



ESCO (2011) SEC 009 FINAL

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ESCO Stakeholder Survey - Final Analysis -

Executive Summary

- Through the survey, the European Commission reached a good level of coverage and geographical representativeness with responses received from 34 countries – an average of six per Member State.
- There was also balanced participation from the different types of stakeholders potentially concerned by ESCO – with 40 % of responses from education and training stakeholders, 31 % from the employment/labour market side and 13 % from social partner organisations.
- The replies showed a strong interest in ESCO project - with 80 % of stakeholders having national or sectoral classifications in place interested in linking to ESCO and 60 % of those who do not currently have national/sectoral classifications believing that ESCO might be sufficient to meet their needs etc.
- Stakeholders' experience with existing taxonomies shows, that classification systems of occupations, skills/competences and qualifications are used for a variety of purposes including job matching, data exchange, statistical analyses and research, skills forecasting, recognition of certificates etc. Currently, this is either achieved by using international systems (mainly ISCO and ISCED), by using national systems, or by using both.
- The broad stakeholder support for the goals of the ESCO project and potential demand for a European taxonomy in the fields of employment/labour market, of education/training and in



the intersection of the two can also be seen from the fact that all proposed potential uses of ESCO received a high degree of approval, with consensus on skill/job matching as the top priority.

- At the same time, results also indicate how challenging a project like ESCO is. The challenges identified by the European Commission were also seen as the main issues by the stakeholders. Respondents emphasised, that finding the right scope and level of detail is just as crucial as ensuring sufficient resources. It is also essential not to reinvent the wheel but to build on existing structures and experiences and to link to existing frameworks such as the EQF. Adopting a bottom-up approach based on stakeholder involvement is one way of tackling this issue, since it systematically takes account of existing know-how.
- The Social Partner organisations participating in the online survey or sending written contributions in reaction to the survey were in agreement with the overall aims of ESCO. Some of the employer representative organisations emphasised that the scale of the task should not be underestimated and that lean management and sufficient resources would be required to succeed. Furthermore, it was pointed out that the link of ESCO to the EQF, to national systems and to other taxonomies is crucial. Some also expressed the view that there was a need for further assessment of the benefits of ESCO and the efforts it will require.
- The provisional ideas on the operation of ESCO and its governance structures were largely endorsed and there was a high level of interest in participating in ESCO's management structures – with 55 suggestions received for possible candidates for the ESCO Board, 51 for the ESCO Maintenance Committee and 69 for ESCO Reference Groups.

The European Commission has carefully analysed all stakeholder contributions and has taken them into account when establishing the governance structures of ESCO. The analysis of the stakeholder survey was also presented to the ESCO Board, the main decision making body of ESCO. The strong overall support of the project is a good sign for the future work on ESCO. Only if all involved parties pull together will ESCO be successful.



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1. Stakeholder survey aims

The Commission is committed to developing ESCO in close partnership with all relevant stakeholders. A variety of means have been used to promote debate, test ideas and exchange views, including a large conference held in March 2010 and meetings with a range of European committees, advisory groups and networks. To open up the debate with a broader range of stakeholders and collect more in-depth feedback on needs, the Commission carried out an online survey¹ between mid-August and mid-October 2010. The complete list of the survey questions can be found in Annex I.

Over 900 stakeholders² were invited to share their experience with existing taxonomies and their views on the potential benefits of ESCO, its scope and content as well as the challenges facing its development and the proposed management structures for stakeholder involvement.

A total of 182 responses were received (175 online and 6 offline).

Based on the initial number of invitations sent to stakeholders the response rate is just below 20 %³.

2. Demographic data

2.1. Field of work

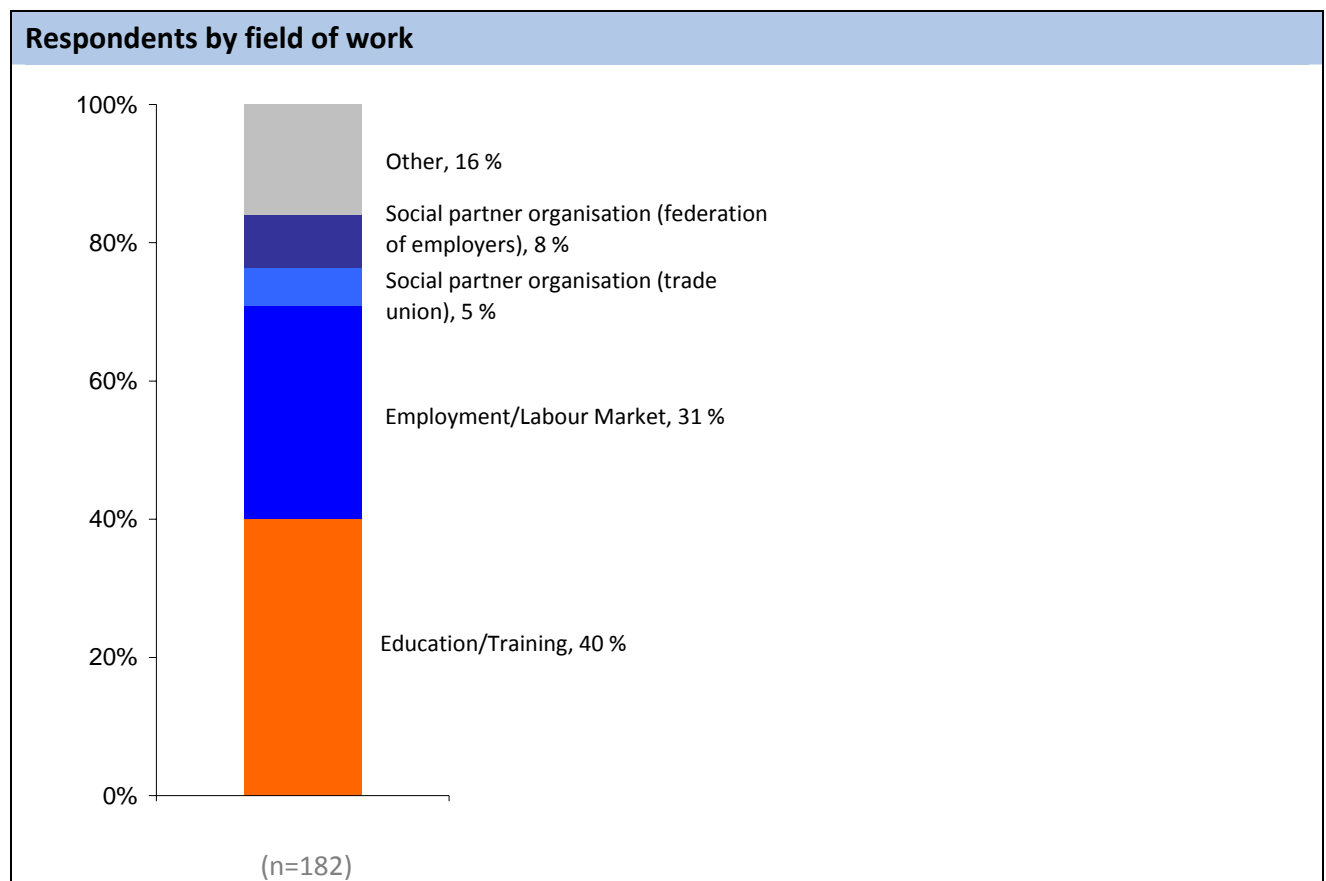
The first section of the survey contained questions that allow for estimating representativeness and for grouping respondents by different criteria. They were asked to identify their main field of activity, the nature of their organisation, the country they are based in and their main role within their organisation.

¹ The online survey was accessible via the website <http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=esco>.

² Please refer to Annex II for a list of organisations that have been invited to contribute to the survey.

³ Since respondents were encouraged to forward the invitation to the survey to other people within their organisation or to other interested parties it is not possible to calculate the exact response rate. Multiple replies from different people within one organisation were treated as different responses. Thus, they are counted multiple times within statistical analyses. However, no more than 3 replies have been received from any one organisation.

40 % of the respondents stated that their main field of activity is education/training. 31 % worked in the employment/labour market sector (without social partners). 13 % of the respondents replied that they belong to a social partner organisation (8 % for federations of employers, 5 % for trade unions). 16 % indicated that their field of work is not covered by the available options.



Respondents that did not fit into the existing categories were asked to specify what kind of organisation they belong to. They named *inter alia* the following types of organisations:

- Eurostat
- Sectoral social partners
- Private companies
- Centres of expertise on Vocational Education and Training (VET)
- Research and consulting
- National Qualifications Framework (NQF) organisations
- National Europass centres
- Educational and vocational guidance/counselling



- Organisations that belong to both sectors (employment/labour market and education/training)

2.2. Type of organisation

Asked for a more detailed categorisation of the type of their organisation, respondents from the education sector most commonly worked for a ministry competent for education/training (32 %), for an education & training institution (19 %) or for a national/regional qualifications authority (15 %). Within the employment/labour market sector 57 % worked for a public employment service, 26 % for a ministry competent for employment and 8 % for a private employment service.

