

“Vocational Qualification Transfer System in Ecology

ECO-MATRIX”



The project “Vocational Qualification Transfer System in Ecology, ECO-MATRIX” addresses the existing problem for lack of transparency of EQF qualifications and appropriate measures for its assurance at National/International levels. Considering the increased complexity of modern education, training and learning systems, ECO-MATRIX project contributes to the promotion of the European Workspace concept through transparency of certificates, diplomas and qualifications; transferability of competencies; accreditation and recognition.

The aim

The main aim of the project is to transfer a relevant and innovative systemic procedure for assurance of international shift of vocational qualifications based on EQF (European Qualifications Framework) principles and create a broad multilingual e-platform for EU target audience. The project aims are reached through 6 phases, elaborated by the project consortium as follows:

- To transfer a relevant and innovative systemic procedure for assurance of international shift of vocational qualifications based on VQTS project outcomes
- To provide flexible and transferable system for qualifications description based on EQF principles

- To create broad multilingual e-platform for the EU target audience

The objectives foreseen for achievement of project aims comprise the following:

- To transfer and further elaborate methods and procedures for development of ECO-MATRIX model Competence Matrix
- To build up Organizational/Individual Competence Profiles
- To implement the ECO-MATRIX model in mobility
- To approbate the application of ECO-MATRIX model for transparency of qualifications
- To establish a partnership with sectoral organizations for embedding the new model at National/European level
- To exploit and disseminate ECO-MATRIX model

The objectives

Its objectives comprise:

- ✓ transfer and further elaboration of methods and procedures for development of ECO-MATRIX model Competence Matrix;
- ✓ build up of Organizational/Individual Competence Profiles;
- ✓ approbation of ECO-MATRIX model and implementation in mobility;
- ✓ establishment of a partnership with sectoral organizations for embedding the new model at National/European level;
- ✓ valorisation of ECO-MATRIX model.

ECO-MATRIX consortium, unified by the main project goal is organized on the basis of different background of the partners. It includes 7 participants from 4 countries–TR,AT,BG,EL, and is composed of Universities(Thessaloniki University,Pamukkale University), a Research and Development Center “Biointech”,a Research & Development Ins.in VET (IBW) and consulting bodies ACIKKOL, ERBIL and PIRAMIT and an association (Natural Balance Society).

The project team consists of members with wide experience in different national/EU programmes. It possesses the necessary

capacity, expertise and competence for implementation of the proposal and successful achievement of its objective. The process of "transfer of innovation" will be facilitated by the associated members of the consortium-representatives of decision makers, VET professionals, and social partners.

The Outcomes

The main outcomes of the project are:

- ✓ work out of general frame of documents certifying completed training and acquired competencies in Ecological Projects;
- ✓ establishment, development and maintenance of project e-learning portal;
- ✓ build up of Competence Matrix and Institutional/Individual Profiles in ecological & environmental projects and
- ✓ their approbation/certification;
- ✓ issue of mobility chart;
- ✓ performance of valorisation events.

The impact

The project impact envisaged will contribute to EU VET system through:

- ✓ enhancement of the quality of continuing education;
- ✓ introduction of a system for validation of qualifications awarded by non-formal/informal educational settings;
- ✓ improvement of the qualifications transparency and recognition in Life Learning context.

The rapid social, technological and economic changes in Europe, reflected in the European Policy Agenda (http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/social_agenda/c10127_en.htm), outlines the major goal of creating a knowledge-based economy.

The core of this concept also coincides with Turkish policy, setting up increasing demands towards a lifelong learning and realization of the shift from "knowledge" to "competence" and from "teaching" to "learning".

