrition from scientific sources to patient’s bed and population.

Formal and traditional systems of education in most universities are inflexible and slow in introduction of modern fields of knowledge like general and clinical nutrition.

Various non-formal LLL programmes are taking the initiative of education in nutrition, but they are still rather sparse.

The outcome of these programmes is not widely distributed. There is still a resistance of formal educational institutions to recognize the outcomes of various initiatives of LLL as a part of educational achievement of individuals. There are difficulties of employers to recognize and to accept the certificates of non formal and LLL programmes. That is why there is a need to create:

- *a new LLL programme comparable to a Master curriculum;*
- *an instrument for recognition and valorisation of LLL outcomes: certification, diploma and validation of competences and skills of the target group.*

The project contribution to solve this problem was a development of an innovative LLL programme in nutrition...”.

Sheet 22

“The two-tier structure in nursing education according to the Bologna process only started in Romania 3 years ago. At BSc level, Romanian schools of nursing still greatly vary from curricular point of view and do not offer training at EU standards. MSc programs for new competences like health care management, gerontology, mental health nursing, critical care nursing, midwifery, nursing and health care ethics, trans-cultural and cross cultural nursing are completely lacking. Through the project, teachers in Nursing from the University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Victor Babes" Timisoara set the premises for implementation of fast track curricula for validation of Romanian nursing high-school degrees to BSc level and for joint Masters programs in Nursing together with two EU partner institutions that practice nursing education according to European requirements...”

Sheet 33

“The project was developed to improve the quality of and access to vocational training for trainee doctors working in Europe. The development of the European Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) aimed to enable access to vocational training opportunities for those who were geographically isolated or disadvantaged. The opportunity to access the VLE any time, any place promoted flexibility for women or those who have families. The opportunities for online discussion and collaboration, were intended to

promote the sharing of best practices and networking. Formal and non-formal learning was evaluated using a range of assessment tools including formative examinations, an e-portfolio and personal reflection of professional development. Within the cross-cultural community, participants had the opportunity to increase their knowledge, further develop their clinical competence and increase their key transferable skills (e.g. technology skills, communication, group working and problem solving)...

Another interesting datum concerns the presence of two highly “institutional” projects, that is to say initiatives promoted by bodies within the public administration or which were able (or allowed) to identify and meet a need, while also making a significant step towards the transfer and concrete application of the experience.

These interventions concern resource planning and defence: these areas involve public officers and decision makers, who need a constant refreshing, as well as validation and legitimation of their competences.

Sheet 8

“The project addressed the needs for:

- higher language proficiency amongst European peacekeepers involved in military, police or humanitarian operations;*
 - new transnational language training programmes, materials and tools for peacekeepers, high degree of fluency, accuracy, and communicative competence for effective joint operations, including both linguistic and intercultural competences of peacekeepers;*
 - transparency of competences and qualifications, credit transfer in vocational education and training, validation of non-formal and informal learning.*
- The project succeeded in developing language training and reference materials for peacekeepers for self-study, semi-autonomous and tutor-supported learning in formal, non-formal and informal settings. The materials addressed the needs for:*
- describing the competences necessary for this specific type of communication, the related knowledge and skills, as well as situations and domains of communication;*
 - mutual understanding and recognition of language skills and competences between the military (NATO STANAG 6001) and the civilians (The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages CEFRL);*
 - civil–military transparency and transferability of skills, competences and qualifications (i.e. ‘translate’ the civilian qualifications into military and vice versa);*
 - matching the NATO language standards to the CEFRL, referring to civilian and military descriptors and examinations...”*

Sheet 43

“The Go.C.E.T. project aimed mainly at awakening local stakeholders and countries, involved in the partnership, meeting their interest to the theme of the governance system focusing on the issue of workplace learning and recognition and validation of skills.

Analysis and experience comparison, as result of the work carried out from all partners, gave an overview of the whole research work, from the analysis of national systems and case studies to good practices referring to indications and recommendations, devised as a reference for decision-makers.

The results and achievements of the transparency of competences and qualifications and the validation of non formal and informal learning –issued analysed in the Go.C.E.T. project – has been drawn on in the ‘Leonardo da Vinci Thematic Group’, established by the European Commission in the framework of Thematic Monitoring. This group facilitated the stakeholders exchanging good practices and European projects’ experience but also improving transnational cooperation through virtual initiatives and events.

In order to awaken and to involve the stakeholders institutional actors and social and economical partners of all countries participating in the partnership has been involved in the project meetings, discussions, seminars, etc.

The transnational dimension of the project has been developed using functional benchmarking methods on several occasions, identifying from time to time good practices, analysing their contents, verifying their transferability, comparing their relevance, creating models and adapting these practices to the different contexts.

*In particular, by observing and by analysing the VET systems of several project partners, even though highlighting the diversity of practices, the comparison has been useful and constructive. The study allowed to underline how every country wants to act in an active way in the field of validation of non formal and informal learning.
Most of the initiatives are agreements and empirical paths agreed between institutions and social partners or in the most experienced countries these initiatives have been regulated by specific laws...”*

A third, but not least, interesting aspect concerns the set of projects on education and training.

Obviously this typology includes also some projects which have a sectoral perspective (in the economic sense): in this case, we have counted only those having a significant impact on educational systems or, anyway, on the training provision.

There is more or less an equal distribution between on one hand initiatives focused on the professions and related competences of facilitators in education and guidance processes and, on the other hand, projects aimed at improving the effectiveness of transnational mobility schemes in the framework of both Community programmes and national strategies.

These projects almost always include an integration of such tools and arrangements as Europass or aim in most cases also at enhancing international networks of trainers and guidance counsellors.

Sheet 4

“European citizens should be able to study and work throughout Europe, making full use of their qualifications, no matter where their educational or professional career path leads them. Transparency of diplomas and qualifications is an indispensable prerequisite for transfer, recognition and accreditation of knowledge, skills and competences (KSC). EU institutions developed several tools to support international transfer. However, whereas the European transparency tools provide a standard format for the description of KSCs, a consistent terminology is missing and CVs or diploma supplements of different countries are still difficult to understand. A comprehensive, multilingual and well proven terminology is needed also from experts in the field of skills research, vocational counselling, employment and so on...”

Sheet 5

“There are currently EU instruments allowing any individual to manage and present the information relating to his/her competencies and qualifications, namely Europass. The individual tools that integrate the Europass (i.e. the CV and the EPL) are at the present declarative tools. If today they exist in electronic format, they do not provide in their electronic implementation neither the validity nor the certification of the information declared by the individual. Back in 2005 when the Europass initiative was launched, the Europass CV and the ELP were not interoperable tools allowing the establishment of electronic transactions between eLearning, recruitment and HR services. Their development approach left little space for user centric management of data and provided limited use of social technologies. This was a limitation for learners, passive and active job seekers and workers in the use of their personal information for academic and professional mobility. Besides the technological, interoperability and standardisation issues, they were also and still are the challenges related to the large scale adoption of the single framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences due to its centralised approach of development and implementation. This is why the KITE project proposed to provide one solution to contribute to the massive adoption of the Europass CV and to answer to some of the related technological, interoperability and standardisation main challenges. KITE will evaluate the potential impact of the use of blogs on the adoption process of the Europass-CV. The aim is to evaluate the relevance of the tool as facilitator of its adoption on a large scale: the ease with which the individual will be able to use the electronics documents which form Europass will be a major factor of adoption...”

Sheet 18

“The basis of the H.E.L.E.N. project has been established according to some needs indicated in the framework of the considerations of the European Council of Barcelona in March 2002: “to make vocational training in Europe a world quality reference point within 2010”.

A further stimulus derives from the resolution of the European Council of Copenhagen on November 19, 2002: "vocational training is necessary for promoting employment, social cohesion, active citizenship and personal and professional realization".

Moreover, conclusions of Bruges-Copenhagen process, and in particular the following declaration: "research on how to promote transparency, comparability, transferability and systemic recognition of competences and/or qualifications, among different countries and at different levels could be sponsored through the development of reference levels, common principles for certification and measures, including a system of credits for V.E.T.".

HELEN's objectives are:

- 1. to favour mobility of workers and students;*
- 2. to implement a transnational network;*
- 3. to promote social dialogue among policy makers and partners, among partners and their networks at local level and/ or at transnational level.*

Users of the final products are institutional subjects with competences in law, management and certification in high technical vocational training, having access to privileged channels of information and communication and with national and European institution, and also social partners..".

Sheet 42

"Following the Communication on "Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality" adopted by the Commission on 21 November 2001, lifelong learning has become the guiding principle for the development of education and training policy in the European Union. The upgrading of the education and training systems represents one of the three main goals of the general approach. In this frame, adult's training is one of the main tools. The European learning strategy aims, among others, at identifying, evaluating and recognising informal and non-formal learning. Guidance should be considered at European level instead of at national level, and high quality guidance services play a fundamental role, as they facilitate the access to lifelong learning.

The project aims at strengthening and improving the actual guidance systems used in different European countries and at reducing its heterogeneous nature, through the exchange of experiences and methodologies used by guidance counsellors in these countries. It intends to elaborate a Standard European Curriculum for Guidance Counsellors, based on research on the various curricula already in use in the different European countries, the exchange of information and experiences between guidance counsellors themselves and with the help of European experts in the field of guidance.

The main objectives were:

- Reduction of heterogeneous nature of guidance systems in Europe;*
- Exchange of experiences and practices among guidance counsellors from different Member States;*
- Development of a Standard Curriculum or Skills Reference Frame for European Guidance Counsellors;*
- Development of a model training course for European Guidance Counsellors;*

Besides the elaboration of a standard curriculum of a European Guidance Counsellor, the project developed and tested a model training course to train European guidance counsellors. Having the standard curriculum of a European Guidance Counsellor in mind, an analysis of competences and training needs was carried out among a sample of guidance counsellors in different European countries, and a model training course based on the outcomes has been developed. This model of a training course was then tested by a sample of counsellors..."

As for the third theme (validation of non-formal and informal learning), there is little dispersion: once again there is a significant concentration on the educational sector, but even in this case many projects belonging to this cluster also have a sectoral perspective.

Table 10 – VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING: the sectors in the sample

SECTOR	PROJECT NO.
Third sector	2
Tourism	1
Education and training	8
Crafts	1

Energy	1
Mechanics	1
TOTAL	14

The only exception, which is absolutely obvious, concerns those projects aimed at identifying solutions for the recognition and transparency of competences in the third sector or, anyway in areas requiring a voluntary service.

Sheet 34

“Mostly complex situations and changing frameworks and objectives build the daily background of professionals working in services for people with disabilities. They have to restructure and to enhance their knowledge and know-how day by day, an ideal starting point for making informal learning visible and for being able to stimulate and to facilitate informal learning (Learning in Practice). Approximately 8 million employees within the European Union are directly employed in the sector of social services for people with disability...”

Sheet 38

“Assessing Voluntary Experiences (AVE) has been a way to identify, evaluate and validate skills and qualifications acquired through volunteering as an example of validation of non-formal and informal learning. Associations may be the ideal place to experience innovative solutions and practices and to acquire skills and competences. A voluntary experience may lead to or facilitate a professional career, by recognizing and validating this kind of non-formal and informal learning. It could be very useful for people who have no professional experience when facing with a first activity (youngsters) and for people who have been kept away from the labour market in order to renew their professional activity (parents who have raised their children, sick people once been recovered, prisoners once set free...). A voluntary experience is an alternative way to experiment, develop or update specific skills and qualifications in a specific context, neither public nor private, for both professional and non professional staff, with the aim of including and serving the general interest...”

In the second part of the question, promoters were asked to identify their target groups or target systems.

It is necessary to explain why the information available in the application forms could not be enough to this purpose.

As we already mentioned, many initiatives funded in the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme have two constant features: the inclusion of testing activities and the multi-annual duration. In such a broad period, many hypotheses – which can concern also basic elements of the application (such as the identification of the target group) – might be re-discussed. This is due to quick and unforeseen changes in the scenario, accidental discoveries, a new possible interpretation further to on-field work.

Actually it happened quite often that new and not scheduled (but yet worthy and important) objectives were added to the main initial target or that spin-offs or “cascade” effects were produced with respect to previously unconsidered beneficiaries.

This can find a further and partial confirmation if we consider that in the different editions of the application forms promoters were asked to identify from 1 to 3 target groups, while the final data of the projects sheets collected in the survey show that in almost half the cases the concerned initiatives have involved a significantly higher number of targets.

This aspect is worth further reflection, even if that goes a little beyond the scope of the Monitoring Group.

First of all, we should ask ourselves if the impact and effectiveness of the actions are somehow affected, in a negative or positive way, by this significant multiplicity of objectives.

The answer is not so obvious: educational phenomena take place in rather complex and articulated contexts and imply different levels and dimensions, even in an inertial way or in a way which is not or cannot be expected.

Therefore an intervention which starts with some specific objectives and achieves in progress some other objectives, even with a different intensity, is not “dispersive” as such.

Secondly, there is a need to reconsider the whole evaluation procedures and the related tools, also at the *ex ante* stage, so as to be sure that any possible spin-off is correctly taken into account, contextualised, identified as expected or accidental, measured.

Table 11 - No. of target groups/systems of the projects

TARGET GROUP/SYSTEMS NO.	PROJECTS NO.	%
9	1	2,2
6	5	11,1
5	6	13,3
4	7	15,6
3	13	28,9
2	10	22,2
1	3	6,7
TOTAL	45	100

The Decision establishing the Leonardo da Vinci Programme clearly identifies target groups and systems. The list of potential beneficiaries is quite broad and includes social actors, institutions, organisations from the world of production and so on; the projects within the sample addressed to most of these target.

The limited presence of students, or better of youth, as a target group is an extremely interesting element for reflection. As a matter of fact, it seems that the theme of transparency of competences and of qualifications is perceived as an issue in connection with working life, or with that period which immediately precedes integration into the labour market, as if the problem concerned only a phase of transition, of crisis or of mobility (mainly unintentional).

On the other hand, the significant presence of enterprises (in particular SMEs) and social partners among the direct or potential beneficiaries of the examined projects is quite remarkable, whereas these typologies of subjects are rather under-represented within the Programme.

We can also highlight a considerable presence of the so-called learning facilitators, in the broader sense of the term. Trainers, guidance counsellors, tutors are some of the most recurrent knowledge workers, which demonstrates that innovation and quality are highly depending upon the capacities of these actors in organising and managing knowledge and competence transfer.

Table 12 – Projects’ target groups/systems

TARGET GROUPS/ SYSTEMS	PROJECTS NO.	%
Workers	28	17,6
Trainers	23	14,5
Training agencies /schools	20	12,6
Students	16	10,1
Public institutions	15	9,4
Unemployed people	12	7,5
Guidance counsellors	10	6,3
SMEs	9	5,7
Social partners	7	4,4
Voluntary workers	5	3,1
Tutors	4	2,5
Universities	3	1,9
Employment services /Guidance centres	3	1,9
Development agencies/Chambers of Commerce	2	1,3
Apprentices	1	0,6
Immigrants	1	0,6
TOTAL	159	100

III.2.2 The possible contributions: general and specific objectives of the projects

During the enquiry, the wording of the item of the questionnaire concerning projects' contribution to solve the identified problems and to give a response to the detected needs has turned out to be somehow problematic.

Most probably, the question should have been formulated in a more direct way, in order to avoid any ambiguity between the words “project objective” and “expected result”, as the meaning of the latter is more closely linked to the concept of “contribution”.

With respect to the “approach” and the “methodological solutions” (see below), in general project sheets did not contain any reference to theoretical paradigms, nor did they outline the reasons for choosing a specific support, for developing a “laboratory” testing or for directly involving the identified beneficiaries; only very few projects actually mentioned the importance of technology-based solutions.

What was the contribution of your project to solve these problems? (max 10 lines)

*Describe the **project objectives** with respect to the highlighted needs, as well as the **approach** and **methodological solutions** envisaged*

Therefore, in many cases the answers to Item 2 clearly overlap with those given to the previous question, that is to say the one concerning needs and objectives.

Responses could be analysed only through a significant “manipulation” of the available data, which would not be correct and might constitute a fragile basis for drawing any kind of conclusion; an in-depth reflection on this matter should therefore take place only in a different report, more focused on evaluation and built upon a more precise definition of the field of enquiry.

The reader should therefore refer directly and autonomously to project sheets; we can hereafter draw only some general conclusions:

1. in most cases, transparency of competences and qualifications is just a finish line: the process actually includes several preliminary and equally problematic steps, such as the definition of the target professional profile, the identification and assessment of training needs, the creation of appropriate and innovative training environments, the enhanced accessibility of lifelong training opportunities.

2. the analysed projects, with very few exceptions, need an update, adaptation and further reflection: their contribution has basically the value of an exemplary solution, but very seldom are there models which can be immediately transferred;
3. in general, projects' contributions were tested locally and with "limited figures": even if the transnational dimension was relevant in most cases, yet we have to admit that several steps still need to be taken from pilot testing to concrete application, with particular reference to the necessary cultural and legal changes in the contexts where innovation is to be received.

III.2.3 Results and products: the elaborated tools, processes and models

As project sheets highlight, the initiatives in the sample have implemented a very broad range of products.

A rough estimate – which does not consider possible intermediary results that the involved promoters have certainly not inserted in their descriptions – leads to identify almost 220 concrete outputs; some of these are already being updated and developed through further actions (for instance, in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013), while some others (in a more limited number, actually) are exploited within standard education and training pathways or by enterprises.

What outcomes and products did you develop/are available? (max 15 lines)

*Describe the achievements of the project, focusing on **the results and concrete outputs** implemented.*

For each of the final products, please specify:

- *title and **typology of product** (i.e.: curriculum, training pathway, research report, handbook, etc.);*
- ***typology of support** (i.e.: website, CD-Rom, paper, etc.);*
- ***languages** available,*

*and provide with **short description** of main features.*

In addition to the broad range, it is also interesting to remark that each selected initiative has been able to implement a considerable number of complete outputs and often several language versions.

Only three projects have concentrated their results in one single product, always a research report³⁸.

Table 13 – Quantity of products per project

PRODUCTS	PROJECTS NO.
22	1
13	1

³⁸ The analysis actually highlights that in this case promoters did not mention at least another project output: the website hosting such a report...

12	1
9	2
8	1
7	1
6	5
5	7
4	8
3	9
2	6
1	3
TOTAL	45

Moreover, most outputs have been made available on different supports (paper, electronic version, etc.) and the potential of the Web was fully exploited, thus improving the opportunity to have access to all realised materials. For instance, most of the guides and handbooks are available on paper, on Cd-roms, and on line, while didactic materials have been distributed not only on paper but also through the implementation of a considerable number of telematic platforms.

It is interesting to observe that the definition of a professional profile is the most frequent typology of product: this confirms that transparency of competences and qualifications necessarily implies the redefinition of a job, of its technical and relational contents, of its organisational inter-connections.

The significant production of tools for the assessment of target groups' competences (workers, unemployed people, students, immigrants, etc.) is in itself fully understandable. It is also quite obvious that such kind of outputs is peculiar of those projects focused on validation of non-formal and informal learning.

The large number of such products as glossaries, dictionaries, databases and inventories demonstrates the still strong need to share languages and interpretations: as a matter of fact, if "mutual trust" is the right direction, one of the preliminary requirements to meet is the reduction of any possible misunderstanding in the use of linguistic terms and symbols, in order to decrease existing hindrances in mutual understanding.

Table 14 – Typologies of products/results

PRODUCT TYPOLOGY	NO.	%
Professional profile	27	12,3
Research report	24	11,0
Handbook (paper version)	23	10,5
Website	23	10,5
Handbook (electronic version)*	18	8,2
Curriculum	18	8,2

Handbook (cd-rom version)	15	6,8
Interactive tools	15	6,8
Assessment tools **	12	5,5
Didactic materials	11	5,0
Pilot courses	11	5,0
Glossaries/Dictionaries	8	3,7
Databases/Inventories	8	3,7
Portfolios	4	1,8
Exchange of experiences / Mobility	2	0,9
TOTAL	219	100

* “electronic version” means availability on the web

** we have here considered those tools for the identification and evaluation of competences

English remains the most commonly used language for spreading products’ contents.

As a matter of fact, almost all projects have realised their production, or at least the most significant outputs, in this language³⁹.

The use of German and French (in at least 20-25% of the projects) is in line with the statistical data contained in other studies and reports, while it is worth highlighting that many products are also available in languages which are less widespread in Europe and in the world, such as Italian, Hungarian, Polish, Czech and Slovenian.

The limited availability of products in Spanish can somehow surprise, as this language is used a lot within Leonardo da Vinci, in particular within mobility programmes to Spain (which is one of the favorite destinations for transnational placements and exchanges).

Table 15 – Used languages – Total available products per language

Language	Projects no.
EN	42
DE	14
HU	10
FR	10
IT	9
ES	7
PL	6
SK	6
SI	5
CZ	5
SE	5

³⁹ We have to consider that English is also the most used language for exchanges and communication among partners during project implementation and in most interim tools and deliverables (questionnaires, grids, formats for communication), which are functional for the implementation of the final outputs.

FIN	4
GR	4
NL	4
DK	3
NO	3
LT	2
BG	2
RO	1

To this purpose, it is also interesting to remark that in almost 50% of the cases, products have been implemented in 4 or more different language versions, while in less than 25% of the cases only one language was chosen.

Table 16 – Availability of language versions for products

Language versions	Projects No.	%
7	2	4,4
6	6	13,3
5	6	13,3
4	5	11,1
3	3	6,7
2	10	22,2
1	13	28,9
Total	45	100

III.3 Actual spin-offs: from “laboratory” to reality

The survey has allowed to collect information about the actual or potential exploitation of the results and products implemented by the projects in the sample.

If we take the risk of drawing conclusions which might appear too general, even on the basis of a certain “empathy” with the implementation of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme, we could infer that the results of the survey not only represent the picture of the initiatives involved in the interviews, but can also apply – for most aspects – to all projects on development of innovation (mainly pilot projects), regardless of their specific theme and objectives

In this case, the usefulness of thematic monitoring would be once again confirmed, as the researches and analyses with this objective are too infrequent and too much national-based⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ Actually, if we do not consider the reports on the interim and final evaluation of the Programme, national analyses are little circulated and European ones practically do not exist.

In order to understand the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the results achieved (in other words the effects) by projects characterised by strong innovation and anticipation, the Thematic Group has included a specific and very direct question in the survey grid.

Where and how are your results put into practice? (max 10 lines)

*Describe the **concrete application** of the implemented products within the training systems and practices of partner countries and organisations.*

*Mention also any further **piloting and follow up** of projects results carried out at national / regional / local / sectoral and international level.*

As already mentioned, a significant support was provided by all National Agencies involved in the survey; and the result can be considered as very realistic.

Before going in-depth into the analysis, two introductory remarks need be made.

First of all, effects – and impacts even more – can be detected and measured only if they have enough time to be settled and therefore to become more evident and trustworthy in terms of stability and usefulness of the changes. Actually, most of the interviewed projects had just ended their activities at the moment when the survey was carried out and probably answers to the questionnaire were provided by the promoting organisation. This might have affected the thoroughness and exhaustiveness of the information given, as compliance with the deadline established by the research group might have been privileged with respect to a more complete collection of feedbacks from their respective transnational partners.

Secondly, the possible interpretation of the term “put into practice” needs further reflection.

It is evident that the searchers and the interviewees have a different focus to this purpose:

- searchers start from the assumption that the issue of transparency of competences and qualifications involves mainly institutional contexts and are therefore looking for results at systems’ level, that is to say for effects of structural changes in the field of acknowledgement, validation, valorisation, assessment of competences and qualifications;
- interviewees (project promoters) tend to highlight spin-off effects linked to the implementation of their results – or exploitation of their products – also within one single training initiative or for the benefit of a restricted number of final beneficiaries.

We do not want here to discuss about the “value” and the importance to be given to the results; yet, for the sake of methodological correctness, it is necessary to account for the fact that in many cases, above all those concerning spin-offs on national systems, we had to consider also results which were not so relevant from a quantitative point of view, but yet had an exemplary value, by assuming that they were potentially able to bring about more relevant impacts.

After this introduction, the analysis of the 45 project sheets allows to identify at least 5 different (but in some cases co-existing) typologies of results (of practical applications).

The **first typology** includes the results which are, or have been used within other “projects”.

This means a short-term exploitation of outputs, which does not imply the permanent integration into systems and yet is not less significant. On the contrary, it is an important hint of how the community of Leonardo da Vinci project promoters is able to monitor itself and to find those practices which can be extremely useful to achieve new objectives, with no impact on each own project’s budget and without “reinventing the wheel”.

When the survey was carried out, little less than 10% of the projects had adopted this “survival” strategy.

Sheet 1

“The VQTS model can be used not only for the transfer of competences acquired abroad, but also for other purposes where the transparency of competence profiles is extremely important (e.g. for the development of qualifications and curricula, for composing job profiles or for personnel planning). It also provides better opportunities for comparing qualifications and mapping qualifications against the EQF. The VQTS model is currently used by several European projects: e.g. by the DEQU project (<http://www.dequ-info.net/>) to integrate labour market needs into curriculum design, by the project S-M-E Master (<http://www.sme-master.eu/>) to describe and compare competences in CVET and by the project EASCMF (<http://www.eascmf.eu/>) for designing a sectoral competence framework for the automotive sector. Furthermore, the follow-up project VQTS II has started in December 2007. The VQTS model will be used for identifying the overlapping areas of the competence profiles of VET and HE qualifications and for adjusting VET and HE programmes to be more compatible and to enhance permeability between VET and HE....”

Sheet 29

“Education materials are used for UNDP personnel in Bosnia (developed by Cranfield University);
• *Education material are used for Advanced Vocational Education and Training in Sweden and for piloting transnational education between partner organisations and countries;*
• *Mobility projects between partner organisations and countries have started and others have been planned....”*

Sheet 35

“The regional member networks which were created in new member countries continue to exist and to use the project outcomes further beyond the Leonardo project and plan to prepare new regional projects on the theme of the Recognition of Prior Learning. Outcomes of the EPANIL project have already been widely used in the project “UNIV” (Recognition of the results of informal learning and non-formal education by networks of schools providing the education service for adults); Another project using the outcomes of EPANIL is “NSK - National Qualifications Framework” (see <http://www.nsk.nuov.cz/>), a system project of the Czech Ministry of Education....”

In many cases, the multi-annual duration of the projects has allowed to detect interesting spin-offs also with respect to the economic and social systems and sectors of partner countries.

This information deserves careful consideration in some cases, because – as already mentioned – change can be considered as such only if it has some features of stability, which can reveal themselves only after a certain period.

This **second typology** of results include both more restricted actions, with a limited impact at systems' level (for instance, training courses based on profiles and *curricula* implemented during pilot initiatives, adoption of innovative organisational strategies for managing certain services in an economic sector, adoption of training standards for the recognition of a vocational qualification in a given sector or sub-sector) and initiatives which demonstrate a full integration into existing practices and institutional exploitation of the results, or of part of them.

Sheet 3

“All the participating institutions are at present delivering the courses within their countries. The course concept has been introduced as a module in three different Scandinavian master programs addressed to seafarers and nurses. A Transfer of Innovation project is also at present spreading the concept to other EU member states, with very positive results. The course has been considered interesting also by a number of countries outside the EU and has been recognized by The International Maritime Organization, dealing with all international shipping educational and training standards....”

Sheet 7

“By the end of the project (2003-2005), 29 modules were developed and in the two following years the number was expanded to 68. Altogether 105 modules are planned to be developed (see module catalogue).

Live sessions (4-5 per year) contribute to intensive training and certification. Modules are carefully constructed through multi-disciplinary approach and present a precise set of competences and skills essential for a particular area. The flexibility of the system allows implementation of specific portfolios for the purposes of different target groups. It awards competency-based certification and credits for Continuing Medical Education in the framework of ESPEN (European Society of Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism) on successful completion of the modules.

The programme for the 2006 and 2007 was realised. For 2008 the topics of the modules were selected, their authors were pointed out and assigned; the programme for the live session was developed. Guide Book for users was developed in printed version, in CD and web-line version (in English and Bulgarian). The guide book provides learners with clear, complete, and updated information on the curriculum, modules, courses and certificate requirements, nature of interaction with tutors and administrators, prerequisites; it includes as well LLL system management and a guide of virtual classroom development. The guide helps educators in developing and running the educational programme.

Module Catalogue (printed and CD version in English) containing Core curriculum prepared with the consensus of European experts including syllabus, shaping learning units: modules, with code, credit, short description of learning objectives and key points.

Study Manual for the self-training (printed and CD version in English), contains the modules developed under the project. It is planned as a periodic annual edition that will publish the modules developed in each year. More than 1300 users were registered on the WEB portal. More than 1200 users already participated in LLL courses :

The courses already conducted are:

- LLL First Lecture (10-14 September 2004, Lisbon - PT)*
- LLL Course on Nutrition (17-19 December 2004, Istanbul - TR)*
- LLL Course on Nutrition (16-18 April 2005, Pleven - BG)*
- LLL Course on Nutrition/ESPEN Congress (22-24 October 2006, Istanbul -TR)*
- LLL Course on Nutrition (22-24 April 2006, Belgrade - RS)*
- LLL Course on Nutrition (5-11 May 2007, Maastricht - NL)*
- LLL Course on Nutrition (7-10 September 2007, Prague - CZ)*
- LLL Course on Nutrition (20-25 October 2007, Ljubljana - SI)*
- LLL Course on Nutrition (13-14 November 2007, Moscow - RU)....”*

Sheet 8

"The project materials were recognised and are in use by the partnership including the German Ministry of Defence, who took great interest and joined the project as silent partner. Thanks to the cooperation with external institutions throughout the project and after its conclusion the materials have been made available to the UK Ministry of Defence and Defence School of Languages, Hungarian Ministry of Defence and Defence Academy, Latvian Ministry of Defence and Military School of Languages, Romanian Ministry of National Defence, Bulgarian Ministry of Defence and General Staff of the Bulgarian Army, University of Westminster, acting as the UK Ministry of Defence Language Examination Board, and other relevant institutions and interested parties...."