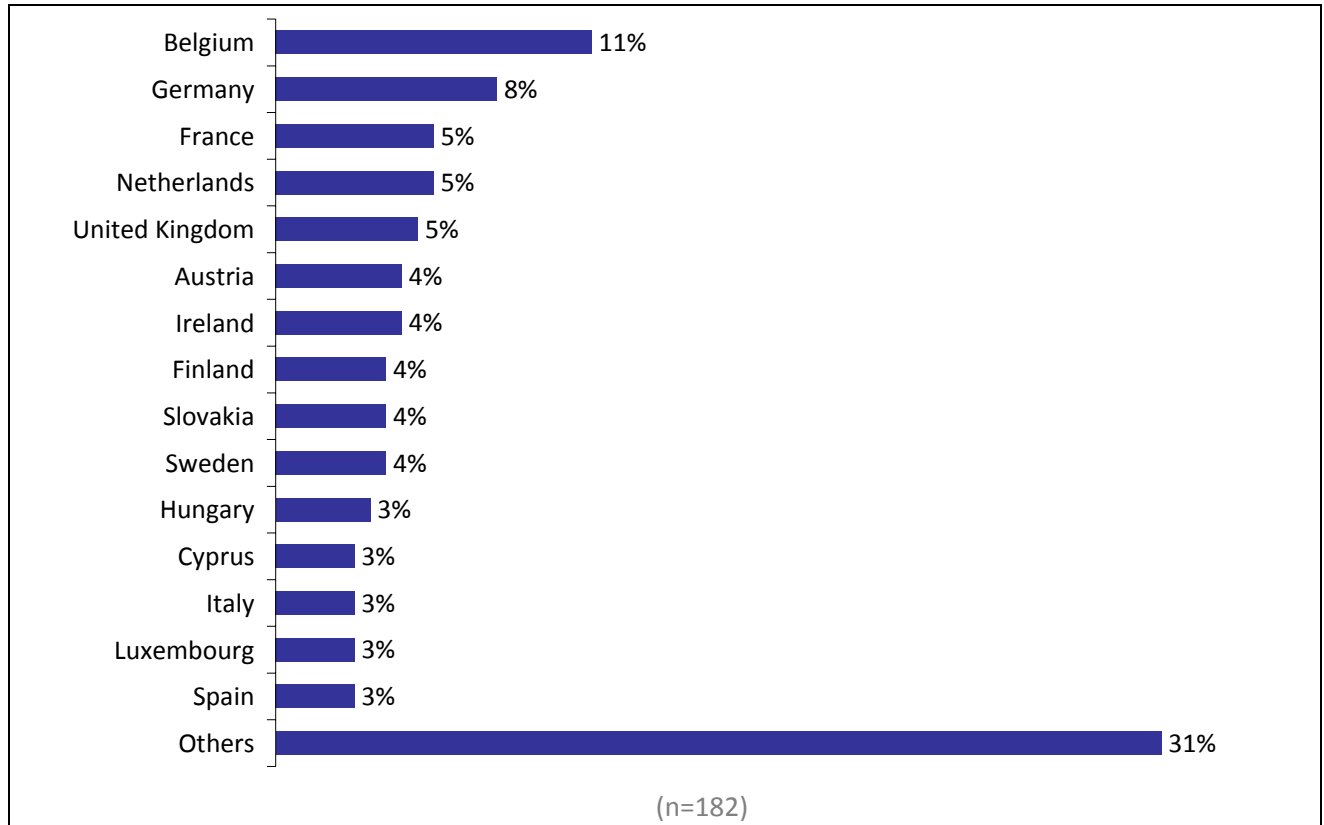
2.3. Respondents positions

Most respondents were working in senior management (28 %), in policy development (24 %), in programme & project management (14 %) or in policy analysis (5 %). Experts in terminology / taxonomy management (5 %) and in statistical analysis (4 %) replied to the questionnaire less often.

2.4. Broad regional coverage

The national distribution of respondents shows a broad range covering all EU and EFTA member states and some third countries. Overall, respondents from 34 different countries replied to the survey. Belgium, seat of many European organisations, accounted for 11 % of the replies, followed by Germany (8 %), France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (5 % each). The European Commission received on average six replies per EU member state.

Respondents by country



2.5. Good representativeness of replies

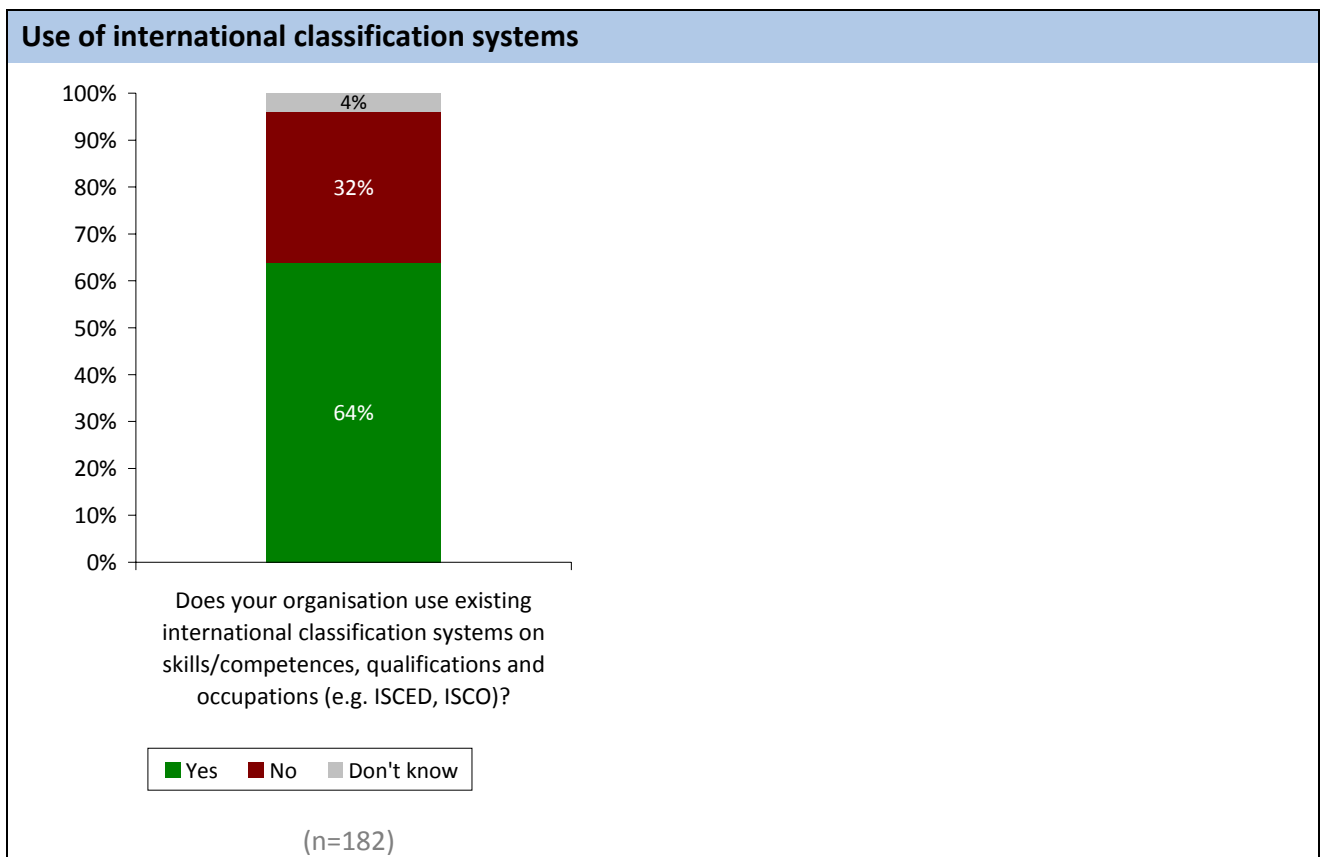
The demographic data shows that the stakeholder survey achieved a good coverage of different subgroups. The European Commission received replies from all major stakeholder groups, from people that were working in different positions within their organisations and from a large number of different countries. This enhances the reliability of results.

3. Use of existing classification systems

One aim of the stakeholder survey was to find out the extent to which taxonomies are currently used by different organisations at national level. This includes not only the use of international classification systems, but also the development of classification systems on national, regional or sectoral level. Furthermore, the European Commission intended to gather information on the stakeholders' expectations towards ESCO when it comes to linking/mapping to their own systems or adopting ESCO in the event that no national, regional or sectoral system exists that serves their needs.

