




# GINCO

## Tools & Training

for International Course Development and Delivery

*Editors:  
Guy Tilkin and Michèle Paulus,  
Landcommanderij Alden Biesen, Bilzen, Belgium*







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## Editors:

Guy Tilkin and Michèle Paulus,  
Landcommanderij Alden Biesen, Bilzen, Belgium

## Co-authors:

Guy Tilkin, Landcommanderij Alden Biesen, Bilzen, Belgium  
Sabine Wiemann and Tim Scholze, BUPNET, Göttingen, Germany  
Jaap van Lakerveld, PLATO, Leiden, The Netherlands  
Christa Bauer and Elisabeth Amtmann, Evalitas, Graz, Austria  
Franziska Steffen and Holger Bienzle, die Berater, Vienna, Austria  
Kylene de Angelis, Training 2000, Mondavio, Italy

Project co-ordinator



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# Introduction

GINCO is a European network of organisations and stakeholders involved in professional development and in-service training of adult education staff. The aim of the network is to share expertise and to enhance communication and cooperation in order to improve the quality of international staff training courses, to enlarge the scope of provision and to improve the visibility and success of the staff mobility training actions and related courses.

The GINCO team continued its work in GINCO Tools & Training, a follow up project in response to the needs revealed in GINCO surveys and research. GINCO T&T is a Grundtvig Multilateral Project aiming to collect, create and share useful material in order to support course organisers in their search for quality. GINCO T&T started off in the Lifelong Learning Programme but continued in the Erasmus + programme. Its outcomes also serve the needs of international KA1 training course organisers in an Erasmus+ context.

## **GINCO T&T aims:**

1. to improve the quality of provision and delivery of international continuous professional development courses.
2. to contribute to the professionalisation of trainers and organisers running European in-service training courses for adult education staff.

Target groups are: Organisers of in-service training courses for adult education staff, actual and potential KA1 course providers, AE providers who may wish to internationalise their local in-service training course offers, Erasmus+ National Agencies, educational policy makers at European, national and regional level.

## **Course provider competence profile**

This manual is one of the outcomes of the project and contains background information and training material based on an approach for 'competence development of course organisers'. GINCO Tools & Training launched a survey amongst Grundtvig in-service training course organisers (listed on the training data base between 01/01/2009 and 31/06/2013) as to define and prioritise the competences needed to organise a quality course. They were also asked to define their training needs. Based on the results of this survey and based on the principles of the EU Commission study on 'Key Competences for Adult Learning Professionals' (see disk p.32 the GINCO T&T team has come up with 41 competences spread over 8 competence areas to become the "Course provider competence profile".

These competence areas are the following:

- 1 Application of innovative didactics and competence oriented approaches
- 2 Quality care and self-evaluation
- 3 Validation of learning outcomes
- 4 Promotion and marketing
- 5 Attention to EU dimension
- 6 Appropriate ICT use
- 7 Providing social and professional support
- 8 Management and organisation

For each of these areas the GINCO T&T team has created a set of competences. These competences and the training needs as derived from the surveys were the basis for training material and course modules, collected and/or created by the GINCO T&T team. Also the structure of this manual is based on the competence areas as described in

the profile. More material is available in the section “Tools & Documents” of the project website [www.ginconet.eu](http://www.ginconet.eu). Next to these materials the main product of the GINCO T&T project is an international course for course organisers: “Quality of Course”, which was piloted twice during the project funding period and will be organised by the team in the years to come.

## Erasmus plus

In the next seven years the Erasmus+ programme will set the rules for the international in-service training and mobility action. Key Action 1 (KA 1) offers opportunities for individual learning mobility and in-service training (IST). This action is open for staff in adult education and in school education. The Erasmus+ rules for course grant applicants affect the organisation of international training courses and outreach strategies of course providers.

In short the following issues affect the organisation of a course:

- Organisation based applications
- Free course market
- Minimum duration: 2 full days (on site)
- The COM and GRU IST database is no longer available
- No European dimension eligibility rules any more
- Smaller grant for beneficiaries, different composition
- Needs driven training provision
- Closer relation to European objectives & priorities
- Competence driven approach, learning outcomes description, learning agreements
- Validation of learning outcomes
- Transfer and follow up, importance of impact

## Organisation based applications

All KA1 grant applications are ‘organisation based’. This means that an individual teacher or trainer cannot apply for a grant anymore. All individuals have to apply via the

organisation they work for. A school or adult education organisation will have to create a ‘European Development Plan’ including staff development needs and international in-service training plans for a predefined number of staff and activities.

The plan should also include objectives, activities, course topics/themes, impact, exploitation... It is not necessary to indicate a specific course name at application stage (details about the future course(s) can add to the quality of the application) but the country of destination of the course must be indicated because this defines a part of the grant level.

This application (forms available on the website of each National Agency) must be sent to the National Agency in the country of the school or AE organisation (before the deadline).

When (if) the application is approved by the NA the organisation can look for courses and decide who to send to which course. Grant holders can then contact course organisers and reserve a place at the course.

## Free market and outreach

In the new programme (in 2014) there is no European training database anymore and there are no specific eligibility requirements as to the organisers of the course. It is a free market situation. This also means that at this stage the course organisers have to arrange the publicity for their courses themselves. In the future e-Twinning (European Gateway to Education) and EPAL (Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe) may take over some tasks from the former database.

The KA1 action is also conceived as ‘demand driven’ and not as ‘offer driven’. Schools and adult education organisations create their continuing professional development (CPD) plans and apply for funding and then



look 'on the market' for an appropriate course offer. Grant holders will have to be able to find the courses they need. Course providers will have to be flexible in their course offer and make effective publicity for their courses.

## Finances

The grant calculation has been changed considerably in the new programme. For a participant in a course the applicant (sending) organisation receives:

- Travel costs based on lump sums relative to the distance from home organisation to course venue (online distance calculator provided by the Commission).
- Daily allowances for accommodation & subsistence based on the country where the course takes place.
- Course fee at 70 Euro per (full) day (with a max. of 700 Euro).
- Organisational cost cover at 350 Euro lump sum (first 100 persons in the plan) or 200 Euro (over 100 persons in the plan) per person per course.

The daily allowances and course fee levels are not set to cover the real costs. Course participants (organisations) will have to contribute from their own sources. A course provider must of course consider real costs, related to quality and realistic costs, taking into account the grant level. These considerations may affect the number of trainers involved in the course, the country where the course takes place, the quality of provided accommodation and meals, the activities related to the course.

## Course duration

IST can last from 2 days (2 full days on site) to 2 months.

## Competence driven approach and validation

The European Development Plan (KA1 application form) contains a number of fields - to be filled in by the sending organisation – concerning the competences participants are going (expecting) to develop when attending a course and what validation (of individual learning outcomes) and certification will be offered.

Course providers will have to describe their course(s) in terms of competence development and learning outcomes and, as a consequence, will have to conceive their courses as competence driven courses. In the next couple of years also a 'learning agreement' between organiser and participant must be described before the course takes place. While promoting the course an organiser should also pay attention to what competences and CPD needs are addressed by the course.

Validation of non-formal learning and certification will more and more play an important role in professional development (Europass is put forward in the application form). International IST will have to follow this trend in order to gain recognition on the course market.

## European education objectives & priorities

The European development plan of the applicant organisation will have to give proof that the proposed IST not only meets the needs of the professional development of the organisation but also that it leads to an internationalisation of the organisation meeting European objectives and priorities. Course provision therefore should also be based on these requirements. In Annex 5 the Erasmus+ Guide for Experts offers an overview of reference documents on policy priorities. [http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/expert-guide\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/expert-guide_en.pdf)

The following chapters offer support for the competence development of KA1 course organisers willing to provide a quality course responding to the requirements of the Erasmus+ programme. The manual deals with the competences of the course organisers and is structured in that way. Each 'competence area chapter' starts with a description of the competences in that area and ends with a reference system for validation of one of these competences (also see chapter on validation). This reference system is the basis for defining indicators and creating assessment tools.

**The Tools & Training section of the GINCO website offers more material and tools related to each competence area.**

**[www.ginconet.eu](http://www.ginconet.eu)**

Part One

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Quality of  
Course Provision

GINCO



# Chapter 1

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## The Course Offer



## Introduction

In the adult education (AE) sector the contribution of staff is decisive for the quality of adult learning provision. But, so far, many countries have paid little attention to the training (initial and continuing), the status or the career development of adult learning staff. Staff within the AE sector has different employment conditions, ranging from permanent, full-time contracts to more precarious, freelance ones. AE staff comes from a variety of backgrounds, works on short-term contracts or in addition to another job, and tends to join the profession later in life, after having gained work experience elsewhere. This means that the provision of training of personnel within the sector needs to be particularly flexible and that there should be more emphasis on continuing professional development (CPD) through short courses, work-based learning and induction programmes, rather than on initial training. The KA1 Grundtvig action therefore is of particular importance to the sector. It contributes to the professional development of adult educators and adds to the sector a European dimension, new learning contexts, networking and sharing opportunities, is a channel for innovation etc. It also contributes to the social and personal development of the participants in terms of group dynamics, international mobility and multicultural experience.

The European Commission's Action Plan on Adult Learning (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52007DC0558>) has set the targets and steps for building a "high quality and accessible adult learning system". A number of priorities in this Action Plan deals with the quality of adult education staff and the introduction of innovation. These targets are in line with the Europe 2020 priorities ([http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm)). Quality in adult education provision and delivery, validation of learning outcomes, a European scope, intercultural awareness, networking skills and competence driven teaching and learning are elements contributing to this innovation and envisaged

raise in quality of adult education.

European in-service training courses should be a model for innovative solutions in these priority areas. They can help create a European area of adult education and be a driver for innovation and the transfer of knowledge and expertise. GINCO, the Grundtvig International Network of Course Organisers strives to enhance and improve this role of KA1 mobility training courses in a European innovation policy.

Therefore the network presents a quality concept for international courses based on GINCO surveys and European Commission reports (e.g. "Analysis and exploitation of the results of Grundtvig in-service training activities 2000-2009"):

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/studies/studies\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/studies/studies_en.php) )

Quality in the 'eyes' of GINCO means that:

- mechanisms for quality care and self-evaluation are in place
- innovative didactics and competence oriented approaches are applied
- appropriate ICT use is applied in all phases: pre delivery, delivery and follow-up
- mechanisms for validation of learning outcomes are in place
- attention is paid to personal and social competence development
- the European dimension is taken into account
- courses are linked to ET2020 priorities

## The Offer

As already has been mentioned there is no European training course database in the first years of the Erasmus+ programme. Plans are being made to create a space for adult education staff course offer on the EPALE platform and a space for school education staff course offer on the e-Twinning / European Gateway platform. So far (mid 2014) there is no indication as to the timing,



form and format of the publication of the courses on these platforms. It is a free market situation: any course answering the training needs of the participants can be picked by the sending organisation. Course organisers will have to arrange their own marketing and publicity.

The KA1 action is also conceived as 'demand driven' and not as 'offer driven'. Schools and adult education organisations create their 'continuing professional development' or 'European development' plans based on the needs of the staff and apply for funding. Course organisers will have to adapt their offer to the needs of the field. In some countries they even are working on a database of staff training needs per organisation.

The EU Commission study on Key Competences for Adult Learning Professionals: <http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/doc/2010/keycomp.pdf> by Research voor Beleid gives an overview of the competences the staff team in an adult education organisation should have (see disk on page 32). The training needs of AE staff are situated in the competence areas on this disk. Therefore course organisers can use the disk to define the competences and competence areas they want to include in their course offer. It would be ideal to go for a 'tailor made offer' and to install a negotiation phase between course provider and potential participants for adapting the competences and learning outcomes to the needs of the participant(s).

## The dynamics

The offer of in-service courses reflects the needs and goals of all levels and partners concerned. It is in a way to be considered a mirror of current trends and perceived urgencies. This notion of the course offer as a mirror of societal and educational needs requires continuous reflection, updating and upgrading of the course offer. This may be done by various means as indicated in the subsections below.

### Policy information

Erasmus+ National Agencies and other institutions organize information days on the E+ programme and its actions. During these meetings information is spread and discussed on policy priorities, actualised work procedures and conditions for grant applications. These meetings should also include information on possible databases and communication networks used or to be used for marketing of courses, for an overview of the course offer etc. For course organisers/providers these meetings give important input for offer optimisation.

### Self-evaluation

Courses need to be evaluated. By setting up self-evaluation of the course offer, answers may be found to the extent to which courses offered meet the needs of the target group. Thus one gets an opportunity to see whether course offers need to be adapted to newly arisen needs, or for the better fulfilment of already addressed needs.

### Action research

Along the same line as self-evaluation, it is also possible to engage in action research activities, to identify needs, and trends in the target field the courses aim at. For instance a provider could decide to make an investigation among elderly people to find out to what extent they feel equipped to use modern ICT media, including computers, tablets, smart phones etc. Such investigations allow providers to attune their offer to a target group, and it also reveals needs that may otherwise have remained hidden.

### Co-operation

Separate providers each create a part of an overall offer. In the sections above the focus is on the analysis of the own offer of the providing organisation, or trainers. It is, however, also important to oversee the complete offer of providers together. So far we have seen lots of overlap in the provision. Various offers were more or less the same, and the overall offer at the same time

showed blanks in areas where a need was evident. The EU does no longer publish a course database, but to keep an eye on the overall offer remains relevant. That is why it is important to co-operate with other providers to see to it that together a coherent offer is provided. By avoiding overlap and creating offers that acknowledge various needs, all providers will benefit and many of the provision inefficiencies may be overcome.

## The requirements

An offer of international in-service courses for adult educators needs to meet a number of requirements.

### EU priorities

The courses offered will have a focus on the professional competences adult educators need. This implies that an in-service course should have a direct relation with the professional profile of adult educators as defined in the Key Competences of Adult Educators model (The disk model). Furthermore the offer needs to have a direct link with the priorities set by the European commission. The EC regularly updates its policies and sets out new goals for the funding years to come. These serve as a frame from which to derive the offer.

### Needs of the field

In each work domain and in each region or country also particular needs will exist. The challenge for course providers is to create an offer that matches the specific local or regional needs to the EU wide needs. For instance if the EC wishes to promote inclusive education, in some rural regions that may be transferred in an offer to include more elderly people in adult education while in big cities the inclusion theme may be related to attempts to include more people from various cultural backgrounds in adult education.

### Professionalism

The offer needs to be characterised by a professional

focus and professional approach. In the GINCO network indicators of quality for in-service courses were elaborated and transferred into guidelines. In brief the guidelines refer to the following quality features. International in-service courses for adult educators are competence oriented; they include innovative didactics and adequate use of ICT, self-evaluation and validation of learning outcomes. The courses seek to have an impact in the home organisations of their participants and promote networking and further co-operation among participants and participating organisations.

### Internal and external consistency

The course offer, as indicated above, should be responsive to the needs at various levels. Given those needs the course offer must in its design be based on these needs, the related goals, the desired learning outcomes, the planned learning settings, learning activities, the envisaged content inputs and their sequence, the foreseen assessments and evaluations. All this must be logically and directly related to each other. This relation is referred to as internal consistency. On the other hand, there is the external consistency, meaning that the offer as such must be an answer to the diagnosed problem. So getting back to the above given example, if the lack of inclusion of people in adult education is seen as a problem; the offer and its effect on the adult educators being trained, must be such, that it improves inclusion and brings more people of various backgrounds together in learning situations.