Sheet 12

"The Helsinki Polytechnic has implemented the TTT tools in the planning of the Further qualification for the live performance technics-curriculum. The program will start on 2008 and the tools are directly used in the development of the studyprogram.

The Finnish National Opera is using the Make a profile-tool to assess the training needs and job descriptions of the staff.

TEAD has implemented the results in their activities as consultants for education and training. The competency analysis and comparison tool is used to evaluate and assess the existing programs and to define new programs.

Dramatiska Institutet is currently delivering programmes and courses of different length and developed with the competence descriptions defined in the competency analyse tool...."

Sheet 14

"The vocational training systems in all of the partner countries are profiting from an innovative new occupational profile. In some cases, that profile has already been implemented (Slovenia, UK - Part 1-Spain), while in other cases preparations for implementation have been completed and the profile will subsequently be introduced by the official agents of the vocational training system (Austria, Lithuania, UK - Part 2- Greece). Due to the regulatory background in Germany, the VET system in that country is profiting indirectly, through the creation of materials for training skilled workers for the area of closed loop waste economy. Moreover, tests of the compatibility of a credit structure respecting the learning-process orientation and examining the assignment of credits to core learning areas of the occupational profile of Eco-Recycler were conducted...."

Sheet 16

"The partner countries will be using the material in new pilots in banking and transfer sectors, as well as in the training of assessors and advisers in the validation process. Most countries are working on establishing a pathway for the methodology in their countries at a national level through cooperation with relevant stakeholders.

The ETSC in Iceland will validate a new group in banking early year 2008 through cooperation with banks, educational provider and relevant stakeholders.

Slovenia plans a project which in cooperation with Centres for lifelong learning in Slovenia, the title "Recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the centres of lifelong learning"...."

Sheet 19

"The application will be implemented through a set of training courses in Hungary, Czech Republic and Italy. The first train-the-trainer courses have been held in Hungary with the relevant training institutions. Further piloting will be held in the above countries in the first half of 2008.

Follow-up and implementation will be carried out at national level by the different ANB's (Authorized National Body) in the project countries. EWF as an European umbrella organization will follow up the project at European level..."

Sheet 22

"Concrete application of project results will be made according to the following strategy:

1. short-term (1 year)

- harmonization of nursing curriculum with EU standards for undergraduate level at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Victor Babes" Timisoara (RO);

2. medium-term (1-2 years)

- joint-master degree curricula in community nursing and geriatric nursing developed by the partner institutions..."

Sheet 23

"Proposed standards are to be handed to port authorities from all countries involved in the project;

- Courses developed will be available for minimum 5 years on project's web-page;
- Two pilot courses have been carried out at Constanta Harbour School;
- A continuous dialogue is maintained with interested stakeholders from all countries involved;
- Twin centres will be continuing their activity after the project conclusion..."

Sheet 25

"As for the target group, the access to and quality of training of the career counsellors were improved by this project in several countries.

As for the sector, the project is cross-sectoral. Therefore it has a huge potential for sectoral transfer.

In Slovakia:

- the project tried to introduce new professions in the Slovak labour market "career counsellors";
- the project more or less introduced e-learning in the field of counselling;
- the project created a good starting position for development of higher education study programme in the field of counselling. Such type of higher education study does not yet exist in Slovakia;
- on the basis of the project outputs, a provision was incorporated in the amendment of the Higher Education Act in 2003, according to which higher education institutions are obliged to provide students with counselling services;
- the results of this project are in line with Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on employment services which states that counsellors must have completed higher education;
- the Ministry of Education of the Slovakia included in the Main Tasks Plan for 2004 for the contractor the following priority task "Proposal of Career Counselling Strategy in the Slovak Republic" based on the analyses of career counselling which were prepared in the framework of this project.

In the Czech Republic the project results will broaden the university offer in the field of career counselling and lifelong learning experts specialising in career counselling who work in schools and educational facilities.

In Germany before June 2004 almost all the career counsellors were trained at the University of Applied Sciences of the Bundesanstalt für Arbeit (now Bundesagentur für Arbeit Federal Labour Office) in Mannheim. There were plans to create new training courses for career counsellors in 2005, because the above-mentioned university went a far-reaching transformation process. The results of this project were taken into account. The plans to integrate the modules in this new training courses were discussed with representatives of the university in Mannheim and the Central Employment Agency in Bonn as the head of the new European Competence Centres.

In The Netherlands the modules can broaden educational offer for career counsellors and it will be used as part of courses offered on the labour market.

In Spain the modules will be used as part of university study for teachers in counselling departments, educative counselling teams, practice tutors in vocation training courses, labour counsellors, professionals of lifelong and occupational training, trainers and counsellors in the area of labour market.

In Ireland the modules will be used for further training of career counsellors form lifelong learning..."

Sheet 26

"Pilot project results are constantly on the table for change of legislation. Using the project proposals means preparing common need for increasing of the level of driving training. It is long a way but we are not yet at the beginning. The process runs: it is already valid for Slovakia, the project results are in intention of Bulgaria, some of project results are supporting Finnish training of driving instructors

Sheet 30

"Nine colleges applied for the accreditation within the project. They needed to submit a self-evaluation report and were visited by a visitation panel. The whole process made the programmes aware of their strengths and weaknesses, thus enabling them to improve their quality.

The visitation panels made recommendations to the programmes and to Acovene for further improvement of the programmes.

All known veterinary nurse programmes in Europe will be stimulated to apply for the accreditation after the pilot project.

Graduates from accredited colleges can find jobs in other countries more easily. For example: the UK has decided to accept these graduates as veterinary nurses in the UK, while they previously needed to go through a lengthy process to prove their competences and level of education..."

Sheet 31

"The most tangible impact of EFA Certification is that the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Sweden and Hungary have already had training courses certified by the process developed through the project. In the case of Sweden and Hungary, the courses were developed as a direct result of the tools

developed during the project. The impact on not for profit organisations in these countries has already been felt, as fundraisers who are trained to a higher standard better implement practices (both technically and ethically) and raise more money for causes and beneficiaries of their organisations. Furthermore, and as a direct result of the dissemination process, countries outside of the direct project partners have begun to use the EFA Certification tools to develop their own training. So far, Austria, Finland, Poland, Ukraine, The Netherlands have expressed a direct interest in applying for certification during 2008 courses developed as a result of EUROFRAT....”

Sheet 36

“Each partner has exploited the results when planning and implementing future entrepreneurship training programmes. In Finland e.g. the model programme has been introduced in the frame of graduate entrepreneurship courses with an attempt to promote entrepreneurship training within universities....”

Sheet 38

“The portfolio and the guide have been used:

- 1) in France, for training sessions proposed for volunteers and associations (by Iriv and Cicos) and for assessing voluntary skills (in Afen, the University of Maine and the Direction for Youth and Sports);*
 - 2) in Germany, to accompany volunteers in seeking for a job (DPVW);*
 - 3) in Austria, for the training of volunteers (VÖV);*
 - 4) in Italy, for the training of volunteers and as a human resources tool for associations (FIVOL);*
 - 5) in Poland and Hungary, for training sessions for volunteers proposed by the two national volunteers centre partners of the project;*
 - 6) in the United Kingdom, for training sessions for volunteers in partnership with Volunteering England and in the context of management of volunteering (at the University of East London).*
- In France, a follow up of the AVE project has been the integration of the results in order to propose a common method for assessing skills and competences for volunteers, sportsmen and people back from foreign countries, a project lead by Iriv together with the National Agency for Employment (www.mitec.biz)....”*

It is understandable that the economic and social systems/sectors in the countries of partner organisations are involved, interested and aware and therefore more willing to acknowledge the results and to adopt them, while the interest from countries not included in project partnerships is less expected.

Yet, we found hints of such an attention in little less than 18% of the sample.

According to our classification, this is a **third typology** of result, which in our views might depend upon:

1. the quality of implemented products;
2. the existence of common needs with respect to partner countries, which yet did not imply the choice of a direct participation to the project by organisations from other countries;
3. an effective marketing, dissemination and valorisation of achieved results, through devoted investments and exploitation of partners' networks.

Sheet 3

“A Transfer of Innovation project is also at present spreading the concept to other EU member states, with very positive results. The course has been considered interesting also by a number of countries outside the EU and has been recognized by The International Maritime Organization, dealing with all international shipping educational and training standards....”

Sheet 28

“The ITM Worldwide concept is now part of the services offered to SMEs by Trade Organisations in Sweden, Norway, Slovenia but also in Namibia and South Africa soon followed by Lithuania, Iceland, Greece and Hungary. A new company has been created - ITM Worldwide - to sell and implement this concept in more countries worldwide and coordinate the joint international seminars....”

Sheet 31

“Furthermore, and as a direct result of the dissemination process, countries outside of the direct project partners have begun to use the EFA Certification tools to develop their own training. So far, Austria, Finland, Poland, Ukraine, The Netherlands have expressed a direct interest in applying for certification during 2008 courses developed as a result of EUROFRAT...”

The activities carried out by the concerned initiatives have not necessarily, and not only, led to the achievement of direct results within target systems or sectors. In some cases, there is a **fourth typology** of effect and way of exploiting project results, and namely the *consolidation of networks* – often at sectoral or institutional level – where dialogue and exchange can be maintained and developed.

Sheet 2

“The common qualification is totally or partly implemented in seven countries (FR, GR, IT, NL, PO, RO, SI), 157 training centres being involved in this process starting with the school year 2007/2008. A network of training centres was created, 25 training centres out of 157 are involved in this network. The implementation is foreseen in short time within other three countries (BE, ES, CH). Student mobility exchanges abroad will start next school year (September 2008)....”

A very significant number of projects has adopted a strategy of results exploitation implying the submission of new applications, in order to obtain additional resources for transferring, adapting and updating already implemented materials. The Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 is the context where many applications will be or have already been submitted.

In some cases, we could directly verify that among the initiatives approved within the action Transfer of Innovation there are some projects actually originating from those in our sample.

This **fifth typology** of result certainly indicates that there is a need for a Community tool allowing to overcome the stage of advanced testing, “in laboratory”, which was peculiar of the first two programming periods of Leonardo da Vinci, and built so as to better meet the exigency of a qualitative evolution of the educational social and economic systems of European countries.

As a matter of fact, it is worth reminding that the initiatives approved in the past programming periods were basically aimed at finding innovative solutions to meet and somehow to anticipate existing needs: they were more focused on testing and “discovery”, based upon broader partnerships – so as to gather the maximum multiplicity of perspectives and experiences as a basis for their working hypotheses –,

less “responsible” for the generated impact, but more careful to create the conditions for a proper transparency and dissemination of products.

The objectives linked to valorisation strategies have only recently been set out (just in the years when the projects of our sample were running their activities).

Sheet 11

“We are working with some of the partners on a new project proposal, the idea of which is to transfer the project result to further sectors, to further educational institutions and workplaces as well as to further countries. The new project also aims at further developing the products, at adjusting and localizing them according to the local needs and at translating them into further languages. This new project would then be supported by student mobility projects. In addition, the products would be transferred from the Virtual Campus to the Moodle environment, which is easier to use and is freely accessible to the participants.

Various interviews have shown that, for example, the following issues should be tackled to improve the vocational skills demonstrations system: 1) Language skills of students, teachers and workplace instructors should be improved; 2) All parties within the network should commit themselves to the guidelines; 3) Teachers and workplace instructors should be given further training in design, organisation and evaluation of vocational skills demonstrations.

Efforts will be made to include at least the training of teachers and workplace instructors in the new project proposal....”

Sheet 6

“The products are just the theoretical basis and a beginning which will serve for developing language competence certification tools for the vocations (LCCTV) within the framework of a new project under the LLP. A new project with this title will provide the methodology for developing these tests and will enable the team to write the tests....”

Sheet 10

“The revised curriculum is intended for an even larger group of people. The results of the revision work are being put to use in the ECVET 2 project. Funding was received to continue the project in 2007-2008 for three students....”

Sheet 16

“It will be of utmost importance to continue dissemination of project process and results in order to encourage others to use the methodology in new sectors and take the methods and tools further. The representatives in the professional task groups of the project can assist in making this option sustainable for employees the pilot companies/sectors, so time must be spent on continuing developments with them and other interested and relevant stakeholders. A Transfer of innovation project may be a good start for dissemination in new sectors...”

Sheet 20

“Concrete applications of the projects results are as follows:

- Creation of Polish Association of Building Managers (www.psbm.pl) – the national association gathering managers in construction. PSMB is fully recognized by UK organisation – Chartered Institute of Building and PSMB is a member of AEEBC (The Association of European Building Surveyors and Construction Experts). The main benefit of PSMB membership is the set of recognised managerial qualifications in construction across EU (AEEBC gathered organisations from 15 EU countries);*
- Creation and successful application for LdV project PL/06/B/P/PP/174014 (2006-2008) titled: “Common Learning Outcomes for European Managers in Construction”....”*

Sheet 24

“The results of the works will be used:

- on vocational subjects – floristry, arranging;*
- on practical trainings;*
- in other exchanges of teachers in partnership;*
- in application of experiences to curriculum;*

- realization of new projects in supranational level (project SK/07/LVD/PRO/01-73230364 FLOARNETS Teachers INTernational competent – FLOARNETS partnership 2007)....”

Sheet 29

“Education materials are used for UNDP personnel in Bosnia (developed by Cranfield University);
• Education material are used for Advanced Vocational Education and Training in Sweden and for piloting transnational education between partner organisations and countries;
• Mobility projects between partner organisations and countries have started and others have been planned....”

Sheet 41

“Furthermore, moving from VAI experience other projects have been conceived and implemented as, for example, the Leonardo Pilot Project “OVER – Trainers' training to valorise all forms of adults learning” in which VAI results represent a concrete basis for further investigations.....”

Sheet 42

“Last year training courses targeted to the Guidance counsellors working in the Guidance Centres of the Municipality of Rome were organised. During these training courses the portfolio methodology was tested. Through a new Leonardo Transfer of Innovation project “TIPEIL” the model of the digital portfolio will be transferred to the operators....”

III.4 Open challenges and possible areas for developments: the point of view of the interviewees

We have already remarked that the time available for searchers to carry out in-depth reflections on outcomes and possible developments was certainly not enough.

Yet, when conceiving the survey tool the Group decided to insert a question aiming at stimulating such a reflection, as it was asked to promoters to identify on one hand open challenges and on the other hand the potential for results development and the possible integrations or evolutions of the implemented products.

Only some of the responses have developed both issues.

Some promoters focused on the perspectives and indentified in some cases “bottlenecks” and preliminary conditions and assumptions, or sometimes even real strategies for actions; some others rather focused on the issue of the utility of their own products, by evaluating their respective limits and outlining changes, developments and integrations.

The searchers tried to cluster these responses, with all the difficulties due to the extreme conciseness of the available information, and identified **6 challenges** and **4 strategies**.

For each challenge and strategy, we have selected some abstracts of the responses given.

III.4.1 Open challenges

Challenge 1: Improving the active involvement of national and supranational institutions

The active involvement of institutions and, more in general, of policy and decision makers is far more evident in the sample projects than in other similar initiatives in the framework of the same Programme.

This participation is extremely important, as the issue will have a formal implementation in the coming years and is bound to have a strong impact on the organisation of the education and training provision of every European country.

Yet, many interviewees think that the road ahead is still rather long and complicated and, despite the difficulties, the involvement of the above mentioned actors needs be enhanced, otherwise the achieved results, even if encouraging and concrete, will have little sustainability.

Sheet 13

“The most important challenge seems to be the recognition of project results by responsible bodies all over Europe, in terms of common agreement on the criteria for assessment procedures. Although the project approach was from the very beginning linked to already existing, more or less publicly recognised structures in member states, and has found a lot of interest in discussions with several stakeholders, it cannot be expected that the above mentioned issue can be met in short time. These problems have to be solved within the development of Zones of Mutual Trust...”

Sheet 3

“The challenge ahead is primarily to get an international acceptance of the course content and curriculum, which is well underneath the required minimum set by the IMO. Another challenge is also to convince the European Parliament that there is a need to develop a EU standard for all maritime education and training, leading to a situation where all needed certificates actually has the same content within the maritime educational institutions of the member states, giving all the European seafarers possible access to all vessels registered in any of the member states...”

Sheet 14

“The results from and experiences gained through the “European KeyOccupation Profile” project should be discussed with experts from other sectors, in order to promote dissemination of the innovative elements therein.

The design of occupational profiles having a European orientation from the onset represents a considerable contribution towards the establishment of a clearly contoured European educational landscape. This is in accordance with Strategic Objective 3 (Opening up education and training systems to the wider world). At system level, it is difficult to harmonize occupational profiles in Europe, since the VET systems differ so greatly from one to another. However, the work-process oriented European occupational profile can be rationally implemented in national systems, as in terms of content it is structured only on the basis of work tasks – an approach which is extremely promising for many other sectors...”

Sheet 17

“A key challenge in VET is the status of unaccredited short-term sectoral/professional training courses as this depends on recognition in National Qualifications Frameworks. But work placements, on-the-job training, short courses are often not part of national awards. Providing a Master List of competences is only one step in the recognition process. Competences have to be transformed into Learning Outcomes which can be evaluated, validated, and awarded credits, following the European Qualifications Framework proposals. Using the tools developed in the WAVE project, the WAVE partners wish to test how certain types of lifelong learning acquisition can fit into the EQF using the aquaculture sector as a proposed sectoral framework...”

Challenge 2: Broadening the networks towards new organisations and countries

According to many interviewees, the integration of experiences into existing systems and practices needs further debate and contributions from actors which operate in different contexts with respect to the one where products and results were implemented.

Broadening the networks and establishing communities of practice is certainly a way and a tool to verify the usefulness of results and the sustainability of solutions.

The challenge concerns the quality level that these networks will be able/allowed to achieve in disseminating and valorising the results, so as to allow a full understanding of results contents and a proper adaptation to new contexts and sectors.

Sheet 2

“Although the Leonardo COMINTER project has come to its end, the project has wide development perspectives ahead. The challenge is to keep extending the network of countries (training centres and companies) involved in the COMINTER implementation. The development could: 1) work in a bilateral way, joining a country already involved in the project and a new country, the first one guiding the second one in the implementation process; 2) take the form of a new Leonardo Transfer of Innovation project, with the constitution of a multilateral partnership of countries not yet involved and willing to develop the common qualification using the COMINTER methodology.

Another challenge is to encourage the transfer of this methodology to other fields....”

Sheet 31

“EFA will continue to develop its training and development role, building capacity in countries where fundraising is emerging, and ensuring the strengthening of a unique platform which reinforces national fundraising associations and brings tangible benefits to fundraisers from all over Europe. Specifically, EFA proposed a new strategic plan to its members at its General Assembly in October 2007, which outlined next steps for the organisation.

The biggest challenge faced by EFA is that one of continuing the development of its activity towards new member states with emerging fundraising sectors whilst balancing the economic model of the organisation. Core funding will be a key issue in establishing successful development...”

Sheet 35

“The new member states (MS) have not enough experience in the area of the APL. It is necessary to make a link to the experience of the old EU MS in this area and to accepting the Common European Principles on the Identification and Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (CEP) and develop the LLL approaches in new MS as well as to make a significant contribution to the E&T 2010 Work Programme by reflecting upon the CEP. It is necessary to demonstrate how the APL can contribute to the development of flexible regional labour markets by developing compatible approaches across national systems. It is also necessary to give the “old” MS a “fresh” angle on the APL processes and procedures that can be implemented and review the overall APL process, highlighting a variety of issues, and most of all the need for a referent throughout the whole process from the information stage to the implementation of outcomes, and the importance of special guidance and support for target groups most in need of qualification such as unemployed people or those in danger of losing their jobs...”

Sheet 38

“The main challenges related to the AVE project is to transfer its results, tool and method to other target groups such as the local councillors who are working a lot with associations and whose activities, especially for the small and very small cities and villages are very similar to the ones fulfilled by volunteers in associations.

Another challenge would be to propose this portfolio and guide to all the European countries as a useful human resources tool for volunteers to be used by associations. Three of the 27 national centres

for volunteers have been informed and convinced (Hungary, Poland and United Kingdom). The other ones are still reluctant to use and promote a tool and method yet too much professional. A last challenge would be to promote the AVE tool as a complement of the Europass as far as the voluntary experience is concerned, to value this specific part of informal and non-formal learning....”

Challenge 3: Updating and further testing

Even if the concerned projects are commonly defined as “good practices”, there is a strong risk of obsolescence of products contents and technological means to circulate them. Fast changes, including the evolution of reference regulations, require constant efforts and investments to maintain the effectiveness and efficiency of results.

Moreover, many testing activities, even if they were rigorously carried out, are yet limited to some specific territories and contexts: we can understand that this might depend upon budgetary restrictions and yet often testing was under-dimensioned with respect to the need to thoroughly experiment innovation and its capacity to permeate target systems and sectors.

Sheet 4

“The further development of DISCO will of course have to focus on the improvement of terminology and services. Based on the DISCO thesaurus lots of development perspectives are possible. The terminology could be further developed by using semantic web technologies supporting for example automated analysis of job ads from different countries. On the other hand, test implementations on the websites of public institutions, job services or companies could bring practically proven input for the further development of specific sectors of the DISCO thesaurus....”

Sheet 23

“This project identified a lot of other shipping areas for which standardization and international cooperation is necessary. It is clear that in the maritime field, students are trained in less developed countries of European Union and they are carrying out their activities either on board vessels managed by companies based in more developed countries of European Union or in companies based in those countries....”

Sheet 15

“The evolving topic of eBusiness requires regular updating of the training material. The utilization of the training material and method for new sectors calls for some customization. The web-based training tool is currently just informative but could be made interactive and database linked. This project has developed, tested and produced training material. This material and method can now be put through the process of credit transfer validation....”

Sheet 19

“Challenges ahead will be content creation that covers a wider spectre in the field of plastic welding as well as translation of content to different national languages. This may be done in new projects. A wider dissemination of the project findings will be important for future implementation on a wide European basis.

The use of new visual collaboration and communication technologies, which stimulates the students, will also require that future work must cover an education of teachers and instructors in this field as well....”

Challenge 4: Improving methodologies and tools for assessing and validating the results

Many examined projects – if we take a look for instance at their respective websites – developed an interesting activity of self-monitoring and self-evaluation.

The responses given in the survey allow to infer a need to enhance this typology of action, for the purpose of validation but also and above all for gathering hints and suggestions for an adaptation and updating of the implemented results and products. Moreover, a more sophisticated and in-depth evaluation can allow also a better and more specific definition of the priorities on which to concentrate the actions and investments, even and in particular in the framework of the Lifelong Learning programme 2007-2013.

Sheet 27

“The elaboration of a system for the recognition and certification of competences with reliable tools, useful at transnational level means a great challenge, due to both the industrial development and cultural differences existing in the European countries and more precisely those participating in the project partnership.

On the other hand, this system should be “credible”, that is, the different agents (companies, trade unions, workers and administration) should rely on the measurement results, which is also a hard work. The evaluations are justified by the value given to them by the political system, the market and people. In this respect, they are like a coin, whose value depends on the market’s opinion. It is therefore necessary that the device has credibility and reliability for all the agents.....”

Sheet 45

“The system is constantly developed and updated with new questions and answers every year. The IT system will be developed with new possibilities. The validation system will contribute to market oriented requirements and will push for additional courses and reforms in the existing vocational schools. The validation system will be an important tool in the work to define higher standards and quality in a country’s training system. Changes of courses and attempts to meet the requirements of educated people working in the industry have already started in Sweden by the education system...”

Challenge 5: Increasing the relevance and coherence with the community arrangements ECVET, EQF and Europass

One of the limits of “advanced” testing, and of laboratory actions in general, is often represented by the limited relevance of such testing with respect to what happens in the “real society”, which is made of complex, articulated and specific regulations, cultures, constraints and opportunities. Leonardo da Vinci was the laboratory of innovation *par excellence* and its role to this purpose was certainly positive and sometimes extremely valuable.

Yet the amount of investments – which are now considerable in their global value – and the need to measure the related payback must lead to look for sustainable solutions, in order to functionally and rationally support broad policies and strategies at both European and national level.

Some European arrangements, such as frameworks or really shared tools, must more and more represent the context where to concentrate the adaptation and updating of achieved products and

results, with a view to allow their consolidation and a continuous verification of the correctness of the adopted strategy and operational solutions.

Sheet 5

The challenges foreseen are related to establishing connections to and between ECVET, EQF, Europass and a set of common principles which allow individuals to prove the validity of the information they present. Specifically the information related to the learning outcomes, competencies and qualifications. These challenges can be summarised as:

- providing all European individuals with access to a friendly and user centric management environment which allows ownership and total control of their competencies and qualifications throughout episodes of eLearning, employment and interaction with HR services from a life long learning perspective;

- enhancing European citizens' awareness of the challenges related to building online professional profiles, the issues related to managing digital identities and data and privacy issues;

- promoting effective online job search strategies in order to improve academic and professional mobility amongst Member States;

- promoting exchange and cooperation between European Union institutions, key stakeholders such as: vocational educators and training providers; vocational education, training authorities and social partners; eLearning and the recruitment industry; and standardization bodies. This includes a spectrum of individuals such as students, active and passive job seekers and workers;

- fostering work on interoperability issues to increase the actual value of the Europass by introducing a level of trust in the data which is presented through validation of transcriptions and records of credit and certification of data that the individual declares..."

Challenge 6: Finding resources to ensure sustainability, maintenance and updating of results

Money, money, money

Producing innovation is expensive, but maintaining it is not cheaper. As we have already outlined, many of the financed initiatives need to be further updated and integrated.

Quite often partnerships possess competences and know-how which are developed in their daily work regardless of their economic capacity and institutional role. Used funds are mainly public, and the cash-flow is often discontinuous and delayed. In many cases promoters think that participating to new calls for proposals is the only way to be able to continue their work: this strategy is clearly risky and weak.

The private market and a better programming in the use of public resources, more focused on "useful" innovation, might offer more effective solutions.

Sheet 4

"An open issue is how a permanent maintenance of the DISCO services can be financed and organised..."

Sheet 30

"The main challenge ahead is to make sure other colleges apply for the accreditation. This is needed to make Acovene financially feasible and to give further credibility to the accreditation system..."

Sheet 33

"Sustainability and the ongoing development of the original aims of the project will require funding and an overarching supportive infrastructure. Discussions are currently in progress with the European Society of Pediatric Research to explore whether they, as a European training and research

organisation, would be prepared to take “ownership” of the VLE. The project Partners have already expressed their interest and ongoing support in the future development of the VLE as the portal for the continuing vocational training and life long learning of junior doctors. The feasibility of developing further modules for the syllabus and the establishment of an online European neonatal vocational training community are all distinct possibilities which could be easily facilitated and managed within the current VLE. However, funding, quality assurance, the definition of a common accreditation framework, protected study time for participants and ongoing evaluation would all have to be considered and robust solutions implemented....”

III.4.2 Strategies for action

Strategy 1: Broadening experiments

Already mentioned among the challenges, the action of broadening the basis of experiments is considered by many of the interviewees as the first and most urgent action to develop. It is not only a matter of a quantitative increase, but also of verifying the possibility to test the contents of new product versions and of identifying different preliminary organisational conditions for the application of existing products. This is often done by designing new applications in order to pursue this objective.

Sheet 1

“The VQTS project has developed a method for the description of work-related competences and their acquisition. Since the comprehensiveness of these descriptions will only become clear through practice, it is necessary to test the method in different sectors and for different purposes. An important issue is also the further development of methodological expertise to moderate processes (expert workshops) for drawing up descriptions of work-related competences. Furthermore, developments on national and European levels have to be taken into consideration: in the context of the development of qualifications frameworks, several measures are taken to promote the elaboration and clarification of key terms, in particular, the concepts of learning outcomes and competences. The VQTS model can contribute to these discussions, but it might also be necessary to adapt the VQTS approach to new developments. Some of these challenges will be addressed in the follow-up project VQTS II....”

Sheet 22

- “1. Implementation and development of an on line e-learning Masters program in Nursing with following courses: Nursing Education (training for teachers and trainers), Nursing Health Care Leadership, Nursing Administration and a portfolio for Family Nurse (Gerontology, Complementary Therapies, Occupational Therapy, Mental Health);*
- 2. Design of joint curricular modules for MSc in Nursing;*
- 3. To offer a platform of exchange of experience and knowledge between countries through imaging/ digital libraries and exchange of best practice trends;*
- 4. To set criteria for quality management to respond to education and training needs in Nursing....”*

Strategy 2: Involving other sectors

A significant part of the concerned initiatives has developed models and toolkits which are not necessarily designed for specific sectors or organisational contexts.

This allows to infer that this set of “free-content” products is available to be tested and transferred to different sectors and new target groups.

A relevant number of interviewees has identified exactly in this strategy the direction to be undertaken.

As it can intuitively be understood, this is the most expensive development, but also the most interesting and profitable one in terms of valorisation of the initial investment.

Sheet 11

"We are working with some of the partners on a new project proposal, the idea of which is to transfer the project result to further sectors, to further educational institutions and workplaces as well as to further countries. The new project also aims at further developing the products, at adjusting and localizing them according to the local needs and at translating them into further languages. This new project would then be supported by student mobility projects. In addition, the products would be transferred from the Virtual Campus to the Moodle environment, which is easier to use and is freely accessible to the participants.