The aging population accentuates these challenges, underlining the need for a continuous updating and renewal of knowledge, skills and wider competency. However, the realization of lifelong learning is complicated by the lack of communication and cooperating between education and training providers and authorities at different levels. Barriers between institutions and countries prevent the efficient use of knowledge and competency already acquired. This problem is primarily caused by a lack of transparency of qualifications and arrangements that allow citizens to transfer qualifications from one setting to another. It is also caused by the tendency to regard learning acquired in non-formal and informal settings as inferior to learning for formal qualifications delivered in initial education and training.

The preparatory work in this domain at EU level includes promotion of conceptual EU Qualification Framework while accounting for country specific factors. These Frameworks (in Europe and beyond) are tackling the increased complexity of modern education, training and learning systems and an establishment of European workspace.

The needs analysis undertaken indicated that the promotion of the European Workspace concept could be achieved through: transparency of certificates, diplomas and qualifications, transferability of competencies as well as accreditation and recognition. These measures should include also performance of activities similar to Sorbonne–Bologna-Prague process (e.g. ECTS) in the area of VET (ECVET). The indicated needs for transparency of qualifications at EU level have been acknowledged by the expert group of EC, comprising decision makers with national responsibilities (http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44_en.htm). The performed comparative policy studies and their conclusions

said that appropriate measures to assure the transparency of qualifications at National/International level are needed.

The ways in which the situation set out under the need analysis will be changed and addressed comprise implementation of the ECO-MATRIX project results/outcomes. They are based on a “common” language provided in the competency description and their acquisition, and on a way to relate these descriptions to those acquired in national training programs. Thus the ECO-MATRIX model focuses on competency related to a work process, identifying the core work tasks within the context of a particular occupational field. It follows as well a development logical differentiation of a competence profile and in this way can describe the acquisition of competency. The project will use the valorisation process for optimization/utilization of the knowledge adopted, thus promoting further transparency of qualifications at EU level.

Introducing comparative analysis, the ECO-MATRIX model describes the acquirable steps of competence development within a training program as well as the already obtained competency in a transnationally comprehensible manner. In this way the description of the competency in a work context can support the understanding between education and work. This approach can be used for transfer of competency gained abroad, development of qualifications and curricula, composing job profiles & personal planning.

The project under transfer

The project under transfer treats the transparency of qualifications at European/National level and proposes a flexible model for introduction of EQF principles. It is contracted by AT, has partners from 8 countries and comprises the following main outputs:

- Approbated systematic procedure for international transfer of acquired qualifications

- Manual with documentation of the developed procedure; samples for documents/informative literature; instructions for procedure realization; guidelines; instructions for procedure implementation and consideration of the model transferability into other economic sectors/fields of VET

The project has received the Helsinki Award 2006 and the Lifelong Learning Award 2007 in Gold for its contribution to the aims of the Copenhagen process.

The rationale

The rationale behind choosing the above results for transfer to TR, BG, AT and EL is to create a cluster of partners with different experience wishing to contribute to the process of transfer of qualifications gained in educational institutions or/and companies as a "common currency" at National/European scale. The transfer envisaged will be in addition to the already described Mechatronics sector and will be enlarged with the new one-Ecology

VQTS results will be used for exploitation in the new context of ECO-MATRIX project through the following scheme:

- Transfer of VQTS guide: translation in partners' languages
- Building an internet platform with multilingual operational capacity
- Drafting and approbation the Competence Matrix/Profiles in ECOLOGY
- Implementation of the new model in mobility
- Creation of ECO-MATRIX Competence Acquisition Dossier
- Dissemination and exploitation and post-project life

The new project is grounded on the networking philosophy by creation of cluster of partners. It will contribute to the transfer and recognition of competencies acquired within the official VET system as well as those achieved through non-formal/informal learning at sectoral National/European level. The project will also contribute to the application of ECVET procedure and certification process. In this way the development and approbation of the innovative model using

sector-related approach in the Ecological vocational field could be a basis for application in other sectors/branches at National/International level.

The initial developer of VQTS project(3S research laboratory)has authorized Institut fuer Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft (ibw) to participate in the new ECO-MATRIX project.