### Underpinning

An offer to raise the level of professional competences must be based on evidence, or if evidence is not yet available on carefully developed theories and models. An offer needs to have empirical and theoretical underpinning. Without such underpinnings, the reflections on internal and external consistency are not possible, and thus the process of considering, reconsidering and further developing the offer will be intuitive rather than systematic.

### **Sense of direction**

The course offer, because of its relation with needs and priorities, shows the target group in short what the priorities are and what kind of offer is supposed to help them meet the future requirements. As such the offer points out a direction in which participants and their institution will need to move. A course offer therefore is more than just the titles of courses to be delivered. It functions as a guide to show to potential participants and organizations what needs to be done to follow the trends, expectations and priorities in adult education in Europe.

### **Balanced composition**

The courses we consider are international (European) in-service courses for adult educators. The international/European aspect needs careful consideration. The offer needs to be guaranteeing that the international aspect has an added value. This may be promoted by carefully considering the international, cultural and language composition of the teams of trainers and of participants. The mixed composition of the trainers team is no longer an official requirement, but it would definitely add to the cross European dimension of an offer to include a mixed group of trainers.

## Chapter 2

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# Management and Organisation

[www.ginconet.eu/content/management-and-organisation](http://www.ginconet.eu/content/management-and-organisation)

A course offer needs to be embedded in a transparent and smooth organisational context. In this section a number of aspects of this organisational context are mentioned and briefly elaborated. This element is also a competence area in the course organiser competence profile.

## Course organiser competence profile

### Management and organisation

**This competence area involves competences to:**

1. manage international administration and paper work
  - To manage grant based finances
2. link with the home organisation and staff
  - To include own staff in the course development
3. administer accommodation and logistics
  - To book accommodation
  - To organise the space and materials for course activities
4. create and manage an international team
  - To contact and book international trainers and speakers
5. plan and schedule the course
  - To link up with and insert the course in international data bases

### Subscription

The process of registration requires clear information to the participants and participating organisations about the aims, goals, content and intended impact of the course. A letter

of invitation is needed. A contact person must be specified. In order to reach a learning agreement, an intake procedure will be required in which the learning outcomes, learning activities and intended impact are discussed, negotiated and agreed upon with the participants and their organisations.

### Accommodation

Good provision of courses needs to be facilitated also at the more basic level of subsistence and accommodation, educational facilities such as equipment, infrastructure, course ware and course aids. These basic elements must be clear and arranged for in advance. Although all this seems to be a bit more remote from the learning process, it still is important to consider the possibilities of establishing these conditions to the optimal benefit of the course goals.

### Staffing

International course teams may best be staffed with trainers from various backgrounds regarding nationality as well as expertise. It is important that the composition of the team is meeting a group profile of the team of trainers. A group of good trainers is not the same as a good team of trainers. This is something to keep in mind when creating a team. In addition to the content and didactic expertise and qualifications also fluency in the working languages is required.

### Management and organisation

The organisation of the course offer will have to be well rooted in sound and transparent procedures of management and finance. The organisation of the offer may best be based on a professional international partnership, with clear division and allocation of tasks and clear responsibilities.

Other aspects of the quality of the management and organisation are very practical. They concern matters as timely availability of study materials; clear programmes,



clear communication about dates, names of staff and of participants, locations, etc.

## Quality and evaluation

Quality and evaluation issues need attention in many ways, be it formative and/or summative. A specific chapter in this manual is devoted to these aspects and a number of quality and evaluation guidelines are included in the GINCO repository on the web.

## Follow-up

The offer provided needs to be specific on issues concerning the completion and the follow-up of the courses offered. Certification, validation, implementation of results, dissemination must be clearly arranged in a sustainable way, meaning in a way that optimises the possibility of actual impact in the participating organisations.

### LEVEL 5 Reference System: Topic/Learning outcome: manage international administration and paper work

	COGNITIVE/KNOWLEDGE		ACTIVITY		AFFECTIVE	
	2	3	2	3	2	3
L	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement
5	Know where else (knowledge for Transfer	Strategic knowledge on how to deal with international administration and paper work in different domains of work.	Developing/ Constructing Transfer	To develop own materials and procedures.	Incorporated	To have an incorporated reflex to apply international administration rules. To find it important that the sector adopts a correct international administration and management work.
4	Know when (Implicit understanding	To know deadlines and how and when to apply the different procedures.	Discovering/ acting independently	To search and choose appropriate procedures and materials.	Self-regulation	To be motivated in positively managing and administering an international course. To feel the need to be active in this respect.
3	Know how	To know how to apply the various procedures and to use the international administration tools in order to facilitate the validation and management of an international course.	Deciding/ selecting	Decide to use procedure and materials according to the course	Empathy/ appreciation	To value the international administration and paper work also in other contexts.
2	Know why (Distant understanding	To know that an efficient management and administration is essential to the success of a international course. To know that to keep record of all data (financing, students, teachers) is a key factor for the management of an international course.	Application, Imitation	Use existing resources, documents and materials (templates, tables etc etc...) Use resources, procedures and documents that have been experienced	Perspective taking	To be interested in management and administration aspects of international courses
1	Know-what	To know what international management means. To know that international administration and grant application is required for international course management.	Perceiving	To recognize the importance of international administration and paper work in international courses. Look for information (EU documents, guidelines, etc...) on international administration and paper work.	Self-oriented	Feeling that is important for your own competence development to use correct procedures and administrative tools.

## Chapter 3

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# Public Relations & Outreach

[www.ginconet.eu/content/public-relations-outreach](http://www.ginconet.eu/content/public-relations-outreach)

A big challenge for providers of European in-service training (IST) courses represents the marketing and promotion of their training offer.

The new Erasmus+ Programme, compared to the former Lifelong Learning Programme, brings with it a host of new challenges concerning the marketing activities of course providers. European staff training courses can be funded through Erasmus+ in the frame of so-called 'mobility projects', in which the 'sending' and 'receiving' organisations cooperate with each other.

Course providers have to know that the system is not 'offer driven' any more but 'needs-driven'. Moreover, there is a shift to an organisational approach to IST. This means it is not the individual anymore who applies for a specific course but the organisation has to create a 'European Development Plan' in which the organisation's needs are described in terms of quality development and internationalisation involving further training of the staff. On this basis an AE organisation can apply for a KA1 mobility training project through its National Agency. Course providers themselves don't need to be identified at the application stage. They also do not need to promote concrete courses, but are rather invited to present their course portfolio, their particular training areas and expertise, in order to attract European clients. Afterwards they can collaborate with potential client organisations and develop tailor-made training courses for the 'mobile staff'.

For the realisation of successful public relations and outreach regarding European in-service training offers the organisers need to possess specific competences which can be summarised in three areas:

## Course organiser competence profile

### Public relations and outreach

**This competence area involves competences to:**

1. network at all levels
  - To promote and advocate the course towards decision makers and curriculum developers
  - To network (potential) course participants
2. raise funds
  - To broaden the target group for the course
  - To find additional financial resources
3. promote and market the course
  - To publish and make publicity for the course
  - To analyse and respond to the needs of the market/target groups
  - To brand and format the course
  - To communicate and reach out to the target group and their beneficiaries

Often the marketing of the course is started by creating an attractive educational offer and is rounded off by classical (and sometimes poor) marketing and communication measures. This way, however, many high-quality offers do not find (enough) customers.

High-quality marketing is a complex and dynamic but controllable process characterized by customer orientation, economical efficiency and sustainability. In accordance with a holistic approach marketing is to be understood as a comprehensive design approach, where the marketing goals form the basis for conceiving specific offers. Of course, marketing goals do not completely channel the

conception of an offer, and there will be obviously some overlap with didactical considerations and objectives. However it can be said that it is rather inappropriate to create an offer and only afterwards “do a little marketing”.

## Setting marketing goals

When bringing course offers onto the market, the provider should have in mind the marketing goals derived from the current market situation and the overall corporate strategy. Examples for general marketing goals of course providers in the context of deriving strategies for the continuous professional development (CPD) of European adult educators could be the extension of the current market situation and the acquisition of new course participants through the internationalisation of existing courses or the stabilisation of the current market situation by the enrichment of existing educational offers through additional offers like advanced courses or course series. Setting goals promotes motivation and can help us to bundle energies and resources. In order to anchor these goals and allow them to be effective it is essential, however, to formulate them more in detail than the two general examples described above. The goals should be “SMART”<sup>1</sup>, which means

- Specific - well defined and clear to everybody involved in the marketing task,
- Measurable – well defined indicators to control the continuous progress and success, to know when the goal has been achieved and how far away completion is,
- Accepted – agreement with all stakeholders what the goals should be,
- Realistic – within the available resources, knowledge and time,
- Time based – linked to a timeframe that creates a

practical sense of urgency, or results in tension between the current reality and the vision of the goal.

## Applying marketing instruments

On the base of their marketing strategy course providers can decide on the measures to be set in order to reach the set goals in an efficient and sustainable way. The aligned deployment of marketing instruments considering the market situation and the product lifecycle in the traditional marketing theory is known as the **marketing mix**. McCarthy<sup>2</sup> proposed in 1960 the “four P’s” classification of marketing instruments which has been used by marketers throughout the world and, of course, can also be applied to the marketing of IST courses for adult educators. The four P’s stand for ‘product’, ‘price’, ‘promotion’ and ‘place’.

### Product

The product or service envisaged by an organisation should be designed in a way that it satisfies the consumer demands. A good product management helps to develop more and better knowledge about the product and the relevant market; in our case the state of the art of IST courses, potential course participants and the organisations they are working for (the actual clients), and competitors on the market of European IST course providers in the AE sector. What are the personal training needs of AE staff, and what are the development strategies of AE organisations? A great place for finding out topics and types of courses that are demanded on the market is inside of online forums. Facebook groups can be valuable for this type of research as well.

On the base of such knowledge course providers can decide upon core themes, areas of specialisation and, in the end, the course portfolio they want to offer on the market. European course providers should think about what makes their offer unique and what benefits it brings to both potential course participants and the organisation they are working for. A comprehensive product design comprises all services:

<sup>1</sup> Doran, G. T. (1981). *There's a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management's goals and objectives*. *Management Review*, Volume 70, Issue 11 (AMA FORUM), pp. 35–36.

<sup>2</sup> Jerome McCarthy: *Basic Marketing: A managerial approach*, 1960

- during the phase prior to the core performance – the course, e.g. reservations, consultations, learning material, learning agreements, taster course etc.
- during the course event itself, e.g. welcoming and farewell, course content, special requirements, transport, accommodation and catering, trainer(s) etc.
- after the course, e.g. management of invoice, feedback, complaints, validation, maintaining contacts, follow-up etc.

Especially for the realisation of the prior- and post-components of the offer the use of digital media becomes a more and more relevant, efficient and resource-saving option.

### Price

All decisions and agreements on the remuneration of the services offered, potential discounts, special terms and conditions of credit and payment are summarised under the term price policy.

Taking into account the costs, the level of price is generally determined by the market with its key components: supplier, demander and competitors. In the case of IST courses offered as Erasmus+ KA1 another price determining fact is the level of the grant, which is 70 Euro per (full) course day, with a maximum of 700 Euro per course. Independently from possible other sources for financing measures of staff development this limits the budget sending organisations face when looking for appropriate course offers.

Also the KA1 grant unit prices for subsistence (depending on the country where the course takes place) and the grant unit prices for travel (depending on distance bands) will in most cases not cover the real costs. Part of these costs will be covered by the co-funding sources of the sending organisations. Course providers will have to offer 'value for money' but will also try to reduce (limit) the level of co-funding a sending organisation will have to provide. This will affect course providers' decisions concerning the country where the course will be organised, the price level

of the hotel, the number of extra educational activities, the number of (international) trainers etc.

The quality of the course and the added value of the international context will have to motivate for the co-funding.

### Place

When it comes to providing European IST courses 'place' can be understood as referring to providing the product at a place which is

- convenient for potential participants to access;
- reasonable in terms of costs;
- attractive by providing a range of social activity options;
- appropriate in terms of learning conditions and on site learning activities.

### Promotion

When the offer is developed it must be presented as to ensure that potential clients are attracted. The challenge is to answer the questions "What to promote?" "To whom?" and "How to promote?"

The core of communication activities in terms of promotion and marketing are key messages, as they open the door to meaningful communications with the addressed audience. A well-crafted message highlights the unique benefits, targets the audience precisely, supports the mission and often includes a call to action.

Which information must be provided that adult education organisations feel animated to book the course for their staff? Information economics helps answering the question how European IST courses can be communicated. It states that each product and each service has three different categories of qualities<sup>3</sup> :

- Search qualities: Features that can be analysed before the purchase, e.g. the price and the general content of the course.

<sup>3</sup> Philip Nelson, "Information and Consumer Behavior", 78 *Journal of Political Economy* 311, 312 (1970).



- Credibility qualities. How much do potential and current clients trust the course provider? The provider promises something, e.g. that after the course the participants are able to solve specific problems or that the qualification through the course opens specific career options to participants. Interested clients strive to gather transparent information that reflects trustworthiness of the provider, like indicators for the provider's reputation, certifications or quality labels, and a reasonable price. On the basis of such information they decide whether the offer is experienced as a high-quality offer.
- Experience qualities: Features that are only assessable after the purchase decision. Examples are the professionalism of the trainers, the attractiveness of the course venue, the social programme offered and the quality of the catering.

In consequence, in addition to the obligatory information, that describes an educational offer (title, duration, location, price, number of participants, requirements for participation ... ), it is recommended to offer additional information like the expertise of the trainers and the provider, cooperation partners, customer opinions, press releases, course certification, possibilities for funding – information that indicate the trustworthiness of the provider.

## How to bring the message?

For the promotion of a course a whole range of classical communication tools like flyers, press articles, information at events, advertisements, newsletter information are available. The international target group of KA1 grant holders however requires good management of public relations and outreach via online-marketing.

First and foremost online marketing means a good web presence that goes beyond a mere description of the

offer or the offer portfolio, provides additional provider information (see information economics above), services like FAQ, download material, taster courses in the form of webinars, integration of job portals, and is present also on social networks (facebook, xing, etc.). Erasmus+ partner search tools are to be generated now, this Facebook partner finding tool (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/EU-PROJECTS-PARTNER-FINDING/110101895709424>) is available already. Another option is to create your organisational e-portfolio in order to present your course activities and offers. The GINCO T&T offers the e-portfolio my VITA (<http://www.ginco.my-vita.eu/>) which has been developed for individuals and organisations that wish to set up their profiles, evidence their competences and skills etc. in a kind of market place setting. The idea is to create a growing network at European level.

To promote and advocate European courses also means networking at all levels. A sustainable competitive advantage can be a good marketing channel strategy. This is not easy to copy because the channel structure depends on relationships and people. A crucial role in promoting and supporting course offer(s) is played by multipliers abroad, including course organiser's own partner organisations and their national and international networks. Through rather informal communication about the course portfolio and offers a provider can stimulate word-of-mouth.

GINCO is unique in being the mouthpiece and advocate of the interests of mobility training course organisers in Europe. Advocacy in the way GINCO understands it is a two-way communication process: The needs and wishes, points of view and criticism of course organisers are permanently identified through surveys, virtual networking and exchange, and through intense communication at the GINCO conferences.