Various interviews have shown that, for example, the following issues should be tackled to improve the vocational skills demonstrations system: 1) Language skills of students, teachers and workplace instructors should be improved; 2) All parties within the network should commit themselves to the guidelines; 3) Teachers and workplace instructors should be given further training in design, organisation and evaluation of vocational skills demonstrations..."

Sheet 8

"The Linguaepeace Europe results are easily transferable to other sectors given the multilateral nature of Peacekeeping, which involves sectors such as: transport, communications, construction, manufacturing, non-governmental organisations, health and social work, public administration and extra-territorial organisations. All means envisaged by the Dissemination and Sustainability Action Plans will be used for the purpose of enlarging the Linguaepeace Europe project area in terms of other relevant groups, sectors, geographic areas. Special attention will be paid to establishing and maintaining close cooperation with extraterritorial organisations such as UNDPKO, NATO, Partnership for Peace, OSCE, Eurocorps..."

Strategy 3: Using more accessible technologies

Accessibility is one of the quality criteria for training products and systems in general. Hindrances and barriers to the use of existing options and possibilities to improve one's own competences, to take aware decisions, to increase one's own "marketability" on the labour market, are real diseconomies and need to be removed if we want to achieve a society where competitiveness is really knowledge-based.

New technologies are called to play a significant role to this purpose. The dissemination of communication tools and channels, as well as the adaptation to the language features which are necessary for transferring didactic and pedagogical contents, encourage all those interviewees who expressed the need to adopt different supports for their own results and products.

Digital portfolios, electronic platforms for training content management, paper tool turning into interactive electronic tools are only some of the evolutions envisaged for already implemented products.

Sheet 42

"The new TOI project "TIPEIL" will be aimed at facilitating the use of the digital portfolio by improving the ICT aspect in order to adapt the technology and to make it more user friendly for operators..."

Strategy 4: Integrating products with training kits for operators entrusted with facilitating products utilisation (trainers, tutors, counselors, ...)

Among the panel of interviewees there is a widespread opinion, which is shared also by the authors of this report, that the produced innovation needs “filters” and the expertise of facilitators, who can support the understanding and integration of the identified solutions into existing systems and practices.

This could be the role of trainers, tutors, counsellors, employment and guidance services operators, who do not necessarily possess all the required competences to carry out this task properly and effectively.

Therefore, for some interviewees, the development of training and refreshing pathways for this category of facilitators and “ambassadors” of innovation is exactly one of the priority strategy for short-term work.

Sheet 36

Our research demonstrated that within entrepreneurship training a good facilitator or mentor is not only a pedagogic expert but also someone having a deep knowledge and understanding of the content, entrepreneurship, as the content and process are to be taken forward and tandem. This brings great challenges to educators in the field of entrepreneurship as only few educators are experienced enough in entrepreneurship and pedagogy at the same time. Also an important question is how the learning outcomes are transferred into practice.

IV. Conclusions

The conclusions which can be drawn from the work of the Thematic group on Transparency, Credit transfer and validation as presented in this Report, concern two different aspects:

- on one hand, a brief balance of the activities and impact of the Group and more in general of the Thematic monitoring initiative (Chapter II);
- on the other hand, the main results of the on-field survey on relevant projects, which is extensively presented at Chapter III.

The Thematic Group has been working together for more than two years. This fruitful cooperation has allowed to get some important achievements, but has also highlighted some difficulties which is worth mentioning also as a lesson for a possible continuation of this activity.

Among the encountered difficulties, content-related, we can include:

- the complexity of the related policy issues, which have implications on education and training strategies and programmes, on employment policies, on contractual negotiations, on the structure itself of the labour market;
- the significant differences among national systems and practices in the field (e.g., great variety of existing qualifications, in terms of contents, duration and level of related training pathways; different modalities for achieving qualifications; different approaches with respect to the acknowledgement of non-formal and informal learning), but also within a single national system among different territorial or sectoral levels;
- the multiplicity of actors involved in the process at European/national/local/sectoral level and the different roles they play in their respective context;
- the complexity of the methodological approach adopted at European level (focus on learning outcomes, integration of formal and non-formal/informal pathways, attribution of credit points to single units of a qualification, etc.);
- the necessity of fine-tuning and sharing a common terminology, able to overcome the highlighted differences and at the same time to represent all the variety of existing experiences and contexts;

- the lack of a common European platform containing information on ongoing and finalised projects in the concerned themes and providing the results and products of the pilot experiences;
- the difficulty to measure the relevance of field initiatives which were mostly conceived and approved when the European context was much less structured than it is now;
- the time constraints (the Thematic Group was awarded a one-year period to perform its activities).

While in terms of achievements, the work done has definitely fostered:

- more awareness on the themes of transparency of qualifications, credit transfer in VET and validation of non-formal and informal learning, in particular among project promoters and stakeholders at European and national/sectoral level;
- more awareness about the Leonardo da Vinci and the Lifelong Learning Programme, as well as and about the Thematic Monitoring initiative, among project promoters, stakeholders at European and national/sectoral level and decision-makers;
- more chances of a dialogue between decision makers, stakeholders and practitioners;
- more in-depth knowledge about relevant and interesting projects and results, as a basis to support further valorisation, transfer (also through the new Leonardo da Vinci measure supporting transfer of innovation) and mainstreaming into training systems and practices;
- more theme-based and focused counselling to potential applicants by the National Agencies responsible for the management of the Lifelong Learning Programme.

As for the analysis on projects, Chapter III of the Report opened by defining two main aims for the on-field survey:

- on one hand to verify how partnerships, which were mainly and in average set up five years ago, were aware of having acted not only to meet identified and already existing needs but also in terms

of anticipation and relevance with respect to policies and strategies which are expressed in “passwords”, formula and definitions nowadays better defined and identified;

- on the other hand to increase this awareness by stimulating project promoters to participate to the survey, which asked them to redefine their experience and to summarise it by extracting the more political and strategical contents with respect to those contents concerning local or sectoral responses to equally local and sectoral needs.

In other words, the heuristic process had to contribute to switch from the dimension of a pilot project to the one of a model of intervention (more reproducible and transferrable).

This objective seems to be substantially achieved, if we consider the concrete strategies identified by promoters themselves and the list of challenges which are still open.

We can therefore conclude that the interviewed projects have all good chances to become in the coming months a real community of practice, where despite the specific features of each one, there are common and mutually interesting links, interests, needs and ideas.

Bibliography

Bibliographical references for this document can be found on the website of the Thematic Group <http://www.tg4transparency.com/> and in the area **Documents** of the Cd-Rom Final Report.

Annex

Infosheets of the projects involved in the survey

Project sheet no. 1

Project Title	VQTS - Vocational Qualification Transfer System	Project Number	A/03/B/F/PP-158034
Project Promoter	3s research laboratory	Cluster	Credit transfer
Contact Name	Karin Luomi-Messerer	Country	Austria
Address	Wiedner Hauptstr. 18 - 1040 Vienna (AT)	Telephone	+43 1 5850915 41
Project Website	http://www.vocationalqualification.net	E_mail	luomi-messerer@3s.co.at
Project Partners	ibw (AT) - öibf (AT) - HTL Graz-Göding (AT) - HTL St. Pölten (AT) - Siemens AG Österreich (AT) - Voith Paper St. Pölten (AT) - bm:bwk (AT) - bm:wa (AT) - WKÖ (AT) - ÖGB (Gewerkschaft Metall-Textil) (AT) - NUOV (CZ) - Cirius (DK) - EUC Syd (DK) - Danfoss A/S (DK) - Undervisningsministeriet (DK) - Dansk Industri (DK) - Dansk Metal(DK) - biat - University of Flensburg (DE) - GBS Flensburg - Fachschule für Technik und Gestaltung (DE) - Staatliche Technikerschule Weilburg (DE) - KRONES AG - Werk Flensburg (DE) - Bundesverband staatl. gepr. Techniker e.V. (DE) - NIVE (HU) - Újpest Két Tanítási Nyelvű Muszaki Szakközépiskola (HU) - Emasoft Stúdió Kft. (HU) - Oktatási Minisztérium (HU) - BKIK (HU) - RSO S.p.A. (IT) - Istituto Tecnico Industriale Statale "Fermo Corni" (IT) - Ilmec S.r.l.(IT) - ISFOL (IT) - CGIL-FFR (IT) - Kenteq (NL) - Pontydysgu (UK)		

Background

The VQTS project was closely aligned with the aims of the 'Copenhagen Process' wherein the EU countries have declared their willingness to foster employability and lifelong learning in Europe by strengthening cooperation and increasing mobility in vocational education and training. It should be possible to make use of competences acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning throughout Europe and studying abroad should not necessarily lengthen vocational training. Therefore, common tools for VET are needed to enhance transparency and comparability of qualifications and mutual trust among stakeholders. The main aim of the VQTS project was to develop a procedure to ensure international transfer of vocational qualifications (in terms of competences and skills). The procedure should be used by students/apprentices in initial vocational training looking for learning and training periods abroad. In addition, training providers should use the procedure to recognise competences acquired abroad.

Objectives

The VQTS project has developed an ECVET approach that involves a system of a structured description of work-related competences and their acquisition (including Credit Points). The VQTS model does not focus on the specificities of national VET systems because it uses a learning outcomes approach to enhance transparency. It provides a 'common language' to describe competences and their acquisition and a way to relate these competence descriptions to the competences acquired in national-level training programmes. On the one hand, the VQTS model focuses on competences related to the work process and identifies the core work tasks within the context of the particular occupational field. On the other hand, the VQTS model follows a 'development logical' differentiation of a competence profile (known as a competence development or acquisition model) and thus can also describe the acquisition of competences. The VQTS project has received the Helsinki Award 2006 and the Lifelong Learning Award 2007 in Gold for its contributions to the aims of the Copenhagen process.

Outcomes/Products

The VQTS model is available in print form (handbook) and electronically. Both products are available in seven languages (EN, DE, CZ, DK, HU, IT, NL) and include the following information:

- Information about the VQTS model's core elements, the Competence Matrix and the Competence Profiles. A Competence Matrix displays competences in a table according to core work tasks in a specific occupational field and the progress of competence development. A pilot Competence Matrix is available for the field of 'Mechatronics'. Competence Profiles (including Credit Points) are formed from individual parts of this Competence Matrix. This is done by identifying the competences which are relevant for a certain training programme or qualification ('organisational profile') or by identifying the competences acquired so far by a person in training ('individual profile').
 - Information on creating a specific Competence Profile using the pilot Competence Matrix 'Mechatronics': by using the interactive tool at the VQTS web site, specific Competence Profiles can be created.
 - Information on implementing the VQTS model in mobility processes: the Mobility Procedure describes the planning and the organisational steps necessary for a VET student's or apprentice's stay abroad when using the VQTS model.
- A list of references, further information and links as well as a glossary with key terms used are also included.

Application of results

The VQTS model can be used not only for the transfer of competences acquired abroad, but also for other purposes where the transparency of competence profiles is extremely important (e.g. for the development of qualifications and curricula, for composing job profiles, or for personnel planning). It also provides better opportunities for comparing qualifications and mapping qualifications against the EQF. The VQTS model is currently used by several European projects: e.g. by the DEQU project (<http://www.dequ-info.net/>) to integrate labour market needs into curriculum design, by the project S-M-E Master (<http://www.sme-master.eu/>) to describe and compare competences in CVET and by the project EASCMF (<http://www.eascmf.eu/>) for designing a sectoral competence framework for the automotive sector. Furthermore, the follow-up project VQTS II has started in December 2007. The VQTS model will be used for identifying the overlapping areas of the competence profiles of VET and HE qualifications and for adjusting VET and HE programmes to be more compatible and to enhance permeability between VET and HE.

Challenges ahead

The VQTS project has developed a method for the description of work-related competences and their acquisition. Since the comprehensiveness of these descriptions will only become clear through practice, it is necessary to test the method in different sectors and for different purposes. An important issue is also the further development of methodological expertise to moderate processes (expert workshops) for drawing up descriptions of work-related competences. Furthermore, developments on national and European levels have to be taken into consideration: in the context of the development of qualifications frameworks, several measures are taken to promote the elaboration and clarification of key terms, in particular, the concepts of learning outcomes and competences. The VQTS model can contribute to these discussions, but it might also be necessary to adapt the VQTS approach to new developments. Some of these challenges will be addressed in the follow-up project VQTS II. Feedback and suggestions for further development of the VQTS model as well as ideas regarding further possibilities for the application of the VQTS model are highly welcome!

Project sheet no. 2

Project Title	COMINTER	Project Number	FR/05/B/P/PP-152021
Project Promoter	CIEP - Centre International d'Etudes Pédagogiques	Cluster	Credit transfer
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Project Partners	OEEK (GR) - Kennis Centrum Handel (NL) - NVG (NL) - IBS Alliance (NL) - Agefa PME (FR) - CGI (FR) - CCE (FR) - CECOIA (PT) - NCTVED (RO) - CETFP (SI) - MIUR (IT) - EBINTER (IT) Silent partner: IUFFP (CH) - Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia - Subdirección General de Formación Profesional (ES)		

Background

The COMINTER project aims at developing transparency of competences and qualifications throughout Europe, by using an approved methodology in the elaboration of common certifications: "professionnalisation durable". COMINTER meets the needs of developing credit transfer in VET taking into account the ECVET principles for its implementation, the focus on modular training approach, the validation of non-formal and informal learning and it facilitates mobility through a network of training centres and companies. By elaboration of a common vocational profile, COMINTER frames in the priorities defined in the Maastricht declaration (Dec. 2004). Due to its multicultural feature, the trade sector has been chosen to experiment the methodology. There is a real demand from companies to have such training provided.

The main target groups are post-secondary vocational training students and social partners involved in the field of international trade. Companies concerned are mostly SME's. Stakeholders of vocational training in each partner country are also targeted: trainers, competent bodies, Institutions, work groups at European level on initiatives such as ECVET, EUROPASS, and REFERNET.

Objectives

The general objective of the project is the creation and implementation, in each partner country, of a common European vocational qualification in the international trade field. Considering the decisive role of each partner in the vocational training system, the COMINTER project will significantly contribute to the transparency of qualifications at European level.

The organisation of training has been elaborated taking into account the job requirements and needs expressed by companies. Thus, COMINTER certification guarantees a better correlation between the training offer and the labour market needs.

A correlated training programme developed within a network of training centres and companies has a direct contribution to a recognised mobility between the network partners.

Outcomes/Products

- A common vocational profile of "import-export commercial assistant" described in terms of activities and tasks (paper/electronic - FR, EN and other languages of the partnership)
- Certification objectives (electronic/ paper - FR, EN)
- EUROPASS descriptive certificate supplement (electronic/paper - FR, EN)
- A reference guide on training systems (electronic/paper - EN)
- A reference guide for COMINTER implementation taking into account the ECVET principles (electronic/paper - EN)
- A common vocational profile defined in terms of training units and concerted training programme (electronic/paper - EN, FR, PT, IT)
- A Network of training centres & companies with definition of quality criteria
- Updating methodology for the vocational profile (electronic/paper - FR, EN)
- Valorisation and dissemination tools for the project: brochure, presentation leaflet, CD-Rom with all products and presentation of results (EN, FR)
- Working electronic platform for mobility: the designed and the technical specification elaborated, the platform will be operational starting with December 2007.

Application of results

The results are put into practice within different training systems at European level:

- The common qualification is totally or partly implemented in seven countries (FR, GR, IT, NL, PO, RO, SI), 157 training centres being involved in this process starting with the school year 2007/2008. A network of training centres was created, 25 training centres out of 157 are involved in this network. The implementation is foreseen in short time within other three countries (BE, ES, CH). Student mobility exchanges abroad will start next school year (September 2008).
- As national transfer of innovation, other countries from the EU have expressed their willingness to implement the qualification in their country and thus extending the COMINTER network.
- As for sectoral transfer of innovation, there are other Leonardo pilot projects (Eurasment, Euroast) which have already used the Cominter methodology to develop common qualifications profiles in other fields of activity. There are also other projects, which planned to participate to the next call of proposals, which will use and valorise the COMINTER results.

Challenges ahead

Although the Leonardo COMINTER project has come to its end, the project has wide development perspectives ahead. The challenge is to keep extending the network of countries (training centres and companies) involved in the COMINTER implementation. The development could: 1) work in a bilateral way, joining a country already involved in the project and a new country, the first one guiding the second one in the implementation process; 2) take the form of a new Leonardo Transfer of Innovation project, with the constitution of a multilateral partnership of countries not yet involved and willing to develop the common qualification using the COMINTER methodology.

Another challenge is to encourage the transfer of this methodology to other fields.

Project sheet no. 3

Project Title	Securitas Mare	Project Number	S/02/F/PP-127010
Project Promoter	Kalmar Maritime Academ	Cluster	Credit transfer
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Project Partners	Bremen University of Applied Sciences (DE) - Estonian Maritime Academy (EE) - Tallinn Medical School (EE) - University of Cádiz (ES) - Sydväst Polytechnic (FI) - Åland Polytechnic (FI) - University of Piraeus (GR) - Maritime Safety and Survival Training Center (IS) - Maritime Institute Willem Barentz (NL) - Vestfold University College (NO) - Buskerud University College (NO) - Swedish Maritime Administration (SE) - Viking Line (FI) - International Federation of Shipmasters Association (UK)		

Background

The project aimed at increasing understanding and readiness for crisis management by providing competence and support to offer highly qualified and equal training to the participating European higher educational institutions. The content of courses within this area, which is mandatory to certain staff onboard passenger vessel, needed also to be harmonised in order to enable authorities from different member states to recognise each others certificates. The primary target groups are officers and crew onboard passenger vessels and ferries, but also people in decision-making positions ashore and other groups having to deal with people in crisis situations.

Objectives

The objectives has been to provide qualified and equal training to all targeted groups in the participating countries with a professional need for competence in crisis management.

The project has developed three course concepts for crisis management training, one for seafarers based on the international requirements, one for shorebased staff with shipping companies emergency teams and a third for other groups of professionals in need of this type of training.

Outcomes/Products

The courses developed has been recognized and accepted as the standard for CCM-training (Crowd and Crisis Management training) by the national authorities of six of the participating countries and accepted as an alternative in some of the other participating countries.

The shipping industry is using English as the only recognized working language, thus the basic course concepts have been developed in English, with national translations for the participating institutions in Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Spain, Germany and the Netherlands. Curricula are provided by the project coordinator, still in charge of the project's development. In order to be certified to perform and deliver the course, each new user has to go through a two-stage training session. Within these instructor training course, future suppliers will be provided with course handbooks, CD-Roms and other course materials.

Application of results

All the participating institutions are at present delivering the courses within their countries. The course concept has been introduced as a module in three different Scandinavian master programs addressed to seafarers and nurses. A Transfer of Innovation project is also at present spreading the concept to other EU member states, with very positive results. The course has been considered interesting also from a number of countries outside the EU and has been recognized by The International Maritime Organization, dealing with all international shipping educational and training standards.

Challenges ahead

The challenge ahead is primarily to get an international acceptance for the course content and curriculum, which is well underneath the required minimum set by the IMO. Another challenge is also to convince the European Parliament that there is a need to develop a EU standard for all maritime education and training, leading to a situation where all needed certificates actually has the same content within the maritime educational institutions of the member states, giving all the European seafarers possible access to all vessels registered in any of the member states.

Project sheet no. 4

Project Title	DISCO - European Dictionary of Skills and Competencies	Project Number	A/04/B/F/PP-158114
Project Promoter	3s Unternehmensberatung	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Partners	EUCEN – European Universities Continuing Education Network (UK) - NUOV – Národní ústav odborného vzdělávání (CZ) - BIBB – Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (DE) - BETA Céreq Alsace, University Louis Pasteur Strasbourg, The European Pole (FR) - TANINFO Ltd.(HU) - Vytautas Magnus University /Center for Vocational Education and Research (LT) - BW – Bildung und Wissen Verlag und Software GmbH (DE) - Budapest University of Technology and Economics - Departement of Measurement and Information Systems (HU)		

Background

European citizens should be able to study and work throughout Europe, making full use of their qualifications, no matter where their educational or professional career path leads them. Transparency of diplomas and qualifications is an indispensable prerequisite for transfer, recognition and accreditation of knowledge, skills and competences (KSC). EU institutions developed several tools to support international transfer. However, whereas the European transparency tools provide a standard format for the description of KSCs, a consistent terminology is missing and CVs or diploma supplements of different countries are still difficult to understand. A comprehensive, multilingual and well proven terminology is needed also from experts in the field of skills research, vocational counselling, employment and so on.

Objectives

DISCO is an online dictionary, allowing the translation of KSCs in seven European languages (EN, CZ, FR, DE, HU, LT, SE). It offers a search and translation feature as well as a profiling tool for composition and translation of European diplomas, personal e-portfolios and application documents. Thus DISCO contributes to a better understanding and international comparability of KSCs. The development of DISCO's multilingual thesaurus was based on survey results, existing national classifications and international standards (e.g. ISCO, ISCED). The terms were not just translated into other languages, but peer-reviewed by project partners. DISCO services are available at www.disco-tools.eu and as webservices which can easily be incorporated into existing web applications.

Outcomes/Products

Based on a multilingual thesaurus of KSCs (8.000 terms/language, 7 European languages), DISCO offers the following services:

- The DISCO CV Profiler, which supports the composition and translation of personal CVs and job applications: selecting from a pre-structured terminology, users may build their personal profile of KSCs and then translate it into other languages. Different export formats are offered.
- The DISCO Mobility Pass Profiler, which supports the composition and translation of European Mobility Pass documents: users may record their foreign job experience in terms of DISCO's comprehensive terminology.
- The DISCO Job Ad Profiler (forthcoming), which supports the composition and translation of job advertisements.
- The DISCO Skills Translator, which facilitates the search and translation of KSC terms: Individuals and experts find multilingual support for interpreting skill related texts in vocational or educational guidance materials. A printed trilingual thesaurus (English, French, German) will be published in addition to the online services.

Application of results

DISCO offers online services for CV profiling as well as terms search and translation which can be valuable complements for other websites like (e.g. Europass, labour market and job portals etc.). The DISCO thesaurus, for example, could be integrated into the Europass website in order to provide users with suitable KSC terms for all text fields in the CV online form. If a user starts writing in a text field like e.g. "Organisational skills and competences," an alphabetical list with all available terms of the DISCO thesaurus sector "organisational skills and competences" could be displayed and offer selection via click on a term. A printed trilingual thesaurus (English, French, German) will be distributed to experts in the field.

Challenges ahead

An open issue is how a permanent maintenance of the DISCO services can be financed and organised. The further development of DISCO will of course have to focus on the improvement of terminology and services. Based on the DISCO thesaurus lots of development perspectives are possible. The terminology could be further developed by using semantic web technologies supporting for example automated analysis of job ads from different countries. On the other hand, test implementations on the websites of public institutions, job services or companies could bring practically proven input for the further development of specific sectors of the DISCO thesaurus.

Project sheet no. 5

Project Title	KITE - The European mobile worker's kit	Project Number	EUR/05/C/P/PP-84709
Project Promoter	MENON Network EEIG	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Partners	Les développements durables (FR) - European Distance and E-learning Network (UK) - SCIENTER (IT) - FIM-NewLearning (DE) - OBR Campania (IT) - ANDRAS (EE)		

Background

There are currently EU instruments allowing any individual to manage and present the information relating to his/her competencies and qualifications, namely Europass. The individual tools that integrate the Europass (i.e. the CV and the EPL) are at the present declarative tools. If today they exist in electronic format, they do not provide in their electronic implementation neither the validity nor the certification of the information declared by the individual. Back in 2005 when the Europass initiative was launched, the Europass CV and the ELP were not interoperable tools allowing the establishment of electronic transactions between eLearning, recruitment and HR services. Their development approach left little space for user centric management of data and provided limited use of social technologies. This was a limitation for learners, passive and active job seekers and workers in the use of their personal information for academic and professional mobility. Besides the technological, interoperability and standardisation issues, they were also and still are the challenges related to the large scale adoption of the single framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences due to its centralised approach of development and implementation. This is why the KITE project proposed to provide one solution to contribute to the massive adoption of the Europass CV and to answer to some of the related technological, interoperability and standardisation main challenges. KITE will evaluate the potential impact of the use of blogs on the adoption process of the Europass-CV. The aim is to evaluate the relevance of the tool as facilitator of its adoption on a large scale: the ease with which the individual will be able to use the electronics documents which form Europass will be a major factor of adoption.

Objectives

The contribution of the KITE project has been in the emphasis given to the person, to the control over personal data, and to the use of mass-endorsed publication tools as vectors of the Europass-CV. To do so, KITE offers an implementation of the Europass-CV, as a plugin of three open source existing weblogs: WordPress, ELGG and Dotclear. With KITE, everybody is entitled to add to his personal weblog page (blog) a smart extension, based on open standards, to make his own professional profile more accessible, more browsable, searchable through the web and thus improving study, internship and online job search. Above all, KITE will make everybody's profile compliant with today's HR standards (HR XML) for easy, fast and convenient European-scale comparison and inclusion in public databases, employment sites such as Job boards and co-optation sites.

The electronic version of Europass could be implemented in several ways (i.e. with several technologies allowing to have a Europass plugged into several platforms). The key is the interoperability of the Europass documents. One of the possibilities is the use of blogs as a support for the two personal documents of Europass (i.e. the CV and the European Language Portfolio). The other three instruments of the Europass Portfolio (i.e. Mobilipass, Diploma Supplement and Certificate Supplement) could be digital keys or electronic certificates stored in institutional databases. The core element of the Europass (i.e. the CV) will be open standard compliant (HR-XML) and interoperable. So that the data interchange between the instruments will be possible and the storage of data will be independent. Allowing to this approach, the student and the job seeker will have total control of his personal data: Europass-CV and ELP (storage, access, manipulation and transmission). On the basis of this unique CV, controlled by the owner, individuals can build their online professional profile, as the backbone of their digital self, and exchange data with eLearning, Employment and HR services according to a human resource lifelong perspective. This initiative has the potential to complete the digital identity management tools that allow to verify the user identity in the field of electronic exchanges, claim user related information and control digital reputation.

Outcomes/Products

- Research report "Internet Job Search today: uses, services and needs". This is a paper-based and online publication that offers an overview of today's employment electronic transactions, tools and services and the three major strategies that job seekers and also students adopt to search for a job, a placement or a study opportunity via the Internet. The report also presents the KITE framework for interoperability with eLearning, employment and HR services and several scenarios on the use of the Europass-CV plugin for blogs to support the building of online professional profiles;
- Research report titled "Internet Job Search tomorrow: uses, services and needs". A paper-based and online publication that presents a prospective analysis of employment electronic transactions, tools and services based on an analysis of interviews with international experts from the eLearning, employment and HR industry;
- Europass-CV plugin for DotClear 2.0 and WordPress 2.0 blogging systems that is compliant with HR-XML Staffing Exchange Protocol specifications and a detailed user guide;
- Comparative evaluation report on the "Impact of the use of the blogs on the adoption process of the Europass-CV" based on several pilots carried out with a sample of young people participating in the Leonardo Mobility programme, HE students and job seekers;
- Valorisation activities relating to the Europass-CV plugin for blogs in main European eLearning and Employment events.

Application of results

The KITE Europass-CV plug-in is addressed to support online professional profiles and online job search in an interoperability framework with employment and HR services. The Europass-CV plugin for DotClear 2.0 and WordPress 2.0 blogs systems and compliant with HR-XML Staffing Exchange Protocol specifications, alongside with its related user guide, has been piloted at national and European level, by means of three national workshops (Germany, Italy, Hungary) and a open call for piloting launched in the blogger websites. The users feedback has been very positive, especially as regard to the easiness, convenience and added value of the tool in managing the individual personal data through the internet.

Challenges ahead

The challenges foreseen are related to establishing connections to and between ECVET, EQF, Europass and a set of common principles that allow individuals to prove the validity of the information they present. Specifically the information related to the learning outcomes, competencies and qualifications. These challenges can be summarised as:

- providing all European individuals with access to a friendly and user centric management environment that allows ownership and total control of their competencies and qualifications throughout episodes of eLearning, employment and interaction with HR services from a life long learning perspective;
- enhancing European citizens' awareness of the challenges related to building online professional profiles, the issues related to managing digital identities and data and privacy issues;
- promoting effective online job search strategies in order to improve academic and professional mobility amongst Member States;
- promoting exchange and cooperation between European Union institutions, key stakeholders such as: vocational educators and training providers; vocational education, training authorities and social partners; eLearning and the recruitment industry; and standardization bodies. This includes a spectrum of individuals such as students, active and passive job seekers and workers;
- fostering work on interoperability issues to increase the actual value of the Europass by introducing a level of trust in the data that is presented through validation of transcriptions and records of credit and certification of data that the individual declares.

Project sheet no. 6

Project Title	Developing sector-specific multi-format foreign language teaching materials for the vocations	Project Number	BG/05/B/F/LA-166043
Project Promoter	"Angel Kunchev" University of Rousse	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Partners	Secondary Professional School of Fashion Design and Clothing (BG) - Leopard Ltd (BG) - Branch Union of Light Industry Manufacturers (BG) - IDEEA - Industrial Design Association (BG) - Karel de Grote Hogeschool (BE) - LID Editorial Empresarial, S.L. (ES) - IDEC Ltd (GR) - Idris Educational Consultancy Ltd (UK)		

Background

Alongside with the development of sector-specific foreign language teaching materials, the project team felt the necessity for developing language competence certification tools for the vocations which will facilitate the transparency of competences and qualifications and the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The target groups and sectors are those most seriously affected by worker mobility and immigration, processes which have increased with the accession of new countries to the EU.

Objectives

The project established the basis for creating a framework of references which will be used to develop foreign language vocation-specific tests to measure the linguistic competence of the mobile workforce in Europe. These will serve the purposes of both employers and employees.