3.1. International classification systems

Respondents were asked if they use existing international classification systems on skills/competences, qualifications and occupations. A majority of 64 % replied that they do, while 32 % do not use existing classification systems and 4 % do not know.

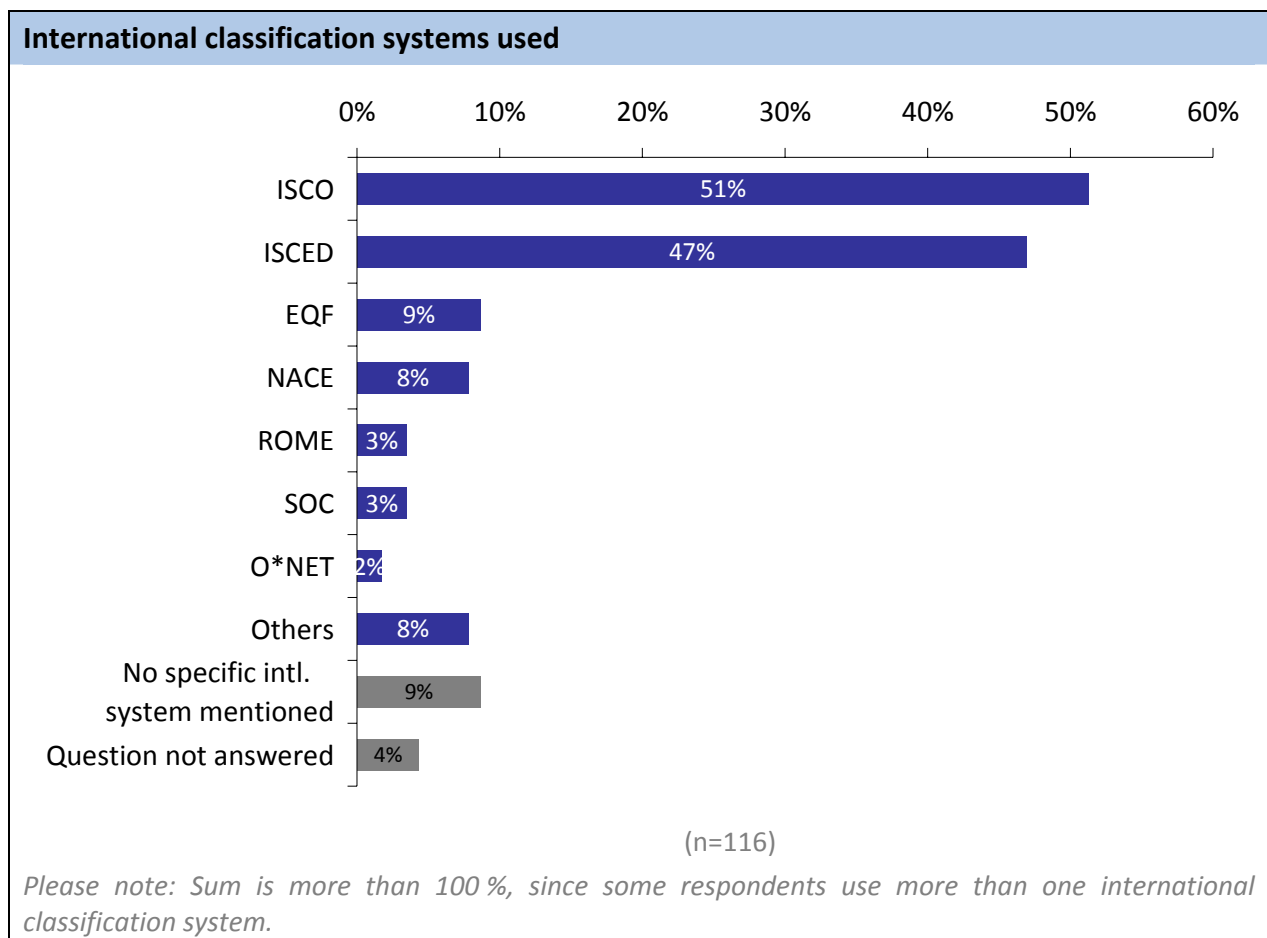


The 116 respondents that use existing classification systems were asked to outline briefly which systems they use and for what purpose. 111 answered the question. The international classification system most often referred to is the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO). 51 % of respondents stated that they use ISCO or national systems based on ISCO. 6 % of the respondents use the latest version (ISCO-08), 5 % use ISCO-88 and 40 % did not state which version of ISCO they are using. ISCO is used more frequently by respondents in the field of employment/labour market (81 %) than in the field of education/training (30 %)

The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) is used by 47% of the participants. More respondents from the education/training sector stated that their organisation uses ISCED (62 %, compared to 31 % in employment/labour market).

The shares of organisations in the education sector using ISCO as well as in the employment/labour market sector using ISCED, are almost one third each. This illustrates how

closely both fields are interconnected. Occupation classifications play a role also for the education sector and educational classification systems are important for the employment sector as well. 22% of the respondents using international classification systems replied that they use both systems, ISCO and ISCED.



The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) was named by 9% of the respondents, the *Nomenclature statistique des activités économiques dans la Communauté européenne* (NACE) by 8%. Some participants named national classification systems that are also used by other countries and thus have an international dimension such as the French *Répertoire Opérationnel des Métiers et des Emplois* (ROME), or the US systems Standard Occupational Classification System (SOC) and Occupational Information Network (O*NET).

The most common application of international classification systems is in the fields of research and statistical analyses. 17% of respondents use international classification systems in statistics. Another 17% named the use of classification systems for tasks such as conducting surveys, labour market analyses and forecasts or research in general. ISCO, ISCED and NACE are especially useful



for research projects with an international dimension. Thus, 8 % of respondents stated that they use these systems for benchmarking or international comparison.

Job matching is another main use of ISCO, and to a lesser degree of ISCED. 36 % of respondents working in the field of labour market and employment (13 % of all respondents to this question) use international classifications for this purpose. All respondents naming job matching as a main use belonged either to a ministry of employment/labour or to a public or private employment service.

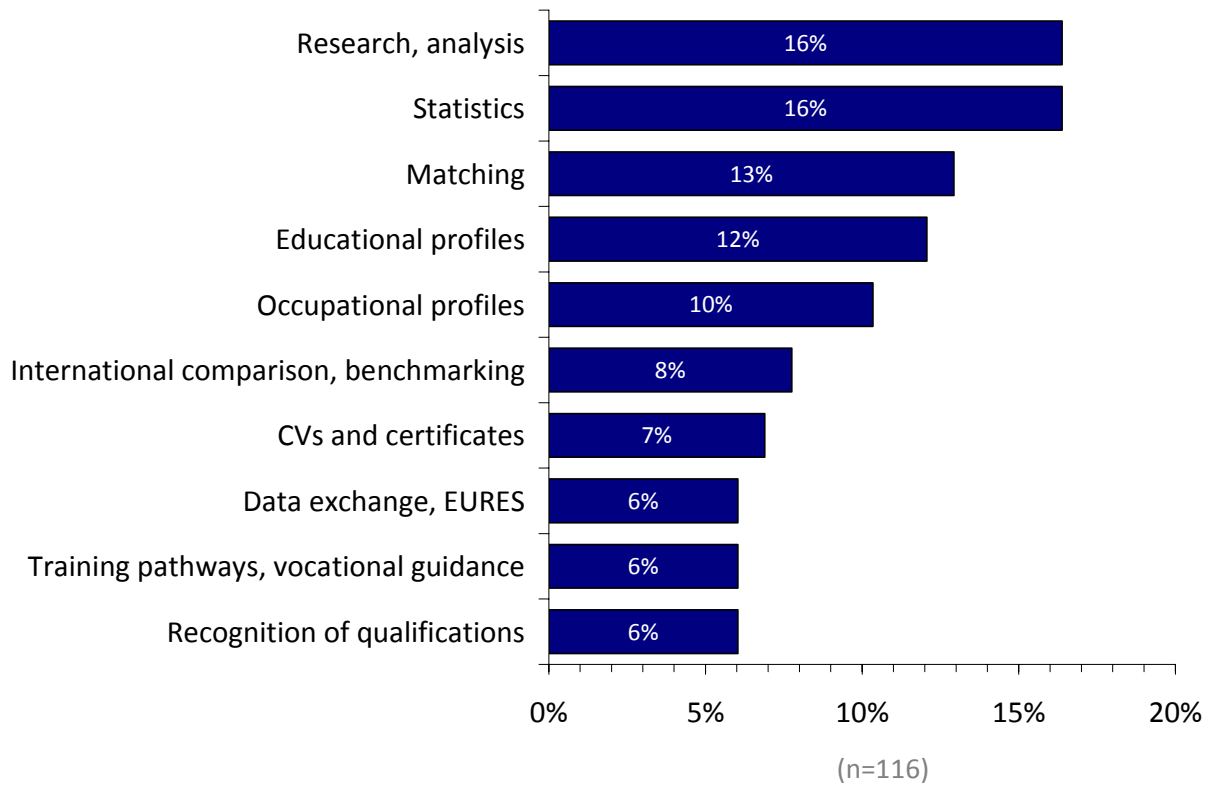
Stakeholders from the employment/labour market sector also mentioned the exchange of vacancy notices and more specifically, exchange within the EURES Network and with the EURES Job Vacancy Portal as a major function of ISCO (17 % of those working in employment/labour market, equalling 6 % of all respondents).