## LEVEL 5 Reference System: competence to promote and market the course

	COGNITIVE/KNOWLEDGE		ACTIVITY		AFFECTIVE	
	2	3	2	3	2	3
L	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement
5	Know where else (knowledge for transfer)	Strategic knowledge on how to communicate with different target groups and on how to transfer marketing tools and instruments to other domains of life and work.	Developing/ Constructing Transfer	To develop your own techniques/ approaches/strategies regarding the promotion and marketing of the course based on the analysed needs of the target groups.	Incorporated	To have an incorporated reflex to apply appropriate marketing approaches and tools. To feel the need to help other people use it
4	Know when (Implicit understanding)	To know which marketing tool or instrument to use for which target group. To know how to analyse and respond to the needs of the various target groups.	Discovering/ acting independently	To search for the appropriate marketing channel and opportunity for your course purpose. To choose the right instrument for the right target group and to act appropriately.	Self-regulation	To feel the need to be pro-active in using appropriate marketing and promotion tools. To value marketing of your course as an integrated part of your work. To find it important to be creative in this respect.
3	Know how	To know how to use appropriate marketing tools in order to reach specific target groups.	Deciding/ selecting	To find and use marketing tools and instruments that are suitable for the purposes of the course.	Empathy/ Appreciation	To find it important that the marketing approach and course promotion fit the purposes of the course and are valued by the (people in the) sector you are working in.
2	Know why (Distant understanding)	To know that each target group requires appropriate marketing tools to be reached efficiently. To know that there is a variety of marketing tools and instruments that can be used in order to reach out for different target groups.	Using, imitating	To occasionally make use of tools and instruments for making publicity in accordance with the needs of specific target groups	Perspective taking	To be interested in using the right communication channel for reaching out to various target groups.
1	Know-what	To know what marketing means. To know that marketing helps you to reach your target groups.	Perceiving	To recognise marketing tools. To perceive marketing strategies.	Self-oriented	To feel that is important to match the marketing approach with the needs of the target groups.

Part Two

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Quality of  
Course Delivery

GINCO

## Chapter 1

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# Educational Planning for Competence Oriented Learning

[www.ginconet.eu/content/educational-development-and-planning](http://www.ginconet.eu/content/educational-development-and-planning)



## Introduction

As part of the Lisbon Strategy the concept of lifelong learning implied a focus on competences - rather than knowledge - as outcomes of the learning process. Also the ET2020 priorities pay a lot of attention to competence development and validation. The European Reference Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (<http://www.ginconet.eu/sites/default/files/European%20reference%20framework.pdf>) provides the eight key competences that "each citizen will need to adapt flexibly to a rapidly changing and highly interconnected world". In the light of these priorities the role of (adult) education changes to stimulating and helping the learner to acquire these competences. Further professional development of the adult educators is crucial in this process; they too have to become lifelong learners.

The great power of KA1 courses is exactly the fact that they not only are in the position to offer innovative content but also can practice innovation while delivering that content. Competence driven KA1 courses, in which adult educators as participants experience this approach are the best way to introduce competence based education and learning. The participating adult educators will learn and experience. They are the ideal disseminators and multipliers for the new content and expertise, the 'mainstreamers' in their organisation and in their country.

What is competence oriented learning and what does it imply for international in-service course development? In this chapter we touch various aspects of these questions and give a broad picture of what competence oriented in-service courses for adult educators may be. The concept of competence is defined and a section is devoted to the key features of competence oriented learning and competence oriented education. Throughout the last decades in-service education as such shows trends we think are crucial to reflect upon and be aware of in planning for future in-service courses. That is why a specific section is devoted to these trends and to how EU policies reflect and promote

these developments. The next section focuses more specifically on the key competences of adult educators that are supposed to be developed by the in-service training course we reflect upon in this manual. Eventually the focus is on what it takes to develop international competence oriented in-service courses for adult educators.

To organise competence oriented learning is a crucial area in the competence profile of course organisers.

## Course organiser competence profile

### Organising competence oriented learning

This competence area involves competences to:

1. define and formulate learning outcomes in terms of competences
  - To describe competences in terms of knowledge, activities and attitudes
2. identify the needs of the learners
  - To help learners articulate their needs/learning styles
  - To assess the needs of the participants
3. translate competences into learning activities
  - To design the course in terms of tasks, roles and actions
  - To relate the course to professional activities
4. create an open learning environment
  - To supply the necessary resources for an open educative setting
  - To create the open social environment for the course



5. monitor learning
  - To support interaction with other participants and trainers
  - To promote reflection on the learning
6. moderate
  - To distribute attention equally among participants
  - To acknowledge input from participants

## The concept of competence

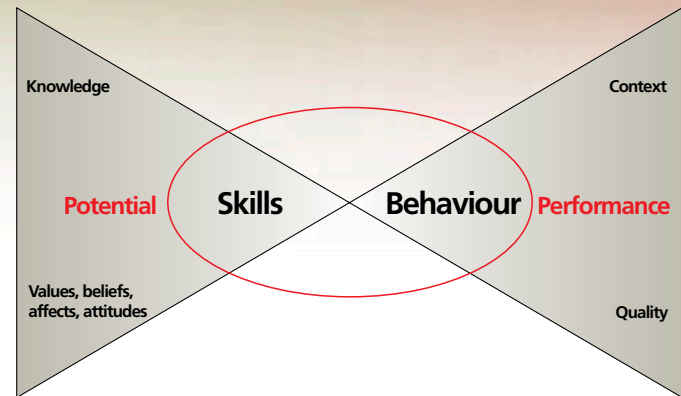
Competences as defined by European bodies, as well as by educational experts throughout and beyond Europe, consist of three interrelated ingredients:

- a. a knowledge component (the understanding part),
- b. a behavioural component (the overt behavioural repertoire) and
- c. a value component (including values, beliefs and attitudes).

Competences consist of a combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours required for the effective performance of a real-world task or activity. A competence is defined as the holistic synthesis of these components. At another level a competence again may be divided in three components or aspects. It is the ability of a person to show:

1. a particular behaviour in
2. a particular context and with
3. a particular quality.

This is the formal way of describing competences. In more down to earth language this implies that what matters is not only what we know about things, but more important is what we are able to do with this knowledge, and whether we are able to go on developing our abilities. Does education make learners knowledgeable, or does it make them competent, that is the question.



*The components of competence*

The ellipse in the middle of the scheme includes the actual behaviour that shows the level of control over a particular competence. The components in the left triangle (composing someone's potential) allow a person to show the intended behaviour in the right triangle. There the learner demonstrates his/her acquired competence (performance).

## Competence oriented education and learning

Competence based learning and competence based education do not consist of traditional teaching situations. They are based on the idea that the learners learn by experience and discovery. This concept has an impact on how learners may be educated. The idea is that learners need to be actively involved in the learning situation. They learn best in meaningful contexts and in co-operation and interaction with others and with their environment. Thus they enable themselves to acquire knowledge, construe knowledge and check and cross check their newly constructed ideas with those of others. Of course this implies no denial of the importance of teaching; it emphasises the necessity of teaching in a highly responsive and learner centred way without neglecting the obligation of showing learners new horizons and perspectives and enthusiasm for things they may never yet have heard of.

## Key features of competence based education and learning

Competence based learning requires an approach to education that differs from the traditional approaches to teaching. In competence based education one tends to stress the importance of powerful, or rich learning environments, that enable the learners to engage in meaningful learning processes. The most distinctive features of this approach may be summarised as follows:

### Meaningful contexts

For learning to take place it is recommended to create or to look for meaningful contexts in which learners will experience in a realistic setting the relevance and the meaning of the competences to be acquired.

### Multidisciplinary approach

Competences are holistic and as a consequence the educative approach needs to be integrative and holistic as well.

### Constructive learning

The philosophy of competence based education has its roots in the social constructivism that pervaded our views on learning these days. Learning is conceived as a process of constructing one's own knowledge in interaction with one's environment, rather than as a process of absorbing the knowledge others transfer to you. The consequence of this view is that educative processes may better be constructive. By focusing on the construction of models, products, guidelines, rules of thumb, reports, or other outputs the learning easily and naturally will turn out to be constructivist. This as opposed to learning processes that focus on information processing first, after which the actual application of knowledge will have to be awaited.

### Cooperative, interactive learning (with peers and trainers/facilitators)

The basic idea behind competence based education is to help learners to develop and construct their own knowledge

and seek ways to make optimal use of other people's competence in their learning itinerary. Co-operation and interaction are both domains of learning as well as vehicles of learning in other domains. If learning is supposed to be self-initiated, self-regulated, and aimed at developing personal competences, the educative approach must allow for diversity in needs and, related to that, in goals and objectives. This requires an open learning environment in which education includes dialogues between learners and educators about expectations, needs, goals, choices etc.

### Discovery learning

Open learning processes require learning that may be characterised as active discovery as opposed to receptive learning. This does not imply that learning content should not be made available and accessible. It means that the way of acquiring this knowledge or these competences, could not be just a process of providing information, but may always better be embedded in a discovery based approach.

### Reflective learning

Competence based learning requires apart from a focus on competences, also an emphasis on the learning processes as such. By reflecting on one's own needs, motivation, approach, progress, results etc. one develops learning competences/strategies that may be considered meta-competences. The competence meant here usually is referred to as the process of "learning to learn".

### Personal learning

In the competence oriented theories learning is conceived as a process of constructing one's own personal knowledge and competences. Information, knowledge, strategies, only become meaningful for a person if they become an integral part of one's own personal body of knowledge and competences. In education this implies that students need to be able to identify with the contexts, the persons, the situations and interests that are included in the learning domains involved.

## Trends in in-service education of adult learning professionals

### From in-service courses towards lifelong in-service learning

Our views on learning have changed profoundly over the last decades, this applies to the learning processes of adult learners in general but also to the professional learning processes of adult educators themselves. Along the same lines of the changed views on learning we see the role of in-service education show shifting paradigms. The roles of in-service educators evolved accordingly.

### In-service training courses

Traditionally the professional development of teachers was organised as in-service courses for teachers aimed at updating their knowledge and skills in subject matter and occasionally in teaching methods. The focus was on being trained rather than on professional learning. In the seventies the emphasis on professional learning shifted from skills training towards approaches more focused on teacher thinking and teacher planning processes.

### School based in-service education

After a long tradition of training focused on individual teachers, offered by universities and colleges, the concept of school based in-service was explored. Learning was not only a matter of being trained, it was a matter of committing oneself both as an individual and as a team. Schools began to take more responsibility for their development as an organisation and in-service education became more demand driven. Learning in in-service education had to be more tailored to specific work situations. This new approach of school based in-service required new competences of in-service educators. School based educators had to fulfil several roles: as catalyst, problem solver, process helper and resources linker.

### From in-service education to in-service learning

School based in-service education was the dominant approach for some years, until an awareness of the necessity to learn at the workplace, using internal resources, arose. After all, transfer

of what was learned to daily practice remained insufficient. With induction programmes for beginning teachers at the workplace, mentoring and coaching, teacher portfolio's, etc., the focus was on learning as a part of integrated personnel management. In-service educators re-defined their positions and assumed the role of facilitators of learning. Gradually the emphasis shifted to more co-operative forms of in-service learning. Professional learning communities, communities of practice, study circles, networks and partnerships became terms frequently used.

### Contextual learning in management and teaching

Whereas in-service learning can still be considered as an activity that alternates with working – one learns and then one applies – the current idea is that change and innovation are not interruptions of stable periods in which practice doesn't change too much. On the contrary, change and innovation are the 'normal' situation. Our present views include the idea that educative organisations, and maybe the educational profession, as well as society as a whole, provide educators and managers with an environment that continually triggers learning, that helps them to produce and create knowledge and stimulates them to upgrade the profession and their own competences repertoire within it. The challenge is to optimise this environment as a learning environment for all parties involved. We live in a learning landscape in which we upload and download knowledge, in which we produce and share knowledge, in which we cross borders and barriers and in which we include many media and modes of learning. The necessity of learning increases; the complexity of learning increases; the modes of learning become more varied and at the same time we see that professional learning increasingly becomes part of the work.

### Learning beyond organisations

Learning so far was treated as something that happens within organisations. The reality is that much learning occurs in some way between organisations or between persons in a variety of contexts and interconnections. Educators work in their own organisations. At the same time however they take part in professional networks of various kinds. A few examples of

networks, that may extend beyond one's own organisation are:

- Communities of practice
- Alumni networks
- Associations, networks,
- Partnerships
- International links
- E-learning environments
- Data bases
- Personal networks of peers, professional- and other friends, family
- Web logs, Skype, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.

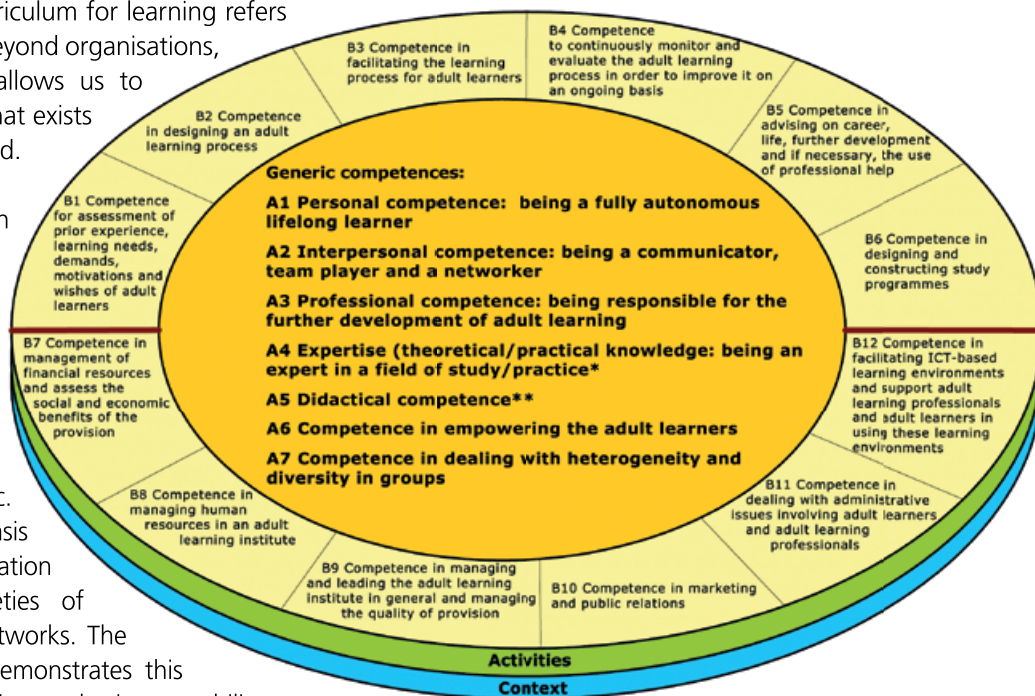
At all levels and in different circles people get input that adds to their experience and competence. The organisation curriculum sketched above would be too narrow a concept, if it would make us neglect these processes that often occur beyond the direct sphere of influence of one's own school, or other type of organisation. A curriculum for learning refers to a wider landscape that exists beyond organisations, that is partly virtual and that allows us to create and produce knowledge that exists beyond the individual human mind.