Outcomes/Products

As part of its overall activities, the project team developed:

1. a work-based typical language competences framework of references for nursing
2. a work-based typical language competences framework of references for tourism

Both products are in electronic format and paper version.

For the time being they are only available in English, but the project team envisages their transfer into other languages and sectors.

These frameworks of references define the linguistic competence required to perform, at levels which are comparable to the CEF of languages and the language portfolio but for work purposes. The tests will measure and certify the language competence of everybody wishing to work abroad, with a multinational company or environment.

Application of results

The products are just the theoretical basis and a beginning which will serve for developing language competence certification tools for the vocations (LCCTV) within the framework of a new project under the LLP. A new project with this title will provide the methodology for developing these tests and will enable the team to write the tests.

Challenges ahead

The project team believes that if these language competences certification tools for the vocations are developed, it will take the combined efforts of National Agencies to valorise the products but it is an effort which is worth making in view of the current situation on the European labour market. The project partners see the further development of the project idea in the introduction of these uniform work-based language competence certification tools in initial vocational training which will enable school leavers to move freely all over Europe and find employment without experiencing the limitations of linguistic incompetence.

Project sheet no. 7

Project Title	Life Long Learning System in Molecular Medicine and Nutrition	Project Number	BG/03/B/F/PP-166039
Project Promoter	University of Medicine-Pleven	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Partners	Nutrisub asbl (BE) - Alliance "Health in Our Hands" (BG) - Medical University – Sofia, Faculty of Medicine, Pre-Clinical University Center(BG) - Charles University - Prague, Faculty of Medicine in Hradec Kralove (CZ) - Rhein Friedrich-Wilhelms University of Bonn, Faculty of Medicine (DE) - European Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition		

Background

The high incidence of common diseases related to nutritional habits indicates that there is a gap in the knowledge of individuals about healthy nutrition. Indeed, training in clinical nutrition remains inadequate in medical education throughout the world preventing good nutritional care of patients. There is an insufficiency of specialists transferring the knowledge about nutrition from scientific sources to patient's bed and population. Formal and traditional systems of education in most universities are inflexible and slow in introduction of modern fields of knowledge like general and clinical nutrition. Various non-formal LLL programmes are taking the initiative of education in nutrition, but they are still rather sparse.

The outcome of these programmes is not widely distributed. There is still a resistance of formal educational institutions to recognize the outcomes of various initiatives of LLL as a part of educational achievement of individuals. There are difficulties of employers to recognize and to accept the certificates of non formal and LLL programmes. That is why there is a need to create:

- a new LLL programme comparable to a Master curriculum;
- an instrument for recognition and valorisation of LLL outcomes: certification, diploma and validation of competences and skills of the target group.

Objectives

The project contribution to solve this problem was a development of an innovative LLL programme in nutrition . It possesses a new advanced approach to nutrition as a preventive and curative measure based on the knowledge of molecular mechanisms of diseases. The LLL programme in nutrition of a semi-virtual character, freely accessible through the Internet, has the following features:

- based on WEB-Modules combined with Live Courses for intensive training (practical) and certification at partner universities, and through European common courses;
- based on Innovative Core Curriculum for training in Clinical Nutrition developed by European experts;
- containing new training modules (assigned with credits) linking the latest scientific achievements and research on diseases' mechanisms and modern nutrition;
- conducting regular courses with partner institutions providing a platform for problem based learning, case discussion, testing and certification;
- possessing general rules for application, registration, training, assessment and certification of users;
- modules are assigned with credits, allowing construction of individual portfolios for different target groups;
- credit accumulation and their certification provides a base for Diploma;
- new training environment efficient, comfortable, non-stressing, attracting to participate in the programme, motivating for lifelong learning, cultivating practical skills for problem solving and responsibility.

This innovative LLL-programme needs training of capable specialists highly motivated for continuous learning and professional improvement, possessing updated skills and knowledge that will facilitate personal fulfillment and carrier development. This programme also necessitates the recognition of efforts made by participants/users and this must be done by official certification of their studies by a network of EU universities.

Outcomes/Products

Educational Web Portal of LLL Programme in Nutrition (www.lll-nutrition.com).

LLL programme in nutrition (e-learning university) contains all the tools and resources of an e-learning university: core curricula, training content, tools for innovative training, study navigator to guide the learning process; software for the learning management system (LMS); personal information management, tools for assessment, rules for credit accumulation and certification, multi-language support.

The programme provides training in Nutrition through both on-line and live sessions. By the end of the project (2003-2005), 29 modules were developed and in the two following years the number was expanded to 68. Altogether 105 modules are planned to be developed (see module catalogue).

Live sessions (4-5 per year) contribute to intensive training and certification. Modules are carefully constructed through multi-disciplinary approach and present a precise set of competences and skills essential for a particular area. The flexibility of the system allows implementation of specific portfolios for the purposes of different target groups. It awards competency-based certification and credits for Continuing Medical Education in the framework of ESPEN (European Society of Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism) on successful completion of the modules.

The programme for the 2006 and 2007 was realised. For 2008 the topics of the modules were selected, their authors were pointed out and assigned; the programme for the live session was developed.

Guide Book for users was developed in printed version, in CD and web-line version (in English and Bulgarian). The guide book provides learners with clear, complete, and updated information on the curriculum, modules, courses and certificate requirements, nature of interaction with tutors and administrators, prerequisites; it includes as well LLL system management and a guide of virtual classroom development. The guide helps educators in developing and running the educational programme.

Module Catalogue (printed and CD version in English) containing Core curriculum prepared with the consensus of European experts including syllabus, shaping learning units: modules, with code, credit, short description of learning objectives and key points.

Study Manual for the self-training (printed and CD version in English), contains the modules developed under the project. It is planned as a periodic annual edition that will publish the modules developed in each year.

Application of results

More than 1300 users were registered on the WEB portal. More than 1200 users already participated in LLL courses :

The courses already conducted are:

- LLL First Lecture , Lisbon, Pt , 10th – 14th September 2004
- LLL Course on Nutrition, Istanbul, Tk, 17th-19th December 2004
- LLL Course on Nutrition, Pleven, BG, 16th-18th April, 2005
- LLL Course on Nutrition/ ESPEN Congress, Istanbul, Tk, 22th-24th October 2006
- LLL Course on Nutrition, Belgrade, RS, 22th-24th April, 2006
- LLL Course on Nutrition, Maastricht, Ne, 5-11th May 2007
- LLL Course in nutrition, Prague, Cz, 7th-10th September 2007
- LLL Course on Nutrition, Liubljana, Sv, 20th-25th October, 2007
- LLL Course on Nutrition, Moscow, Ru, 13th-14th November, 2007

Challenges ahead

Development and exploitation of recognition issues in nutrition on the basis of credit accumulation in coherence with Bologna reform, by introducing all the innovative outcome of the Bologna process into LLL.

Implementation of LLL programme into formal educational structure and curricula.

World-wide access to educational content.

Development of procedures for Diploma recognition in EU professional area. Validation of LLL-Programme Diploma.

Implementation of more Practical materials (video, multimedia) orientation of training process.

Development of on-line certification.

Development of our network with other EU universities and health institutions for common Diploma development- Master programme. This dissemination and valorisation will be achieved by partners' network through local, national and European organisations contributing to promotion and comparison of qualifications and competences of health specialists in nutrition, and facilitating their professional integration.

Plans for Future:

I. Expansion of LLL programme

1. Development of new modules, to finalize the programme planned in the Guide book and module catalogue (www.lll-nutrition.com/edu/guide/).
2. Translation of modules in other European languages (Already in Russian 24 modules, Bulgarian 20 modules, planned for Lithuanian, Spanish, Italian).
3. Organising and holding the following courses

LLL Courses planned for 2008:

LLL Course on Nutrition, Pleven, BG, 16-17th February, 2008

LLL Course on Nutrition, Vilnius, Lt, 29-30th March, 2008

LLL Course on Nutrition, St Petersburg, RU, 16-17th April, 2008

LLL Course on Nutrition, Maastricht, NL, 20-26, april , 2008

LLL Course on Nutrition, Florence, It, 5-11th May 2008 (the programme is already available on-line: <http://www.espen.org/presup/npresentations.asp?prlocation=prague2007>)

LLL Course on Nutrition Berlin, De, 13th-15th November, 2008

LLL Course on Nutrition, Vienna, Au, 3- 5th September 2009

Further development of LLL programme:

4. To accumulate and analyze specific criteria accepted in different countries for evaluation of competences in nutrition and on the basis of these criteria to develop: standards, rules and flexible procedure for evaluation, certification and recognition of competences acquired through lifelong learning;
5. To make the evaluation of learning outcome comparable to formal education;
6. To expand ECTS comparable credits and credit accumulation for entire process of LLL;
7. To validate LLL-ESPEN Diploma course on Nutrition.

Project sheet no. 8

Project Title	LINGUAPEACE EUROPE: Developing language training and reference materials for peacekeepers	Project Number	BG/03/B/F/LA-166009
Project Promoter	ECET- European Centre for Education and Training	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
Contact Name	Boian Savtchev	Country	Bulgaria
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Project Website	www.linguapeace-europe.net	E_mail	ecet@ecet.bg
Project Partners	Universe Press - Europe (BG) - German Ministry of Defence (DE) - ICC-The European Language Network (DE) - Generalitat de Catalunya, RCFL (ES) - International House Tallinn (EE) - Lyon Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FR) - H-Net Professional Language Studio (HU) - Public Service Language Centre (LV) - Public Service Language Centre (LI) - University of Information Technology (PL) - University of Pitest (RO) - Adroit (UK) Bournemouth Business School International (UK) - University of Westminster (UK)		

Background

The project addressed the needs for:

- higher language proficiency amongst European peacekeepers involved in military, police or humanitarian operations;
- new transnational language training programmes, materials and tools for peacekeepers, high degree of fluency, accuracy, and communicative competence for effective joint operations, including both linguistic and intercultural competences of peacekeepers;
- transparency of competences and qualifications, credit transfer in vocational education and training, validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Objectives

The project succeeded in developing language training and reference materials for peacekeepers for self-study, semi-autonomous and tutor-supported learning in formal, non-formal and informal settings. The materials addressed the needs for:

- describing the competences necessary for this specific type of communication, the related knowledge and skills, as well as situations and domains of communication;
- mutual understanding and recognition of language skills and competences between the military (NATO STANAG 6001) and the civilians (The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages CEFRL);
- civil–military transparency and transferability of skills, competences and qualifications (i.e. ‘translate’ the civilian qualifications into military and vice versa);
- matching the NATO language standards to the CEFRL, referring to civilian and military descriptors and examinations.

Outcomes/Products

Project results are as follows:

- Language training set of materials for peacekeepers for self-study, semi-autonomous and tutor-supported learning in formal, non-formal and informal settings (Book: Level B1-B2 CEF/NATO SLP 2-3; Trainer’s/Student’s Guide; Entry and Certification Tests; Audio CD);
- European Language Portfolio for Peacekeepers (Passport, Biography, Dossier, Strands of Progression) matching the CEFRL and the NATO language standards and granting mutual understanding and recognition of language skills and competences between the military (NATO) and the civilians (CEFRL);
- Interactive Multilingual Glossary of Peacekeeping Terms: didactic tool for self-study, semi-autonomous and tutor-supported learning in non-formal and informal settings (access in 12 languages; 1600 terms with explanations; audio recordings of the terms; search engine in all languages; examples of usage provided; interactive exercises);
- Language Skills Map and Certification Framework, enhancing Civil–Military transparency and transferability of skills, matching the NATO language standards to the Common European Framework, referring to civilian and military descriptors and examinations;
- Public website with exemplary materials for downloading.

Application of results

The project materials were recognised and are in use by the partnership including the German Ministry of Defence, who took great interest and joined the project as silent partner. Thanks to the cooperation with external institutions throughout the project and after its conclusion the materials have been made available to the UK Ministry of Defence and Defence School of Languages, Hungarian Ministry of Defence and Defence Academy, Latvian Ministry of Defence and Military School of Languages, Romanian Ministry of National Defence, Bulgarian Ministry of Defence and General Staff of the Bulgarian Army, University of Westminster, acting as the UK Ministry of Defence Language Examination Board, and other relevant institutions and interested parties.

Challenges ahead

The Linguapeace Europe results are easily transferable to other sectors given the multilateral nature of Peacekeeping, which involves sectors such as: transport, communications, construction, manufacturing, non-governmental organisations, health and social work, public administration and extra-territorial organisations. All means envisaged by the Dissemination and Sustainability Action Plans will be used for the purpose of enlarging the Linguapeace Europe project area in terms of other relevant groups, sectors, geographic areas. Special attention will be paid to establishing and maintaining close cooperation with extraterritorial organisations such as UNDPKO, NATO, Partnership for Peace, OSCE, Eurocorps.

Project sheet no. 9

Project Title	Professional competencies and certifications of agriculture advisors in the world of competitive market of service business - Agriculture Advisors Competencies (AAC)	Project Number	CZ/05/B/PP-168026
Project Promoter	Institute of Agriculture and Food Information	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
Contact Name	Andrea Pekárková - Zdeňka Marešová	Country	Czech Republic
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Project Website	www.agroextension.net	E_mail	pekarkova@uzpi.cz
Project Partners	Agroinstitute Nitra (SK) - Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów (PL) - Szent István University (HU) - Institute for Rural Development, Education and Advisory (HU) - Triesdorf Consult (DE) - District Administration Board Chemnitz (DE) - Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (AT)		

Background

The project intended to meet the following needs:

- to achieve the most effective approach in the field of professional preparation of cross compliance advisors;
- to support and to emphasize the awareness for the need of professional training of advisors in the process of innovation;
- to lay the foundations for further cooperation in the area of advisors qualification and accreditation in order to make possible a future implementation of a uniform concept in this area;
- to define requirements for qualification and professional preparation of advisors, allowing for an implementation according to each country's specific requirements.
- to lay the foundations for an international permanent working group involving national certification authorities which, in the future, will be able to coordinate, specify and improve general standards of advisors.

The target group are advisors in the agricultural sector (from the point of view of their professional preparation, qualification, certification)

Objectives

The project aimed at realising the analysis and comparison of consulting systems in the participating member countries, the setting-up of standards for professional qualifications of advisors as well as the terms for their certification. The objective was to ensure high quality advisory services for all farmers requiring assistance in implementing cross compliance measures in the several member states. In this context, a manual containing all requirements concerning the knowledge and necessary qualification of advisors offering consulting services in the field of cross compliance was to be compiled.

Outcomes/Products

1. Manual with a list of requirements for the knowledge of cross compliance advisors (handbook on the website, on CD-Rom, on paper form – as a part of the AAC report No 4 - in English, Czech, Slovak, Polish, Hungarian, German language);
2. Analysis and comparison of consulting systems in various countries (report on the website, on CD-Rom, on paper form in English, Czech, Slovak, Polish, Hungarian, German language);
3. Questionnaire "The professional preparation of advisors for the new tasks", a questionnaire on competences, education and certification of advisors (the report "Summary of the project partners' responses" on the website, on CD-Rom., on paper form - as a part of the AAC Project Report No 3).

Application of results

The project achieves a specification of the general standard of competence (professional capability) of advisors providing subsidized services within the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), including knowledge and skill requirements in the form of "Advisor Competence Manual for Cross Compliance". The compiled "manual" will assist all those who wish to familiarize themselves with cross compliance requirements. The knowledge provided may be used not only by future cross compliance advisors, but also in professional secondary schools and universities where experts for future practice are being educated. It can further serve as orientation for chambers, professional unions, enterprises, offices and development agencies. According to the AAC project partners reports, they are using information acquired in practice, they have acquired the most important information from AAC partners checklists, for example, and have used it for their FAS (= Farm Advisory System). They are going to design the training courses according to the manual.

Challenges ahead

The expected effect of the project is the continuing cooperation between all project participants, targeted users and an international community within the network. This partnership offers a wide range of knowledge and transfer options within the network and at the national and international level as accompanied added value.

Project sheet no. 10

Project Title	ICBC - Intercultural Business Competence	Project Number	FIN-06-A-PL-6055-a
Project Promoter	Suomen Liikemiesten Kauppaopisto – Atk-Instituutti	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
Contact Name	Jenni Österman	Country	Finland
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Project Website		E_mail	jenni.osterman@slk.fi
Project Partners	Rudolf-Rempel-Berufskolleg (DE) - ROC Eindhoven (NL)		

Background

The project introduces an international class which, during one academic year, studies approximately 14 weeks in each institution. One goal of the project was to promote transparency, comparability and transferability of secondary vocational education and qualifications in the field of Business and Administration. The project also aimed at increasing the attractiveness of vocational secondary education in the aforementioned field by improving the skills and competences brought in by qualification in the participating countries and through dissemination of results in the rest of Europe as well. Increased international competence of participating students supports their employment after graduation. Active work for developing of the ECVET model in vocational education was also a key issue. All participating institutions have a substantial amount of international students. Thus it is in their interest to work for the transparency of education and qualifications and promoting the implementation of the ECVET model.

Objectives

The international classroom moves from one country to another always continuing their basic business studies where they left off in the previous country. We have been developing common curricula. The process is ongoing. The project has been a pilot for the national FIN-ECVET project.

All subjects are covered in an international context. The international group and the changing learning environment and culture coach the students for working in a foreign language and in a multicultural environment.

Outcomes/Products

During the project the partnership started to revise the curriculum according to the KSC principle and it is continuing the work in the academic year 2007-2008.

The participating students estimated that their language skills improved during the year. Most of them would like to work in the international labour market in the future.

Application of results

The revised curriculum is intended for an even larger group of people. The results of the revision work are being put to use in the ECVET 2 project. Funding was received to continue the project in 2007-2008 for three students.

Challenges ahead

The different ways of teaching and learning in different cultures pose a challenge for the students when they are required to adapt to three different cultures during one year. We have worked on this and are constantly trying to improve the level of cultural coaching that the students receive before and during the year.

Project sheet no. 11

Project Title	SKILLDA - Skills Demonstrations Abroad	Project Number	FI/04/B/F/PP-160534
Project Promoter	Savo Consortium for Education	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
Contact Name	Anne Onikki	Country	Finland
Address	Presidentinkatu 3 E 1 - 70100 Kuopio (FI)	Telephone	+358 44 785 3045
Project Website	www.skillda.fi	E_mail	anne.onikki@sakky.fi
Project Partners	Educational institutions: Cph West (DK) - Bornholms Erhvervsskole (DK) - Kossuth Lajos Ipari Szakközép-Szakiskola és Kollégium (HU) - Mondriaan College voor Horeca en Toerisme (NL) - ROC van Amsterdam, afd. Mode (NL) Educational authorities: National Board of Education (FI) - The Vocational Committee for Clothing in Denmark (DK) - The Vocational Committee for Kitchen, Hotel and Restaurants in Denmark (DK) - National Institute of Vocational Education (HU) - LIFT Group (NL) Companies: Relief Haute Couture (DK) - Pet Ravintolat Oy, Restaurant Kummiset (FI) - MeVi Tailor (FI) - Hotel-Restaurant-Rehabilitation Centre (FI) - Petritex Oy (FI) - Kuopio University Hospital, Food Services (FI) - LIVIA Tailor's Workshop (HU) - Lachmann FIAI KFT(HU) - Carlton Beach Hotel (NL) Other organisations: Service Union United/Eastern Finland (FI) - Federation of Savo Enterprises (FI) - European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training EFVET (BE)		

Background

The educational institutions involved struggled with the problems of quality, assessment and guidance as well as with the problem of training teachers and workplace instructors when organising vocational skills demonstrations. There were remarkable differences in the practices, for this reason it was considered as necessary to create a system which would enable a fair and more uniform student assessment, ensure a smooth running of skills demonstration planning, organisation and evaluation and save workplaces' and educational institutions' resources. Consequently, the project tackled issues such as transparency and recognition of competencies and qualifications, validation of non-formal and informal learning as well as quality assurance.

The main target groups of the project were hospitality and clothing sector students in initial vocational education, hospitality and clothing teachers and trainers as well as workplace instructors.

(Note - During the project, vocational skills demonstrations were defined as "work processes or work situations which are planned, arranged and evaluated in co-operation with the education provider and the working life". Through vocational skills demonstrations the students show to what extent they have acquired the skills defined in the core curriculum and required by the working life. The definition also includes skills demonstrations as level and final exams and as a medium of project learning.)

Objectives

The objective of the SKILLDA project was, firstly, to create a vocational skills demonstration system between the participating countries, secondly to improve the competence of teachers and workplace instructors in the planning, organisation and evaluation of vocational skills demonstrations and, thirdly, to ensure the best possible use of the workplaces' and educational institutions' resources.

The Finnish model was used as a basis in the development work, but efforts were made to take the specific features of the participating countries into consideration. Though hospitality and clothing comprised the target sectors of the project, the outcomes were attempted to make as non-sector-specific as possible to enable their wider use. In addition, the customer-oriented approach was taken to make the products user-friendly.

Finally, the outcomes were tested by means of two student mobility projects, whereby feedback was collected from all the target groups.

Outcomes/Products

- Vocational skills demonstration guide for students, teachers and workplace instructors (available via the Internet in EN, FI, DK, NL, HU; the appendices exist only in EN, because only EN forms will be used in practice; available as paper versions in EN, FI, DK). Contents: Introduction, 1. What are vocational skills demonstrations?; 2. Organisation of vocational skills demonstrations; 3. Evaluation; 4. Instructions; 5. Prerequisites for successful demonstration of vocational skills abroad; 6. Time frame; 7. Check list; 8. Vocabulary related to skills demonstrations; Appendices;
- A one-credit evaluation module for teachers and workplace instructors (available via the Internet in EN, FI, DK, NL, HU; the supplementary information exists only in EN). Contents: Welcome; 1. Introduction; 2. Student guidance and support; 3. Evaluation; 4. Supplementary information.
- English and Hungarian versions of a Virtual Campus, which was meant to be used as a tool and material bank when preparing the main products (available in EN, FI, HU);
- Two evaluation reports (paper version - EN);
- Cultural and language preparation course for students going abroad for a placement (Virtual Campus).

Application of results

An innovation cannot be called as such until it has been integrated into the partners systems and it has been used by them for a long period of time. The higher the partner's "ownership level" is, the more likely the partner will adopt the system.

As mentioned earlier, the products were tested by means of two student mobility projects during which altogether 20 Finnish students did their on-the-job training periods in DK, HU and the NL and gave their vocational skills demonstrations in this connection. In addition, 8 Danish students did their on-the-job training periods in FI and HU and gave their vocational skills demonstrations there. Later, Savo Consortium for Education made the decision to make vocational skills demonstrations abroad a common practice within the organisation. Since that decision, 12 hospitality and food industry students have done their on-the-job training periods in Hungary and given their skills demonstrations there. Other educational institutions will also make use of the outcomes of the project when organising placements for their students abroad.

Challenges ahead

We are working with some of the partners on a new project proposal, the idea of which is to transfer the project result to further sectors, to further educational institutions and workplaces as well as to further countries. The new project also aims at further developing the products, at adjusting and localizing them according to the local needs and at translating them into further languages. This new project would then be supported by student mobility projects. In addition, the products would be transferred from the Virtual Campus to the Moodle environment, which is easier to use and is freely accessible to the participants.

Various interviews have shown that, for example, the following issues should be tackled to improve the vocational skills demonstrations system: 1) Language skills of students, teachers and workplace instructors should be improved; 2) All parties within the network should commit themselves to the guidelines; 3) Teachers and workplace instructors should be given further training in design, organisation and evaluation of vocational skills demonstrations.

Efforts will be made to include at least the training of teachers and workplace instructors in the new project proposal.

Project sheet no. 12

Project Title	Theatre Technical Training in EU	Project Number	FI/05/B/F/PP-160600
Project Promoter	Helsinki Polytechnic Stadia	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
Contact Name	Mia Hämäläinen	Country	Finland
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Project Website	http://tttineu.stadia.fi/index.html	E_mail	mia.hamalainen@stadia.fi
Project Partners	SDTP - Syndicat des Directeurs de Théâtres Privés (FR) - The Swedish Union for Theatre, Artists and Media (SE) - University College of Film, Radio, Television and Theatre (SE) - Swedish Performing Arts (SE) - SOLT - The Society of London Theatre (UK) - BECTU - Broadcasting Entertainment Cinematograph and Theatre Union (UK) - Cida (UK) - ACODCultuur (BE) - TEAD (BE) - EURO-MEI (BE) - PEARLE (BE) - Estonian Theatre Union (EE) - Association of Finnish Theatres (FI) - TeMe - Teatteri- ja Mediatyöntekijät ry (FI)		

Background

In the field of theatre technical training the tools for competence analysis, for assesment of earlier gained skills and knowledge and for making digital portfolios are in a growing demand. In the theatre technical field the terminology is unclear, the quality of training varies, qualifications of theatre technical professionals and the quality of technical equipment is different from country to country and there has been a lack of basic training in the sector.

The TTT project aimed at recognising the special expertise/competences needed by technical professionals working in the rapidly changing technical theatre, supporting lifelong learning and with the aim of promoting the transparency of qualifications and competences in different partner countries.

The target groups of the project are all those working in the field of theatre technics and theatre employers, unions and training organisations focusing on developing the field of theatre technical professions.

Objectives

The objective of the TTT in EU project was to promote transparency of qualifications and competences in theatre technical training and professions by the development of an industry-based competency analyse tool. This was planned to help target groups to locate their professional profile at European level, to help vocational training organisations putting their courses into European comparacy and to support continuous education especially for those theatre technical professionals whose skills are learned on the job. The core analysis of their professional competences and qualifications aimed at promoting transparency of qualifications in different partner countries, to help assessing competences and to make it easier to compare the training offered in various training institutions.

By giving the real time knowledge on competences and qualifications of theatre technical professionals in Europe and by making elements under different competences visible and comparable in each partner country with a reference to EQF levels, the proposal aimed at reaching the planned objectives.

Outcomes/Products

The main outputs of the project are 3 wiki-based digital tools to analyse, compare and assess competences.

1. Competence analyse tool: a digital on-line tool to help identifying the key competences of the theatre technical skills and knowledge (available in EN, NL, SE, FI);
2. 'Make a Profile'-too: a downloadable tool from the web-site to create a personal profile of one's competences, compare different profiles or to do self-evaluation / analyse training needs of different competences (available in EN, NL, SE, FI);
3. Tools for assessment: web-based on-line tools giving guidelines for assessors and people developing competence-based qualification systems on how to place a competence unit/element in the local context and how to assess it (available in EN, NL, SE, FI).

The other project outputs are a Dictionary of the theatre technical words and a Glossary of the terms used in the tool, especially in assessment (available in EN, NL, SE, FI).

Application of results

The Helsinki Polytechnic has implement the TTT tools in the planning of the Further qualification for the live performance technics-curriculum. The program will start on 2008 and the tools are directly used in the development of the studyprogram.

The Finnish National Opera is using the Make a profile-tool to assess the training needs and job descriptions of the staff.

TEAD has implement the results in their activities as consultants for education and training. The competency analysys and comparison tool is used to evaluate and assess the existing programs and to define new programs.

Dramatiska Institutet is currently delivering programmes and courses of different length and developed with the competence descriptions defined in the competency analyse tool. They will also implement the tool in developing continuous education for professionals.

PEARLE and EUROMEI have disseminated the tools to their members and have promoted the project results in the social dialogue meetings in order to give their members a picture of required training and competences in the live performance technical sector.

Challenges ahead

Theatre technicians work in a fast evolving sector, therefore by definition the descriptions of competences run behind the reality. Every day new competences are needed and according to this, new competence descriptors.

The core analysis of the light, sound and stage competence areas in TTTinEU project also revealed the need for description of other related fields. Especially the design and management fields are closely related to light, sound and stage competency areas since they are the typical career moves in the path of technicians.

The project also revealed the need, as for the growing group of professionals working across Europe, to have tools to create online profiles for giving evidence of earlier gained skills and knowledge and for assessment of those competences in different countries.

Somehow, the process started with the project is not yet finished and we hope the tools created during the project can be an inspiration for other industry sectors.

Project sheet no. 13

Project Title	Embedding ICT/Multimedia Standardisation Initiatives into Vocational Training Strategies in Europe (Embedding Standards)	Project Number	D/04/B/F/PP-146192
Project Promoter	DEKRA Akademie GmbH	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Website	http://www.dekra.com	E_mail	peter.littig@dekra.com
Project Partners	Zentrum für Soziale Innovation (AT) - Bundesverband der Digitalen Wirtschaft (DE) - Fachhochschule Osnabrück (DE) - Institut für Medien- und Kompetenzforschung (DE) - Asociación Española de Empresas de Multimedia (ES) - Indra S.A. (ES) - Association Multimedia Emploi (FR) - South-East European Research Center (GR) - Security Technologies Competence Centre (SI) - Fastrak Consulting (UK) - National Institute for Vocational Education (HU) - Prompt (HU)		

Background

Trying to meet the new requirements of training and education caused by globalisation of economy and upcoming information society, a lot of standardisation initiatives at national and European level had been launched when the project proposal was set up (2004), but they were in no way linked to each other although European governments had already formulated the need for compatibility of educational systems by initiating the Bologna Process and the Copenhagen Process. Therefore there was a strong need for overcoming this "standardisation divide": this was the background of a project claiming to contribute to this aim starting from its title (Embedding ICT/Multimedia Standardisation Initiatives into Vocational Training Strategies in Europe). This sector-oriented project should reach its objectives by using already existing elements of standards (as the British Skills Framework for the Information Age - SFIA - and the German Advanced IT-Training System - AITTS), or emerging ones (as the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training - ECVET- and the European Qualification Framework - EQF).

Objectives

Three job profiles were selected:

- IT Project Coordinator (taken from the German Advanced IT-Training System - AITTS);
- IT Security Coordinator (taken from the AITTS);
- Web Content Specialist (taken from a previous LEONARDO project).