Vocational/career guidance or identifying training needs were mentioned by 6 % of the respondents. A considerable number of respondents described the relevance of international classification systems in more general terms and stated that they use them for describing, defining or classifying either education/qualifications (12 %) or occupations (10 %). A frequently mentioned application is recognising or level-rating qualifications, e.g. in an NQF/EQF framework (6 %). Another purpose facilitating cross-border mobility is the creation of qualification certificates and of standardised CVs such as Europass (7 %).

Answers to the question about the uses of international classification systems were very varied. Other uses mentioned include *inter alia*:

- Monitoring policies
- Developing NQF
- Reporting (e.g. to international organisations)
- Facilitating translation
- Use in computerized systems
- Describing good practice
- Classification of sectors (NACE)
- Governance and representativity

Most common uses of international classification systems



Please note: Some respondents mentioned more than one purpose of international classification systems.

3.2. Existence of national, regional and sectoral classification systems

Apart from the wide use of international classification systems many stakeholders also use national, regional or sectoral systems. Such specific classification systems were developed in over half of the countries or organisations. 52 % of respondents confirmed that their country/organisation developed its own classification systems or taxonomies at national or sectoral level. 39 % replied that this is not the case and that they are not aware of a national or sectoral system, while 9 % do not know.

Those, who replied, that a national or sectoral system exists were asked to describe it. The level of detail of these descriptions varies and in many cases they do not include the name of the system, the links to international systems, the type of information covered or the size (number of terms) of the classification system.

3.3. Characteristics of national, regional and sectoral classification systems

However, the information that was provided allows identifying certain characteristics of the classification systems in use. Table 1 provides an overview of the different criteria that can be used in order to describe the different classification systems.

Table 1: Characteristics of classification systems in the employment/labour market and education/training sector

Type of information included	Occupation fields, occupation groups	Occupations	Skills, competences	Levels of education
	Qualifications	Industry sectors, fields of economic activity	Geographical / political regions	Other
Scope of the system	International	National	Regional	Sectoral
Other classification systems it is related to	ISCO	ISCED	EQF	NACE
	National Systems			
Type of relation to other classification systems	Is linked to / is mapped to	Refers to	Extends	Is based on / is an adaption of
	Is equivalent to / is a translation of			
Size (terms)	Less than 100	100 to 999	1 000 to 9 999	10 000 or more
Levels	4 or less	5	6	7 or more
Structure	Unstructured	Monohierarchy / "Tree structure"	Polyhierarchy ⁴	Multihierarchy / Matrix ⁵
Languages	Multilingual	Monolingual		

Using the above matrix in order to describe existing classification systems allows for identifying groups with common typical characteristics. These are presented in the following.

⁴ Polyhierarchy means that one element of a classification can have more than one parent element within a certain hierarchical structure. E.g. an occupation that belongs to more than one occupation group.

⁵ Multihierarchy means, that elements in the classification are hierarchically structured with different dimensions. E.g. a Master of Law can be categorised according to education level (Master level) and by educational field (Law).



3.3.1. National occupation classification systems

These systems are typically managed by the PES and are used for job matching, statistical analyses, research and data exchange on national level (through linking also on international level).

The systems describe occupational groups, often based on ISCO, and occupations with a national scope, more seldom with a regional scope. Sometimes they include additional information on the occupations (e.g. task description, definition, information on salaries etc.). Usually they follow a hierarchical structure assigning occupations to specific occupation groups, however, sometimes other logics of structuring occupations are applied such as the required educational level. The classification systems are usually either extending the ISCO classification or linking/mapping the national classification system to ISCO. The typical size of these systems is between 1 000 and 10 000 terms per language, sometimes complemented by synonyms. In most of the cases they are available in the official languages of the area of responsibility of the PES. Thus, the majority of these systems are monolingual.

Some examples for this kind of classification system are: AMS-Berufsinformationssystemklassifikation (Austria), Competent (Belgium), ROME (France), Klassifikation der Berufe 2010 (KldB2010, Germany), Nomenklatura and classification of occupational units (NUP, Italy), Dutch PES Occupational Classification, Classificação Portuguesa das Profissões (CPP, Portugal), Integrated System of Type Positions (ISTP, Czech Republic).

3.3.2. National Qualification Frameworks (NQF) and other systems describing qualifications or levels of education

Systems that are describing qualifications, degrees or educational levels are used for the purpose of international recognition, for helping individuals in understanding qualifications and their relation to skills and the labour market and for developing curricula and certificates. Such systems are managed by the ministries responsible for education and training, national accreditation authorities, national or regional qualification authorities or the PES. Concerning their relation to international classifications they sometimes use ISCED as underlying structure or link to it. Furthermore, they are often referencing to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). These qualification classification systems usually divide the educational system into six to twelve different educational levels. Some of these systems use two levels of hierarchy (e.g. educational levels and educational sectors). Examples for these systems are the Register of Regulated Qualifications, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), the Malta Qualifications Framework and the Nederlands nationaal kwalificatiekader (NLQF).



3.3.3. Classification systems describing skills/competences

Classification systems describing skills and competences with a national, trans-sectoral scope are less common. Managed by the PES or a ministry they typically consist of 3 000 or more terms. The structure that is underlying these systems and their relation to other classification systems cannot be deduced from the answers to the stakeholder survey. Examples for this type of classification system are the AMS-Qualifikationsklassifikation and the multilingual European Dictionary of Skills and Competencies (DISCO).

3.3.4. National/adapted versions of international classification systems

Some countries translate or adapt international taxonomies for national or regional use. Especially the ISCO classification is commonly adapted and managed by PES or ministries of employment in the national/regional language. Examples for this are ÖISCO (Austria), DISCO-08 (Denmark) and CCO (Catalonia).

Furthermore, the NACE classification for economic activities is often adapted for national/regional use. It is either directly translated into the national/regional language or, in some cases, extended by an additional level covering specific national/regional situations. Examples for such adaptations of the NACE classification are NOGA 2002 (Switzerland), TEAOR (Hungary) or CCAE (Catalonia).

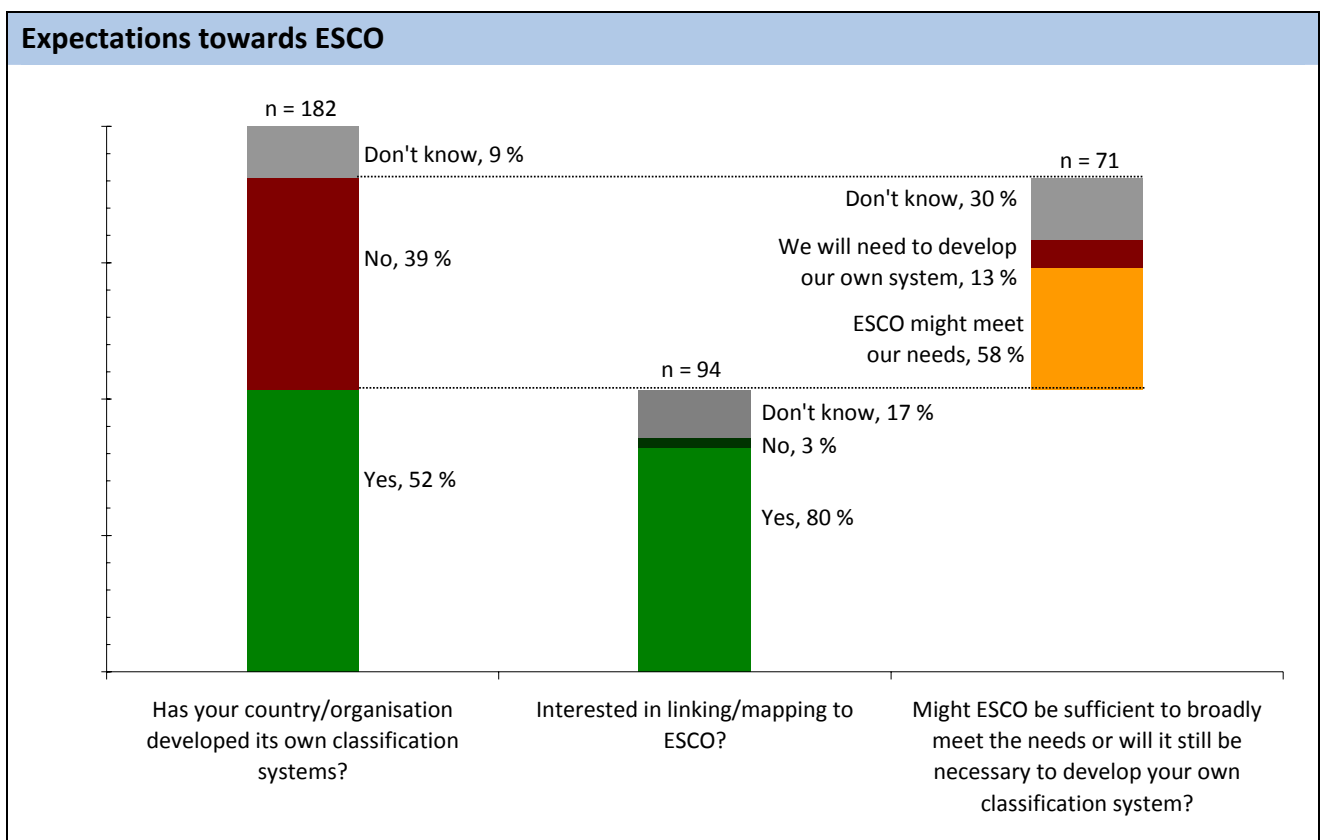
3.3.5. Detailed classification systems for specific purposes