The policies of the European Commission reflect the trends as described above. In the past adult education projects under Grundtvig were supposed to produce an in-service course for adult educators. This approach was enriched with other options, such as mobility actions, networks etc. Also we saw an increased emphasis on the process of dissemination and valorisation including varieties of communications channels and networks. The present policy under Erasmus+ demonstrates this ongoing trends with on one side its emphasis on mobility, job shadowing, co-operation and on the other side the more integral and collaborative requirements of embeddedness

in organisation's European development plans. Co-creation, connectedness and connectivity are included in this policy, both at organisational levels and beyond organisations.

## Towards competence development of KA1 course organisers

With the definition of competence in mind, and aware of the trends in in-service education of adult educators and building upon the result of the EU studies ALPINE and a study on Key competences of adult educators, we made an inventory of the competences a KA1 mobility training course organiser would need to have. The inventory goes with a validation reference system and includes the knowledge, the attitudes and the skills required and the actions that the international course organiser will have to show in a variety of contexts and with a particular quality.



Key competences for adult learning professionals, ( study financed by European Commission, DG EAC) B.J. Buiskool, S.D. Broek, J.A. van Lakerveld, G.K. Zarifis, M. Osborne, 2010

This Key competence profile served as the basis. The focus is on the competences of organising an international in-service course, without excluding the trainers' part of it. We included knowledge, skills and attitudinal elements as derived from a literature search on the relevant background of course organisers and trainers. The eventual actual competences are assumed to be a synthesis of these components. Competence implies that one is able to demonstrate the acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes in behaviour in a relevant and authentic context at a defined level of quality.

Competences as defined in such an exhaustive and analytical way (including all angles of the two triangles) include a richness of details. This is an advantage (the richness) and a disadvantage (the number of details). That is why after this exercise of unravelling the competences, we made an attempt to reduce the number of details again into a smaller set of core competence domains.

The more condensed set of core competence areas consists of:

- a. Educational development and planning of competence oriented learning.
- b. Quality care and evaluation
- c. Validation of the acquired competences
- d. Public relations and outreach
- e. Attention to the EU dimension
- f. Appropriate use of ICT
- g. Social and professional support
- h. Management and organisation

Each of the core competences has been operationalised in view of the elements included in the two triangles in order to establish a clear profile of an international adult educators in-service course organiser/trainer to serve the purpose of directing training programmes for these organiser/trainers, as well as for assessing their competences and for their validation.

## Competence oriented educational planning

Competence oriented planning includes the following steps. Keep in mind that wherever the word learners is used here, we mean the participants in an in-service course, who are trained to become a more competent adult educator!

- Learning outcomes are defined and formulated as competences. This implies that from each learning outcome the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be acquired are specified. In addition to that the behaviour that the learner eventually has to demonstrate, needs to be described as well as the context or setting in which this has to be done and at what level of quality. The thus described competences may be too detailed, so they may need to be condensed into a smaller number of competence areas (just like we did in this chapter). Especially the description of the context and/or setting requires attention. It is not enough to state that an educator needs to be able to moderate learning sessions; it is necessary to add in what kind of groups, the approximate numbers of participants, the kind of room, etc. Learning outcomes have to be defined and agreed upon.
- Develop a realistic setting. Other than in traditional teaching, the competence oriented educator starts by identifying the setting in which the learning may be organised in such a way that it is perceived as a realistic educative setting that is highly similar to the future work situation in which the competence will be applied.
- Select or design learning activities. These activities are selected in such a way that the learners are invited, or challenged to act in the realistic situation in which they were brought.
- Prepare an introduction, so the learners know what they are expected to do, and why. It is meant to prepare the learners for the actions they are supposed to take, it is not meant to present theory yet.
- Select relevant content. Relevant content is gathered and has to be made available in written or other forms. This may be in materials, in computers, or in experts (including yourself) having an input in the course. Competence oriented learning takes the application situation as a



starting point and as a trigger for acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and skills. It is a matter of acting to learn, rather than of learning to act.

- Kinds of feedback to be given to the learners have to be prepared. This feedback may concern, the performance, the level of performance, the progress made, the impact on others, etc.
- Develop similar realistic settings that may serve as assessment settings. Identify quality criteria for assessment in relation to the original determined learning outcomes.
- Develop assessment tools to evaluate whether the related knowledge, skills and attitudes have been acquired.
- Plan for evaluation and reflection in order to analyse the learning process, its outcomes and the spin off results such as increased learning competence, communication competences, ICT skills, etc.
- Establish a learning agreement. Once the whole process is planned the essentials of it will be described in an agreement form in which the activities, the content, the duration and the outcomes of the course are explained. This learning agreement also includes the obligations of the partners, being the organisation that sends the participant, the participant him/herself and the organisation that provides the course.

### LEVEL 5 Reference System: Topic/Learning outcome: Competence to define and formulate learning outcomes in terms of competences

	COGNITIVE/KNOWLEDGE		ACTIVITY		AFFECTIVE	
	2	3	2	3	2	3
L	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement
5	Know where else (Knowledge for Transfer)	To know how to help colleagues describe learning outcomes in terms of competences. Strategic knowledge on competences.	Developing/ Constructing Transfer	To build knowledge and expertise, to construct related theory and practice.	Incorporated	To feel an incorporated reflex to formulate learning outcomes in terms of competences. To find it important that the sector adopts competence descriptions as descriptors of learning outcomes. To feel the need to help other people doing so.
4	Know when (Implicit understanding)	To know related theory. To know how to describe a learning outcome in terms of knowledge, attitude and activity dimensions.	Discovering/ acting independently	To search for related theory. To create appropriate competence descriptions related to the learning outcomes of your courses.	Self-regulation	To feel the need to be proactive in this respect. To value your curiosity for competences and their value in society. To find it important to be creative in this respect.
3	Know how	To know how to relate learning outcomes to existing competence descriptions.	Deciding/ selecting	To systematically use existing competence descriptions for the learning outcomes in your courses. To try out appropriate descriptions.	Empathy/ appreciation	To value competence descriptions as appropriate descriptors of learning outcomes in your sector.
2	Know why (Distant understanding)	To know that competence descriptions offer a more complete holistic view on a person's capacity to act. To know that in present society a competence is a relevant concept in a person's portfolio.	Application, Imitation	To occasionally use existing competence descriptions for the learning outcomes in your courses.	Perspective taking	To be interested in competences and competence descriptions for your own courses and course participants
1	Know-what	To know what a competence is. To know that individual learning outcomes can be described in terms of competences.	Perceiving	To pay attention to information on learning outcomes and competence descriptions.	Self-oriented	To feel that competence descriptions can be useful for you.

In the process of educational planning for competence oriented learning the clear description of the learning outcomes in terms of contextualised competences, and a clearly described mutually agreed upon learning agreement are crucial elements. They also play an important role in the process of validation as presented later in this manual. Therefore the GINCO T&T team organised their 'course for course organisers' in a competence driven way.

### LEVEL 5 Reference System: Topic/Learning outcome: Competence to create an open learning environment for adult training

	COGNITIVE/KNOWLEDGE		ACTIVITY		AFFECTIVE	
	2	3	2	3	2	3
L	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement
5	Know where else (knowledge for transfer)	To have the theoretical background to build appropriate open learning training conditions and help other people to do so as well.	Developing/ Constructing Transfer	To build knowledge and expertise, to construct related theory and practice. To help other trainers apply the right conditions. To develop and create new and independent learning environments.	Incorporated	To have an incorporated reflex to arrange your training in an open learning environment. To find it important that a competence oriented training offer is based on open learning formats. To feel the need to help other trainers applying it.
4	Know when (Implicit understanding)	To know when and how to create the appropriate open learning conditions to achieve the competences envisaged.	Discovering/ acting independently	To create appropriate open learning opportunities with learning conditions related to the competence development as envisaged. To add new instruments to the given learning environment.	Self-regulation	To feel the need to explore the theory and practice of open learning environments. To find it important to be creative in this respect.
3	Know how	To theoretically know how to create open learning training conditions offering e.g. multiple perspectives and concrete individual experiences involving authentic problems ...	Deciding/ selecting	To systematically use existing open learning training formats for your courses or training offer. To select and try out appropriate formats.	appreciation	To value open learning environments as the ideal (an appropriate format for learners to develop competences.
2	Know why (Distant understanding)	To know that offering an open learning training involving e.g. multiple perspectives and concrete individual experiences, involving authentic problems ... leads to competence development. To know that open learning environments are a condition to help individuals develop all dimensions of a competence.	Application, Imitation	To occasionally adopt and adapt existing open learning formats for your own training offer.	Perspective taking	To be interested in using open learning training formats for your own courses
1	Know-what	To know what an open learning environment is.	Perceiving	To recognise open learning environments and perceive their usefulness for competence development (without taking other actions)	Self-oriented	To feel that open learning environments challenge your own competence development. Not yet relating open learning environments to the own professional situation.

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## Chapter 2

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# Quality Care and Evaluation

[www.ginconet.eu/content/quality-care-and-evaluation](http://www.ginconet.eu/content/quality-care-and-evaluation)

## Introduction

Quality and its related terms like quality care or quality management are omnipresent in today's world. Quality and quality care are undoubtedly of great importance for every sector and so it is for education. But what do we really mean by quality? Is there a common understanding of quality? And how is evaluation related to quality? What does that mean for you as a course organiser in combination with the new Erasmus+ programme? What are the ideas of the GINCO consortium concerning quality? What support can GINCO offer? How can you, as a course organiser, deal with the fact that there is no official external evaluation or quality control of courses before they take place, nor during the course?

Quite a lot of questions that we are trying to answer in this chapter.

First of all, we think that it is worth having a closer look at the term itself and outline our understanding of quality before going into detail and focusing on quality care, evaluation and their relation in the Erasmus+ Programme.

The word Quality has a Latin origin *qualitas* and describes the nature, the character, the condition of something. This means that there is no general understanding of quality and therefore, criteria have to be defined beforehand regarding:

- the context,
- the requirements of the target group(s),
- the goals of the measurements, etc.

in order to be able to judge the quality of something.

So what are the difficulties we are confronted with when talking about quality in our area? On the one hand, adult education is an extremely diverse field concerning institutions, target groups, offers, etc., even more in an international, European context. On the other hand, up to

now quality has more or less been focusing on the offer and not on the needs of the learners, on management and not on pedagogical aspects or individual successful learning processes.

In fact, evidence of quality becomes more important than ever, especially already in the phase before the course, as adult education institutions develop their European development plans and potential participants are looking for courses that meet their needs. But how do they know about the quality of the course you are offering? What can you do as a course organiser to prove that you have high quality to offer?

The care for quality requires special competences and are taken on board in the competence profile for course organisers.

## Course organiser competence profile

### Quality care and evaluation

**This competence area involves competences to:**

1. design the evaluation process
  - To define the goals for the evaluation of the course
  - To create a time schedule for the evaluation
2. manage the evaluation process
  - To create the right atmosphere and conditions for evaluation
3. define the right indicators and gather the right information
  - To describe performances linked to quality levels
  - To create instruments for collecting information



4. analyse and interpret the data
  - To process the collected data
  - To discuss the results, interpret the data

5. act according to the outcomes of the evaluation
  - To report correctly to all people involved
  - To create the right conditions for change

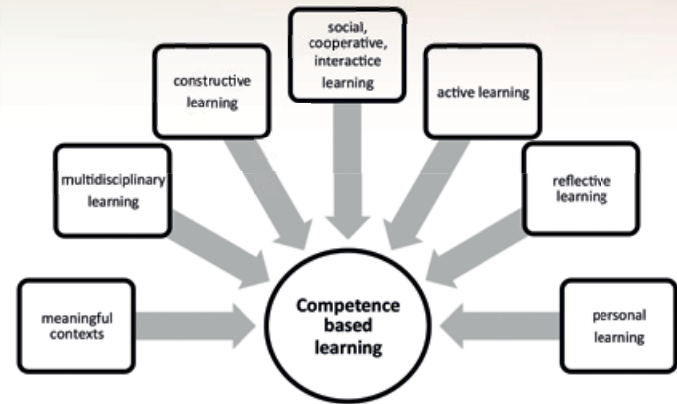
## GINCO and its understanding of quality

The starting point for a common understanding of quality among the GINCO consortium members was an exploration of the characteristics, features and/or requirements that make courses taking place in the framework of Erasmus+ KA1 (Grundtvig courses before) successful. Various aspects and quality issues have been collected and systematised and led to a tool that is meant to help you as a course organiser in evaluating your courses concerning quality and also in developing your quality care and assurance.

One of the big issues here is that everybody starts from an understanding of quality and in most cases this is highly individual and rarely shared with anybody else. Most people think “quality” in educational processes is self-evident, and they do not have to share their understanding as they suppose everybody has the same understanding anyway. But how can you achieve a common understanding of quality? – One way is to make implicit understandings explicit by developing a “quality” standard yourself (developing a goal, a norm for your quality together in a team) or refer to existing quality standards and indicators. Quality does not just “happen”, we can improve it by raising awareness of different necessities and needs and planning for phases of reflection, feedback and dialogue with external partners.

As already mentioned GINCO refers in its definition of quality to the theories of competence based learning which requires other than traditional approaches to teaching. The

core characteristics of competence based learning from our perspective are summarised in the following graph:



Other elements contributing to the quality of the course provision and delivery are:

- mechanisms for quality care and self-evaluation are in place
- appropriate ICT use is applied in all phases
- mechanisms for validation of learning outcomes are in place
- attention is paid to personal and social competence development
- the European dimension is taken into account
- courses are linked to ET2020 priorities

## GINCO Quality grid

Within the GINCO consortium a quality grid of European courses was developed as a combination of two different dimensions

- a sequential dimension based on four phases
- an action-based dimension based on twelve domains of action

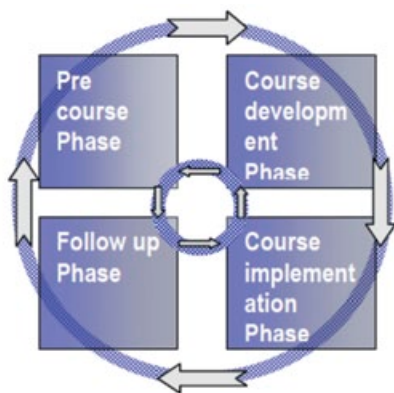
This approach led to a comprehensive framework for

course quality, which is meant to serve as a source, not as a prescription, for you as course organisers as well as for policy makers, educators and trainers, etc.

In our course quality tool we suggest to consider course organisation as a four phase process. Although this model follows a logical sequence as a planning cycle, it is not meant as a strictly chronological one, since in reality there will be many loops and iterations.

There is

- a pre-course phase in which the course is conceived,
- a course-development phase, in which the course is turned into a reality by planning,
- a course-implementation or delivery phase which is the actual course taking place and
- a follow-up phase which makes sure people are supported in their learning by the newly developed course community.



By splitting course development into these four phases and providing quality criteria we want to suggest that in all phases quality issues can and will be dealt with.

Furthermore, twelve domains of action have been identified and represent the second part of the quality grid. These domains refer to series of activities and steps we think professional course organisers have to go through in order to prepare, develop and deliver consistent courses of high quality.