Profiles were already subdivided in work elements, thus delivering smallest assessable units. According to this, descriptions of professions were created, defined in EQF terms formulating knowledge, skills and competences needed to carry out the job.

Derived from these job descriptions, qualifications/curricula were designed and structured in a way that enables the test application of the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational and Educational Training (ECVET).

Transnational training was carried out and evaluated, thereby piloting the EQF.

Outcomes/Products

- IT Project Coordinator SFIA (Job/occupational profile described in competence categories of SFIA);
- IT Security Coordinator SFIA (Job/occupational profile described in competence categories of SFIA);
- Web Content Specialist SFIA (Job/occupational profile described in competence categories of SFIA);
- Web Content Specialist Job description (based on the results of the Leonardo project "Web Content Manager");
- IT Project Coordinator Qualification (Curriculum described in EQF terms, with interfaces to the application of ECVET);
- IT Security Coordinator Qualification (Curriculum described in EQF terms, with interfaces to the application of ECVET);
- Web Content Specialist Qualification (Curriculum described in EQF terms, with interfaces to the application of ECVET);
- Tecnico Superiore per la Comunicazione e il Multimedia in the Web Content Specialist Qualification format (Curriculum based on the above mentioned curriculum, with supplements from the Italian system of vocational training, delivered by a team of Politecnico di Torino);
- ZMT Promotion – setting up the prototype of a structure provided to support the development of Zones of Mutual Trust (Paper on Further Development of Project Results).

All documents are available on the project website <http://www.embedding-standards.com>.

Application of results

As described in the Paper ZMT Promotion, a virtual transnational training portal shall be established, delivering opportunities to carry out and to participate in virtual training courses, based on curricula developed within the project. Members of the partner consortium are currently discussing various possibilities of launching these courses which will start in the near future, supported by certification based on agreements of associations who have participated in project work or collaborating with them as strategic partners.

Challenges ahead

The most important challenge seems to be the recognition of project results by responsible bodies all over Europe, in terms of common agreement on the criteria for assessment procedures. Although the project approach was from the very beginning linked to already existing, more or less publicly recognised structures in member states, and has found a lot of interest in discussions with several stakeholders, it cannot be expected that the above mentioned issue can be met in short time. These problems have to be solved within the development of Zones of Mutual Trust.

Project sheet no. 14

Project Title	European RecyOccupation Profile - Implementation of a European occupational profile and curriculum for the recycling sector	Project Number	D/03/B/F/PP-146056
Project Promoter	biat - University of Flensburg	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Partners	BIBB - Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (DE) - bvse - Bundesverband Sekundärrohstoffe und Entsorgung e.V. (DE) O.E.E.K. – Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Organization of Vocational Education and Training (GR) - ict - Institut Català de Tecnologia (ES) - Coleg Morgannwg (UK) - Lisa – Linzer Institut für soziale Analysen (AT) - Kaunas Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts (LT) - CPI – Center RS za poklicno izobraževanje (Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training) (SI)		

Background

The lack of adequate training schemes for this sector of the economy is beginning to be felt throughout Europe and must be overcome if European environmental policy targets and the challenges of structural change are to be met. There are currently no established initial training programmes running in the European recycling sector.

Existing training schemes tend to cover only waste disposal measures. Moreover, continuing training offers are generally addressed to the management level. There are no sustainable concepts for training skilled workers. In a sector which does not have a training tradition and employs people from a wide range of occupational fields, this represents a crucial competitive disadvantage and is not very conducive to the implementation of sustainable material-flow management to replace “end-of-the-pipe” strategies. Therefore, the development of an initial vocational training for this sector represents an important contribution for supporting the trend towards professionalization in innovative and efficient enterprises. In the scope of the discussion surrounding the European Qualification Framework (EQF), the project has created a concept addressing the applicability of a European Credit Transfer System (ECVET) to the core occupational profile.

Objectives

The “European RecyOccupation Profile” project introduced initial training in the closed loop waste economy within the participating countries and supported that kind of training with both methodological approaches and didactic concepts. Preparation for those activities took place in the Leonardo “RecyOccupation” project (D/03/B/FF/PP-112149). In the “RecyOccupation” project, from 2000-2003, suitable concepts for implementation at national level were developed for initial training for the recycling sector. The European core occupational profile “ECO-Recycler”, which was developed in that context and is work-process based, represents an appropriate means to overcome the qualification deficit for (technical) employees in the closed loop economy over a longer term.

At the same time, the project designed a framework concept for a European occupational group in the field of environmental technology. This represents an effective approach to counteracting the training deficit in recycling operations.

By October 2005, the preconditions for implementing the European core occupational profile “ECO-Recycler” in selected countries and for driving its dissemination forward were met in the “European RecyOccupation Profile” transfer project.

Outcomes/Products

Country-specific curriculum handbooks were developed in the partner countries. These handbooks implement and shape the transformation of the European core occupational profile of ECO-Recycler to reflect national structures and requirements, making it accessible for sustainable use. Learn and work assignments were designed, compiled and published in country-specific handbooks which also contain a didactic concept for training practices, methodological and organisational aids to implementation and learning arrangements that have been assigned to the core occupational profile. A database was compiled to be used in identifying appropriate aids to training. Appropriate training aids were identified and linked to the didactic concept. A didactic concept was developed to support sustainable development through initial training in the closed loop waste economy. In addition, tests were conducted checking the compatibility of a credit structure with respect to respecting the learning-process orientation and examining the assignment of credits to core areas of the “Eco-Recycler” occupational profile.

The products of the project are available in the following languages: DE, EN, SI, ES, LT, EL (download at www.recyoccupation.eu.tc).

Application of results

The vocational training systems in all of the partner countries are profiting from an innovative new occupational profile. In some cases, that profile has already been implemented (Slovenia, UK - Part 1- Spain), while in other cases preparations for implementation have been completed and the profile will subsequently be introduced by the official agents of the vocational training system (Austria, Lithuania, UK - Part 2- Greece). Due to the regulatory background in Germany, the VET system in that country is profiting indirectly, through the creation of materials for training skilled workers for the area of closed loop waste economy. Moreover, tests of the compatibility of a credit structure with respect to respecting the learning-process orientation the assignment of credits to core learning areas of the occupational profile of Eco-Recycler were conducted.

Challenges ahead

The results from and experiences gained through the “European RecyOccupation Profile” project should be discussed with experts from other sectors, in order to promote dissemination of the innovative elements therein.

The design of occupational profiles having a European orientation from the onset represents a considerable contribution towards the establishment of a clearly contoured European educational landscape. This is in accordance with Strategic Objective 3 (Opening up education and training systems to the wider world). At system level, it is difficult to harmonize occupational profiles in Europe, since the VET systems differ so greatly from one to another. However, the work-process oriented European occupational profile can be rationally implemented in national systems, as in terms of content it is structured only on the basis of work tasks – an approach which is extremely promising for many other sectors.

Project sheet no. 15

Project Title	The eBusiness Community Model – Vocational Education and Training Project	Project Number	ISL/05/B/F/PP-164008
Project Promoter	Commercial Workers' Union of Reykjavik	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Partners	EITS – Estonian Information Technical Society (EE) - TIEKE - The Finnish Information Society Development Centre (FI) - CCIR – Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Romania (RO) - VR –The Commercial Union of Reykjavik (IS) - IST – Icelandic Standards (IS) - HK Copenhagen (DK)		

Background

Enterprises and organizations are increasingly using ICT within their activities. For the individual this calls for acquiring new skills and knowledge, the change being seen either as an opportunity for advancement or a threat for job security. For eBusiness and the human capital to develop effectively, people and organisations need to be aware of and understand the new work methods, and to believe in the potential benefits. Target group: individuals working in the value chain of trading and distribution of products and services for business use. Target sector: companies operating B2B and B2G (i.e. import, export, manufacturing, warehousing, sourcing and distribution companies).

Objectives

The eBCM-VET project addressed these challenges by developing an eBusiness vocational education and training Programme in a holistic way by referring to the eBusiness Community Model.

It analyses the need for education and training in the field of eBusiness within target group and sector, it designs and tests, in a pilot project, relevant education and training methods and material. The method used to deliver the knowledge was based on the "Train the Trainers" concept.

Outcomes/Products

- Need Analysis (analysis report): field study within partner countries, on the target group's need for eBusiness vocational education and training (website and paper - EN);
- Learning Objects (curriculum): eleven specific learning objects (chapters) about e-Business and an additional chapter on continuous learning (text and slides, website and paper - EN and project languages);
- Trainers Manual (training pathway): a guide for trainers on how to convey the curriculum to trainees, including the "Train the Trainers" course programme, assessment forms and a template for individual trainee's study programme (website and paper - EN and project languages);
- Training Tool (training pathway): a web based training tool providing access to training material and easy navigation (website and paper - EN and project languages).

Application of results

Project is newly finished (Nov. 6th 2007). It has been presented in an international conference in Bucharest Romania (Oct. 18th 2007) and within stakeholder communities in partner countries. The post project valorisation and implementation plan is being compiled and will be presented as a part of the project's final report.

Challenges ahead

The evolving topic of eBusiness requires regular updating of the training material. The utilization of the training material and method for new sectors calls for some customization. The web-based training tool is currently just informative but could be made interactive and database linked. This project has developed, tested and produced training material. This material and method can now be put through the process of credit transfer validation.

Project sheet no. 16

Project Title	VOW - The Value of Work	Project Number	2005-ISL/05/B/F/P-164006
Project Promoter	Education and Training Service Centre	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Partners	Synthesis Centre for Research and Education (CY) - NIACE- National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (UK) - The Centre of Validation in the City of Malmö (SE) - The Danish Institute for Educational Training of Vocational Teachers (DK) - Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SI)		

Background

The project focused on the validation of non-formal and informal learning of people with little formal education. Through the process of validation the competencies of participants are documented, evaluated and validated in order to open gateways to new opportunities in lifelong learning. The workplace is seen as an important learning arena. Through the validation process the individual will gain an overview of his/her skills to build on further lifelong learning. This can be a very motivational factor for continuing learning. Through participating in validation, the company can develop its human resources operation, strengthening the company and giving it a better position in the competitive market. The main target groups of the project are people with little formal education, companies, guidance counsellors and relevant stakeholders. Validation is seen as a tool for raising participation in lifelong learning and through that, the competence level of a company, of a community, of a nation.

Objectives

The project developed methods and tools for validating competencies acquired in the workplace, transferable between sectors. Professional task groups were established in each partner country whose role was to participate in the development of methods and tools and dissemination of project findings. The project focused on validating employees within the banking sector (3 countries) and then the methods and tools were successfully tested in transfer sectors (2 countries). The main product is the model developed in the pilot which has proven to be transferable between sectors. Next steps will be to test it in new sectors in partners countries in order to validate the competencies of the main target group and open new opportunities for them towards learning and a better position on the labour market.

Outcomes/Products

Handbook of standards: description of how the standards used in the validation process were developed (available in English on the project website).

Handbook of methods and tools: description of the methodology used in the validation process in the project (available in all partner languages on the project website).

Guideline brochure: description of the pilot experience, process and results (available in all partner languages, printed and on the project website).

Project website: including a description of the project and partnership, pilot summaries, all the above mentioned project products and external evaluation material (including feedback from participants and stakeholders).

Final conference: focused on a dissemination of the project material on an international level. The project was introduced and products and processes were reviewed in interactive workshops. Two international experts on workplace learning and EU issues spoke at the events.

Application of results

The partner countries will be using the material in new pilots in banking and transfer sectors, as well as in the training of assessors and advisers in the validation process. Most countries are working on establishing a pathway for the methodology in their countries at a national level through cooperation with relevant stakeholders.

The ETSC in Iceland will validate a new group in banking early year 2008 through cooperation with banks, educational provider and relevant stakeholders.

Slovenia plans a project which in cooperation with Centres for lifelong learning in Slovenia, the title "Recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the centres of lifelong learning".

In UK it is planned to look at extending this model into other sectors and work is beginning with the print sector. It is also planned to look at banking systems in the four government systems.

In Cyprus, as validation is a new process, the focus is on making this model available for employees in the banking sector but also for people who work in other sectors, such as the home care and nursing homes, and unemployed.

In Denmark a member of the Professional Task Group representing the Financial Services Union has implemented the results and the products from the Value of Work project in his department's training strategy and thus potentially to all members of the union.

Challenges ahead

It will be of utmost importance to continue dissemination of project process and results in order to encourage others to use the methodology in new sectors and take the methods and tools further. The representatives in the professional task groups of the project can assist in making this option sustainable for employees the pilot companies/sectors, so time must be spent on continuing developments with them and other interested and relevant stakeholders. A Transfer of innovation project may be a good start for dissemination in new sectors.

Project sheet no. 17

Project Title	WAVE - Working in Aquaculture - Validation of Experience	Project Number	IRL/03/B/F/PP-153112
Project Promoter	AQUATT Ltd Ireland	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Partners	FEAP-Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (BE) - CNAM-Institut National des Sciences et Techniques de la Mer (FR) - FHL Havbruk (NO) - KEK Diastasi (GR) - SATA-Scottish Association Training Association (UK) - SQA-Scottish Qualifications Authority (UK) - AMC-AQUALEX Multimedia Consortium Ltd (IE)		

Background

The WAVE project targeted the aquaculture industry throughout Europe (workers and employers in SMEs, trade associations, colleges, training organisations and regulatory authorities) in order to identify the knowledge, skills and competences needed in the sector, agreed by all involved parties. Each country has its own training requirements, responsive to different needs and criteria. Though constituting the bedrock of the industry's accelerating performance, knowledge, skills and competences acquired in the workplace were rarely given accreditation. The project had two major aims: i) to create a European Master List of competences covering all species, production techniques and technologies in 10 EU languages; ii) to create a mechanism based on the List, leading to the validation and accreditation of practical training and work experience. Such a Master List becomes an inventory of technical competences incorporating variations in work practices and variations according to species, types of farms and farming methods across Europe.

Objectives

A preliminary list of competences was taken from established European vocational and academic courses. WAVE then interviewed 151 individuals working on 91 fishfarms in 10 different European countries, adjusting the list according to their comments, in order to ensure that the list was relevant to their needs and understood and accepted by both workers and managers. This "bottom-up" approach is an essential part of the process, enabling acceptance and approval by the whole European industry. A methodology was developed which had to be capable of initiating and sustaining dialogue with providers, employers and employees on a trans-European scale, and also had to bear intensive scrutiny by all stakeholders. An innovative WAVE surveying tool allowed interviewers in 10 countries to upload results to the database, view statistical overviews and allow partners to view and make comments on specific competences. Industry, trade associations, colleges and regulatory authorities have all contributed to the Master List.

Outcomes/Products

- Master List of the competences (248 competences, 16 groups, 10 EC languages) used in primary production in aquaculture based upon existing national lists with industry input;
- Printed and online Guidelines (in English, French, Spanish, Italian, Norwegian, Greek, Danish, Dutch, Czech and Hungarian), for 5 different target audiences detailing how to use the Master List;
- Website containing all products (<http://www.waveproject.com>);
- Online competency database, developed by partners, essential for managing the extended discussions concerning the draft competency lists. Features include: online editing, tracking, historic archives, comments section, remote translations, online surveying and results;
- Online surveying tool allowing interviewers in 10 countries to upload results to the database, view statistical overviews and allow partners to view comments on specific competences resulting from the surveys;
- Online glossary with definitions of 132 VET terms, available online in 10 languages;
- Online competency tool giving users the opportunity to generate individualised list of competences, which is then emailed directly to them.;
- Report on WAVE methodology as part of WAVE Final Report.

Application of results

- Online Master List allowing users to create an individual list of competences, according to need.
- Students (work placements): Farm managers can structure on-site training; students leave with list of what has been achieved; training organisation can use this in its accreditation system (ECTS or other).
- Farm workers can use the WAVE mapping of competences to map out own learning pathways.
- Farm Managers in staff selection (what candidates can and can't do) and in identifying training needs.
- Policy and decision-makers: new curricula can be developed rapidly in response to identifiable needs.
- Educators can compare European systems, pick out future training needs, and accredit work placements.
- The AQUATNET TN (SOCRATES, 117 members) uses the Master List preparing for the TUNING project.
- FEAP uses the WAVE surveys, a 'first' for the sector, in their policy work at a European level, also as business management tool, at national policy level and farm manager working level.

Challenges ahead

A key challenge in VET is the status of unaccredited short-term sectoral/professional training courses as this depends on recognition in National Qualifications Frameworks. But work placements, on-the-job training, short courses are often not part of national awards. Providing a Master List of competences is only one step in the recognition process. Competences have to be transformed into Learning Outcomes which can be evaluated, validated, and awarded credits, following the European Qualifications Framework proposals. Using the tools developed in the WAVE project, the WAVE partners wish to test how certain types of lifelong learning acquisition can fit into the EQF using the aquaculture sector as a proposed sectoral framework. The sector is ideal as it is a fast-growing and innovative industry, its success relying on a joint practical and theoretical knowledge base, whose personnel regularly require specialised up to date training which is provided in many different formats.

Project sheet no. 18

Project Title	H.E.L.E.N. - The European Learning Network	Project Number	I/04/B/F/NT-154056
Project Promoter	Politecnico di Torino	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Background

The basis of the H.E.L.E.N. project has been established according to some needs indicated in the framework of the considerations of the European Council of Barcelona in March 2002: "to make vocational training in Europe a world quality reference point within 2010".

A further stimulus derives from the resolution of the European Council of Copenhagen on November 19, 2002: "vocational training is necessary for promoting employment, social cohesion, active citizenship and personal and professional realization".

Moreover, conclusions of Bruges-Copenhagen process, and in particular the following declaration: "research on how to promote transparency, comparability, transferability and systemic recognition of competences and/or qualifications, among different countries and at different levels could be sponsored through the development of reference levels, common principles for certification and measures, including a system of credits for V.E.T.".

Objectives

HELEN's objectives are:

1. to favour mobility of workers and students;
2. to implement a transnational network;
3. to promote social dialogue among policy makers and partners, among partners and their networks at local level and/or at transnational level.

Users of the final products are institutional subjects with competences in law, management and certification in high technical vocational training, having access to privileged channels of information and communication and with national and European institution, and also social partners.

Outcomes/Products

Results were foreseen in terms of:

- Processes: collection, selection and classification of competence standards for professional profiles and of practices for identification and certification, methodologies for a systematic use of information systems, identification and application of best practices appropriate for the foundation and the preservation in time of a transnational network and promotion of social dialogue.
- Products: "DOMAINS" collection of formal models for qualification, certification and credits; specification of a semantic searching engine for vocational training named "QUOVADIS"; "Best Practices Manual for a Virtual Community for Post-Secondary Formation" report; definition and development of the HELEN Portal and of the Institution Domain Sites of the Virtual Community with activation of privileged interaction channels following models of transnational networks; implementation of conventions and seminar activities.
- System: product and process construction modalities oriented to the development of new competences for the involved operators and contribute to the definition of ontologies, collectively defined by the partnership as a fundamental and dynamic element for a transparent and coherent system.

Application of results

Let's imagine that a French student has followed a training course in France where he/she obtained a qualification. Let's also imagine that he/she wants to continue his/her specialization abroad, for example in The Netherlands. Which competences previously acquired could be actually recognized in the field of the new path?

A great part of activities of the H.E.L.E.N. project is aimed at identifying linking strategies among conceptual elements of models of different countries. It could be thus possible to establish which elements of the French professional profiles are useful for the comparison. Once the link at model level has been defined, it should be considered in detail the information contained in the two profiles and it should be established a concrete correspondence between competences.

Challenges ahead

The results in terms of system, as well as the interest of the many institutional bodies and social partners represent an element of force, which guarantees the application and exploitation of the implemented results and the continuation of activities ensuing the end of the project.

Project sheet no. 19

Project Title	HAMSTER - New Harmonised Models for Skill Development to SMEs identifying a European Plastic Welding Repository	Project Number	N/06/B/PP-165009
Project Promoter	Smartcom Interaktive	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Partners	Easy Learning Solutions (NO) - Quality Management Software (NO) - European Welding Federation (PT) - CWS-ANB (CZ) - UNO Prag (CZ) - MHE (HU) - IS (IT) - Psibeta (GR)		

Background

HAMSTER aims at validating the use of Activity Structured Training Models in a new harmonized training schedule for European Plastic Welders. The training schedule follows the EWF Guideline Doc. 581-01 and it will be implemented in more than 36 European countries. The Guideline will ensure a transparency in knowledge and qualification in vocational education and training towards the target sector, which is SME's and VET schools focusing on plastic welding.

The training schedule will use new visual communication and collaboration tools in order to ensure distribution on learning content across regions in a just-in-time context.

Objectives

The project uses an Activity Structured pedagogical approach whereby the education and skills transfer closely follows the industrial production process. The education focuses also on health, environment and safety in addition to the technical content in order to cover a wide European need for sustainable growth.

Streaming video is used to highlight different aspects of the production process as well as environmental challenges. Through EWF, responsible for dissemination, a common European Harmonized Diploma aims at documenting the formal knowledge and skills obtained through the courses developed in the project.

Outcomes/Products

The results which the project means to achieve are:

1. A set of focused courses within plastic welding according the EWF Guideline Doc 581-1;
2. A set of Train-the-Trainer courses for teachers and instructors showing how to utilize visual communication and collaboration tools in education and training;
3. A set of demonstration videos showing best practice training skills;
4. A set of targeted videos related to plastic welding;
5. A European plastic welding repository;
6. A project web site highlighting the project results.

Application of results

The application will be implemented through a set of training courses in Hungary, Czech Republic and Italy. The first train-the-trainer courses have been held in Hungary with the relevant training institutions. Further piloting will be held in the above countries in the first half of 2008.

Follow up and implementation will be carried out at national level by the different ANB's (Authorized National Body) in the project countries. EWF as an European umbrella organization will follow up the project on an European level.

Challenges ahead

Challenges ahead will be content creation that covers a wider spectre in the field of plastic welding as well as translation of content to different national languages. This may be done in new projects. A wider dissemination of the project findings will be of importance for future implementation on a wide European basis.

The use of new visual collaboration and communication technologies, which stimulates the students, will also require that future work must cover an education of teachers and instructors in this field as well.

Project sheet no. 20

Project Title	A Model of Professional Qualification Structure and New Methods of Promotion, Certification and Mutual Recognition of Managerial Skills in Construction Industry, according to the Requirements of the European Union	Project Number	PL/02/B/F/PP-140029
Project Promoter	Warsaw University of Technology - Faculty of Civil Engineering - Department of Construction Engineering and Management	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Partners	Polish British Construction Partnership, Sp. z o.o. (PL) - Construction Management Education Foundation (PL) - National Union of Building Employers (PL) - University of Minho (PT) - The Chartered Institute of Building (UK) - The College of Estate Management (UK)		

Background

The main goal of the project was to develop a system of mutual recognition of managerial skills in construction, comparison and certification of managerial qualifications in the European construction industry. The system is necessary in order to provide equal opportunities in the labour market for construction engineers from European Union in Central and Eastern Europe countries as well as for engineers from these countries in European Union.

Objectives

Partners undertook the following tasks:

- acceptance of the project final version of areas and structure of managerial knowledge in construction, necessary for different levels of qualifications and all types of managerial function in construction, in order to certify engineers and accredit courses;
- creation of a guidebook for a comparability of all components of certification and accreditation systems in the form of curricula-qualification modules;
- comparable analysis of curricula, education methods and certification requirements in selected countries from European Union;
- creation of uniform certification criteria of managerial qualifications and accreditation of studies, preparing to fulfill managerial functions in various areas of construction industry and different levels of required qualifications;
- preparation of models and organization of complementary studies (especially "distance learning" system), which are necessary to standardize qualification levels and process of specialization of construction managers in different countries;
- preparation of uniform and detailed conditions and procedures of managerial skills certification and accreditation of studies assuring these qualifications.

Outcomes/Products

Main results of the projects, printed as books and available in Polish and English are as follows:

- Development of extended and detailed version of area and structure of knowledge about entrepreneurship in construction and set of definitions; discussion, verification and acceptance by all partners final version of area and structure of knowledge about entrepreneurship in construction, essential for various levels of professional managerial qualification and specialization - set of managerial knowledge in construction, a basis for qualifications comparison;
- Development of mutual recognition system of managerial qualifications, as a full set of modules of content-related descriptions of explicit qualification requirements, as a knowledge compendium required on different levels and specialities of managerial qualification, discussion, verification and final acceptance of the system – set of educational tools for education of construction managers;
- Comparative analysis of curricula and methods of education in selected European countries and requirements concerning certification of qualifications, in order to meet requirements of “managerial qualifications’ comparability system” - analysis refers to Polish engineers from construction industry – procedures for mutual comparison of qualifications.

Application of results

Concrete applications of the projects results are as follows:

- Creation of Polish Association of Building Managers (www.psmb.pl) – the national association gathering managers in construction. PSMB is fully recognized by UK organisation – Chartered Institute of Building and PSMB is a member of AEEBC (The Association of European Building Surveyors and Construction Experts). The main benefit of PSMB membership is the set of recognised managerial qualifications in construction across EU (AEEBC gathered organisations from 15 EU countries);
- Creation and successful application for LdV project PL/06/B/P/PP/174014 (2006-2008) titled: “ Common Learning Outcomes for European Managers in Construction”;
- Creation of 7 books – base for Construction Managers Library.

Challenges ahead

Main challenges still to be faced are:

- the creation of distance learning systems of education for EU constructions managers;
- the development of the PSMB (gathering new members);
- the extension of mutual recognitions systems to all EU countries, including potential members, like Ukraine or Turkey.

Project sheet no. 21

Project Title	eNOV - Virtual Training for Young Innovative Entrepreneurs	Project Number	RO/05/B/F/PP-175012
Project Promoter	National Agency for qualifications in higher education and partnership with economic and social environment	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Partners	Haute Ecole de la Province de Liege (FR) - Hellenic Centre for Regional Development (GR) - Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (ES) - Institut Universitaire de Technologie de Rouen (FR) - Université Pierre et Marie Curie - Paris 6 (FR) - Market Research and Analysis Centre (PL) - Romanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RO) - COMSYS - COMSYS S.R.L. (RO) - Romanian Association for Knowledge Transfer (RO) - University of Brighton (UK)		

Background

The eNOV project aims at creating, on transnational and partnership basis, a training tool in order to support the young entrepreneurs to find, develop and efficiently manage the results of university research and to help them to validate their non-formal and informal learning. The project has sustainable outputs, especially the learning content and training tools, which could be made available to the teaching, learning, or research communities on a permanent basis or to other project target sectors. The project products could be used in different kind of trainings by entrepreneurs, universities researchers, assistant professors, higher education students in their final academic years having an initial academic background in a technical field.

Objectives

The rationale of the project is to offer these young entrepreneurs, by means of a continuous vocational training, a learning tool which should teach them not to create a "classic enterprise" but an innovative one, created and implemented through the valorization and direct use of a university RDI results.

Outcomes/Products

The main outcomes and products of the project are:

- European Inventory of the young innovative entrepreneurs' training needs (research report in CD-ROM, website - EN, FR);
- Handbook for creation and management of innovative businesses (CD "Dare your enterprise" and handbook in CD-Rom - EN);
- Training package (CD-Rom, website - EN, FR);
- Website (www.enov.ro - EN, FR);
- Digest "National and European SMEs legislation" (research report in website, CD-Rom, paper - EN, FR);
- Handbook "University research programmes and results in the project countries" (website, CD-Rom, paper - EN, FR);
- Digest "National and European legislation and practice in technology transfer and innovation" (research report in website, CD-Rom, paper - EN, FR);
- Guide "Good practices in innovative start-up creation" (research report in website, CD-Rom, paper - EN, FR);
- Guide for young innovative entrepreneurs (research report in website, CD-Rom, paper - EN, FR).

The project products and results offer new tools and more over innovative pedagogical tools for several target groups (university graduates, self-employers, enterprisers, university teachers, researchers) and sectors (universities, companies, research institutes, incubators, technology parks, scientific parks etc.). Therefore, the project outcomes help them meeting the challenge of targeting entrepreneurship skills and competences, supporting their training through the specific training modules based on their training needs, helping companies turn the ideas of today into the goods and services for tomorrow. The European partnership gave the opportunity to create both a large framework to validate the results and a large network to assure technological transfer and the improvement of the innovative professional skills for the young entrepreneurs.

Application of results

The added value of the transnational activity consisted in the parallel and cross research on existing resources and training needs, transferring, testing and adapting different partners' pedagogical approaches and supporting training tools for innovative entrepreneurship. Due to the transnational activity, a very important comparative assessment paper has been done which will lead to a better understanding of the economical and social environment of each country, an easier professional insertion of those who want to start an innovative business both at national and European level. The transnational partnership explored the common issues in entrepreneurship at national and European levels and provided an analysis of the current relationships between universities and industry, within each partner country. The opportunity to exchange experiences of innovative entrepreneurs, trainers and researchers made possible to transfer new ideas, alternative training models, pedagogical tools and expertise to each transnational partner. The eNOV project has sustainable outputs, especially the learning content and training tools, which could be made available to the teaching, learning, or research communities on a permanent basis or to other project target sectors. The project products could be used in different kind of trainings both in the incubators, university laboratories and doctoral schools.

Challenges ahead

In order to assure the sustainability of project partnership and project activities/results and for the further development of the project outcomes, some activities are envisaged:

1. Improving, updating and using the project results in the current activities of project partners;
2. Implementing the main project results and outcomes in a master program;
3. Involving the main part of eNOV partners in a new European project valorising the eNOV results.

The project website will continue to be online for the indefinite future, so the various results and outputs of the project and especially the virtual training centre can further be accessed and improved. The main advantages of the results achieved within our project are their utility and applicability within many institutions (universities, incubators, enterprises, research institutes) as well as the fact that they can be used at the same time as a successful self-training tool.