Some respondents described smaller scale classification systems that have been developed for a specific purpose. These systems are usually mono-lingual and cover a specific sector or field of interest. They often contain less than 100 terms. Thus, they can be managed with a higher level of detail and may contain more descriptions, definitions and additional information than larger-scale classification systems. In some cases, they use national or international classification systems as a basis and add an additional level of detail to them. Examples for the content of specialised classification systems are:

- Occupations in the education sector
- Occupations and specialisations in the banking sector
- Occupations in the postal sector
- Skills/competences in agriculture
- Soft skills

3.4. Expectations towards ESCO

In order to evaluate the expectations towards ESCO, participants assessed how ESCO might be used on national level. Those replying that a national/sectoral classification system had been developed in their country or organisation were asked if they thought it likely that there would be an interest in linking/mapping it to the ESCO classification. A large majority of 80 % affirmed that there would be such an interest in linking to ESCO, with only 3 % not expecting it.

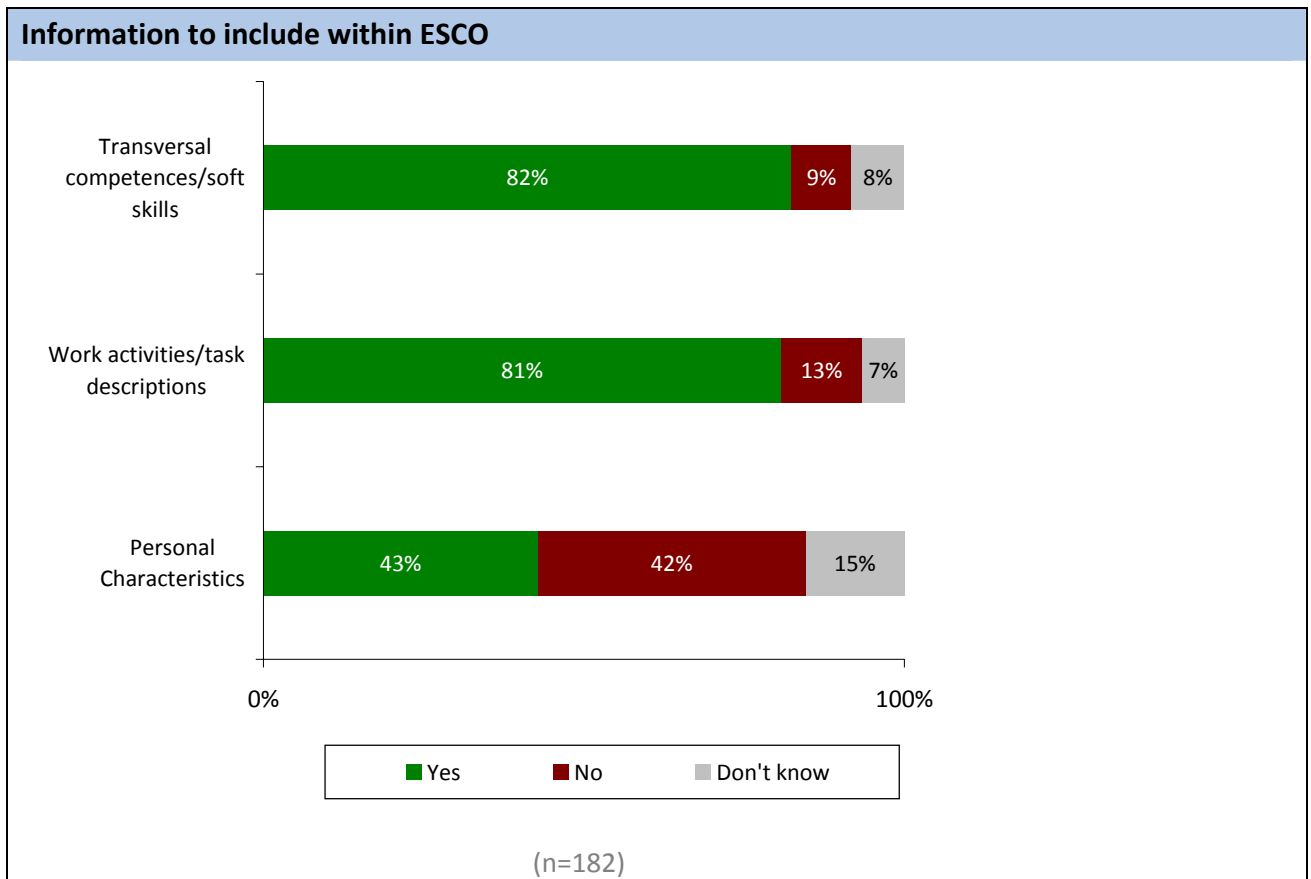


Respondents, who stated that they did not have a national/sectoral system, were asked if they expected ESCO to meet the needs of their organisation. Almost 60 % replied positively, a little less than a third (30 %) stated that they did not know and 13 % believed that it would nonetheless be necessary to develop their own system in future.

4. Scope and content of ESCO

Respondents were asked which kind of information should be included in ESCO. While there was a clear consensus that transversal competences/soft skills (82 % yes) and work activities/task

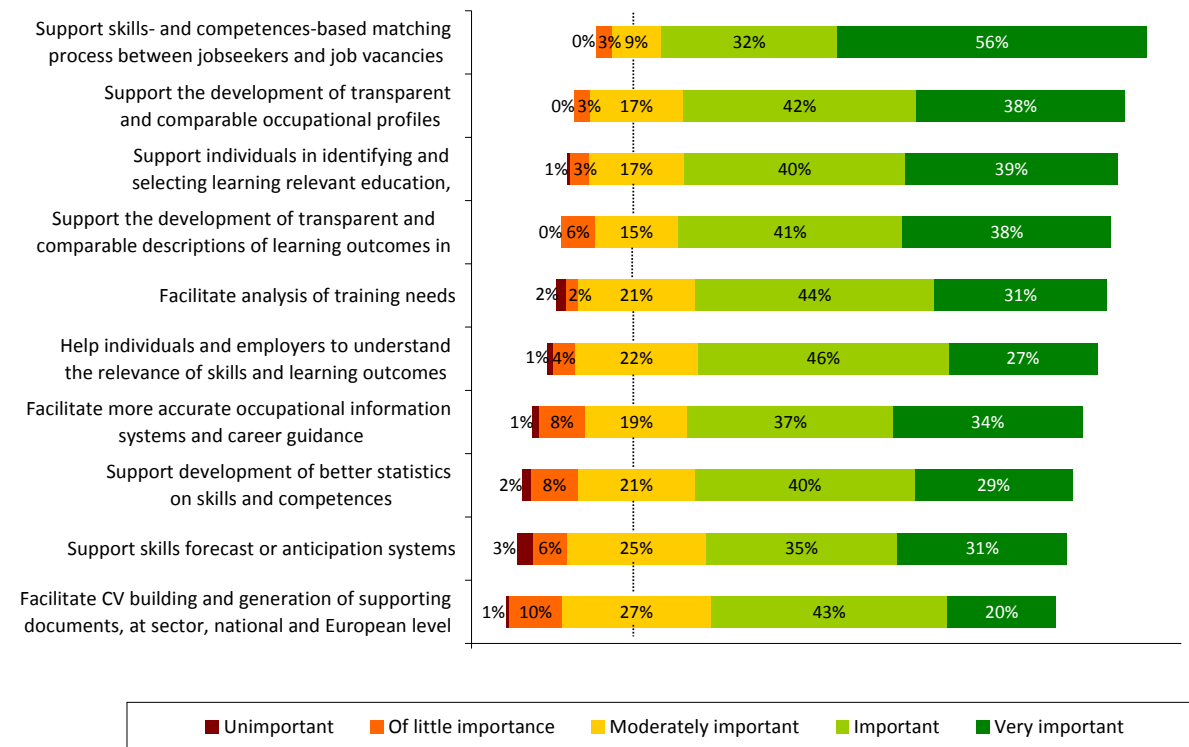
descriptions (81 % yes) should be included, reaction to including personal characteristics was more divided (43 % in favour, 42 % against).