The GINCO quality grid of course quality consists of both approaches and arranges them in a pivot table. The grid is available in a printable version as well as in an online hypertext tool and you are guided through all of these stages in an interactive way.

	(PC) Pre-Course	(CD) Course Development	(CI) Course Implementation	(FU) Post-course Follow Up
1. Basic conditions and strategic planning	PC Quality issues 1	CD Quality issues 1	CI Quality issues 1	FU Quality issues 1
2. Outreach and marketing	PC Quality issues 2	CD Quality issues 2	CI Quality issues 2	FU Quality issues 2
3. Needs assessment	PC Quality issues 3	CD Quality issues 3	CI Quality issues 3	FU Quality issues 3
4. Goal setting	PC Quality issues 4	CD Quality issues 4	CI Quality issues 4	FU Quality issues 4
5. Designing the course	PC Quality issues 5	CD Quality issues 5	CI Quality issues 5	FU Quality issues 5
6. Constructing the learning environment and materials/aids	PC Quality issues 6	CD Quality issues 6	CI Quality issues 6	FU Quality issues 6
7. Managerial organisational activities	PC Quality issues 7	CD Quality issues 7	CI Quality issues 7	FU Quality issues 7
8. Teaching, training, educating	PC Quality issues 8	CD Quality issues 8	CI Quality issues 8	FU Quality issues 8
9. Social facilitating	PC Quality issues 9	CD Quality issues 9	CI Quality issues 9	FU Quality issues 9
10. Assessment, monitoring and evaluation	PC Quality issues 10	CD Quality issues 10	CI Quality issues 10	FU Quality issues 10
11. Networking, sustainability	PC Quality issues 11	CD Quality issues 11	CI Quality issues 11	FU Quality issues 11
12. Policy feedback	PC Quality issues 12	CD Quality issues 12	CI Quality issues 12	FU Quality issues 12

[http://www.ginconet.eu/sites/default/files/GINCO\\_Grundtvig\\_Course\\_Quality\\_tool\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ginconet.eu/sites/default/files/GINCO_Grundtvig_Course_Quality_tool_EN.pdf)

The arising quality issues are discussed by statements that clarify the relevance of the feature and propose actions in order to promote this aspect of quality.

- the issue/goal of the evaluation (why/what for?)
- the information/evidence needed (what about?)
- people involved (with whom?)
- the methods/instruments (how?)

GINCO highly recommends self-evaluation as the method to prove your quality and shares the concept of SEALLL. In our understanding learning is connected to change. So this is not only about getting feedback, but getting involved in constructive dialogues with all your stakeholders. We do believe in evaluation activities that are worthwhile for everybody while at the same time producing valuable information for further work.



**SELF EVALUATION IN ADULT LIFE LONG LEARNING**

A culture combining self-evaluation and quality care with ownership of processes and outcomes is vital for an evaluation process which has a real chance to make an impact and lead to change. Therefore, it is advisable to adopt a bottom-up approach and guidance of the 'initiators' in the process of conducting their own evaluation for making quality visible. Self-evaluation is seen as a valid form of quality assurance and quality development of the course. Of course, that does not exclude the participation of an external evaluator, as very often an external view will help to gain a new perspective and contribute to change.

This implies that we are in favour of ongoing evaluation as a process accompanying the learning process – in the jargon of evaluation this is called "formative" evaluation.

## 9. Post-course follow up

	Post-course follow up
Basic conditions and strategic planning	1. Funding
	2. Certification
	3. Overview (career) paths
Outreach and marketing	4. Post course information and news
	5. New inviting initiatives
	6. Searching for external links, new audiences
Needs assessment	7. Needs surveys
Goal setting	8. Revision/optimization
Designing the course	(Revision/optimisation)
Constructing the learning environment and materials/aids	9. E-environment
Managerial organisational activities	10. Sending reminders
	11. Regular contact
Teaching, training, educating	12. Managing post course feedback
Social facilitating	13. Moderator role
Assessment, monitoring and evaluation	14. Monitoring post course activities
	(Certification)
Networking / sustain / valorisation / embedded	(Post course information and news)
	15. Perspective(s), incentives
	16. Common e-environment
	(Moderator role)
	(New inviting initiatives)
Policy feedback	(Searching for external links, new audiences)
	17. Course report part 2 (including evaluation 3)

The Grundtvig course may have come to an end, but not so the learning itinerary the learners have become involved in. After the face to face meeting during the course efforts will have to be invested in keeping the learning experience alive; in promoting realisation of the action plans made; in stimulating further dissemination and in new initiatives as a spin off of the course.

## Evaluation of European Erasmus+ courses

After having chosen the evaluation field – by using the GINCO quality grid – an appropriate evaluation concept has to be developed. One possibility to achieve that is by following the steps of the SEALLL process (Self-evaluation in Adult Life Long Learning) by defining four aspects.

By doing so, you can still feed in what you have learned from your evaluation activities into your course or project. In order to assure high quality training courses it is helpful to turn to a systematic consideration of quality requirements to produce reliable data that can be fed back into the process. Furthermore, we need to monitor processes and assure that feedback loops are carried out and shared with everybody as soon as possible so that they enable the development and learning that is needed.

As mentioned above, there are no formal requirements for evaluation within the Erasmus+ framework. In practice, course providers throughout Europe discuss under the term Evaluation both an assessment of the quality of the course and an assessment of participants' competences. GINCO differentiates these aspects and elaborates the second within the separated competence area Validation of Learning Outcomes. Be aware that you will be asked to negotiate learning outcomes with sending organisations in a learning agreement and that under Erasmus+ you have to produce validation for these competences.

Providers of a European IST course within the Erasmus+ framework should carefully devise their evaluation strategy in accordance with the special requirements of transnational adult education courses. In the frame of quality assurance and evaluation, course organisers should look systematically at all related activities concerning the preparation, development and delivery of a European IST course.

Let's look at the concept of evaluation more closely. It is often negatively loaded with connotations such as inspection, control, repercussions... We want you, as a European IST course organiser, to see the potential of evaluation processes in terms of individual and organisational learning and the improvement of the international course organisation. Evaluation and self-evaluation in particular means "an assessment of a situation according to previously formulated standards".

The understanding of the purpose of the evaluation plays an important role. Do people perceive it as control or accountability or as development or an opportunity for professional learning? Each of these aspects has an underlying "climate" attached to it. If you want to connect it to learning, development and professionalisation you should make that explicit and contribute to a climate which makes this possible. Such an evaluation should be carried out in an open, participative and democratic atmosphere by setting up a climate of dialogue among course organisers and the different stakeholders, such as participants and their institutions, trainers and national agencies from the very beginning – even starting in the pre-course phase.

As self-evaluation (SE) is self-initiated, and focuses on learning by systematically collecting data on an individual, collective and organisational basis it allows for evidence-based decisions to be made. So we can say that SE empowers, professionalises, creates new knowledge, supports democracy and makes things transparent. It is meant to support processes and progress of the course and is an inevitable part of quality care.

Sometimes people have restrictions as they think that evaluation that is carried out by people affected themselves cannot be "objective". We hold against that we are collecting perspectives from different stakeholders in order to learn. Learning can be regarded as highly subjective, too. As long as it is guaranteed that the data are collected systematically and carefully analysed with the goal to improve quality and to implement change there is little harm done and we achieve a state of "inter-subjectivity" – a shared view on aspects of quality. We even go one step further and recommend evaluation activities with the focus on learning that are considered worthwhile and interesting by people taking part in them.

In the following we have summarised some helpful material for organising and implementing self-evaluation and quality care.

Evaluation of Grundtvig courses				
	1. Learners	2. Trainers	3. Developers	4. Managers
<b>A. Pre course</b>	<u>Assessment of prior learning and experience</u> <u>Inventory of expectations</u> <u>A first impression of the course information</u>	<u>Assessment of professional profile</u> <u>Inventory of expectations</u> <u>Evaluation of contract conditions</u>	<u>Assessment of professional profile</u> <u>Inventory of expectations</u> <u>Evaluation of contract conditions</u>	<u>Evaluation of the state of play in the target group</u> <u>Market analysis</u> <u>Evaluation of societal support</u> <u>Evaluation of recruitment and selection</u> <u>Evaluation of management support</u> <u>Evaluation of outreach</u>
<b>B. Development phase</b>	<u>Piloting some parts of the course</u> <u>General needs assessment</u>	<u>Critical review of draft course design</u> <u>Critical review of course materials</u> <u>Evaluation of trainers' instructions/guidelines</u>	<u>Task analysis</u> <u>Monitoring progress</u> <u>Piloting products</u> <u>Peer review</u> <u>External critical friends</u> <u>Evaluating the co-operation</u>	<u>Monitoring progress</u> <u>Panel evaluation of draft design</u> <u>Comparative evaluation with other offers</u> <u>Financial monitoring</u> <u>Analyzing commercial potential</u>
<b>C. Course implementation</b>	<u>Specific needs assessment</u> <u>Inventory of expectations</u> <u>Monitoring the learning activities</u> <u>Analyzing learners' assignments</u> <u>Assessing learning outcomes</u> <u>Evaluating the group processes</u> <u>Evaluation of learners' satisfaction</u>	<u>Evaluation of preparedness</u> <u>Evaluation of feasibility</u> <u>Evaluating the training process</u> <u>Evaluating the co-operation</u> <u>Evaluation of satisfaction</u>	<u>Programme evaluation</u> <u>Evaluating the course materials and tools</u> <u>Evaluating the e-learning environment</u> <u>Evaluating the evaluation</u>	<u>Monitoring the implementation</u> <u>Time registration</u> <u>Meta evaluation</u> <u>Quality assessment (TQM)</u>
<b>D. Follow up phase</b>	<u>Evaluation of follow up actions</u> <u>Evaluation of network activities</u> <u>Evaluation of dissemination and transfer</u> <u>Evaluation of arising new initiatives</u>	<u>Monitoring network activities</u> <u>E-survey</u>	<u>Evaluation of follow up procedures/tools</u> <u>Evaluation of the e-learning environment</u>	<u>Evaluation of staff involvement in follow up</u> <u>Analysis uploads as basis for further initiatives</u>

[http://www.ginconet.eu/sites/default/files/GINCO\\_evaluation\\_tool\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ginconet.eu/sites/default/files/GINCO_evaluation_tool_EN.pdf)

In this context GINCO T&T has also developed a web based hypertext tool that gives suggestions how to set up evaluation activities on the one hand suitable for the four different phases – pre-course, development, course-implementation and follow-up phase – and on the other hand for four different stakeholders, learners, trainers, course developers and managers.

As mentioned above we suggest evaluation activities that focus on learning about a certain situation, make different views and assessment visible, so that people can compare and learn in a social-constructive way.

Questionnaires are often seen as a one way road as results are rarely shared and the learning is not made visible to people filling them in. Lots of different evaluation methods and tools are available.

On the GINCO website we have collected links to a big variety of tools that are accessible online, giving also an outline of major European projects and networks dealing with evaluation.

#### **Categorisation of self-evaluation instruments:**

Self-evaluation activities may be either individual or collective, or a combination of both. They may be responsive (the respondent responds to what is asked), or



productive (the people involved produce their own views, comments or explanations of what has happened and how they value it). Please place the self-evaluation instruments you have chosen on in these four categories:

<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interview</li> <li>Questionnaire</li> <li>Self-evaluation profile</li> <li>SWOT analysis</li> <li>Observation and recording</li> <li>Analysis of documents</li> <li>Learning questions related to personal development plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emoticons: color your mind</li> <li>Telling a story</li> <li>Mental map</li> <li>Flow-charting</li> <li>Presentation</li> <li>Letter addressed to yourself</li> <li>Writing an article</li> <li>Creating a website</li> <li>Reflective silence STAR</li> <li>Serving as a consultant in other similar projects</li> </ul>
<p><b>Responsive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group interview</li> <li>Choosing positions on a line</li> <li>Delphi rounds</li> <li>Sparring partner / critical friend</li> <li>360° feedback</li> <li>Thermometer with immediate feedback</li> <li>Four corner exercise</li> </ul>	<p><b>Productive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Atmosphere cards (card based reflection)</li> <li>Play</li> <li>A group painting</li> <li>Presentation</li> <li>Working with scenarios</li> <li>Critical incidents method</li> <li>Debate</li> <li>Prioritizing with tokens</li> <li>Bulls eye</li> <li>Sculptures</li> <li>Body sculptures</li> <li>Using objects as symbols</li> <li>Systemic Representation</li> </ul> <p><b>Collective</b></p>

## Conclusion

Undoubtedly, evaluation is of great importance for quality care and professional development but evaluation can only be effective if results are derived and consequences drawn. GINCO offers appropriate tools that are able to support you as course organisers to develop and assure the quality of your courses by developing at the same time your evaluation competences.

But one thing that is related to your responsibility only is inevitable: Any minute you have dedicated to evaluation work is spent in vain if it is left without any consequences – the learning part should always be in the focus. According to an Austrian educational expert evaluation results should not be considered as simple data but as concrete agreements for consequences and measures/ actions (Schmid-Waldmann, 2011).

In our philosophy evaluation helps to get a clearer view on your own work – organising evaluation as a learning process, using a multi-perspective approach as suggested in the SEALLL concept and attaching great importance to the views of all persons involved in order to gain a broad picture of as many dimensions as possible. It helps to empower people who work in the field of education and to activate their potential for growth. As already said by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: "For a clear view, it's often enough to change your viewing direction."

## LEVEL 5 Reference System: Topic/Learning outcome: Design the Evaluation Process

	COGNITIVE/KNOWLEDGE		ACTIVITY		AFFECTIVE	
	2	3	2	3	2	3
L	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement
5	Know where else (knowledge for transfer)	Strategic knowledge on how to transfer evaluation processes to other domains of work.	Developing/ Constructing Transfer	To develop your own evaluation activities that lead to accountability, learning and consequences (development) for yourself/ for your work/ in your course/ in your institution.	Incorporated	To have an incorporated drive to design evaluation processes in an appropriate way. To find it important that correct evaluation design is recognised as a basic issue of quality care. To feel the need to apply evaluation in other domains of life.
4	Know when (Implicit understanding)	To know at what time the group is ready for evaluation (create a climate of trust) To know when and how to create the appropriate evaluation activities.	Discovering/ acting independently	To search for related theory. To search for and choose appropriate evaluation activities for your own purposes.	Self-regulation	To feel the need to be proactive in appropriate design of evaluation processes. To value evaluation as an integrated part of your work. To find it important to be creative in this respect.
3	Know how	To know how to create evaluation processes that allow learning (define goals, success indicators, time-schedule, actors, tools...) and/or accountability.	Deciding/ selecting	To select and apply appropriate evaluation techniques.	Empathy/ Appreciation	To value evaluation in general. To find it important that correctly designed evaluation is valued by the (people in the) sector you are working in.
2	Know why (Distant understanding)	To know that evaluation requires a number of well-planned steps. To know that evaluation can be about accountability and/or about learning.	Using, imitating	To occasionally try out evaluation tools that have been experienced.	Perspective taking	To be interested in evaluation processes in the frame of your own work.
1	Know-what	To know what evaluation is. To know that certain steps have to be taken in an evaluation process.	Perceiving	To recognise evaluation steps and processes.	Self oriented	To feel that correctly designing an evaluation process is important.