Project sheet no. 22

Project Title	EURO-NURSE - The European harmonization of nursing curricula in Romania	Project Number	RO/2005/PL95166/EX
Project Promoter	University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Victor Babes", Timisoara	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Website	www.umft.ro	E-mail	sdragan@cardiologie.ro
Project Partners	University of Sunderland (UK) - University of Rovaniemi (FI)		

Background

The two-tier structure in nursing education according to the Bologna process only started in Romania 3 years ago. At BSc level, Romanian schools of nursing still greatly vary from curricular point of view and do not offer training at EU standards. MSc programs for new competences like health care management, gerontology, mental health nursing, critical care nursing, midwifery, nursing and health care ethics, trans-cultural and cross cultural nursing are completely lacking. Through the project, teachers in Nursing from the University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Victor Babes" Timisoara set the premises for implementation of fast track curricula for validation of Romanian nursing high-school degrees to BSc level and for joint Masters programs in Nursing together with two EU partner institutions that practice nursing education according to European requirements.

Target groups: teachers, undergraduates and professionals from nursing, occupational therapy, health care management, social workers, midwives, maternal assistants, undergraduates in Nursing, graduates of nursing schools with high-school degrees, professional organisations, Romanian institutions of certification and recognition of competences and qualification in health care.

Objectives

Objectives:

- to provide and to develop new learning environments, interactive learning solutions, problem-based learning in all fields of nursing in Romania: general nursing, gerontology, critical care, health care management, occupational therapy, mental health care, rehabilitation of the disabled;
- to design joint curricular modules for undergraduates and graduates in nursing, as flexible learning tools - platforms of exchange of experience and knowledge between countries;
- to exchange best practices between teachers and trainers.

Methodological solutions:

- to find partner institutions with a very good experience in the field: the University of Rovaniemi (FI) offers excellent integrated instruction in nursing at Bachelor level and the Master structure is very well organized and adapted to the needs of the market, the University of Sunderland (UK) is experienced in on-line teaching and implementation of modern methods of teaching in Nursing in foreign countries, especially Eastern Europe;
- to present the project results to Romanian institutions of certification and recognition of competences and qualification in health care and to the Ministries of Health and Education.

Outcomes/Products

Project outcomes:

- comparative discussion of curricula and teaching methods, based on preliminary report previously sent by Romanian partner;
- development of common curricular modules, both for graduate and post graduate teaching which will enable experience exchanges between the partner countries;
- development of a special, one-year curriculum for nurses with under-graduate degrees in order to equalize diplomas;
- instruction on distance teaching organization for Master in nursing;
- instruction on development of Master curricula;
- instruction on online evaluation of student performance;
- establishing criteria for quality management of theoretical knowledge, practical abilities and student behaviour.

Product developed: fast track curriculum for validation of the nursing high-school degree to BSc level proposed by the University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Victor Babes" Timisoara, recognized by the Romanian Ministry of Education (paper - RO).

Application of results

Concrete application of project results will be made according to following strategy:

1. short-term (1 year)
 - harmonization of nursing curriculum with EU standards for undergraduate level at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Victor Babes" Timisoara (RO);
2. medium-term (1-2 years)
 - joint-master degree curricula in community nursing and geriatric nursing developed by the partner institutions;
3. long term (2-5 years)
 - expand joint-master degree curricula to mental health nursing and occupational therapy;
 - implement an on line e-learning platform for Masters programs in Nursing Piloting;
 - develop a pilot project on harmonization of nursing curriculum with EU standards within a Romanian network of nursing schools;
 - lobbying at the Ministry of Education for validation of the new curricula developed within the Romanian network.

Challenges ahead

1. Implementation and development of an on line e-learning Masters program in Nursing with following courses: Nursing Education (training for teachers and trainers), Nursing Health Care Leadership, Nursing Administration and a portfolio for Family Nurse (Gerontology, Complementary Therapies, Occupational Therapy, Mental Health);
2. Design of joint curricular modules for MSc in Nursing;
3. To offer a platform of exchange of experience and knowledge between countries through imaging/digital libraries and exchange of best practice trends;
4. To set criteria for quality management to respond to education and training needs in Nursing.

Project sheet no. 23

Project Title	e-Marine - New forms, Internet based and products for vocational and educational training (VET), lifelong learning and competences assessment for the marine and port fields	Project Number	RO/05/B/P/PP-175004
Project Promoter	Constanta Maritime University	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Partners	Polytechnic University of Catalonia (ES) - IPA S.A. (RO) - Diakrisi (GR) - Constanta Harbour School (RO) - Oneco (ES) - Frareg (IT)		

Background

Training for maritime and port related professions is realised at national levels, whereas the job is performed in an international environment and it is expected that people with the same job carry out their activities in the same manner. In order to achieve this goal, there is a continuous need of standardisation and cooperation at international level. E-Marine project can be considered as one of the few initiatives in the field of maritime and port activities and its main goals can be resumed as follows:

- generation of an electronic environment for training and competence evaluation;
- developing of occupational standards for certain port and shipping professions.

The main target groups of the project are: crew on board ships, ship and port management companies, port workers, students in maritime and port related studies, high school students willing to pursue a career in the maritime or port industry.

Objectives

Project specific aims are:

- the creation of practical and advanced, Internet and direct based conditions and products, for the training of the worldwide dispersed seafarers and port workers;
- the exploitation of usability, accessibility, inter-operability and immediacy of the Internet based training for people involved in the marine area;
- the intensive implementation of advanced and appropriate e-Learning elements and activities in VET and LLC, in the marine field;
- the exploitation of opportunities generated by the diminishment of unemployment within marine professions;
- the achievement of conditions to approach the new technologies in marine activities;
- the creation of compliance with the requirements related to the IMO training and to other international bodies;
- the creation of the environment for competencies evaluation;
- the adoption of EU Standards and Regulations in the field of competencies evaluation;
- the establishment of a European data and information exchange between European countries in VET, VET's products and VET's practical facilities and simulators in marine and port areas.

Outcomes/Products

Projects' outcomes are:

- Report on training needs analysis (handbook, paper - RO, EN);
- Manual and user Guide of the VLE (handbook, website, CD-Rom - EN);
- Seven occupational standards for maritime and port related professions (handbook, paper - EN, ES, IT EL);
- Validated analytical programs for the seven professions;
- Books on a variety of port and shipping related subjects (handbook, CD-Rom - RO, EN, ES):
 - Freight Forwarding
 - Ship/Shore Interface – Safe Working Practices
 - Human Errors and the Environment
 - Management of Marine Oil Pollution Response
 - New Technologies for Navigation Safety
 - Ship Security

Application of results

- Proposed standards are to be handed to port authorities from all countries involved in the project;
- Courses developed will be available for minimum 5 years on project's web-page;
- Two pilot courses have been carried out at Constanta Harbour School;
- A continuous dialogue is maintained with interested stakeholders from all countries involved;
- Twin centres will be continuing their activity after the project conclusion;
- Experience accumulated within this project will be used for future projects on occupational standards in maritime and port related activities.

Challenges ahead

This project identified a lot of other shipping areas for which standardization and international cooperation is necessary. It is clear that in the maritime field, students are trained in less developed countries of European Union and they are carrying out their activities either on board vessels managed by companies based in more developed countries of European Union or in companies based in those countries.

Project sheet no. 24

Project Title	Teachers exchange of the FLORNET– network-teachers operating in partnership, acquiring skills	Project Number	SK/05/A/F/EX-5014027
Project Promoter	Secondary Agricultural School in Pruské	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Partners	Statens gartner-og blomsterdekoratorskole VEA (NO) - UCFlor – Sanremo Flower market (IT) - Mäntsälä CollegeSaarentaus (FI) - Staatliche Fachschule für Blumenkunst Weihenstephan (DE)		

Background

The project was a reaction to the need of exchanging experiences, improving professional skills in floristry and arranging. This initiative was founded on the basics of informal organization Flornet, which gathers partners from European countries. The projects target groups were vocational teachers and teachers of practical training.

Outcomes of this project were:

- improving intercultural knowledge of participants;
- developing insight into other teaching programmes and models;
- developing their craftsman abilities;
- developing vocational language and social skills.

The participants of the mobility gain the certificate:

- improving vocational competences;
- improving language skills;
- improving intercultural skills;
- higher adaptability on problems in team, recognizing of new social – cultural dimensions.

Objectives

The aims of the project were:

- motivation teachers to learn from their foreign colleagues;
- increasing their own expertise;
- increasing abilities for comein useful;

Contribution of the project were:

- introducing of new innovative methods in floristry;
- stimulation supranational capacity of centres of vocational education;
- increasing European dimensions in education;
- transforming new ideas and progresses in education;
- possibility to gain new contacts by visiting other schools and vocational institutes in foreign countries.

Outcomes/Products

Practical results of each mobility were :

- presentation of concrete works of each participant on exhibition in host country;
- presentation in Power Point on a CD- ROM;
- modul presentation on school and FLORNET-web sites;
- panel presentation of the final works.

Application of results

The results of the works will be used:

- on vocational subjects – floristry, arranging;
- on practical trainings;
- in other exchanges of teacher in partnership;
- in application of experiences to curriculum;
- realization of new projects in supranational level (project SK/07/LVD/PRO/01-73230364 FLORNETS Teachers INTernational competent – FLORNETS partnership 2007).

Challenges ahead

- Improving of existing partnership;
- Spreading on new members from EU- countries;
- Increasing quality of the work in that field of education;
- Creation and realization of new projects.

Project sheet no. 25

Project Title	MODILE-EUROCARCO - Modular Distance Learning for European Mobility Career Counsellors	Project Number	SK/01/B/P/PP-142220
Project Promoter	State Vocational Education Institute (SVEI), Centre Career Counselling and Research (CCCR)	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Partners	Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (SK) - State Vocational Education Institute (CZ) - Federation of Employers Associations of the Slovak Republic (SK) - The Federal Labour Office (DE) - Noorderpoort College (NL) - University of Economics of Bratislava (SK) -Town Office Estepa (ES) - National Centre for Guidance in Education (IE)		

Background

The theme of the pilot project is the creation of a modular educational programme for career counsellors as part of European mobility. The main objective of the project is the innovation of vocational education of career counsellors in the view of the European dimension in order to support mobility within education and the labour market. The goal of the project is to improve the quality and accessibility of further vocational education and lifelong gaining of skills and competences of the target groups. The innovative contribution is the European dimension of vocational training of career counsellors with respect to the international co-operation among the partner countries.

The pilot project:

- creates the conditions for updating and innovating vocational education and training of career counsellors adapted to a new social and economical situation, new needs of the labour market and new demands for labour force needed within the labour market;
- supports the application of new information and communication technologies (ICT) in the work of career counsellors.

Main target groups are career counsellors for:

- the educational sector (elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities);
- the labour and social affairs sector;
- employers' associations (social partners);
- non-governmental and non-profit making institutions.

Objectives

The project offers the following procedures:

- creation of modules for career counsellors with special attention to information and communication technologies;
- common methodology of effectiveness evaluation of the latest curricula for career counsellors, evaluation scales, expert analyses;
- international comparison of new or revised curricula for career counsellors, including the latest information and communication technologies;
- creation of curricula for career counsellors (a modular programme of lifelong education in the partner countries, international dimension of comparison);
- preparation of methods for career counsellors (forms, CD, including the possibilities of the partner countries);
- expansion of the European network of co-operating partner organisations;
- accreditation of the modular educational programme for career counsellors;
- proposals and recommendations for the decision making sphere.

Outcomes/Products

1. Analyses:

a) Critical analyses of career counselling in Germany, Ireland, Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Spain and Slovakia (analyses of career counselling in the partner countries, international comparison of career counselling in the partner countries - paper and electronic forms, EN version);

b) Critical analyses of career counsellors (analyses of vocational education and training of career counsellors in partner countries, system of career counselling - EN version);

2. Analyses of educational needs of career counsellors (paper and electronic forms - EN version);

3. Curricula for teaching career counsellors comprising theoretical and practical preparation (EN, SK versions);

4. Information and promotional material (leaflet - EN, DE, ES, SK versions);

5. Proposals and recommendations for decision making sphere referring to career counselling;

6. Modular distance on-line education course for career counsellors consisting of 11 modules (Module 1 - General aspects; Module 2 - Information management; Module 3 - Quality management; Module 4 - Community cooperation; Module 5 - Labour relations; Module 6 - Occupational, educational and career counselling psychology; Module 7 - Sociology; Module 8 - Minority groups in career counselling; Module 9 - Ethics in career counselling; Module 10 - Marketing in career counselling; Module 11 - Statistics) and 2 handbooks ("Handbook of the applicable legislation" and "Slovak – English – German – Spanish Terminological dictionary"). All modules are in EN, SK, DE, ES versions and available on-line, CD and in paper form;

7. Pilot training for career counsellor;

8. Manual web page editor (EN, SK versions);

Educational programme for career counsellors "Modular Distance Learning for European Mobility Career Counsellors (MODILE-EUROCARCO) is accredited by the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic under No.: 1696/34705/2005/93/1.

Application of results

As for the target group, the access to and quality of training of the career counsellors were improved by this project in more countries.

As for the sector, the project is cross-sectoral. Therefore it has a huge potential for sectoral transfer.

In Slovakia:

- the project tried to introduce new profession in the Slovak labour market “career counsellors”;
- the project more or less introduced e-learning in the field of counselling;
- the project created a good starting position for development of higher education study programme in the field of counselling. Such type of higher education study does not yet exist in Slovakia;
- on the basis of the project outputs, a provision was incorporated in the amendment of the Higher Education Act in 2003, according to which higher education institutions are obliged to provide students with counselling services;
- the results of this project are in line with Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on employment services which states that counsellors must have completed higher education;
- the Ministry of Education of the Slovakia included in the Main Tasks Plan for 2004 for the contractor the following priority task “Proposal of Career Counselling Strategy in the Slovak Republic” based on the analyses of career counselling which were prepared in the framework of this project.

In the Czech Republic the poroject results will broaden the university offer in the field of career counselling and lifelong learning experts specialising in career counselling who work in schools and educational facilities.

In Germany before June 2004 almost all the career counsellors were trained at the University of Applied Sciences of the Bundesanstalt für Arbeit (now Bundesagentur für Arbeit Federal Labour Office) in Mannheim. There were plans to create new training courses for career counsellors in 2005, because the above-mentioned university went a far-reaching transformation process. The results of this project were taken into account. The plans to integrate the modules in this new training courses were discussed with representatives of the university in Mannheim and the Central Employment agency in Bonn as the head of the new European Competence Centres.

In The Netherlands the modules can broaden educational offer for career counsellors and it will be used as part of courses offered on the labour market.

In Spain the modules will be used as part of university study for teachers in counselling departments, educative counselling teams, practice tutors in vocation training courses, labour counsellors, professionals of lifelong and occupational training, trainers and counsellors in the area of labour market.

In Ireland the modules will be used for further training of career counsellors form lifelong learning.

Challenges ahead

The project has been the basis for the project "Implementation of the Educational Programme Modular Distance Learning for European Career Counsellors (MODILE –EUROCARCO), modified on the basis of target groups and realized with the support of the European Social Fund in 2005-2008.

Project sheet no. 26

Project Title	IFD - Instructor for driving	Project Number	SK/02/B/F/PP-142272
Project Promoter	Združenie autoškôl Slovenskej republiky	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Website	www.ifd.szm.sk	E_mail	zas-sr@nexta.sk
Project Partners	Visshe Transportno Uchilishte (BG) - Europrofis (CZ) - Verkehrsakademie Bayern e.V. (DE) - IPF-Iniciativas Para la Formación (ES) - IDEC (GR) - FARE (FR) - Häme Polytechnic (FI) - ASIA Onlus (IT) - Žilinská universita (SK) - Stredná priemyselná škola dopravná (SK)		

Background

The simple project idea was based on promoter's need to find an optimaly structure for increasing the level of qualification of instructor for driving. The goal was also to propose entering condition for preparation for work, lifelong monitoring and application with e-learning model. The main need which the promoter willed to solve was to define the job of driving instructor as a real vocation qualification.

This kind of job was not described in details and it envisaged very simple preparation of people involved. Based on the acquired experience, the task would be have been solved with the formulation of big amount of details needed for definition of this work place. The project did not solve transfer of credits or validation of informal learning.

The main target group of the project are driving instructors and secondary target groups are trainers of instructors, trainers of safety road transport, managers of driving training.

Objectives

The project results contributed to the definition of qualification with proposals based on experience, knowledge and skills obtained by the partnership. The actual access to vocation definition of mentioned qualification has been extended and more detailed as in the past. A gate to lifelong learning has also been opened.

The project implemented a definition for entering into vocational preparation. It helped people to be sures that their choice to became driving instructor was right. The proposed training structure, a combination of theory and practical parts of preparation, quality definition of trainers and teachers and time duration of preparation, responded the needs presented in preparation stage of project.

The project objectives have been achieved also in the final exams in terms of suggestion of forms, contents and people involved. The definition of lifelong learning for driving instructor has also been structured.

Outcomes/Products

- Selection pathway for people with intention to be a driving instructor (printed form, CD - EN, SK, DE, BG, GR, IT);
- Curriculum of instructor preparation (printed form, CD - EN, SK, CZ, IT, DE, FI): find an optimal structure of training;
- Examination process (printed form - EN, SK, ES, FR, FI, CZ): main points of instructor's exams;
- Lifelong follow up of instructors (printed form, CD - EN, SK, FI, CZ, ES, FR): optimal structure of lifelong profession monitoring;
- Training materials (6 subjects) (books, CD - EN, SK, FI, FR, DE, BG): supporting material of selected subjects;
- E-learning model of training (EN, SK): selected subject on webpage;
- Pilot training courses in 5 countries (SK, DE, FR, FIN, BG): verifying proposed subjects;
- Training tool instruction (2 videocassettes - EN, SK);
- Project information (webpages www.ifd.sk, www.ifd.szm.sk).

Application of results

Pilot project results are constantly on the table for change of legislation. Using the project proposals means preparing common need for increasing of the level of driving training. It is long a way but we are not yet at the beginning. The process runs: it is already valid for Slovakia, the project results are in intention of Bulgaria, some of project results are supporting Finnish training of driving instructors.

Challenges ahead

The project idea can be offered to new countries as study material.

The training tools are an interesting mode of continuing in the project idea: using autosimulators, video-in-car system and forced e-learning might probably be the next project idea. Another idea is the dictionary in more European languages which is expected for the future. Both project ideas are supporting quality of instructor work.

Project sheet no. 27

Project Title	METALCERT - Transnational Device to certify competences in the Metal Sector from the Social Dialogue	Project Number	ES/06/B/F/PP-149430
Project Promoter	Federación Vizcaína de Empresas del Metal	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Partners	FEE – Fondo Formacion Euskadi S.L.L (ES) - IMH – Instituto de Máquina Herramienta (ES) - IVAC – Instituto Vasco de las Cualificaciones (ES) - BFI – Berufsförderungsinstitut (AT) - Gip Académique Cafoc (FR) - Emergences (FR) - Trebag (HU) - ISE – Institutul De Stiinte Ale Educatei (RO)		

Background

The metal sector is undergoing important transformations though facing them from a weak position: in front of the technological evolution, competitiveness, internationalisation, delocalisation, organisational changes, the sector is old, masculine, with scarce qualification, small business structures. These changes and transformations compose a complex (many variables), dynamic (quick changes) and uncertain (unpredictable) panorama. The professional certification systems privilege the traditional ways of learning, compared with other ways of acquiring competences. As a consequence, those who have learnt by experience have a “hidden curriculum”.

The productive system is particularly interested in productive processes and competences. They do not rely on certificates due to their theoretical character, not real.

A recognition system should have reliable and valid tools to measure; furthermore, this information must be credible for the different agents. It is similar to a “coin”.

An evaluation device should combine quality of the measuring system and credibility in its results as predictors of the professional performance.

The sector is the metal one. Target groups: sector companies, business associations, public organisations and institutions of qualification and accreditation, trade unions and legal representation of workers, workers and vocational training centres.

Objectives

Metalcert project is aimed at improving the qualification transparency from transnational cooperation, social dialogue, quality and valorisation of “best practices”. To this purpose, Metalcert will develop and experience a transnational device to certify key competences in the metal sector with the participation of all the agents of the metal sector, supported by quality standards, vocational qualifications and best practices, with gender perspective. In short time, it will be a device whose credibility lays on the participation of all the metal sector agents; all this by means of encouraging transparency of qualifications in the Metal Sector with Social Dialogue, Transnational Cooperation and by means of valorising best practices, offering an integrating, innovating and experiencing planning always focused on clients.

Outcomes/Products

Carried out:

- Report regarding the centrality of processes in the sector and their sensitiveness to the different changing trends (paper, electronic Word files, Acrobat, webpage - EN, ES);
- Map of processes involved in the metal sector activity (paper, electronic Word files, Acrobat, webpage - EN, ES);
- Competences related to the key processes which are sensitive to the changing trends (paper, electronic Word files, Acrobat, webpage - EN, ES);
- Referent of the Competences (from three to five) associated to each of the three key processes sensitive to the trends (from 9 to 15 competences in total) (paper, electronic Word files, Acrobat, webpage - EN, ES);
- Catalogue of the Best Practices in the evaluation, recognition and validation of competences (paper, electronic Word files, Acrobat, webpage - EN, ES);

In process:

- Guidance and guidelines to build a system for the competence accreditation. A transnational approach, from social dialogue (paper, electronic Word files, Acrobat, webpage, CD - EN, ES);
- o System for the Evaluation, Recognition and Validation of Competences related to Key Processes sensitive to the changes in the metal sector (paper, electronic Word files, Acrobat, webpage, CD - ES, FR, HU, AT, RO).

All of them are addressed to: trade unions, companies, departments of human resources, qualification organisations, authorities and training organisations.

Application of results

INITIAL STAGE:

- Edition of information about the project in the various publications of the organisations composing the project partnership;
- Spreading the project through the Working Networks the organisations in the Partnership belong to;
- Elaborating and sending informative newsletters about the project;
- Organisation of working meetings with the organisations most directly involved in the project. Those meetings will be used to personally present objectives, methods and expected results of Metalcert and to set the cooperation bases throughout it;
- Doing a “mailing” addressed to the organisations which could be interested in the issues treated by Metalcert;
- Editing informative “reports” about the objective, activities and results that will be got as a result of Metalcert project development.

DEVELOPMENT AND EXECUTION STAGE:

- Organisation of working technical meetings, taking advantage of the transnational meetings, to which other non-partner organisations will be invited;
- Presentation of the surveys, analysis carried out by the project technical team;

- Introduction of the whole information generated by the project (surveys, analysis, bulletins, etc.) into the partnership Web;
- Use of the project logo in all the public events that are carried out;
- Use of the other tools designed for the initial stage;
- Elaboration of a periodical informative bulletin (2-4 pages, in principle, one number scheduled for each stage) which will be distributed to all the cooperating organisations and to others which might be interested. This bulletin will include the progress, activities and events of the project;
- Take part in the valorisation meetings organised by the E.C. (e.g. thematic monitoring groups).

FINAL VALORISATION STAGE :

- Transfer of results through the working networks promoted by the E.C.;
- Edition and spreading the products in the partners' languages;
- Organisation of an "open door" final conference inviting every kind of organizations, both public and private (public administrations, experts, the transnational partners and other organisations will take part on it);
- The partners will carry out conferences to present the results in their respective countries;
- Presentation of the developed work in different Congresses of Employment and Training organised in the participant states.

Challenges ahead

The elaboration of a system for the recognition and certification of competences with reliable tools, useful at transnational level means a great challenge, due to both the industrial development and cultural differences existing in the European countries and more precisely those participating in the project partnership.

On the other hand, this system should be "credible", that is, the different agents (companies, trade unions, workers and administration) should rely on the measurement results, which is also a hard work. The evaluations are justified by the value given to them by the political system, the market and people. In this respect, they are like a coin, whose value depends on the market's opinion. It is therefore necessary that the device has credibility and reliability for all the agents.

Project sheet no. 28

Project Title	TRIM - Trade Management Implementation	Project Number	S/05/B/F/PP-161028
Project Promoter	Swedish Trade Council	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Partners	Hungarian Foundation for Enterprise Promotion (HU) - Innovation Norway (NO) - Trade Council of Iceland (IS) - Public Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Entrepreneurship and Foreign Investments (SI) - Lithuanian Development Agency (LT) - Exporters Association of Northern Greece (GR)		

Background

The international growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is an important issue, especially in small countries which are largely dependent on export, and the biggest obstacle today is the lack of personnel with relevant trade competences. Today Trade Organisations in Europe lack an international vocational training concept for SMEs to meet this need and the TRIM-project has developed the concept "ITM Worldwide" to meet this.

Objectives

The TRIM-project aims at transferring this "ITM Worldwide" concept into partner countries Trade Organisations by:

- Organizing a Pan European ITM Training organized by the partners;
- Develop a handbook on how to run the ITM concept by each partner,
- Create a European Diploma in Trade Management to be recognised worldwide;
- Create a European Trade Management Association.

Outcomes/Products

ITM Worldwide (see www.itmworldwide.org - EN).

The ITM Worldwide concept is a blend of local national seminars, individual export coaching, joint international seminars in combination with business meetings and networking among small and medium-sized enterprises. After completed the training, they will have a worldwide recognised Diploma in International Trade Management accredited by International Association of Trade Training Organisations (IATTO) and life-long membership in an on-line trade network.

Application of results

The ITM Worldwide concept is now part of the services offered to SMEs by Trade Organisations in Sweden, Norway, Slovenia but also in Namibia and South Africa soon followed by Lithuania, Iceland, Greece and Hungary. A new company has been created - ITM Worldwide - to sell and implement this concept in more countries worldwide and coordinate the joint international seminars. The coaching material will be further developed into a stand alone service to be offered SMEs.

Challenges ahead

Apart from the above mentioned coaching material we would like to develop more on-line or blended simulation based training to be offered in the trade network for SMEs.

To develop a Worldwide Executive MBA in three steps where the ITM training is followed by a Certification in Business Administration and an Executive MBA built on modules that will take place locally in each country as well as joint modules worldwide to be able to offer managers in distributed SMEs top class executive training in cooperation with international business schools but also career opportunities.

Project sheet no. 29

Project Title	EU-Excert	Project Number	SE/06/B/F/PP-161036
Project Promoter	KCEM	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Website	www.euexcert.org	E_mail	erik.nilsson@kcem.se
Project Partners	YFIND (SE) - DEOS Cranfield (UK) - Nitrex (IT) - Hi-plan (FI) - EFEE Europe - IN Nordic - Masugnen (SE) - KAU (SE) - Nammo Raufoss (NO) - University de Coimbra (PT) - University of Pardubice (CZ) - Technical Inspectorate (EE) - BCHI (LT)		

Background

In several European countries a high proportion of the most experienced and knowledgeable personnel in the explosives industry are retiring or nearing retirement. It is therefore necessary to replenish this expertise in this key technology area. The pilot project will develop a comprehensive framework for competencies which will describe and categorise all the competencies of workers engaged in the manufacture or use of explosives. The competencies will be underpinned by a training and education programme which will identify the curriculum of subjects, topics and knowledge necessary to generate and develop the competencies. A range of products including workbased learning programmes, e-learning packages using both the Internet and CD-Rom and conventional teaching materials will be developed and trialled in partner nations. The project is run in co-operation among SE, UK, FI, IT, NO, EE, LT, DE, PT, CZ and FR. Two European organisations have joined the project, European Federation for Explosive Engineers (EFEE) and IN-Nordic. The target group is all personnel that professionally handle explosives in the European society.

Objectives

The project has evaluated occupational standards for competencies and developed a framework for education and training according to some of these standards. The project has developed and trialled education materials and methods for skills enhancement and education and vocational training. Some of these training modules are developed for workbased learning and some for distance education and training. Training packages have been trialled for transnational education and training.

Outcomes/Products

- Website (www.euexcert.org);
- National occupational standards developed in UK for workers in the explosives sector and validated in several partner countries for national variances;
- Certified Vocational Training with emphasis on process engineering within the explosives industry in Sweden, basic education and vocational training (40 weeks, www.masugnen.se);
- Cranfield University, distance education material for distance learning activities for explosives, higher education and vocational training (modules, www.rmcs.cranfield.ac.uk);
- NITREX, education and training materials and manuals for explosives sector (www.nitrex.it);
- Draft glossary for the European explosives sector (www.euexcert.org);
- MOU - Concerning a European legal association for certifying competencies for the European explosives sector;
- Biannual Conference on Education and Training in Explosives (2005, 2007, 2009);
- European network for dissemination of EUExcert project activities.

Application of results

- Education materials are used for UNDP personnel in Bosnia (developed by Cranfield University);
- Education material are used for Advanced Vocational Education and Training in Sweden and for piloting transnational education between partner organisations and countries;
- Mobility projects between partner organisations and countries has started and more are planned.

Challenges ahead

1. The language barriers need to be solved in order to make the project goals achievable;
2. The project is developing a common vocabulary within the project – mainly by developing a glossary – which exists in a draft version;
3. The outcomes in the project must be recognised by the European Commission and the stakeholders in order to make the project goals legitimate;
4. Explosives materials are handled in many areas in every modern society; this requires safe handling from competent personnel, taking the right decisions in the right moment;
5. Actions must be taken through a harmonised legislation within the EU to ensure that the personnel has the right competence to control the risk and consequences of explosive handling.