5. Uses of ESCO

Respondents were asked to express their view on the importance of the various potential uses of ESCO. All proposed uses of the classification system were considered to be "important" or "very important" by over 60 % of respondents. Supporting the skills-/competence-based matching process between jobseekers and job vacancies received the highest degree of approval with 88 % of respondents considering it as "important" or "very important".

Potential uses of ESCO



(n_{min}=175, n_{max}=179)

Participants were given the option to add other potential uses of ESCO. A total of 44 Participants (24 %) suggested further uses of ESCO.

It was frequently mentioned, that ESCO might help to increase interoperability and that it could contribute to a common understanding between the world of education/training and employment as well as across borders. A couple of respondents mentioned the increase of workforce mobility as another main function of ESCO.

All other potential uses were named three times or less often. These included *inter alia*:

- Assessment of skills/competences
- Career planning
- Certification and recognition of skills/competences
- Research, benchmarking and cross-country comparison
- Wages and salaries
- Defining/matching occupational standards
- Recognising management levels/levels of responsibility
- Providing up-to-date information

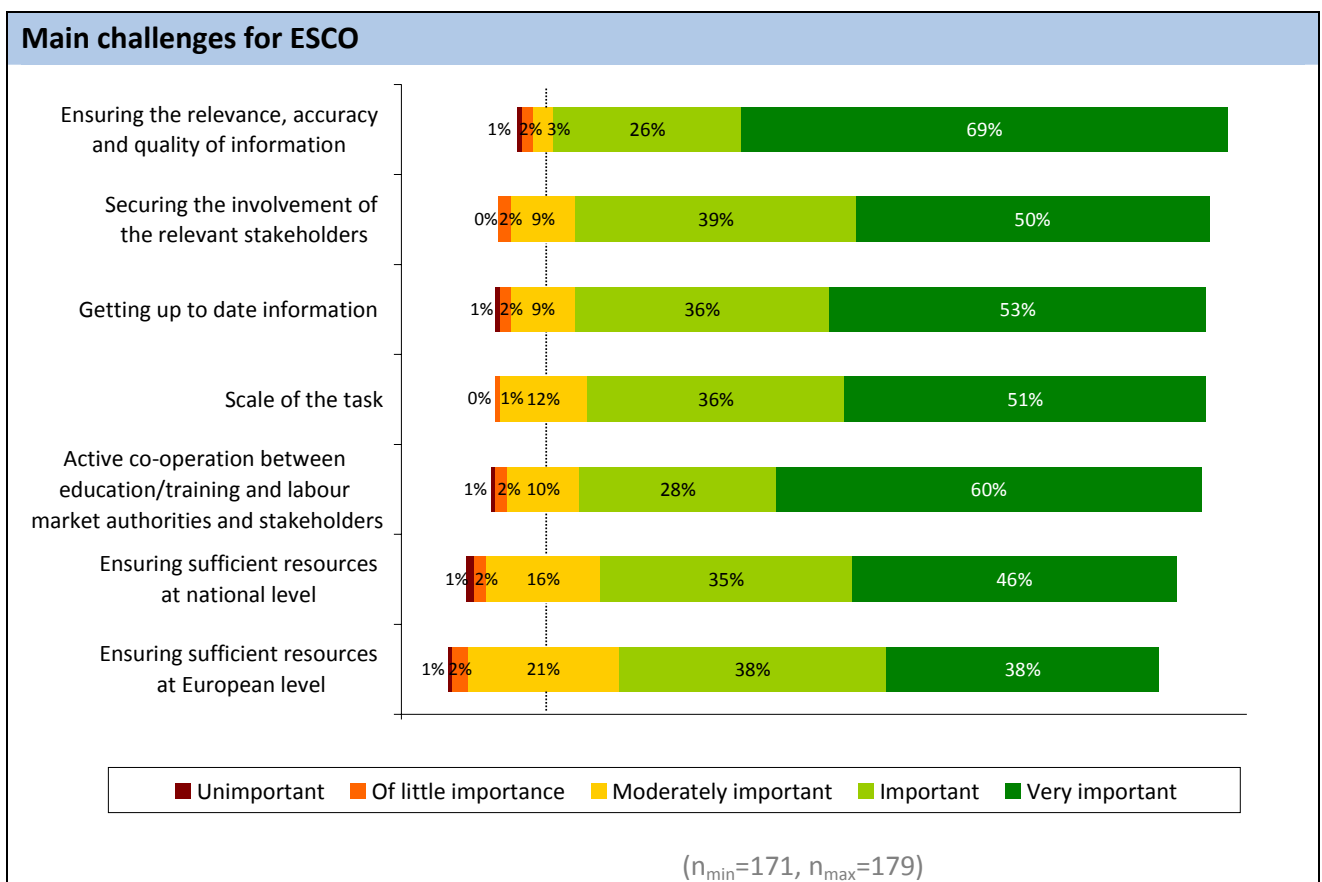


- Designing training programs
- Decreasing discrimination
- Modernising employment services

6. ESCO as a challenging project

6.1. Main challenges for ESCO

Considering the scale of the task, the constantly changing environment and the different perceptions and requirements in the education/training and employment sectors in various countries, developing ESCO as a European classification system is a demanding task. The European Commission identified a number of challenges for this project. In the survey, respondents were asked to provide their view on the importance of these challenges.





Each of the challenges presented was considered to be important or very important by more than 70 % of the respondents. According to the respondents the biggest challenge is to ensure relevant, accurate and high quality information. 69 % considered this as very important, 26 % as important.

6.2. Possible Solutions for ESCO

Respondents were asked to outline solutions to the challenges ESCO is facing. In total, 64 participants (35 %) put forward suggestions on how to overcome the challenges.

A considerable number of recommendations focused on the scope of the project. Some respondents advised that the classification should not be too detailed, so that it is easier manageable. It was also recommended to the European Commission to clearly prioritise the aims followed with the project. Another suggestion was to start with a narrower scope and to broaden it when first results are achieved. Respondents also feared that the European Commission might underestimate the scope of the project and stated that sufficient resources on both, European and national level, are crucial to successfully carry out the project. In this respect the important role of tight project management and proper planning was highlighted by several respondents. In order to ensure sufficient resources on national level, one respondent suggested providing recommendations and guidance to the institutions on national level.

Another way of managing the project successfully that was put forward by several participants is the use of best practices. It was proposed to look at existing classification systems for a reference of proper management and methodological structure. It was expressed that these systems could serve either as a basis or as a reference for the new taxonomy. Regarding the relation to existing classification systems, respondents expressed the concern that these might be affected by ESCO, especially in case of the EQF/NQF. Therefore, they should be linked or interconnected with the new taxonomy. It was also highlighted that strict methodology, clear definitions and internal working standards are important success factors for the development of the classification.

One of the solutions presented in order to overcome the challenges ESCO faces is the involvement of stakeholders. This is believed to ensure that existing knowledge on classification systems is made use of and that ESCO will meet the real needs of stakeholders. Some respondents put forward ideas on how the involvement of stakeholders could be made more efficient, namely by using electronic telecommunications (e.g. web conferences), by choosing the appropriate members for the management structures based on experience and not on function and by enabling stakeholders to participate in other languages than English. One issue that has been referred to in different ways is the national perspective and the involvement of member states. It was proposed *inter alia* to focus on the national dimension of ESCO, to form a working group



among member states or to create a discussion space/forum where national stakeholders can contribute to the project. Another suggestion was to create national committees that focus on the national implementation of ESCO and on suggestions that are specific to their national environment.