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## Chapter 3

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# Validation of Learning Outcomes in Mobility Training for Adult Education Staff

## Introduction

In the European educational sector there is a paradigm change to competence oriented education and validation of learning outcomes in informal or non-formal learning (VINFL) in order to facilitate the transparency and comparability of qualifications and to foster mobility in Europe.

Since 2002 European instruments like EQF, ECVET and EUROPASS have been largely introduced on national and European levels.

Nevertheless these initiatives and developments have in many cases and in several member states not (yet) reached the stakeholders from the field, who only have very little knowledge and practical relation to VINFL and the related instruments.

However, in order to reach the European goals, especially those target groups must be actively included in the developments.

Based on the latest surveys carried out in the framework of several LLP-funded projects<sup>4</sup>, the following obstacles and weakness have been identified:

1. Missing outreach and lack of cross-sectorial usability
2. Lack of integration of other educational sectors like AE, Youth and School in the VINFL approach and missed opportunities to attract new users and to exploit the full potential of EUROPASS, ECVET and VINFL;
3. Lack of interfaces to key competences and social, personal and organisational competences;
4. Lack of professional application of validation instruments and principles, e.g. learning outcome descriptions
5. Lack of further training and continuing professional development for stakeholders in these sectors and missing networking opportunities among national and European stakeholders on the matter.

Up to now, the learning outcomes of mobility training for adult education staff have not (or hardly ever) been subject to validation. This is, at least, what GINCO partners found out during the development phase and was confirmed by the findings in the Grundtvig Study: “In-Service Training”. Certification and recognition of the participants’ course learning outcomes is not at all common practice. Course organisers provide a certificate of attendance and sometimes a certificate of input – on rare occasions linked to achievement levels. However, hardly ever do they consider validation of learning outcomes, validation of competence development or certification by a related higher education organisation. Validation of learning outcomes in in-service training courses would definitely add to the value of these courses. It would contribute both to the recognition of the professional development of the adult educators involved (in this case as trainees) and to the quality of the courses.

These findings led to the idea to create a knowledge base and CPD opportunities for professionals in adult education in order to facilitate the introduction of VINFL in competence oriented, holistic and innovative learning arrangements.

Especially in the light of the ERASMUS+ programme and the validation requirements in the Key Activity 1 courses for educational professionals a competent management of validation is a key issue.

This chapter in the GINCO manual shall support professionals of AE in this respect. It goes together with the GINCO trainings on validation and the validation tools offered on the GINCO e-Portfolio. It is based on the relevant competences as described in the GINCO competence profile for course organisers.

<sup>4</sup> [www.vilma-eu.org](http://www.vilma-eu.org), [www.vita-eu.org](http://www.vita-eu.org)

# Course organiser competence profile

## Validation of the acquired competences

### This competence area involves competences to:

1. describe the course and learning context
  - To describe content, methodology, context
2. create the inventory of competences to be acquired
  - To sum up the competences related to the learning activities at the course
  - To characterize the competences
3. create reference systems and instruments
  - To describe the acquisition levels of the competences involved
  - To create assessment tools to gather information
4. assess (distinguish between stages of acquisition, apply level indicators)
  - To observe, interview, discuss, ask
5. provide evidence, communicate the results + consequences to the learner
  - To create a certificate for the participants
  - To report on the acquired competences in the certificate
6. relate to the wider system of qualification
  - To link with NQF, EQF or other official framework

## Validation of Learning Outcomes

The validation of non-formal or informal learning is a priority in the EU's actions to support education and training. However, countries around Europe are at different stages in supporting this validation. Some have started to establish systems, while others are only beginning to develop in

this field. There is an increasing interest to take account of the full range of an individual's skills and competences – not only those acquired in formal education systems. Therefore, recognising all forms of learning is a priority of EU action in education and training. Yet, different terms in the context of validation are being used in different contexts and with different purposes. Hence we would like to introduce a few definitions on which our development work has been based.

### Definitions

A simple definition of **validation** is 'the process of identifying, assessing and recognising skills and competences acquired in formal, non-formal and informal settings'. The CEDEFOP 2009 guidelines state that validation is "the confirmation by a competent body that learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) acquired by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting have been assessed against predefined criteria and are compliant with the requirements of a validation standard. Validation typically leads to certification".

Important stakeholders and authors of the European Commission state there is some confusion around the term validation and rather concentrate on the expression **recognition of prior learning**, which seems meaningful. In sociology, recognition is the public acknowledgement of a person's status or merits (achievements, virtues, service, etc.).<sup>5</sup> In the context of validation, the term is used as similar to the concept of approval: 'to give recognition for achievements or status of performance'; 'to give credits for the achievements'.

**Learning outcomes** are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after the completion of a process of learning (ECTS - EU, 2004). For the last few years, learning outcomes have come into the focus, since no reliable data about the quality of teaching and learning were available and input indicators turned out to lack reliability and significance.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recognition\\_\(sociology\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recognition_(sociology)).



Learning outcomes should provide comparable information about what learners have actually learned. They are a counter-concept of time-based systems such as ECTS.

### EU-Policy Background

The European “Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning” is recognised as an important tool in the pursuit of economic and social goals at European level.<sup>6</sup> Its importance is underlined by the fact that a number of European stakeholders have been contributing to or further promoting the development of validation. The following results illustrate the ongoing activities:

- Common European Principles for the Identification and Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (2004)
- Europass (2005) and Youthpass (2007) – sets of documents recognised across Europe that enable validation
- EQF (2008) – based on learning outcomes
- Action Plan on Adult Learning (2007-2010) – Priority Action 4
- European Guidelines for Validating Non-formal and Informal Learning (2009) (2nd edition in preparation)
- ECVET – European Credit System for VET (2009)
- EQAVET– European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET (2009) – covers validation
- E&T 2020 (2009) – need for increased ‘recognition of learning outcomes’
- European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (2010)
- Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning (2011), priority 1: “putting in place fully functional systems for validating non-formal and informal learning and promoting their use by adults”
- Council Recommendation on Validation (2012).

### Purpose and Benefits

The overall aim of validation is to make visible and value the full range of an individual’s qualifications and competences,

irrespective of where these have been acquired (i.e. be it in a formal, non-formal or informal setting). The purpose of this validation may be formative as well as summative. By formative we mean the process of identifying learning outcomes without formal recognition (for personal and/or career development). Formative validation reveals individual strengths, weaknesses and particular learning needs and can be used as a basis for further training. It may provide the basis for formal recognition. By summative we mean validation resulting in formal recognition (for example through a certificate or diploma). The summative approach is applied at the end of a learning process and should take into consideration national standards and be linked to national qualification systems or frameworks (Common European Principles for Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning, 2004).

The benefits of introducing validation in adult education and learning can be situated at:

- educational level: improved access and transfer in education, exemption of training or subjects, partial/full awards;
- economic level: makes human capital visible, addresses skills shortages, supports employment;
- social level: access to education/employment for the disadvantaged;
- personal level: self-esteem, confidence, motivation, possible greater access to employment/promotion, stimulating self-reflection on prior and further learning.

However, one can also put forward a number of challenges: variety of terminology and aims; need for a cultural shift; implementation and mainstreaming; variation in provision; quality and costs to individuals; quality assurance needed to ensure validity, reliability, objectivity, acceptance and trust; the Matthew effect; data collection and evidence gathering; the impact on non-formal learning etc.

### Validation Elements and Process

According to the Council Recommendation (2012) European member states should have in place (by 2018 at

<sup>6</sup> CEDEFOP. “2010 Update of the European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning - Final Report”, 2010.

the latest) systems that allow individuals to demonstrate what they have learned outside formal education and training.

In other words: by 2018 each member state shall offer “arrangements” for VINFL which enable the individuals to

- have knowledge, skills and competences which have been acquired through non-formal and informal learning validated, including, where applicable, through open educational resources (OER);
- obtain a full qualification, or, where applicable, partial qualification, on the basis of validated non-formal and informal learning experiences, without prejudice to other applicable Union law...

The full validation process is outlined in the following draft:

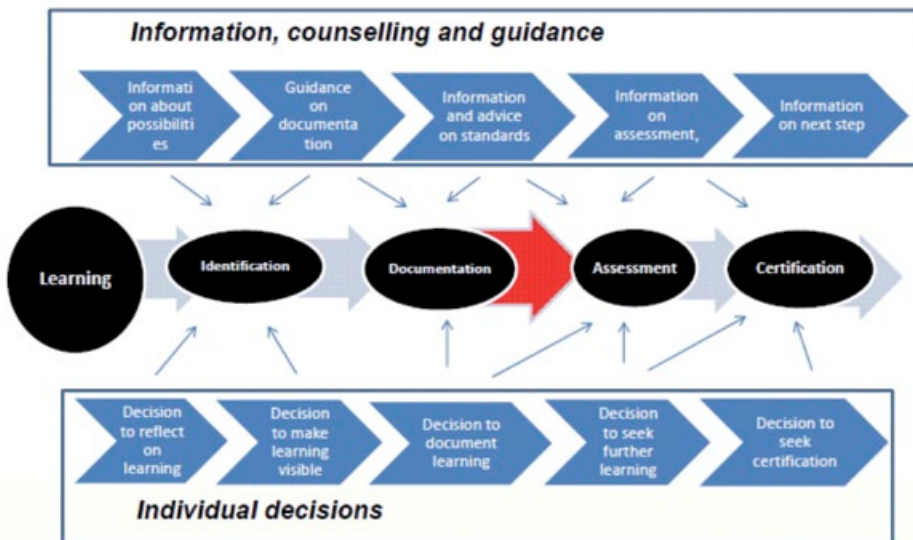


Fig. 1: The complexity of the validation process?

It describes validation as a process that follows learning, it has the function to give evidence of what a learner knows and is able to do.

The complete process of validation consists of the following elements that each individual can take advantage from (either separately or in combination, in accordance with his/her needs):

- IDENTIFICATION of an individual's learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning;
- DOCUMENTATION of an individual's learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning;
- ASSESSMENT of an individual's learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning;
- CERTIFICATION of the results of the assessment of an individual's learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning in the form of a qualification, or credits leading to a qualification, or in another form, as appropriate.

According to the Council Recommendation the following principles shall be applied:

- Validation arrangements shall be linked to the European Qualifications Framework.
- Information and guidance have to be made available to individuals and organisations
- Disadvantaged groups (unemployed) are to particularly benefit from VINFL
- Unemployed persons shall have the possibility to undergo a „skills' audit“
- Transparent Quality assurance shall be put into place
- VINFL shall be supported by appropriate guidance and counselling
- Professional training / qualifications for those persons involved in validation processes has to be developed
- The use of transparency tools /EUROPASS, YOUTHPASS) is promoted
- Synergies between validation systems and credit systems (ECVET/ECTS) exist (and shall be fostered)

## Conclusions for Educational Professionals

Against the background of the developments in the field of validation of informal and non-formal learning there are a number of challenges and changes expected in the professional fields of educationalists, be it in VET, HE, AE or in school, but also in the field of youth, mobility, sports and all other sectors that create informal learning spaces like the volunteering sector.

It would be a severe misunderstanding to reduce the validation of competences to an isolated assessment of skills and competences which is separated from the learning process.

Proofs of competences and competence developments are major parts of the “identification” and “documentation” steps, for instance. European citizens shall collect documentations and evidences of their competences that can be brought in, even into a formal certification.

In addition to the rather formal procedural chart and description presented before it has to be emphasised that major elements of validation of competences have to be included in the learning processes.

As to the transfer into the work-field of educational professionals the following conclusions can be drawn:

- A learning process normally aims at improving competences. Consequently it has to be planned and delivered in a competence oriented way. For most educationalists this may sound odd, but it is a development from a supply oriented to a demand oriented teaching and learning approach. Still, in many European countries, in all aforementioned sectors learning is offered in a traditional way, teacher/trainer centred, with fixed (centralised) methods, traditional instructional design, including fixed teacher/learner roles etc.. In a time in which social and personal competences become more and more important (which is certainly an issue regarding

validation) also the acquisition and development of those competences is an important topic for educational professionals...

- Competences, knowledge, skills and attitudes and their developments have to be assessed and evidenced in a way to make the potential of the learners visible.
- Instruments must be made available that are appropriate for different purposes; be it for formal purposes (qualification oriented, summative) or for less formalised contexts, for instance in the aforementioned mobility situations or while learning on the job or in volunteering or in an orientation project for unemployed youth.
- Professionals have to acquire the necessary competences for VINFL. Hence CPD courses and qualifications have to be provided.

## Existing Instruments to Assess and Evidence Learning Outcomes

In GINCO T&T we want to give an overview of the systems to validate learning outcomes that are currently being promoted at a European level. The systems are briefly presented in the following paragraphs and their assets and drawbacks in relation to their usability and practicability in IST courses are highlighted.

### EUROPASS

EUROPASS helps people to make their qualifications and skills understood and recognised throughout Europe, which increases their employment prospects. Its web portal includes interactive tools that, for example, allow users to create a CV in a common European format. The portal – run by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) and available in 26 languages – provides an interactive tool to complete the EUROPASS CV and the EUROPASS Language Passport.

EUROPASS plugins are available also in existing e-portfolios (mahara-plugins), for instance on the GINCO e-portfolio ([ginco.my-vita.eu](http://ginco.my-vita.eu)) or in the LEVEL5 validation software.

The EUROPASS CV highlights people's skills and abilities, including those acquired outside of formal education and training. Language skills are described with the help of the commonly used reference framework established by the Council of Europe. Users can download the CVs that they want to create in several formats, including XML, which makes direct uploading to online employment databases possible.

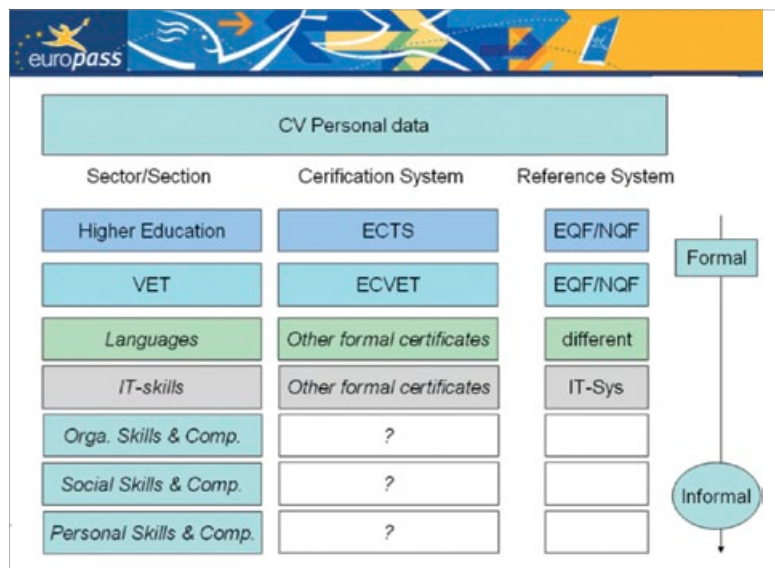


Fig. 2: EUROPASS elements

The EUROPASS CV highlights peoples' qualifications, skills and competences in a decreasing level of formalisation from professional degrees and qualifications (based on ECTS and ECVET credit transfer systems) over language skills (here with the interface to the language passport) up to personal and social competences (high level of informality) in which evidences of the acquired competences is not required.