Project sheet no. 30

Project Title	DASVENT - Development of an Accreditation System for Veterinary Nurse Trainers in Europe	Project Number	NL/05/B/F/PP/157528
Project Promoter	AOC Groenhorst College Barneveld	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Partners	Katholieke Hogeschool Kempen (BE) - CEU Kolding (DK) - ESAV Institut Bonaparte (FR) - FECAVA - Federation of Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (no specific country) - University College Dublin (IE) - Abivet SRL (IT) - Aequor (NL) - Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SE) - Warwickshire College (UK) - RCVS (UK) - Norges Veterinærhøgskole (NO) - KwaliteitsCentrum Examinering (NL)		

Background

At the start of the project there was no European standard for veterinary nurse training. Some countries have an existing national qualification, others don't. Employers throughout Europe are not familiar with the level of education in other countries, therefore employability of veterinary nurses outside their home country is disabled.

The project aimed at setting up a European accreditation system for veterinary nurse programmes. This system will function as a quality assurance tool. It will also increase the transparency of the European programmes.

Target groups: veterinary nurses, veterinary nurse programmes, veterinarians (employers).

Objectives

Project objectives are:

- the formation of an accreditation board with the help of Vetnet (a stable European network of veterinary nurse programmes and interested organisations) and employer organisations;
- the formation of visitation panels to perform visitations of the programmes;
- to create accreditation policies and procedures;
- to create a Dossier of European competences for the veterinary nurse;
- testing the system for acceptability.

Outcomes/Products

1. Acovene (Accreditation Committee for Veterinary Nurse Education) foundation statutes;
2. Acovene accreditation policies and procedures (published on paper and on www.acovene.com - EN): this document gives the standards which a programme has to meet if it wants to become accredited;
3. Acovene Dossier of European competences for the veterinary nurse (published on paper and on www.acovene.com - EN): this document describes the competences that a veterinary nurse in each European country needs to have;
4. Acovene accreditation form (available on www.acovene.com - EN);
5. Acovene guidance for visitors (available on www.acovene.com - EN);
6. Acovene guidance on visitation preparation for colleges (available on www.acovene.com - EN);
7. Acovene flyer (published on paper - EN);
8. Two colleges within the project have received a full accreditation, six colleges were awarded with a provisional accreditation. These six colleges need to meet the given recommendations within two years to become fully accredited.

Application of results

Nine colleges applied for the accreditation within the project. They needed to submit a self-evaluation report and were visited by a visitation panel. The whole process made the programmes aware of their strengths and weaknesses, thus enabling them to improve their quality.

The visitation panels made recommendations to the programmes and to Acovene for further improvement of the programmes.

All known veterinary nurse programmes in Europe will be stimulated to apply for the accreditation after the pilot project.

Graduates from accredited colleges can find jobs in other countries more easily. For example: the UK has decided to accept these graduates as veterinary nurses in the UK, while they previously needed to go through a lengthy process to prove their competences and level of education.

Challenges ahead

The main challenge ahead is to make sure other colleges apply for the accreditation. This is needed to make Acovene financially feasible and to give further credibility to the accreditation system.

Project sheet no. 31

Project Title	EUROFRAT - European Fundraising and Training	Project Number	EUR/05/C/F/RF-84711
Project Promoter	EFA - European Fundraising Association	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Partners	Institute of Fundraising (UK) - Association Française des Fundraisers (FR) - Asociacion Profesionales de Fundraising (ES) - Civil Society Development Foundation (HU) - FRII (SE) - Fundraising Akademie (DE) - Alzheimer's Europe (LU)		

Background

The project aimed at improving the skills and competences of fundraisers and ensure their increased employment potential by delivering a series of training programs and modules and by designing a Certification process. Starting with providing qualified fundraisers throughout Europe, the project has greatly promoted and reinforced the impact of the Third Sector across all member states.

A specific aspect of the program was to establish and develop links between national fundraising organisations and institutes of higher learning and vocational education in order to offer fundraising courses for professional training and integration of fundraising into the existing curricula of these institutes.

Objectives

EFA was founded by its member organisations as an independent validating organisation to develop a series of high quality and culturally appropriate training modules and curricula to be delivered by national fundraising associations in partnership with local or national training and higher educational institutions.

EFA was responsible for piloting and implementing the project, together with a Steering group of sector professionals, representatives of higher education, vocational training specialists, NGOs and end user groups.

Each training module was developed in parallel with EFA Certification, the new trans-European accreditation process developed through the EUROFRAT project, thereby giving a new standard to training and education for professional fundraisers across Europe. The creation of new programs which reach this standard will raise the quality and the practice of civil society resource development, both in terms of techniques and ethics.

Outcomes/Products

The key outcome of the project was the creation of a new process for Certification of fundraising training courses in Europe. This process is supported by the creation of the EFA Certification Handbook, a multilingual set of tools currently available in online and paper format in three languages (more translation work is underway to widen this reach) which set out a competence framework, a proposed syllabus and guidelines for delivery of training courses in fundraising.

These tools were used by the "pilot partners" (Spain, Hungary, Sweden) to develop brand new training courses to drive up standards of professionalism in the Third Sector.

A major dissemination programme was developed to ensure that organisations around Europe would have been aware of benefits and easy implementation of an EFA Certification-based training course. Presentations have been made to national fundraising associations across the EU and widespread press coverage was achieved in the sector.

Application of results

The most tangible impact of EFA Certification is that the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Sweden and Hungary have already had training courses certified by the process developed through the project. In the case of Sweden and Hungary, the courses were developed as a direct result of the tools developed during the project. The impact on not for profit organisations in these countries has already been felt, as fundraisers who are trained to a higher standard better implement practices (both technically and ethically) and raise more money for causes and beneficiaries of their organisations.

Furthermore, and as a direct result of the dissemination process, countries outside of the direct project partners have begun to use the EFA Certification tools to develop their own training. So far, Austria, Finland, Poland, Ukraine, The Netherlands have expressed a direct interest in applying for certification during 2008 courses developed as a result of EUROFRAT.

Challenges ahead

EFA will continue to develop its training and development role, building capacity in countries where fundraising is emerging, and ensuring the strengthening of a unique platform which reinforces national fundraising associations and brings tangible benefits to fundraisers from all over Europe. Specifically, EFA proposed a new strategic plan to its members at its General Assembly in October 2007, which outlined next steps for the organisation.

The biggest challenge faced by EFA is that one of continuing the development of its activity towards new member states with emerging fundraising sectors whilst balancing the economic model of the organisation. Core funding will be a key issue in establishing successful development.

Project sheet no. 32

Project Title	European Union Evidence Based Medicine Unity	Project Number	UK/05/B/F/PP-162349
Project Promoter	The University of Birmingham	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
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Project Partners	J & AB Associates (UK) - Agency for Quality in Medicine (DE) - Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (IT) - CASP _{in} (UK) - CASP _{olska} (PL) - AMC Amsterdam (NL) - CASP _e (ES) - TUDOR (HU)		

Background

Evidence-based medicine (EBM) refers to the integration of current best patient-centred research into clinical decision making. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for EBM is becoming a core competence to be acquired by all doctors. However, EBM is not uniformly taught as part of postgraduate medical education in the UK or Europe. The project addresses this training need by producing a clinically integrated, web-based interactive curriculum, which is adaptable to each country's requirements. The curriculum will be aimed at post graduate medical trainees.

Objectives

Project's objectives are:

- "To improve the quality of, and access to, continuing vocational training ...";
- "To promote and reinforce the contribution of vocational training to the process of innovation ..." and the priority for "Promoting transparency of qualifications". The resulting EBM training addresses the above by increasing the practical knowledge of the doctor and ultimately patient care in Europe.

The project contributes to these objectives and priorities by:

- Developing new methods of training, assessment, certification and validation of a clinically integrated EBM curriculum;
- Developing and testing key elements of qualification through innovative approaches such as an e-learning tool;
- Standardising and therefore recognising skills training and qualifications in EBM for postgraduate doctors across Europe;
- Implementing new unified methods and curriculum, which improve transparency in the European healthcare sector.

Outcomes/Products

Project's results are:

- Evaluated current teaching of EBM in each partner country using questionnaire survey;
 - Design and development of core curriculum of the European EBM course (this includes the development of a project specific website, on-line resources, e-learning assessment tools, trainer and student handbooks, CD-ROMs);
 - European EBM course piloted and evaluated in each country;
 - Dissemination and promotion of results to all relevant stakeholders across Europe;
- The project has produced a core curriculum for training in EBM. The curriculum has been translated into different languages; English, German, French, Hungarian and Polish and will be flexible enough to include country specific modules related to clinical guidelines and legislation relevant to the specific country.

Application of results

We are currently conducting a cluster randomised trial with the objective of scientifically comparing the EU EBM Unity clinically integrated course with usual EBM training. The trial is being conducted in three countries; United Kingdom, The Netherlands and Switzerland. The outcome measures are:

- basic EBM knowledge gain by the participants before and after the course (measured by MCQs);
- changes in doctors' attitudes towards EBM (measured by questionnaire);
- technology acceptance (measured by questionnaire).

Challenges ahead

The project has successfully designed and developed a clinically integrated EBM course with e-learning elements that compliments doctor's clinical training throughout Europe. However, only a small part of the entire subject range was produced and as such a design and development of further modules is needed. Therefore, further funding opportunities to allow the development of a full EBM curriculum suitable for all types of health care practitioners are sought.

Project sheet no. 33

Project Title	The Development of a European Virtual Learning Environment for Neonatology	Project Number	UK/03/B/F/PP-162045
Project Promoter	Southampton University NHS Trust	Cluster	Transparency of competences and qualifications
Contact Name	Michael Hall - Susan Smith	Country	United Kingdom
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Project Website		E_mail	Mh10@doctors.org.uk
Project Partners	Professor Gerard Breart (FR) - Dr Marina Cuttini (IT) - Professor Gorm Greisen (DK) - Professor Neil Marlow (UK) - Professor Andreas Schulze (DE) - Professor Adolf Valls i Soler (ES)		

Background

The project was developed to improve the quality of and access to vocational training for trainee doctors working in Europe. The development of the European Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) aimed to enable access to vocational training opportunities for those who were geographically isolated or disadvantaged. The opportunity to access the VLE any time, any place promoted flexibility for women or those who have families. The opportunities for online discussion and collaboration, were intended to promote the sharing of best practices and networking. Formal and non-formal learning was evaluated using a range of assessment tools including formative examinations, an e-portfolio and personal reflection of professional development. Within the cross-cultural community, participants had the opportunity to increase their knowledge, further develop their clinical competence and increase their key transferable skills (e.g. technology skills, communication, group working and problem solving).

Objectives

In terms of enabling access and ensuring equity and parity, the VLE and the online learning approach was ideal. It provided the opportunity to develop a cross-cultural learning environment where participants could respect and value the knowledge and experience of others whilst also sharing and exchanging their own experiences. Formal and non-formal learning could take place in parallel using online tools such as synchronous communication, problem based learning cases, quizzes, reflective collaborative sessions and self-evaluation. Specific skills could be acquired or refined including those related to the use of technology, communication, critical analysis and project management. Support and guidance was provided by cross-cultural online tutors and subject specific specialists. The challenge of meeting a range of learner preferences and needs was accommodated by providing resource materials in a variety of formats (e.g. online, print-based and CD-ROM).

Outcomes/Products

A European Neonatal Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) was developed to provide the overarching infrastructure for the project; English was the main language used, although within the VLE the target group could personalise their desktop and the associated resources. The following were also available:

- a virtual library, provided access to a wide range of relevant online resources.
- 6 educational modules were developed: Bloom's taxonomy was used to define the learning outcomes and the content was structured to promote collaboration, engagement, interaction and application to practice and available with the VLE, on CD-ROM and paper based.
- online assessment tools, a qualitative and quantitative approach was utilised.
- induction programmes, provided orientation to the context of online learning within the VLE.
- pilot Evaluation of Machine Translation (MT) Tools.
- e-portfolios were developed to promote transparency and evidence of achievement of the programme learning outcomes and designed to be flexible, adaptable and to integrate with Europass.
- external qualitative and internal quantitative evaluation was undertaken and triangulated.

Application of results

The project has served to heighten awareness of the current lack of synergy that exists between individual countries, their vocational training policies in terms of structured postgraduate education, clinical practice and formal accreditation. This has taken place both on a national and European level and it has involved the primary target group and senior professionals involved in the organization and provision of the training programmes. A number of European meetings have taken place to discuss how it would be possible to provide a structured, cohesive standardized approach to training which will promote quality standards, European accreditation, the exchange of best practices, transferability and transparency of qualifications and competences. On a local and national level, since the project completed, requests have been made to the promoter regarding the possibility of access to the modules as part of a current vocational training programme.

Challenges ahead

Sustainability and the ongoing development of the original aims of the project will require funding and an overarching supportive infrastructure. Discussions are currently in progress with the European Society of Pediatric Research to explore whether they, as a European training and research organisation would be prepared to take "ownership" of the VLE. The project Partners have already expressed their interest and ongoing support in the future development of the VLE as the portal for the continuing vocational training and life long learning of junior doctors. The feasibility of developing further modules for the syllabus and the establishment of an online European neonatal vocational training community are all distinct possibilities which could be easily facilitated and managed within the current VLE. However, funding, quality assurance, the definition of a common accreditation framework, protected study time for participants and ongoing evaluation would all have to be considered and robust solutions implemented.

Project sheet no. 34

Project Title	Lifelong Competences – Informal Learning in Social Fields	Project Number	A/04/B/F/PP-158112
Project Promoter	Mosaik GmbH	Cluster	Validation of non-formal and informal learning
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Project Partners	Fachhochschule Joanneum (AT) - Pedagogical Consulting Service and Professional Services in Comitat Baranya (HU) - The Swedish National Institute of Special Education (SE) - Handikappförvaltningen (SE) - Methodological and Pedagogical Centre Prešov (SK) - Sonček - Cerebral Palsy Association of Slovenia (SI) - Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Education Department (UK) - European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (BE) Supported by: Pedagogical Institute Vienna (AT) - Team Training Austria (AT) - Team Training International (AT) - Styrian Government, Department for Social Affairs, FA 11B (AT) - Comitat Baranya (HU)		

Background

Mostly complex situations and changing frameworks and objectives build the daily background of professionals working in services for people with disabilities. They have to restructure and to enhance their knowledge and know-how day by day, an ideal starting point for making informal learning visible and for being able to stimulate and to facilitate informal learning (Learning in Practice).

Approximately 8 million employees within the European Union are directly employed in the sector of social services for people with disability. The target group works in more than 17,000 service enterprises, which, in turn, render services for about 37 millions disabled EU citizens. Broken down into professions, the target group consists of educators, social pedagogics, teachers, social workers, (specialist) nursing staff, therapists (speech, music, physio, ergo), assistants, helpers and many more.

Objectives

The partnerships offers a systematic procedure with the concept "Learning in Practice" for:

- a specific search of informal learning processes (at workplace);
- being able to recognise those processes;
- being able to recognise the status of learning phases;
- providing tools for a learning support
- supplying with measures to influence informal learning processes.

A specific process foreseeing four phases was designed:

- Mutual understanding and/or mutual focuses;
- Existing theories about learning in practice got merged with the findings: new theories and new ways were created (=Learning in Practice);
- Tools for every day business have been collected;
- The daily use has been tested.

Outcomes/Products

The Assessment-Method-Set (AMS) is a collection of ways to understand and to promote informal learning (Learning in Practice) including e.g. theories of learning, components of learning in practice, learning processes, methods and tools, skills-self assessment, adapted job certifications, etc. The handbook is available in English, Swedish, Slovakian, Hungarian, German (January 2008).

The Wegleiter Curriculum is the comprehensive result of all findings and results. Specially trained people skilled in supporting other persons learning and competence development are needed (Skills Resource Managers or "Wegleiter"). The purpose of the training is to give the fundamentals in terms of learning theory, methods and skills to guide other staff members learning processes as well as the exchange and publications of experiences and knowledge on the web platform. The curriculum is available in English.

The Webplatform (www.informal-learning.org) is a tool for communication, presentation and reflection on informal learning in social services. The area "project" is the "business card", while the area "internal" focuses on the work carried out in I.L.C. Area Community and it aims at building a virtual community among all professional groups involved in supporting people with disability (tools like discussion forum, glossary, interesting links, events). All products available on www.informal-learning.org/products (January 2008).

Application of results

The findings have been presented with several disseminations activities and conferences (e.g. The European Council in Strasbourg, September 2007). All partners have tested results and findings in their own organisations and have put them into practice. Lifelong Learning reveals a change in European society: from industrial work to a learning society. Learning in Practice (informal learning) is a chance and way towards new learning as it reflected experiences change into knowledge, as several ways of appreciation and validation of Learning in Practice are starting, as to make Learning in Practice visible and thereby graspable a basis has been built in order to institutionalise informal learning and as Learning in Practice will bring professionals, teams, organisations up to new levels of quality.

Challenges ahead

An access to knowledge is crucial, Learning in Practice helps to get equal opportunities for all involved people (client, professional, team, organisation). From the point of view of Learning in Practice, promotion and implementation is inevitable to unify the interpretation of its outcomes in all EU countries.

A challenge is beforehand: a new empowerment process has started and it has to be continued until all employees are Wegleiters. Learning in Practice is a part of a quality system and wishes to raise the quality of social services. Its message is to create equal opportunities for all staff members, to check out the value of service and to be aware that this is empowerment, not only a service.

The European Union started a challenging and important step when funded this project for making informal learning visible. The change into a learning society needs to open new resources, especially resources which are hidden. To recognise how to start and to support Learning in Practice will open more chances to reach the goal of an European community of practice.

The European Union should focus more on informal learning, on learning in practice: using learning in practice empowers people and offers a full participation. Let's appreciate, respect and apply lifelong learning based on practice to that extend as we appreciate, respect and apply learning based on official (legislative) systems of the individual countries. In that way, the individuality and freedom of choice of all Europeans will be respected.

Project sheet no. 35

Project Title	EPANIL - European Common Principles for the Accreditation of Non-formal and Informal Learning in Lifelong Learning	Project Number	CZ/04/B/F/PP-168010
Project Promoter	National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education	Cluster	Validation of non-formal and informal learning
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Project Partners	Business School Ostrava - Regional Centre of LLL (CZ) - University of Flensburg - BIAT (DE) - CIBC Artois-Ternois (FR) - Upper Silesian Educational Centre (PL) - Aspekt Foundation (SK) - Konrad Associates International (UK) - University of East Anglia - CARE (UK) - Regional Economic Chamber Ostrava (CZ)		

Background

In Europe the access to education for adults, especially with lower or no qualification, is still very complicated. Participants currently must always pass entire study programmes despite considerable authentic, recent and relevant non-formal and informal learning outcomes. In the near future every country will have to open the access to education and training and the validation of experience throughout life, because one of the major problems facing Europe within the next decade is the ageing population issue. Lifelong learning, the recognition of all types of learning for qualifications, the opening up of access to training and education for all at all ages must be an obligation. The project is related to the development of processes and pathways which are meant to increase the access of adults to further education through the recognition and validation of their non-formal and informal learning. The target groups were adults without qualification or with the lowest level of qualification but with experience in the workplace, while the target sector was the HORECA one (hotels, restaurants and catering).

Objectives

The innovation brought by the project involves change in education and training approaches with regard to the overall change of need of adult education and training. Assessment methodologies, accreditation of assessors, counsellors and institutions able to provide valid and reliable assessments of a wide range of competences from different sources (formal, non-formal and informal). In new member countries, institutional regional network (in Moravia-Silesian region, Upper Silesian region and Nitra region) were established. For all countries involved in the process, the usefulness of the "bilan de competences" (skills check-up) in the preparatory stages was highlighted: it reviews the overall APEL process, highlighting a variety of issues, and above all the need for a referent throughout the whole process from the information stage to the implementation of outcomes, and the importance of special guidance and support for target groups most in need of qualification such as unemployed people or those in danger of losing their jobs.

Outcomes/Products

Guidelines, examples of good practice and recognition procedures (research report, paper, CD, website - EN): possibilities and obstacles of implementing these systems in new Member States. Examples of good practice (research report, CD, website - EN, CZ, PL, SK): examples of current practice in the framework of the accreditation of prior learning - DE, UK, FR). Methodical material (handbook, CD, website - CZ, PL, SK): methods and tools for APL in the framework of the Common European Principles. Three modular training courses for assessors and advisors (curriculum, CD, website): Module A - Life Long Learning and the process of prior learning recognition; Module B - counselling and guidance for the client in the process of recognising prior learning outcomes; Module C - Assessment of prior learning. Report of pilot testing (report, CD, website - EN, CZ, PL, SK): experiences from the pilot testing from the three countries with the aim of transferring these experiences to other stakeholders in this system. Recommendations for dissemination and sustainability (research report, CD, website - EN, CZ, PL, SK): the description of the present and future dissemination and exploitation of project outcomes across the EU. Implications for development of Common European Principles discussed on CEDEFOP Virtual Community to support mutual learning. Symposium proceedings (proceedings from final conference, paper, CD - EN): the set of contributions presented in the international conference of the project (Ostrava, September 2006), the set of the poster from the conference (life stories of clients from the pilot testing, presentation of the other project, etc.). National reports (reports, CD, website - EN): the experiences of the partnership. Video films of pilot testing (film, DVD). Final report for the Ministry of Education CR (paper - CZ): summary report of the EPANIL for the council of the ministry.

Application of results

The regional member networks which were created in new member countries continue to exist and use the project outcomes further beyond the Leonardo project, they plan to prepare new regional projects on the theme of the Recognition of Prior Learning. Outcomes of the EPANIL project have already been widely used in the project "UNIV" (Recognition of the results of informal learning and non-formal education by networks of schools providing the education service for adults); Another project using the outcomes of EPANIL is "NSK - National Qualifications Framework" (see <http://www.nsk.nuov.cz/>), a system project of the Czech Ministry of Education. The Czech National qualifications framework has been created in the framework of this project – a public register of both partial and entire certified qualifications, distinguished and recognized in the Czech Republic. NSK will take up to the National occupation framework, managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Challenges ahead

The new member states (MS) have not enough experience in the area of the APL. It is necessary to make a link to the experience of the old EU MS in this area and to accepting the Common European Principles on the Identification and Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (CEP) and develop the LLL approaches in new MS as well as to make a significant contribution to the E and T 2010 Work Programme by reflecting upon the CEP. It is necessary to demonstrate how the APL can contribute to the development of flexible regional labour markets by developing compatible approaches across national systems. It is also necessary to give the "old" MS a "fresh" angle on the APL processes and procedures that can be implemented and review the overall APL process, highlighting a variety of issues, and most of all the need for a referent throughout the whole process from the information stage to the implementation of outcomes, and the importance of special guidance and support for target groups most in need of qualification such as unemployed people or those in danger of losing their jobs.

Project sheet no. 36

Project Title	ENTLEARN - Research on entrepreneurial learning, comparing results with survey of formal and informal entrepreneurship training programmes, providing results in print and web	Project Number	FI/04/C/F/RF-82501
Project Promoter	Turku School of Economics - TSE Entre	Cluster	Validation of non-formal and informal learning
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Project Partners	University of Kassel - Institute of Industrial Science (DE) - CNA Young Entrepreneurs (IT) - Ventspils University College (LV) - Agder Research (NO) - Instituto Vasco de Estudios e Investigación, S.A. (ES) - University of Salford (UK)		

Background

The project took into account and deepened the existing knowledge on entrepreneurial learning. Various academic researches suggested that entrepreneurs learn most effectively by doing, by trial and error and by experience. Nevertheless, it was less clear how this understanding was taken into account in the existing training programmes offered for entrepreneurs within different forms of vocational training for entrepreneurship. Target groups were: educators, programme organisers, researchers, policy-makers. Target sectors were: Education, research and development, other business activities.

Objectives

The project aimed at providing information on how entrepreneurs learn most efficiently and how to take this into account within training programmes, analysing what kind of structure, contents, methods and environments should be used in entrepreneurship training programmes.

The activities implemented were: literature survey of research in entrepreneurial learning, survey into vocational examinations of entrepreneurship, survey into training programmes for entrepreneurs, in-depth qualitative analysis of training programmes for entrepreneurs.

Outcomes/Products

1) Framework for modelling the training programmes for entrepreneurs (EN, paper) helping educators to design training programmes for (potential) entrepreneurs as it identifies critical aspects that need to be taken into account while planning the programmes. 2) Research report (Heinonen - Akola, 2007) "Entrepreneurship training and entrepreneurial learning in Europe – Results from the ENTLEARN project" (EN, paper, web), creates an understanding of the preferred and most efficient ways of learning of entrepreneurs and assess how the existing programmes are able to meet these needs. 3) Good practice guide (Heinonen – Akola, 2007) "Entrepreneurship training and entrepreneurial learning – ENTLEARN Best Practice Guide for Educators and Policy-makers" (EN, paper, web), providing new insights and ideas about how to plan and implement entrepreneurial training programmes able to support learning processes of (potential) entrepreneurs. 4) Internet website (www.entlearn.net) containing all material collected and created during the project (e.g. literature reference search and programme search databases).

Application of results

Each partner has exploited the results when planning and implementing future entrepreneurship training programmes. In Finland e.g. the model programme has been introduced in the frame of graduate entrepreneurship courses with an attempt to promote entrepreneurship training within universities.

As the results have been widely disseminated, other actors too in partner countries have been in position to exploit the outcomes of the study. In addition, some further projects have been under construction with an attempt to apply in practice the outcomes of the project.

Challenges ahead

Our research demonstrated that within entrepreneurship training a good facilitator or mentor is not only a pedagogic expert but also someone having a deep knowledge and understanding of the content, entrepreneurship, as the content and process are to be taken forward and tandem. This brings great challenges to educators in the field of entrepreneurship as only few educators are experienced enough in entrepreneurship and pedagogy at the same time. Also an important question is how the learning outcomes are transferred into practice. Do the outcomes of entrepreneurial learning lead to better entrepreneurs or more successful companies? It is important to focus on how the results of the learning outcomes can be identified in business.

Project sheet no. 37

Project Title	ECOIA - Europe des Conjoints d'Artisans	Project Number	FR/05/B/P/PP-152001
Project Promoter	Chambre de Métiers et de l'Artisanat du Rhône	Cluster	Validation of non-formal and informal learning
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Project Partners	HBL (NO) - FAS (IE) - HWK Köln (DE) - Confartigianato Torino (IT) - BKIK (HU) - UDEC (FR)		

Background

The project aims at improving the recognition of formal and informal learning acquired through work experience by spouses of SME craftsmen/women. The lack of recognition and transparency of their competences can make them vulnerable when the SME or the couple gets into trouble. In the craft sector, the SME and the couple trajectories are deeply linked. The SME usually grows with the financial support and the active implication of a "silent worker", the wife or husband of the SME manager. The development and recognition of qualifications and competences of craftsmen/women spouses at European level, including the formal and informal learning they acquire through work experience, contribute both to their own social and professional integration and to the durability of SMEs in the craft sector.

Objectives

The project contributed in each partner country to better grasp the issue of the spouses of SME craftsmen/women in terms of qualifications and competences. In most European countries, the link between development and recognition of SME craftsmen/women spouses' qualifications and durability of the SMEs is not that obvious. The project laid the foundations for an important progress among European very small firms by contributing to changes in representations, by involving spouses during training sessions, by promoting the exchange of practices and the valorisation of spouses' activities in SMEs.

Outcomes/Products

The project produced:

- an inventory of spouses' positions in each partner country (Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Switzerland) regarding their involvement in the SME, the level of recognition of this involvement, their training needs and their difficulties;
- a common training curriculum for spouses (experimented in each country according to its own features);
- a common grid of professional competences;
- tools for the validation of informal learning;
- a website;
- a flyer.

Application of results

The results have been implemented by the project partners (the Chamber of Craft of Cologne, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Budapest, a training provider from Ireland (FAS), social partners from the craft sector (Confartigianato Formazionze of Turin, Federation of Norwegian SMEs in the Craft Sector of Oslo) according to their role and position towards SMEs and according to the national background characteristics at the beginning of the project. The implementation of results is not at the same stage in all the involved countries.

Challenges ahead

A new Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation project called ECOIA TRANSFERT (November 2007-October 2009) will ensure the diffusion, adaptation and improvement (through an expected boomerang effect) of ECOIA outcomes. A training module aiming at raising the competences of SME managers' spouses in collective action will also be elaborated during this new project, in order to enable them to be better represented in the representative bodies of the craft sector.

Regarding recognition and development of competences, more focus should be put on the validation of non-formal and informal learning and on individual learning pathways. In a long-term view, both the issues of a European status of the SME managers' spouses and of a European recognition of their competences are at stake.

Project sheet no. 38

Project Title	Assessing Voluntary Experiences (AVE) in a professional perspective	Project Number	F/03/B/P/PP-151002
Project Promoter	IRIV - Institute for Research and Information on Volunteering	Cluster	Validation of non-formal and informal learning
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Project Partners	CICOS (FR) - AFEV (FR) - University of Maine (FR) - Regional Direction for Youth and Sports in Champagne-Ardenne (FR) - European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (AT) - VÖV (AT) - INBAS Sozialforschung (DE) - DPVW (DE) - FIVOL (IT) - ÖKA (HU) - Centrum Wolontariatu (PL) - Institute for Volunteering Research (UK)		

Background

Assessing Voluntary Experiences (AVE) has been a way to identify, evaluate and validate skills and qualifications acquired through volunteering as an example of validation of non-formal and informal learning. Associations may be the ideal place to experience innovative solutions and practices and to acquire skills and competences. A voluntary experience may lead to or facilitate a professional career, by recognizing and validating this kind of non-formal and informal learning. It could be very useful for people who have no professional experience when facing with a first activity (youngsters) and for people who have been kept away from the labour market in order to renew their professional activity (parents who have raised their children, sick people once been recovered, prisoners once set free...). A voluntary experience is an alternative way to experiment, develop or update specific skills and qualifications in a specific context, neither public nor private, for both professional and non professional staff, with the aim of including and serving the general interest.