The usefulness and adoption of ESCO is another crucial point made by the respondents. Quite some participants pointed out, that promoting ESCO and raising awareness about it is highly important, maybe even more important than the quality and completeness of the data itself. The classification should be easy to use and understand, also by non-experts. It is also seen as very important that the taxonomy is updated regularly in order to increase its usability. Furthermore, it was proposed to test the usefulness of ESCO in field studies or pilot projects.

Respondents also mentioned that the needs ESCO serves should be identified further. The added value of the taxonomy and the cost-benefit-ratio is still unclear to some stakeholders. It was thus proposed to conduct pre-studies (e.g. impact assessment, feasibility study, cost-benefit analysis) to further elaborate on the potential of ESCO and the time and effort required to implement it. It was also suggested to support institutions on national level in their efforts of mapping to the ESCO classification.

7. Operation and Management of ESCO

7.1. Suggestions on the ESCO management structure

Participants of the survey were asked to put forward suggestions on the management structure of ESCO. 72 people (40 %) filled in this optional field, however, almost half of them used this field to state explicitly that they have no further suggestions or that they welcome the proposed structure.

A notable number of remarks were made on the distribution of responsibility between the different reference groups. One of the most important concerns expressed in this sense was that some occupations cannot be attributed to a specific sector but are rather cross-sectoral in nature (e.g. clerks). It was also pointed out, that it is important to gather the right expertise in the sectoral reference groups. At the same time, the organisational structure relying on reference groups for sectoral expertise was seen as key asset of the ESCO management structure.

Some respondents expressed the concern that the ESCO management structure might be too big and overloaded. They favoured a lighter coordination structure instead. In contrast, other respondents proposed additional bodies for the management structure that are responsible for



specific tasks. For example, it was recommended to have specific committees or reference groups for communicating about and promoting ESCO, for identifying new occupations, for interlinking with existing instruments (e.g. EURES portal, Europass) or with other organisations (e.g. Eurostat) as well as for scrutiny and quality check.

A few participants made proposals on the member state involvement in ESCO. It was suggested to have the member states represented in the ESCO Board, to involve groups that ensure member state representation such as the European Education Committee and Employment Committee (EMCO) or to establish one ESCO taskforce in each member state. It was also proposed to integrate the ESCO structures within existing structures such as the HOPES Meetings, the Sector Skills Councils or the Social Dialogue committees and working groups.

7.2. Additional Stakeholders

Respondents were asked to indicate if they would like to specify any other stakeholders that might add value to the ESCO project and that have not been named in the survey. 66 respondents (36 %) filled in this field⁶, two of them stating that the list already includes too many stakeholders.

Some participants mentioned groups of stakeholders that have already been listed by the European Commission. Apart from that, the stakeholder group that was most commonly referred to were statistical organisations, such as Eurostat or national statistical organisations. Quite some respondents named the different end users as stakeholders. This list includes jobseekers, teachers and trainers, students and learners, employers, companies in general and SME in specific. Business networks such as chambers of commerce were also referred to several times. Other stakeholders, that have been named only once or twice included:

- Professional organisations
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO)
- Global training bodies
- Political parties
- Member states
- Associations of unemployed people
- Ministries responsible for employment
- EMCO

⁶ People just stating that they do not wish to add anything to the list were counted as having not filled in the field.



8. Other comments

Respondents had the opportunity to add further comments at the end of the survey. 35 people (19 %) made use of this option⁷. In most cases the free text field was used to put forward ideas that had already been expressed at an earlier stage in the survey, e.g. the importance of a needs analysis, the interlinking of ESCO with existing tools such as Europass or EQF as well as concerns about the scope of ESCO, the use of English as only working language and the required resources. A few respondents complained about a lack of information, especially concerning tasks and workload of the management structures. Furthermore, some respondents used the free text field to express in a more general way that they welcome ESCO (seven out of the 35) or that they disagree with the project (two out of the 35).

⁷ People just stating that they do not wish to add anything counted as having not filled in the field.



Annex I: Full text of the stakeholder survey

Targeted survey on the development of a European Taxonomy of Skills, Competences and Occupations (ESCO)

Making education and training more relevant and responsive to the needs of the labour market and society and promoting the development of a skilled and adaptable workforce is crucial to enabling Europe to exit successfully from the economic crisis and achieve the Europe 2020 goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. A common language is necessary to bring together the worlds of education/training and work and facilitate co-operation. Parallel shifts have taken place from learning inputs to learning outcomes in the world of education linked to the European Qualification Framework and the development of national qualification frameworks, and from occupation-centred to skills and competence oriented approaches in the labour market. This growing, shared focus on knowledge, skills and competences provides a good basis to bridge the terminological gap that exists between the spheres of education and work.

Working in close partnership with stakeholders, the Commission is proposing to develop a common language - a multilingual standard terminology and European classification/taxonomy of Skills, Competences and Occupations (ESCO) - that is intended to complement and link existing national/sectoral taxonomies and contribute to improved anticipation of needs and skill forecasting as well as better skills and job matching.

A conference on ESCO was held in March 2010 and additional consultation has taken place through meetings with a range of European committees, advisory groups and networks. The European Commission now wishes to invite all interested and concerned stakeholders - especially public, private and third sector employment services, the Social Partners, national education, training and qualification authorities and institutions, as well as sector skill councils, human resource management, recruitment and career guidance professionals, research organisations, promoters of other taxonomy and classification systems, developers of ICT HR applications (including other web-based job search tools) and international organisations such as the OECD and ILO - to contribute views by responding to this questionnaire.

To help tailor the design and development of ESCO to meet real needs and put in place effective and efficient structures we are particularly interested in feedback on the scope of ESCO's content, priority uses and its operational and management structures. The Commission will analyse the replies and draw-up preliminary proposals on ESCO's organisational structure for discussion with the decision-making body - the ESCO Board.

The survey contains ten questions and should not take more than twenty minutes to complete. (Please note that the session time for completing this questionnaire is limited to 90 minutes. If you exceed this time, your answers might be lost. To avoid this you can prepare your answers in an external text editor, e.g. in MS Word, and copy & paste them into the questionnaire afterwards.)

Your contribution will be analysed carefully by the European Commission. It might be published in an anonymised way. Please refer to the [legal notice on personal data protection](#) for detailed information on the handling of your data by the European Commission.

Please note that although the questionnaire exists only in English, you may answer any question that requires an elaborated response in English, French or German.



BEFORE REPLYING TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE, PLEASE READ CAREFULLY THE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

- 1) Overview of ESCO
- 2) Roles and involvement of stakeholders

Section I - Background information

To enable us to see to what extent stakeholder views differ between sectors and countries it would be helpful if you could complete the following background questions:

1a) Please indicate in which area you work:

- Education/Training
- Employment/Labour Market
- Social partner organisation (trade union)
- Social partner organisation (federation of employers)
- Other (please specify)

If answer to 1a) is Education/Training:

1b) Please indicate in which type of organisation in the field of education/training you work:

- Ministry competent for education and training
- National/regional qualifications authority
- Body developing and/or awarding qualifications
- Education & Training institution
- Sector Skill Council
- Guidance body
- Research organisation
- Private consultancy
- Statistical organisation
- Other (please specify)

If answer to 1a) is Employment/Labour Market:

1b) Please indicate in which type of organisation in the field of employment/labour market you work:

- Ministry competent for employment
- Public Employment Service
- Private Employment Service
- Guidance body
- Research organisation
- Private consultancy
- Statistical organisation
- Other (please specify)

2) Please indicate the main role you have in your organisation:

- Senior Management
- HR Management/Recruitment



- Policy Development
- Policy Analysis
- Skill Forecasting and Analysis
- Training Needs Analysis
- Programme & Project Management
- Research
- Statistical Analysis
- Terminology / Taxonomy Development and Management
- Other (please specify)

3) Please indicate in which country you are based

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Turkey
- United Kingdom
- Other

Section II - Use of classification systems & expectations of ESCO

4a) Does your organisation use existing international classification systems on skills/competences, qualifications and occupations (e.g. ISCED, ISCO)?



- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If yes:

Please specify which system/s you use and briefly outline how you use it/them and for what purpose:

4b) Has your country/organisation developed its own classification systems/taxonomies at national and/or sectoral level?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If answer to 4b is yes:

4c) Please describe it briefly by indicating what it classifies, the type of data held, the level at which it operates (national, sectoral), the purposes for which it is used and the main types of users or include a hyperlink to the system or the contact details for a person who could give further information (name, email, telephone, etc.).

If answer to 4b is yes:

4d) Do you think it likely that there will be interest from your organisation/country in linking/mapping between ESCO and your own classification system to enable exchange of information?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If answer to 4b is no:

4c) Do you expect that ESCO might be sufficient to broadly meet the needs of your organisation or do you imagine that in the future it will nonetheless be necessary to develop your own classification system?