EUROPASS Mobility records learning experiences abroad – such as academic exchanges or work placements in companies – and, this way, makes them more visible for employers. Finally, the EUROPASS Certificate Supplement explains vocational training certificates in terms of skills and abilities, enabling

employers to better appreciate what their holders can do.

### Assets for mobility training for adult education staff

- Increasingly known in European countries
- Added-value of European dimension
- Required in ERASMUS+ KA1 courses
- Opportunity to list the skills and competences acquired, however just in a narrative way
  - Part of portfolio of recognition documents
  - Export functions
  - Available in different tools, for instance e-portfolios

### Drawbacks for mobility training for adult education staff

- Missing evidences for social, personal and organisational competences

### European Qualification Framework (EQF)

The EQF aims to relate the national qualifications systems of different countries to a common European reference framework. Individuals and employers will be able to use the EQF to better understand and compare the qualifications levels of different countries, as well as their education and training systems. Since the agreement by the European institutions in 2008, the EQF is being put

into practice across Europe. It encourages countries to relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF so that all new qualifications issued from 2012 onwards carry a reference to an appropriate EQF level.

A qualification framework is primarily an official document that clearly defines each and every qualification that is part of it. It may also provide a hierarchy of qualifications. In system view it is a meta-data model that is an all-encompassing framework to integrate the qualifications issued by different educational and training providers or by academic bodies into a common structure. It consists of a set of common reference points which refer to learning outcomes, supported by a range of tools and techniques, regardless of the system where a particular qualification was acquired.

## Descriptors defining levels

	Knowledge <sup>8</sup>	Skills <sup>9</sup>	Competences <sup>10</sup>
<b>LEVEL 1</b>	basic general knowledge	basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	work or study under direct supervision in a structured context
<b>LEVEL 2</b>	basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study	basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools	work or study under supervision with some autonomy
<b>LEVEL 3</b>	knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study	a range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information	take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems
<b>LEVEL 4</b>	factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	a range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work/study activities
<b>LEVEL 5</b>	comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	a comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change review and develop performance of self and others
<b>LEVEL 6</b>	advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study	manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision making in unpredictable work or study contexts take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups
<b>LEVEL 7</b>	highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields	specialised problem solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields	manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches >take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams
<b>LEVEL 8</b>	knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields	the most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice	

Table 1: The different levels in the EQF

Each of the eight levels is defined by a set of descriptors. These indicate the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at that level in any system of qualifications and are based

<sup>8</sup> In the context of EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.

<sup>9</sup> In the context of EQF, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).

<sup>10</sup> In the context of EQF, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.

on relevant knowledge, skills and competences. However, what the EQF does not provide is a set of core criteria upon which these eight levels of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) will be built. So, instead of seeing the EQF as a descriptive device for translating common qualifications in various countries (or within countries as well, which is a quasi political appreciation of learning outcomes among different national education systems), it would be much more efficient to interpret it as a way of delivering the described learning outcome at each



level, based on criteria set by the providers of educational programmes themselves (a quasi holistic or 'gestalt' appreciation of learning outcomes).

#### **Assets for mobility training for adult education staff**

- Added-value of European dimension
- Can be easily read across countries
- Opportunity to link the skills obtained to national qualifications
- Part of portfolio of recognition documents

#### **Drawbacks for mobility training for adult education staff**

- Not implemented in all countries
- Not yet formally embedded in qualification and validation systems
- Difficult to identify in which level an IST would belong
- The definition of competence is not consistent
- A development in terms of reaching a higher level is not possible within an IST course; hence the system is not appropriate to show competence developments therein
- Not appropriate to show social, personal and organisational competences

#### **European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)**

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) provides a common basis to recognise higher education study periods abroad. ECTS makes teaching and learning in higher education more transparent across Europe and facilitates the recognition of all studies. The system allows for the transfer of learning experiences between different institutions, greater student mobility and more flexible routes to gain degrees. It also aids curriculum design and quality assurance.

Institutions which use ECTS publish their course catalogues on the web, including detailed descriptions of study programmes, units of learning, university regulations and student services. Course descriptions contain 'learning outcomes' (i.e. what students are expected to know,

understand and be able to do) and workload (i.e. the time students typically need to achieve these outcomes). The results are certified in terms of credits, with a student workload ranging from 1.500 to 1.800 hours for an academic year, and one credit generally corresponding to 25 to 30 hours of work. A series of ECTS key documents help with credit transfer and accumulation – course catalogues, learning agreements, transcripts of records and Diploma Supplements (DS).

Although ECTS can positively influence the recognition of a student's studies between different institutions and national education systems, higher education providers are autonomous institutions. The final decisions are the responsibility of the relevant authorities: professors involved in student exchanges, university admission officers, recognition advisory centres (ENIC-NARIC), ministry officials or employers. The European Commission has established a network of recognition experts (ECTS/DS) and developed the ECTS and DS labels to recognise excellent application of either system. ECTS is closely related to other efforts to modernise higher education in Europe. In particular, it has become a central tool in the Bologna Process which aims to make national systems converge.

#### **Assets for mobility training for adult education staff**

- Recognised in academic surroundings
- Implemented through Bologna in all LLP countries and beyond
- Can be easily read across countries
- Element of the EU validation system
- Linked to EQF and EUROPASS
- Can be easily integrated into further education

#### **Drawbacks for mobility training for adult education staff**

- Increases the level of formality
- Administrative burden
- Not output based, no focus on learning outcomes
- Connection to a HE institution is needed to get accreditation for issuing credits

- No assessment or evidencing of social and personal competences, for instance in regard to the European dimension (intercultural competences)

### ECVET - European Credit Transfer System for VET

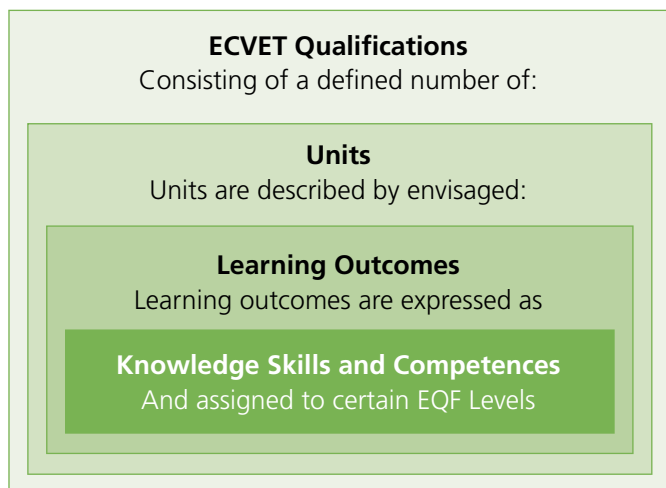
ECVET is the corresponding credit transfer system for the Vocational Education and Training Sector. While ECTS is time based ECVET uses Learning Outcomes to describe different competence levels.

On policy level the first workgroups on ECVET were established in 2002 and the first feasibility studies were published in 2007. By 2014 more than 100 ECVET projects have developed transferable qualifications along the ECVET principles.

ECVET relates in general to the EQF levels 1-5 while Higher Education degrees are covered in the EQF levels 6 (bachelor) to 8 (PhD).

In the VET sector the validation of learning outcomes and the related systems are designed along qualifications, units, learning outcomes (LO) and referring to the EQF or NQF systems that describe qualification levels in terms of knowledge, skills and competences (KSC).

Hence ECVET Systems work with the following elements



In ECVET projects transnational teams work jointly on qualifications that ought to be recognised by each of them in the other country.

For this purpose they sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which secures the quality and the transferability. Learners receive certificates on which their EQF levels are indicated.

A very good example of how an ECVET project can look like is the qualification “Designer in clay plastering (Chamber of Crafts, DE), EQF LEVEL4”, which can be retrieved via: <http://www.adam-europe.eu/prj/2942/prj/LearnWithCay%20brochure.pdf>

More than 100 pilot projects have been listed with their outcomes in the [ecvet-toolkit.eu](http://ecvet-toolkit.eu) portal and <http://ecvet-info.de>, clustered in different sectors.

They have developed “competence matrices” or “qualification catalogues” for different professions in which Qualifications, Units, LO, KSC have been described, valued against ECVET levels and related to credit points.

However, a basic specification of the description of qualifications, units and learning outcomes as originally outlined in the ECVET specifications from 2002 is missing in many of the documented project products.

As a consequence the developed systems defining Qualifications, Units, LO and KSC vary to a large extent in taxonomy (system) and in quality.

### Assets for mobility training for adult education staff

- Based on learning outcomes
- Element of the EU validation system
- Linked to EQF and EUROPASS
- Self-learning time can be included
- The IST course could be used as one element of a qualification

### **Drawbacks for mobility training for adult education staff**

- Affords the planning of the course in units or as part of a qualification
- Learning outcomes have to be described
- Neglects social and personal competences
- Target group is probably beyond EQF level 6

### **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

Continuing Professional Development is the process by which professionals maintain their knowledge and skills related to their professional lives. It includes the continuous acquisition of new knowledge, skills, and attitudes to enable competent practice. CPD can involve any relevant learning activity, whether formal and structured or informal and self-directed, and is common to most professions. Thus, it is a process of lifelong learning in practice. For some professions there are international systems which vary in detail but are characterised by many common features of content and process. These common features allow international mutual recognition of activities in professional development – which applies above all to the medical and legal sector. Most systems are based on an hours related credit system.

A number of countries have recently introduced regulations which define adult learning and what adult learning practitioners should do for their professional development (including BE, DE, FR, UK).<sup>11</sup> IST courses have not been taken into consideration so far.

### **Assets for mobility training for adult education staff**

- Approach proven in other fields
- Specific criteria for Adult Education
- Can be integrated into professional development but also into academic studies

### **Drawbacks for mobility training for adult education staff**

- Not developed (likely to take a long time)
- Requires training of providers
- Significant administrative burden

### **Validating Competences**

Credit Transfer Systems and the EQF are aiming at professional qualification levels that can be described in terms of learning units or curricula. But there are challenges that go beyond the subject specific knowledge and skills and that include personal, interpersonal, social and also cross-cutting organisational competences.

A key competence like “sense of initiative and entrepreneurship”, for instance, does hardly fit in an EQF based system.

Especially in a time in which also employers (companies and industries) are more and more heading for candidates with high potentials regarding to social and personal competences the validation of informal and non-formal learning has to consider these competences as well.

In the framework of the project VITA ([www.vita-eu.org](http://www.vita-eu.org)) a European survey among 165 European educational experts and 135 entrepreneurs and stakeholders on the labour market has been carried out in order to find out the relevance of social, personal and organisational competences in their professional fields.

The 300 responses in the online survey, which was backed up by 30 expert interviews, clearly confirmed that these competences are of high relevance to employers and employment agencies. Their expectations in this regard are often already named in job offers.

Most employers but also many educational providers are not aware of any validation system for these competences and

so far rely on references from previous employers, personal impression and feedback from colleagues etc. There is a general interest in learning more about alternatives, hence validation of these competences is highly appreciated.

Personal, social and organisational competences can be clustered along the EUROPASS system. One should be aware that these differentiations do not mark discrete categories. Some social competences may be, in other contexts, called organisational competences (such as diversity management).

The ordering of the competences in different categories may vary depending on the background of the authors (e.g. psychological vs. pedagogical, different educational and occupational fields).

The following competence clusters can be derived.

### **Social**

- Communication competence
- Intercultural competence
  - Ability to work in an international context
  - Understanding of cultures and customs of other countries
- Negotiation competence
- Customer orientation
- Team competence
- Conflict management competence
- Leadership competence

### **Personal (Self)**

- Flexibility
  - Capacity to adapt to new situations
- Creativity
  - Capacity for generating new ideas
- Autonomy
  - Problem solving
  - Decision-making
- Self-reflection competence
  - Critical and self-critical abilities
  - Ethical commitment and self-critical abilities

- Entrepreneurship/sense of initiative
  - Capacity for applying knowledge in practice
  - Initiative and entrepreneurial spirit
  - Decision making competence
  - Will to succeed
- Learning to learn
  - Capacity to learn
  - Information management skills

### **Organisational**

- Leadership
  - Problem solving competence
  - Capacity for applying knowledge in practice
  - Decision making competence
- Planning/(Resource-)management competence
  - Capacity for analyses and synthesis
  - Capacity for organisation and planning
- Project design and management
- Concern for quality
- Diversity management competence
  - Ability to work in an interdisciplinary team
- Networking

### **Connection to the concept of key competences:**

Key competences in the shape of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to each context are fundamental for each individual in a knowledge-based society. They provide added value for the labour market, social cohesion and active citizenship by offering flexibility and adaptability, satisfaction and motivation. Because they should be acquired by everyone, this recommendation proposes a reference tool for European Union (EU) countries to ensure that these key competences are fully integrated into their strategies and infrastructures, particularly in the context of lifelong learning<sup>12</sup>.

In the 2006 recommendation of key competences in lifelong learning<sup>13</sup> the following eight key competences were defined:

<sup>12</sup> [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/education\\_training\\_youth/lifelong\\_learning/c11090\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11090_en.htm)

<sup>13</sup> Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning

- **communication in the mother tongue**, which is the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts;
- **communication** in foreign languages, which involves, in addition to the main skill dimensions of communication in the mother tongue, mediation and intercultural understanding. The level of proficiency depends on several factors and the capacity for listening, speaking, reading and writing;
- **mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology**. Mathematical competence is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations, with the emphasis being placed on process, activity and knowledge. Basic competences in science and technology refer to the mastery, use and application of knowledge and methodologies that explain the natural world. These involve an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and the responsibility of each individual as a citizen;
- **digital competence** involves the confident and critical use of information society technology (IST) and thus basic skills in information and communication technology (ICT);
- **learning to learn** is related to learning, the ability to pursue and organise one's own learning, either individually or in groups, in accordance with one's own needs, and awareness of methods and opportunities;
- **social and civic competences**. Social competence refers to personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life. It is linked to personal and social well-being. An understanding of codes of conduct and customs in the different environments in which individuals operate is essential. Civic competence, and particularly knowledge

of social and political concepts and structures (democracy, justice, equality, citizenship and civil rights), equips individuals to engage in active and democratic participation;

- **sense of initiative and entrepreneurship** is the ability to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. The individual is aware of the context of his/her work and is able to seize opportunities that arise. It is the foundation for acquiring more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance;
- **cultural awareness and expression**, which involves appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media (music, performing arts, literature and the visual arts).

The following key competences can be seen as alternative cluster headings that reflect a more holistic picture of the human being (work and private (societal) life) like in the EUROPASS clustering. All aforementioned personal, social and organisational skills listed above can easily be grouped under these headings as well:

- Learning to learn
- Social and civic competences
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
- Cultural awareness and expression

As mentioned above, it is hardly possible to validate those competences with the help of EQF based systems.

The LEVEL5 system, which will be introduced in the following part has been developed to close this gap and to make the development of those competences visible.



## LEVEL5

Apart from the Europe-wide promoted systems, various national approaches are applied in the EU member states. The European Inventory on Validation of Informal Learning, published in 2010 by CEDEFOP<sup>14</sup>, gives an overview of all these approaches. It is a unique record on how validation is already being used at national, regional and local level to address issues relating to lifelong learning, employment and social exclusion.