Objectives

The AVE project started with studying within each of the 7 involved countries, the official recognition of voluntary work (legal framework, public or private support), the training proposed by professionals for volunteers (to improve specific skills) and the qualifications required to volunteers (the selection process). The main idea was to compare this process with the one used on the labour market. A consultation has been made, in a second step, among associations and professionals working in the non profit sector to verify whether the process of AVE responded to a social need. The results were very positive. The associations have considered the AVE process as a useful tool for human resources. The project has in a third step proposed a synthesis of the main skills and competences developed in the voluntary activities and the ways and tool to identify them in a professional perspective. This first proposal of portfolio has been experimented at local level. The final step consisted in gathering all the remarks to propose a common tool, for the 7 countries, of a portfolio for volunteers and a guide for trainers.

Outcomes/Products

The main outcomes and products developed through the AVE project have been: 1) a portfolio of skills and competences for volunteers including a biography of the volunteer, a list of training followed during their voluntary experience, the missions fulfilled, a method to identify the competences (mind-map), a list of competences (tables of competences), an action plan for the volunteer, a synthesis of the portfolio, the volunteer's curriculum vitae; 2) a guide for trainers reminding of the European context of validation of non formal and informal learning, the steps of the AVE process, the description of the portfolio, its main objectives, a method of self-evaluation or accompanying with a guide, the workshops which could be proposed to volunteers and the different accompanying steps; 3) a website (www.eEuropeassociations.net) presenting the partners as a network of experts in the field of volunteering and/or life long learning, the main contacts in the volunteering within the 7 countries, a glossary of the main notions to understand, a bibliography, the valorisation process (articles published in the different countries, the final conference, the Helsinki award received by the project in December 2006 as excellent practice in addressing the priorities of the Copenhagen process and promoting an enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training).

Application of results

The portfolio and the guide have been used: 1) in France, for training sessions proposed for volunteers and associations (by Iriv and Cicos) and for assessing voluntary skills (in Afev, the University of Maine and the Direction for Youth and Sports); 2) in Germany, to accompany volunteers in seeking for a job (DPVW); 3) in Austria, for the training of volunteers (VÖV); 4) in Italy, for the training of volunteers and as a human resources tool for associations (FIVOL); 5) in Poland and Hungary, for training sessions for volunteers proposed by the two national volunteers centre partners of the project; 6) in the United Kingdom, for training sessions for volunteers in partnership with Volunteering England and in the context of management of volunteering (at the University of East London). In France, a follow up of the AVE project has been the integration of the results in order to propose a common method for assessing skills and competences for volunteers, sportsmen and people back from foreign countries, a project lead by Iriv together with the National Agency for Employment (www.mitec.biz).

Challenges ahead

The main challenges related to the AVE project is to transfer its results, tool and method to other target groups such as the local councillors who are working a lot with associations and whose activities, especially for the small and very small cities and villages are very similar to the ones fulfilled by volunteers in associations.

Another challenge would be to propose this portfolio and guide to all the European countries as a useful human resources tool for volunteers to be used by associations. Three of the 27 national centres for volunteers have been informed and convinced (Hungary, Poland and United Kingdom). The other ones are still reluctant to use and promote a tool and method yet too much professional. A last challenge would be to promote the AVE tool as a complement of the Europass as far as the voluntary experience is concerned, to value this specific part of informal and non-formal learning.

Project sheet no. 39

Project Title	EXEMPLO - Assesment of non-formally acquired competences of EXperienced EMPLOYees	Project Number	D/03/B/F/PP-146043
Project Promoter	Bfz Bildungsforschung	Cluster	Validation of non-formal and informal learning
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Project Partners	Afpa - Association Nationale pour la Formation Professionnelle des Adultes (FR) - AKOL-Aikuisouluttajien liitto r. y. (FI) - C.F.E./C.G.C. Union Régional de Franche-Comté (FR) - CFDT-Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail, Union Régionale de Franche-Comté (FR) - EEF West Midlands Technology Centre (UK) - Fundación Tripartita (ES) - MEDEF Franche Comté (FR) - Przedsiębiorstwo CEMET (PL) - Solidarnosc (PL) - TNOIK-Towarzystwo Naukowe Organizacji Kierownictwa (PL) - Transport and General Workers Union (UK) - VOX-Voksenopplæringsinstituttet (NO) - Widney UK Limited (UK) - Zurflüh-Feller S. A. (FR)		

Background

EXEMPLO aimed at contributing to the issue of cross-border transparency of competences of [experienced] employees in SMEs. Development of procedures for recording and recognition of competence acquired in non-formal or informal settings to promote lifelong learning has been defined at European level as one of the key factors to achieve the Lisbon strategy objectives. SMEs are, in the first place, poorly informed about the benefits of and the need for assessment of competences acquired by employees in a non-formal or informal way. Secondly, lack of temporal, human and financial resources often proves to be a major obstacle in adopting procedures for competence assessment as practised by large enterprises. Making use of the tools developed under the EXEMPLO project on a wide scale aimed at coming closer to the goal of strengthening the competitiveness of European SMEs.

Objectives

Against this background the EXEMPLO project made an attempt to bring together “the best from different worlds” in terms of establishing procedures for the assessment of non-formally and informally acquired competences developed in several European countries. Thus, within the framework of the transnational partnership a set of tools has been provided to be used by SMEs in different European countries, containing a navigation-system for independently learning employees as well as instruments for enabling companies and employees to enhance transparency of competences acquired during self-organised learning processes. The Toolkit is in line with the “European principles for the validation of informal learning” and follows a series of criteria, above all those of “usability” for SMEs and their employees and “flexibility” in order to be adaptable to the requirements of SMEs in different VET systems.

Outcomes/Products

EXEMPLO Toolkit for SME: tools for evidencing informally acquired competences piloted in the EXEMPLO project. They are amenable to adaption to different companies’ needs and to the cultural background of various countries. They are based on experiences gained in transnational collaboration between European specialists in the Leonardo project EXEMPLO. The EXEMPLO Toolkit is provided in different languages. Selected tools are:

- Competence Card for workplace (DE, EN, FI, FR, NO)
- Stimulation and Supporting Training Processes at Work (DE, EN, FI, FR, NO, PL)
- The RAPRA method (EN)
- Transparency of Competences (DE, EN)
- The EXEMPLO process (EN).

Guidelines for training experts:

- for implementing the Toolkit (DE, EN, FI, FR, PL)
- for assessing training needs in SME (EN, FR).

Classification of instruments: to support the selection of suitable competence assessment instruments classification grids are provided to allow identifying strengths and weaknesses.

Impuls, volume 25 "Promoting visibility of competences – The EXEMPLO toolkit for SMEs" (ISBN 3-88555-791-6)(EN).

Website (www.exemplo.de).

Application of results

Selected tools have been piloted in SMEs of in DE, FR, FI, PL, UK: while within the outcome-oriented VET system of the United Kingdom, e.g., the interest lay primarily on the formative aspect of competent assessment tools, in more process-oriented VET systems like Germany or Poland, the focus has been on methods of evidencing the learning outcomes relevant for the workplace. In terms of ensuring impact after the project’s lifespan, the involvement of several actors, social partners, the state sector and the training providers not only in the development of the tools but also in the piloting phase proved to play a major role.

Impact at regional level: in France the “Competence Club” of the French Comté region has implemented regular meetings, where social partners and SMEs work on the improvement of competence-based approaches in SMEs. Similar in Poland, where Solidarnosc Gdansk works with regional bodies on further development of EXEMPLO outcomes.

Impact at sector level: in UK and other countries Employers’ federations try to implement methods of evidencing competences in SMEs at sectors level, thus – following a bottom-up approach, influencing VET practices on a larger scale.

Challenges ahead

Piloting of EXEMPLO tools in SMEs in five European countries confirmed the hypothesis that it is not reasonable to provide one single approach - “the tool” - for evidencing competences in all SMEs. Depending on specific factor (the situation and purpose of a SME, the status of development of “culture of informal learning” in the different VET systems), it was confirmed that provision of a set of tools

was appropriate to meet needs of European SMEs. This implied a new challenge: selection of suitable tools for highlighting informally acquired competences of employees in SMEs was taking place on the ground of a number of areas of conflict that obviously could not be exited in the one or the other direction by the SME themselves. There is need of further action to provide support for European SMEs in balancing these areas of conflict and find the suitable instruments for their specific needs. Work is in progress and will be continued in the frame of a new Life Long Learning Leonardo Transfer project "AVE EXEMPLO". This gives us the chance not only to transfer and adapt EXEMPLO outcomes to other VET systems (CZ, GR, RO, TR), but also provide further support to SMEs the sense of the identified challenge.

Project sheet no. 40

Project Title	European certificate for management skills ESO-CSA	Project Number	D/04/B/F/PP-146207
Project Promoter	Institut für berufliche Bildung und EDV-Schulung	Cluster	Validation of non-formal and informal learning
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Project Partners	Thanet Campus Canterbury Christ Church University College (UK) - Visiolink Oy (FI) - DIHK Gesellschaft für berufliche Bildung (DE) - Industrieund Handelskammer Cottbus (DE) - BVMW - Bundesverband Mittelständische Wirtschaft (DE) - EUROCHAMBRES - Association of European Chambers Of Commerce and Industry (BE) - UEAPME Akademie Avignon (BE) - CEDOZ-Centrum Doskonalenia Zarzadzania (PL) - Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Perpignan (FR) - ATHENA Association for Education and Development of Women (CZ) - Regionální Hospodárska komora Ostrava (CZ) - Nervir Associacao Empresarial (PT) - Spi Sociedade Portuguesa de Inovacao (PT) - Inhouse GmbH der Wirtschaftskammern Österreichs WIFI Netzwerk (AT) - Unione regionale delle Camere di Commercio Industria Artigianato e Agricoltura del Veneto (IT) - AGFOL Agenzia formazione lavoro (IT) - EPICENTRE Training Organisation (GR) - z & z Alliance Management Consultants Ltd. (CY)		

Background

Vocational education and training of staff in small and medium-sized enterprises often happens through on-the-job training, offering no accreditation and certification facilities. Consequently, the mobility and the proof of acquired skills are often difficult for staff in SMEs.

Target groups are SMEs with their professional staff, leading personnel and managers, within all sectors and branches. They will highly benefit from the accreditation and certification facilities for their VET mainly gained in an on-the-job procedure.

Objectives

By identification, assessment and accreditation of professional skills, the project presents a contribution towards recognition of professional skills and qualifications, with special focus on the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning. Certification areas have been defined and certification procedures been stipulated. The project offers the possibility to develop and implement standardised European competence, still not existing so far in a European SME context.

Outcomes/Products

The project offers a European certificate for the management of skills in small and medium-sized companies, acquired by professional further education and/or professional experiences. The aim is the practical introduction of a European credit transfer system for skills of several professional areas in SMEs, regardless of input (i.e. how the skills have been acquired). Results will be three European management certificates and eight professional certificates, describing skills and necessary requirements in nine languages, presented on the project's Internet portal. A computer-aided selfassessment tool and a tool for exams will also be published on the Internet platform, acting as information pool and certification support. The developed instruments and tools are:

- Certification regulations which are applicable in all European countries;
- Homepage (information, contact and platform for everything connected with certification);
- Portfolio of competences (Europass);
- Tool for a self test;
- Computer-aided examination tool;
- Administration tool;
- Administration of the examination process;
- Elaboration of questions for the CB test;
- Translation tool.

Application of results

The data collection and the development of the European certification standards will ensure the recognition of skills and qualifications and offer transparency for SMEs' human resource development and the mobility of those in practical work. Conditions for a European-wide application:

- Descriptions of competences which are valid in all the European countries involved in the project;
- Certification regulations which are valid in all the countries involved (it must be ensured the adhesion to these regulations and the guarantee of quality assurance in each countries);
- The requirements are valid for all candidates and also the questions and case studies are applied on a European-wide basis;
- The candidates are assessed according to uniform criteria which clearly define when a requirement is met;
- All the certificates are issued by the European head office, they are confirmed and handed over by the national agencies.

Challenges ahead

With the CEMES management certificates and specialist certificates, a European-wide process confirming competences, regardless of how these competences were acquired, has been created.

An IT-based and internet-based procedure in which professional education is assessed according to uniform criteria in an outcome-oriented way has been implemented.

All partners in the different countries apply the same rules. This also increases the European-wide transparency concerning professional education.

The implemented method and the overall system can easily be applied to other competence areas and it could also support a European credit transfer system.

Project sheet no. 41

Project Title	VAI - Valorising non-formal and informal learning within SMEs	Project Number	I/03/B/F/PP-154001
Project Promoter	EBLA	Cluster	Validation of non-formal and informal learning
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Project Partners	Federlazio (IT) - Formare (IT) - CNA (IT) - EXA TEAM (IT) - SDA (IT) - ERFAP (IT) - SMILE (IT) - CKP (CZ) - CRIA (ES) - CEEFIA (FR) - IAGO (UK)		

Background

VAI addressed the specific needs of three different target groups:

- Learning facilitators and SMEs consultants, by offering innovative approaches and tools helping them to detect, recognise and support all learning approaches;
- SME owners and HRD managers, by offering innovative support and guides helping them to gain awareness of all the several learning modalities which are able to sustaining their efforts to be competitive in a knowledge based economy;
- Individuals working within SMEs and micro-enterprises, by answering to their need to have their knowledge and expertise recognised even though not acquired through formal learning pathways.

Objectives

VAI objective was to identify, develop, test and calibrate a methodology and a set of tools suitable to recognise and give evidence to all existing learning modalities and methods within European SMEs, with special attention to non-formal and informal learning.

The approach consisted in creating the best possible conditions for SMEs owners and managers to support the start up of new/all learning opportunities - either internal or external to companies - in a lifelong and lifewide learning perspective and to valorise individual efforts in lifelong learning.

The VAI model is based on some critical principles:

- We learn from any type of experience, in any kind of situation;
- We can transfer knowledge from a domain to another;
- There is no knowledge proof zone;
- Knowledge is an intangible matter, VAI tools can help to identify efficient learning modalities in a company, for an individual, in order to use them.

Outcomes/Products

The main output of the project is the VAI kit: a methodology and a set of integrated tools useful for European SMEs to valorise all forms of learning.

The Kit includes:

- A methodological guide (VAI Model);
- A set of tools for companies, supporting managers' assessment of company NF/I learning practices;
- A set of tools to detect and valorise NF/I learning modalities within SMEs (Informal learning assessment tools);
- A document explaining the steps to be implemented to make companies assessment (User guide for the assessment tool);
- A set of tools for individuals to enhance their awareness of own heritage in terms of knowledge;
- A guide on how to describe own learning pathway, knowledge and competencies (Guide for Individual Acquis description);
- A list of criteria for a self-recognition of owned knowledge and competences (Criteria Chart for Individual Acquis Recognition);
- A grid for a self-evaluation of own Individual Acquis, based on the European CV Model (Individual Acquis Chart);
- The FAI – Informal Learning Facilitator, an innovative consultant profile specialised in implementing the VAI approach;
- A description the profile in terms of required competences (FAI Profile);
- A training path (contents and tools) for FAIs (Training path for FAI).

Application of results

The VAI approach has been used within several SMEs in a pilot phase during the project implementation; after the project conclusion, the approach as a whole and/or some of its tools have been used by partners, and mainly by training agencies in the implementation of their ordinary activity. The most successful part of the approach has been the Individual Chart Acquis, and the Guide to use it, as a support for the description of the new EU CV.

Furthermore, moving from VAI experience other projects have been conceived and implemented as, for example, the Leonardo Pilot Project "OVER – Trainers' training to valorise all forms of adults learning" in which VAI results represent a concrete basis for further investigations.

Challenges ahead

VAI partnership has identified possible future challenges:

- To be able to widen the use of the approach and tools among consultants and SMEs - especially micro-companies;
- The capacity to strengthen the contribution that VAI can give not only to valorisation but also to validation of informal/non-formal learning;
- To invest in further developments of the software;
- To valorize and transfer VAI outcomes to other countries.

Project sheet no. 42

Project Title	EGEIS - European Guidance and the Evaluation of Informal Skills - Developing a Standard Curriculum and a Training Model for the Qualification of European Guidance Practitioners	Project Number	I/03/B/F/PP-154080
Project Promoter	SOLCO	Cluster	Validation of non-formal and informal learning
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Project Partners	IRS Europa (IT) - Confor Informatica (IT) - CID-CGIL (IT) - Università La Sapienza (IT) - Lycée Le Pleiade/Greta Nord Isère (FR) - Social Chamber (SI) - Centre Spirala (SI) - die Berater (AT)		

Background

Following the Communication on "Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality" adopted by the Commission on 21 November 2001, lifelong learning has become the guiding principle for the development of education and training policy in the European Union. The upgrading of the education and training systems represents one of the three main goals of the general approach. In this frame, adult's training is one of the main tools. The European learning strategy aims, among others, at identifying, evaluating and recognising informal and non-formal learning. Guidance should be considered at European level instead of at national level, and high quality guidance services play a fundamental role, as they facilitate the access to lifelong learning.

The project aims at strengthening and improving the actual guidance systems used in different European countries and at reducing its heterogeneous nature, through the exchange of experiences and methodologies used by guidance counsellors in these countries. It intends to elaborate a Standard European Curriculum for Guidance Counsellors, based on research on the various curricula already in use in the different European countries, the exchange of information and experiences between guidance counsellors themselves and with the help of European experts in the field of guidance.

Objectives

The main objectives were:

- Reduction of heterogeneous nature of guidance systems in Europe;
- Exchange of experiences and practices among guidance counsellors from different Member States;
- Development of a Standard Curriculum or Skills Reference Frame for European Guidance Counsellors;
- Development of a model training course for European Guidance Counsellors.

Besides the elaboration of a standard curriculum of a European Guidance Counsellor, the project developed and tested a model training course to train European guidance counsellors. Having the standard curriculum of a European Guidance Counsellor in mind, an analysis of competences and training needs was carried out among a sample of guidance counsellors in different European countries, and a model training course based on the outcomes has been developed. This model of a training course was then tested by a sample of counsellors.

Outcomes/Products

The main outcomes are:

The Standard Curriculum/skill reference frame which consists of three aspects:

1. Knowledge (educational backgrounds);
2. Skills (how to welcome, to interview, to analyse clients needs);
3. Personal attitudes (personal characteristics in the approach to the client-what to do or what not to do);

The Final model of the training course is available on CD-Rom in English, Italian, German, French and Slovene.

This pilot course for Guidance Counsellors on the CD-Rom is structured in an interactive way: you will take part in a simulation in which you follow a European Guidance Counsellor through his/her daily activities such as:

- first-level guidance;
- individual guidance;
- group counselling;
- back office activities.

During these four "cases", your choices will lead to a positive or less positive outcome and the reasons for this outcome will be explained to you.

Application of results

Last year training courses targeted to the Guidance counsellors working in the Guidance Centres of the Municipality of Rome were organised. During this training courses they tested the portfolio methodology.

Through a new Leonardo Transfer of Innovation project "TIPEIL" the model of the digital portfolio will be transferred to the operators.

Challenges ahead

The new TOI project "TIPEIL" will be aimed at facilitating the use of the digital portfolio by improving the ICT aspect in order to adapt the technology and to make it more user friendly for operators.

Project sheet no. 43

Project Title	GO.C.E.T. - Governance of continuing education and training. The relevance of social partners and public authorities in managing VET systems	Project Number	I/03/B/F/PP-154142
Project Promoter	Provincia Autonoma di Trento – Dipartimento Politiche sociali e del Lavoro - Ufficio Fondo Sociale Europeo	Cluster	Validation of non-formal and informal learning
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Project Partners	Istituto Superiore per la Formazione (IT) - University House Birmingham Business School (UK) - University of Jena (DE) - Foundation for Small Enterprise Economic Development (HU) - Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Union (CZ) - Institute de Recherches Economiques et Sociales (FR) - ECAP Foundation (CH) (sleeping partner)		

Background

The Go.C.E.T. project aimed mainly at awakening local stakeholders and countries, involved in the partnership, meeting their interest to the theme of the governance system focusing on the issue of workplace learning and recognition and validation of skills.

Analysis and experience comparison, as result of the work carried out from all partners, gave an overview of the whole research work, from the analysis of national systems and case studies to good practices referring to indications and recommendations, devised as a reference for decision-makers.

The results and achievements of the transparency of competences and qualifications and the validation of non formal and informal learning –issued analysed in the Go.C.E.T. project – has been drawn on in the “Leonardo da Vinci Thematic Group”, established by the European Commission in the framework of Thematic Monitoring. This group facilitated the stakeholders exchanging good practices and European projects’ experience but also improving transnational cooperation through virtual initiatives and events.

Objectives

In order to awaken and to involve the stakeholders institutional actors and social and economical partners of all countries participating in the partnership has been involved in the project meetings, discussions, seminars, etc.

The transnational dimension of the project has been developed using functional benchmarking methods on several occasions, identifying from time to time good practices, analysing their contents, verifying their transferability, comparing their relevance, creating models and adapting these practices to the different contexts.

In particular, by observing and by analysing the VET systems of several project partners, even though highlighting the diversity of practices, the comparison has been useful and constructive. The study allowed to underline how every country wants to act in an active way in the field of validation of non formal and informal learning.

Most of the initiatives are agreements and empirical paths agreed between institutions and social partners or in the most experienced countries these initiatives have been regulated by specific laws.

Outcomes/Products

The principal final product of the Go.C.E.T project is a research work, called “Guide for decision-makers”. The guide is based on the analysis of national systems and empirical case studies and it includes indications and recommendations. These has been devised as reference for the stakeholders when facing the issue of workplace learning and validation of skills.

This Report 5, called “Guide for decision-makers” – VOLUME I, is aimed at providing guidance to decision-makers (Italian/English). This guide is followed by three annexes: National Reports’ Summaries (Report 1); Glossary (Report 2); Catalogue of good practices (Report 4) (available in multimedia CD or downloadable from www.fsc.provincia.tn.it - link Go.C.E.T.).

Summary of the reports’ contents:

- Report 1: National Reports’ Summaries – analysis of the national systems of continuing educational and training systems in each country participating in the project;
- Report 2: Glossary – definition of terms used in each participating country in relation to the characteristics of the system of continuing vocational training;
- Report 4: Catalogue of good practices – preparation of a catalogue after identifying the main features derived from the empirical analysis of national cases and relating to the formulation of hypotheses of good practices.

In the VOLUME 2 "Documentation" National Reports and General Catalogue (Report 3) which analyses three “Case studies” (in original languages) in relation to on-the-job-learning and the role of institutions and social partners in acknowledging and validating skills obtained in non-formal and informal way have been collected.

Application of results

The Go.C.E.T. project had a relevant positive effect on the institutional system of the Autonomous Province of Trento but also on the partners systems.

In real terms, the following results have been achieved:

- a) managerial task charged by the provincial Committee, specifically focused on the definition and experimentation of tools for certification and validation of skills;
- b) drawn up of “basic rules” to follow in the process of building models/tools;
- c) adhesion of the Autonomous Province of Trento to the interregional “Description and Certification of the skills” project, which aims at experimenting a reference model for a national system of minimum competence standard’s - contribution with the provincial experiences in these themes and with the project Go.C.E.T..

The relationships established in the partnership have been carried on with success also with the inclusion of some in other European initiatives and networks.

Challenges ahead

Following up the concertation with the social-economic partnership of the provincial territory to define the operational objectives of the new ESF programme of the Autonomous Province of Trento – 2007-2013, the issue of the “Development of a system for the recognition of knowledge and skills” – also with reference to the thematic developed in the Go.C.E.T. project, has been introduced. This issue foresees the introduction of learning credits and certification of knowledge gained with formal, non-formal and informal learning. This means a strong interest and a challenge for the necessary development of the governance of this policy.

Another Axe of the Operational Programme “Transnationality and interregionality” has been considered very important for stakeholders (policy makers, trade unions etc.) by the Administration. They have an interest in these and others themes in order to enlarge knowledge, to exchange good practices and to continue the development of transnational partnerships and thematic network.

Project sheet no. 44

Project Title	AKS - Accumulated knowledge and skills	Project Number	N/02/B/PP-131005
Project Promoter	ELBUS - Elektrobransjensutviklingssenter	Cluster	Validation of non-formal and informal learning
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Project Partners	Sivitanidios Vocational Training Centre (GR) - OREE (NO) - Svenska Elektrikerforbundet (SE) - JTL(UK) - Den jyske Haandvaerkerkolen-Teknisk Akademi (DK)		

Background

There is increasing mobility of workforce across European borders and increasing turnover of workforce in individual enterprises in Norway, not only in the electro-technical industry. Enterprises are thus becoming increasingly aware of the need to be able to accurately and efficiently assess the knowledge and skills in potential and existing employees. Experiences in Norway show that the European electro-technical industry will benefit from establishing a harmonized documentation procedure to aid identification and validation of accumulated knowledge and skills of potential and existing employees. The procedure will also form an integral part of the continual professional development of existing employees. It seems to be an increasing interest for this issue also in a European perspective, as revealed by the international conference "Validation of non-formal and informal learning; European experiences and solution" recently held in Norway. This project will develop a methodology to help documenting and assessing accumulated knowledge and skills for potential employees in the electro-technical sector from any European country, and hopefully others too. Individuals who have been assessed and verified get a three-part CV. This system can be used to account existing knowledge resources, at individual, enterprise and societal level. In general terms, the objective of this project is to increase the visibility of learning taking place outside formal training and education institutions and systems, thus giving credit to the indispensable role of this knowledge, to individuals as well as to enterprises and societies in general.

Objectives

One of the innovative aspects of the project is the development of the web-tool. This web-tool will help the company to record the accumulated knowledge and skills in their organisation as well as to manage this knowledge in the future.

Another innovative aspect of this project is the fact that it opens a new path for mobility among European countries within branches and sectors. What has traditionally been considered as difficult or impossible (e.g. the electrical branch) seems now possible.

The feature of these branches and sectors is that they are strictly regulated by country specific law/legislation, regulations/directives and standards. Especially in the formal education (e.g. the level of national vocational education) and in the apprentices training this (traditional) opinion has been allowed to gain a foothold.

However, the AKS project has worked beyond this approach and had focus on already country specific skilled or qualified workers. The project has analysed how practical work is carried out and what kind of qualifications are demanded and informal as well as practical training (e.g. electrician in the participating countries) was highlighted. Based on this analysis, there were a lot of similarities and rather little dissimilarities in designing and carrying out electrical installations among all the participating countries. Products, materials and systems are of course different and sometimes different in use, but the core skills and qualification in almost all of the subject in the electrician work range were fully comparable and recognizable among all the participating countries (NO, GR, DK, SK, UK). Based on this knowledge, the common (harmonized) professional matrix was evolved.

This aspect will hopefully be helpful in a future Europass model.

Outcomes/Products

On the website http://www.aks-international.com/download_documents.html it is possible to download the most important documents from the project results.

Application of results

So far, the project results have not yet been used by any other country or organisation.

Project sheet no. 45

Project Title	IT-based Validation and Certification System for practical working Maintenance Technicians	Project Number	SE/05/BF/PP-161003
Project Promoter	UTEK	Cluster	Validation of non-formal and informal learning
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Project Partners	Danish Maintenance Society (DK) - Belgian Maintenance Society (BE) - Slovenian Maintenance Society (SI) - Slovakian Maintenance Society (SK) - Dublin Institute of Technology (IE)		

Background

The project aims at developing a validation tool to make it possible to measure knowledge and proficiency in the maintenance area. UTEK is the Swedish National Maintenance Society and is a member of the European Federation of National Maintenance Societies (EFNMS), which includes maintenance societies from 21 countries. There are hundreds of thousands maintenance technicians/mechanics in Europe. EFNMS has described the requirements of competence for a European Maintenance Technician Specialist and it has also specified the requirements to be able to achieve a certificate as a Maintenance Technician Specialist. In order to compete on the world market, the industry needs to have qualified technicians to increase the productivity. To be able to effectively handle validation of competences of the expected number of maintenance technicians all over Europe and to be able to handle the certification in a cost effective way, the implementation of the project envisaged an IT system.

Objectives

The tool aims at validating the individual's competence, theoretical knowledge and practical skill, within maintenance and at stimulating the increasement of individual's knowledge through training. The implemented system is meant to be part of a lifelong learning system. It results in quality assured certificates for the individuals corresponding to European standard requirements or it result in personal training and development plans for those not corresponding to the requirements. The computer based system allows a cost effective competence validation, and the design of the system guarantees strictly confidentiality handling of the testing procedures.

Outcomes/Products

The implemented validation system i(ValidMaint) includes more than 1000 questions with four alternative answers for each question where just one of the answers is correct. The system covers 20 technical areas; further to the maintenance subject, more general subjects will be presented as well such as quality, environment, automation, team working, material technology, etc. An individual will have a formal document showing knowledge and skill level captured during the "on-job-training" as informal, formal and not formal learning. The individual who is going to test will have a code to come into the system. The system is available on the website of the National Maintenance societie of each country. The available languages at present are English, French, Danish, Slovenian, Slovakian and Swedish. The system has been tested and will be available through the National Maintenance Societies in Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Sweden from the January 1, 2008. Some other Maintenance Societies in other countries have the intention to start testing as soon as the translation of questions and answers to other languages is ready.

Application of results

The system will be available to start in all the 21 countries with National Maintenance societies. Most societies will organize Test Centers and test leaders all over the counties. The system is accepted by the EFNMS organisation as tool for Certification of Maintenance Technicians. The certification process will continuously be followed up at local, regional, national and international level.

Challenges ahead

The system is constantly developed and updated with new questions and answers every year. The IT system will be developed with new possibilities. The validation system will contribute to market oriented requirements and will push for additional courses and reforms in the existing vocational schools. The validation system will be an important tool in the work to define higher standards and quality in a country's training system. Changes of courses and attempts to meet the requirements of educated people working in the industry have already started in Sweden by the education system.