- ESCO might meet the needs of our organisation.
- It will be necessary to develop our own classification system.
- Don't know

Section III - Scope of Content & Priority Uses of ESCO

Information to include within ESCO



5) Based on the experience of your organisation/institution/position do you consider it helpful to include within ESCO not only information on occupations, qualifications and specific occupational skills but also on...

	Yes	No	Don't know
... transversal competences/soft skills (such as creative thinking, teamwork, problem-solving)			
... personal characteristics (such as good hand eye co-ordination, physical strength etc.)			
... work activities/task descriptions (for example for a secretarial profile to include tasks such as filing, archiving, meetings organisation etc.)			

Uses of ESCO

6a) A European standard terminology of skills/competences, qualifications and occupations has the potential to serve a range of needs and to be used in many different ways. Based on the experience of your organisation/institution/position, please indicate the importance you attribute to the following uses:

	Very important	Important	Moderately important	Of little importance	Unimportant
Support skills- and competences-based matching process between jobseekers and job vacancies					
Support individuals in identifying and selecting learning relevant education, training and learning opportunities					
Facilitate analysis of training needs					
Support the development of transparent and comparable occupational profiles					
Support the development of transparent and comparable descriptions of learning outcomes in education & training programmes and qualification					
Help individuals and employers to understand the relevance of skills and learning outcomes for tasks and occupations					



Facilitate CV building and generation of supporting documents, at sector, national and European level					
Facilitate more accurate occupational information systems and career guidance					
Support skills forecast or anticipation systems					
Support development of better statistics on skills and competences					

6b) Would you like to add any other uses of ESCO which you consider to be of high importance:

Section IV - Challenges and Solutions

Main Challenges for ESCO

7a) Although ESCO v0 currently contains around 6 000 skills and 5 000 job titles and so provides a solid basis on which to build; constructing an operationally useful European standard terminology of skills/competences, qualifications and occupations will take time and can only be done gradually step by step.

Based on the experience of your organisation/institution/position, please indicate what you expect to be the main challenges:

	Very important	Important	Moderately important	Of little importance	Unimportant
Scale of the task					
Securing the involvement of the relevant stakeholders					
Active co-operation between education/training and labour market authorities and stakeholders					
Ensuring sufficient resources at European level					
Ensuring sufficient resources at national level					
Getting up to date information					
Ensuring the relevance, accuracy and quality of information					



7b) Please briefly outline any suggestions you have for possible solutions to the challenges:

Section V - Operation & Management of ESCO

8) It is envisaged to create an ESCO structure with three main bodies: The ESCO board, the Maintenance Committee, and the different ESCO Reference Groups organised around industrial sectors. Do you have an alternative suggestion to put forward on how the work of ESCO could be organised?

9) Participation in ESCO's management structures

The Commission has identified as important the involvement of the following types of stakeholders in ESCO:

- public, private and third sector employment services;
- the Social Partners;
- national education, training and qualification authorities and institutions;
- Sector Skill Councils;
- human resource management, recruitment and career guidance professionals;
- research organisations
- promoters of other taxonomy and classification systems;
- developers of ICT HR applications (including other web-based job search tools)
- international organisations such as the OECD and ILO

9a) Based on the experience of your organisation/institution/position, please indicate any other types of stakeholders whom you consider could provide added value to ESCO.

9b) The Commission will decide on the approximately 15 members of the ESCO Board and ensure parity of representation from the spheres of education/training and the employment/labour market as well as involvement of the Social Partners and other relevant stakeholders. Member State representation for the places available for the education and training side will be co-ordinated through the European Qualifications Framework Advisory Group. For the places available for the social partners the Commission will consult the respective European level representative bodies. Only representatives from organisations committed to actively taking forward ESCO development shall become members of the ESCO board.

At its first meeting the Board will decide on the organisation and composition of other ESCO structures. Taking into account the required profile and tasks outlined, you may propose candidates whom you believe possess the necessary expertise and experience for the different structures.

You may propose candidates for the ESCO Board, the ESCO Maintenance Committee and the Reference Groups:



ESCO Board

Tasks: The Board will set out the strategy for the development of ESCO, will define the annual ESCO work programme, will endorse the annual ESCO progress report, will decide on the setting up of the structure under which ESCO is developed; in particular appoint members of maintenance committee and endorse requests and proposals for activation of reference groups, will decide on the release of enriched and updated ESCO versions, etc.

Required profile: Serve at decision-taking level in their organisations or grouping of organisations, empowered to represent their organisation or grouping of organisations and/or the collective national interest at European level; should be prepared to invest time to improve and actively promote the development and use of ESCO; availability for ESCO board meetings, their preparation and follow up; good knowledge of the labour market & its terminology (occupations & skills) and/or education market & its terminology (skills & qualifications), sound knowledge about issues related to taxonomies and classification systems and their potential use; very good English language skills.

Do you know one or more person/s (including yourself) that you believe possess/es the necessary expertise and experience to be member/s of the ESCO Board?

- Yes
- No

If yes:

Please indicate the name and address details (phone, email, etc.) of the person/s and give some short explanation how he/she matches with the required profile:

ESCO Maintenance Committee

Tasks: The Maintenance Committee will have the major role in the conceptual work and in technical decisions concerning the acceptance or rejection of documented proposals that come from the reference groups and Secretariat. After validation of the proposals the Maintenance Committee will recommend them for final approval to the Board. In the ESCO inception period its main role will be to oversee the consolidation and the upgrade of the existing taxonomy to ISCO 08 and to oversee the work of the contractors. It will ensure that decisions are in line with the overall direction and content of the ESCO classification.

Required profile: Expertise in the field of the content of classifications/taxonomies; experience with taxonomy, metadata, controlled vocabularies and classification; good knowledge of the labour market and education/training terminology including related to qualifications and learning outcomes; sound understanding of employment & skills & education/training related standards (ISCO, ISCED, NACE, etc); good knowledge on relations between occupations and skills, good knowledge of other related taxonomies such as ROME, BERUFENET, AGRIPASS, etc.; knowledge of grouping of occupations; very good English language skills.



Do you know one or more person/s (including yourself) that you believe possess/es the necessary expertise and experience to be member/s of the ESCO Maintenance Committee?

- Yes
- No

If yes:

Please indicate the name and address details (phone, email, etc.) of the person/s and give some short explanation how he/she matches with the required profile.

Mention as well in which specific sector he/she has special expertise:

ESCO Reference Groups

Tasks: The main tasks of the different reference groups will be to suggest, update, validate the skills and competences sets and formal qualifications related to each occupation. Its members will ensure that changes in labour markets and occupational demands/qualifications/skills/competences/sets will be brought to the attention of ESCO and incorporated in the continual updating envisaged for ESCO. Reference groups might be organised on industrial sector level and/or on organisation-type level; they will regularly meet to discuss their proposals, some parts of their tasks might be done in virtual meetings. The size of each reference group should be such that the group can function efficiently and effectively (e.g. around 10 members). The members of the reference groups will have access to the ESCO updating/editing tool where changes can be proposed to the Maintenance Committee. The ESCO Secretariat will provide technical and logistical support to the reference groups.

Required profile: Sound knowledge of the terminology related to education and training and labour market including related to qualifications and learning outcomes; good understanding of required skills, competences, qualifications, and occupations of at least one particular industrial sector, experience with classifications, taxonomies, controlled vocabularies, good understanding of the employment and skills related standards (ISCO, ISCED, NACE, etc); very good English language skills

Do you know one or more person/s (including yourself) that you believe possess/es the necessary expertise and experience to be member/s of the ESCO Reference Groups?

- Yes
- No

If yes:

Please indicate the name and address details (phone, email, etc.) of the person/s and give some short explanation how he/she matches with the required profile. Mention as well in which specific sector he/she has special expertise:



Section VI - Additional Comments

10) Other comments you would like to add:

Would you like to be informed regularly of any news on ESCO via e-mail?
You will also receive an analysis of the results of this survey.

- Yes
- No



Annex II: Stakeholder groups invited to contribute to the stakeholder survey

To reach a broad coverage of stakeholders expressing their interests the following groups were invited to contribute to the survey:

- Education Committee and the education attachés of the Member State Permanent Representations in Brussels;
- EQF Advisory Group;
- Advisory Committee on Vocational Education and Training;
- ECVET User Group;
- Europass centres;
- European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network and the Euroguidance network;
- Employment Committee;
- Public Employment Services, Private Employment Services, Third Sector Employment Services;
- The Social Partners organisations at European level;
- Sector skill councils;
- International Labour Organisation;
- OECD;
- Participants of the ESCO stakeholder's conference in March 2010;
- and many more organisations that have shown an interest in ESCO.