One of these approaches presented in the inventory is LEVEL5, a system developed and piloted in a series of LLP-projects by several partners of the GINCO network since 2005. LEVEL5 offers an approach and instrument to assess, visualise and document competence development. It focuses especially on personal, social and organisational competences that form the backbone of the European framework on key competences.<sup>15</sup>

The framework states that a “competence is the ability to apply a synthesis of

1. knowledge,
2. skills and
3. attitudes

in a particular situation and with a particular quality” .<sup>16</sup>

In regard to the acquisition of learning outcomes in Grundtvig courses, GINCO suggests to refer to the definition used in the key competences framework of the EU. Based on this concept, the validation should take the three dimensions (i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes) into account too. Consequently, the LEVEL5 system approach is based on a model to assess, evidence and validate the cognitive, activity related and affective competence development of learners in informal and non-formal learning contexts. Individual or group competences are evaluated in a process-orientated way, visualised in a three-dimensional cube model and fully documented in a specific software system.

The LEVEL5 evaluation procedure is standardised but, at the same time, enables grassroots projects to establish an individualised reference system for assessing and evidencing relevant competences of their beneficiaries in a process-orientated way. The LEVEL5 system allows users to evidence the impact of their work according to a standardised procedure while keeping up their individuality as informal learning projects in their specific contexts.

Here, learning outcomes would be both outputs and indicators for acquired competences or competence levels.

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<sup>14</sup> The entire study (previous publications released in 2005 and 2007) consists of more than 1000 pages in 34 reports and comprises 32 countries.

<sup>15</sup> The “Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Framework” is an annex of a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning that was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 30 December 2006/L394 ([http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l\\_394/l\\_39420061230en00100018.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_394/l_39420061230en00100018.pdf)).

<sup>16</sup> If we connect this to the EQF and the concept of learning outcomes, it becomes obvious that different understandings of the term competence exist, since the combination of both definitions reveals a rather tautological relation: for the EQF, a competence is an element in itself and the qualifications can be described at the three levels of knowledge, skills and competences; when a competence is described as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes, however, the concepts become inconsistent.

## LEVEL5: The Core Principle

Along the lines of the European framework of key competences, the LEVEL5 developers assumed that learning outcomes can be displayed by means of three components or dimensions:

- knowledge component
- activity component
- affective component.

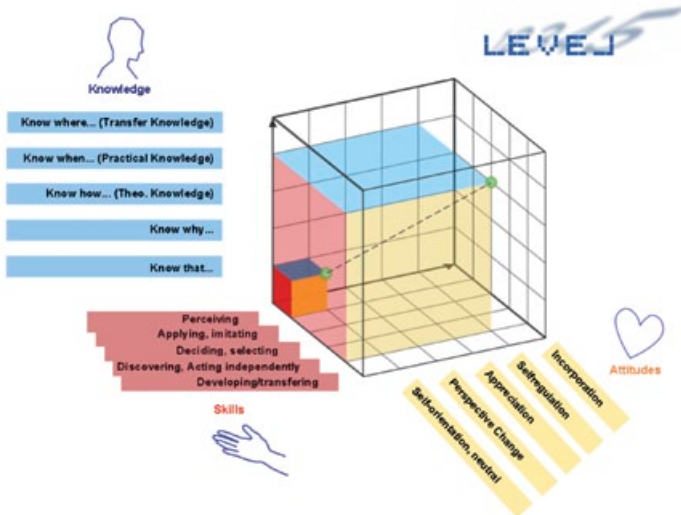


Fig.3: The LEVEL5 cube

The third dimension is often neglected in the evaluation of learning outcomes. However, in most non-formal learning projects, this affective dimension is of major importance. For the evaluation process, the competence levels of an individual are set at five levels for each dimension, which gave rise to the name LEVEL5. Hence, the kernel of the system is a three-dimensional visualisation system: the LEVEL5 cube.

## LEVEL5: The Procedure

The LEVEL5 approach is based on a five-step procedure, starting with a description of the learning project and ending with the evidencing of learning outcomes and the validation of learners and learning projects.



Fig. 2: LEVEL5 cyclic validation approach

### 1. Learning project description

- The learning project is described in a predefined template.

### 2. Selecting competences

- Competences are chosen from an open inventory offering the scope to evaluate areas applicable to the learning activity.
- Competences or competence-sets can be chosen for group learning projects or can be tailored specifically for an individual learner.

### 3. Establishing an individualised reference system

- A reference system (exemplary reference systems on the following pages) is developed on the basis of the three dimensions (cognitive, activity related and affective) for each competence reflecting the three dimensions and the 5 quality levels.

### 4. Assessment

- Assessment concepts (self-, external and mixed assessment) and methods should be chosen according to the context and objectives. A toolbox and supportive materials are provided.

## 5. Rating/documenting/visualising (online documentation system)

- After the assessment, the values from the competence levels 1 to 5 are recorded in the reference system and displayed as a LEVEL5 cube.
- The ratings are explained and documented in the software and, if applicable, in certificates.
- Results of learners and project characteristics are recorded internally.
- Learners' certificates will be automatically generated (as PDF) (exemplary certificate on the following page).
- Projects may also be accredited (online and PDF certificate).

Considering the large variety of training offers, contexts, target groups and activities in the adult education sector, one cannot expect that a 'perfect' validation system in informal learning contexts be developed from 'off the shelf'. Therefore, LEVEL5 is based on action theory principles and works with a rather cyclic procedure: the user always has the opportunity to modify some elements of the validation system during the assessment and evaluation processes.

LEVEL5 is not a pure validation system but can also be used as holistic, competence based learning system in which the validation of competence development plays an important role. It comes with a powerful software which is has also an ECVET and a EUROPASS validation module.

At the right a LEVEL5 certificate is presented. Each chapter in this manual ends with a reference system to validate one of the competences dealt with in that chapter.

## Possible Ways to Integrate Validation of Learning Outcomes in Mobility Training

Experience from more than 100 learning projects in a large variety of learning contexts and settings shows that it is crucial to reflect on four basic questions before starting the validation:

- why do we validate (for which purpose)?
- whom do we validate?
- what do we validate (which competences)?
- and who could assess and give evidence of acquired competences (in a competent way)?

In the validation processes, other questions will follow, determined again by the context, the purpose, available resources etc. Hence, 'validation' is not a value in itself but, together with the connected instruments (e.g. EQF, ECVET, EUROPASS, LEVEL5), has to be seen in its specific context and in relation to the individual learner.

As a consequence, validation should not be considered as an isolated concept, but rather as something



that is always connected with a purpose and a target group – in other words, as part of the learning process. Three basic scenarios have been created to figure out the position and function of validation in a learning or qualification process.

### **Scenario 1:**

#### **Validation as part of formal qualification**

If one assumes that a person would strive for formal qualification – e.g. a certificate based on a standardised competence profile –, validation can help to reveal the existing competences and those which should still be acquired in order to pass an exam. This means that initial assessment and validation are used as a tool to recognise existing skills and competences and to reveal learning needs, so that an individual qualification plan can be established. At the end of the qualification, the learner is validated again. The second validation (summative) needs to take into consideration national standards, is linked to national qualification systems or frameworks and leads to a formal certificate or diploma.

This scenario is clearly not appropriate for the validation of mobility trainings for adult education staff.

### **Scenario 2:**

#### **Validation of competence development in continuing training or at the workplace**

In this scenario, validation is a tool to validate those competences that are acquired in addition to the competences developed in a formal context. The purpose is to document and validate the competences acquired at work or in a further professional development training. There is no need to validate the entire competence profile of a person (again), since formal qualifications already exist. Here, validation only refers to additionally acquired competences. Nonetheless, formal recognition can be given by competent bodies.

This scenario is an appropriate one for mobility training courses if a deliberate decision has been taken to acquire a specific competence (e.g. in a European course dealing with specific teaching competences for adult educators).

### **Scenario 3:**

#### **Validation of competence developments in non-formal and informal learning contexts**

In this scenario, what is validated is the development of specific competences in non-formal and informal settings. This implies assessment and validation of competences before and after a given learning activity. It involves, for instance, the acquisition of key competences in civic learning projects (the ACT-experience)<sup>17</sup>, informal learning in transnational projects ([www.vip-eu.org](http://www.vip-eu.org)) and learning in mobility actions ([www.vilma-eu.org](http://www.vilma-eu.org)).

This scenario suits international in-service training courses in regard to the acquisition of generic competences such as teamwork, diversity management, intercultural communication etc. It also reflects real-life informal learning contexts – be it life-oriented or job-related – in which competences are acquired. The competence development is the ultimate output and impact of the (learning) activity. Hence, an assessment (whatever kind) at the beginning and at the end of the learning activity is essential to find out which competence development has taken place.

In the case of social and personal competences, it is the potential of a person that matters, and not a singular performance. Moreover, these competences are highly contextualised and individualised – communication skills have to be related to a specific situation, e.g. an internship or a mobility learning action in a foreign environment. The assessment setting and the entire validation procedure should reflect this idea too: a singular assessment of a performance in a standardised way is not suitable to cover all the different connotations and implications of ‘communication’.

Formal, curriculum based learning projects follow the first scenario (fully formal qualification); non-formal settings (continuing education and training etc.) are described in scenario 2 (professional further education)<sup>18</sup> ; and, finally, rather informal learning settings, which, however, can be planned, designed and/or improved are displayed in scenario 3.

Mobility training for adult education staff can be located somewhere between scenario 2 and 3. These courses are important instruments for the continuing professional development (CPD) of adult educators. LEVEL5 can be used as a central tool in a holistic competence-based learning approach for CPD.

In order to set up a CPD/IST-offer, we have to answer – for each course – the following questions:

- what is the purpose of the validation (LEVEL5, step1: project description)?
- who are the learners (LEVEL5, step1)?
- what is their learning activity (LEVEL5, step1)?
- which competences are being acquired and/or developed (LEVEL5, steps 2 and 3)?

The steps 1 to 3 would result in a competence framework of the specific IST in-service training course, which then would function as a basic planning tool for the course development. The validation part (i.e. steps 4 and 5) can be delivered at given times, e.g. at the beginning and at the end of the face-to-face part or during the preliminary phase (through e-learning) and the follow-up phase. Instruments for this phase can be found in the SEALLL material ([www.sealll.eu](http://www.sealll.eu)).

This way, the ‘validation of informal learning’ can be thoroughly implemented in the training course, so that the competence developments of the learners can be valued and respected. At the same time, the validation becomes an integral part of the whole training process and a

valuable instrument to evaluate the impact of the learning offer on the competence development of the participants. As such, it contributes to the establishment of a circular quality management of the course.

## Recommendations

To people choosing an instrument to validate the learning outcomes in IST courses, the GINCO partners recommend taking into consideration a number of aspects that have been collected during the development process of this guide:

- applying formative assessment in order to better respond to the needs of the multinational participants by adapting the learning design;
- focusing on the aspired and acquired competence developments, indicated by learning outcomes;
- concentrating on the progress linked to the course activity rather than on the cumulative learning outcomes (as in summative validation);
- assessing learning outcomes at an individual level, since the individual learner should be in the spotlight;
- assessing the added-value of international courses (i.e. the European dimension);
- analysing the Collegiate Learning Assessment for a possible adaptation for mobility training courses in order to assess generic skills;
- defining competences and aspired learning outcomes (LEVEL5 indicators), so that the validation focus is clear;
- taking into account the learners’ perspective – their goals may be different from the ones set by the management, or not intended but still important for them (side effects);
- integrating validation into a competence-based learning approach and into a holistic QM approach.

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<sup>18</sup> Learning on the job is, of course, an important informal learning modality that should be valued and recognised too.



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## Further Reading

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## LEVEL 5 Reference System: competence to deal with validation

	COGNITIVE/KNOWLEDGE		ACTIVITY		AFFECTIVE	
	2	3	2	3	2	3
L	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement
5	Know where else (knowledge for transfer)	Strategic knowledge on how to transfer validation to other domains of life and work.	Developing/ Constructing Transfer	To develop your own techniques/ approaches/strategies regarding validation.	Incorporated	To internalise validation as a necessary and important tool for professional development in your sector. To feel the need to help other people use it. To feel the need to apply validation in other domains of life.
4	Know when (Implicit understanding)	To know in which situation specific validation tools, instruments and systems are appropriate To know how to create the appropriate instruments for validation in a specific situation.	Discovering/ acting independently	To search for the appropriate tools and systems, techniques and opportunities to link to validation in your own context. To choose the right framework for the right purpose and to act appropriately.	Self-regulation	To value your curiosity for validation and its opportunities. To feel the need to be creative and to act in this respect.
3	Know how	To know theoretically how to use validation and its components. To understand the full scope of validation and different approaches and their backgrounds. To know the EU's concept of VNIFL.	Deciding/ selecting	To apply known singular validation instruments in a correct way. To occasionally use instruments that are part of the validation concept in a conscious way.	Empathy/ Appreciation	To value validation in general. To find it important that validation is valued by the (people in the) sector you are working in.
2	Know why (Distant understanding)	To know the purposes of validation and the general concept.	Using, Imitating	To apply certain validation components when being instructed or asked for (or forced to).	Perspective taking	To be interested in validation in the frame of your own work.
1	Know-what	To know what validation is in general.	Perceiving	To recognise validation processes and perceive their usefulness.	Self-oriented	To feel that validation is relevant and may affect you.

## Chapter 4

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# Appropriate Use of ICT in International Courses

[www.ginconet.eu/content/appropriate-use-ict](http://www.ginconet.eu/content/appropriate-use-ict)

The new Erasmus + programme has introduced significant changes in the organisation of European training courses. The proper use of ICT will have a direct impact on the implementation of this new regulation. It can facilitate the proper development of the course both from the organisation's point of view and from the point of view of social and educational dynamics. ICT, can be used to facilitate the management of the course, the administration and accounting and for communication activities (both internal and external), in the creation of the community and in the didactic approach.

The main aim of European mobility training courses for adult educators is to inspire adult educators to find new ways of engaging, motivating and teaching adult learners. To achieve this goal we have to keep pace with the evolutionary educational processes in order to use effective methodologies and tools. The ICT based tools and methodologies should be a component of teaching and learning processes in European IST courses as many adults need the newest competences in order to be competitive in their work.

From the trainer point of view ICT should be integrated in courses for adult educators as they enable new didactic methodologies, different activities, more effective learning paths and a student centred learning environment. This methodological concept fosters motivation, creativity, collaborative learning, autonomy, communication skills and team work.

That is why the GINCO competence profile for course organisers contains an area dealing with ICT competences.

## Course organiser competence profile

### Appropriate use of ICT

**This competence area involves competences to:**

1. Make optimal use of ICT as a means for communication and networking
  - To manage online communication tools
  - To use social media for networking the (ex)course participants
2. Use ICT as a component of teaching and learning
  - To work in an e-learning environment for pre and post course activities
  - To use internet based materials for teaching and learning in the face to face phases
3. Use ICT as a device for organising the course
  - To develop an internet resource base for the course
4. Develop your own ICT competence
  - To learn through and about ICT based teaching and learning
5. Instruct others on how to make optimal use of ICT
  - To help course participants build an e-portfolio
  - To help course participants create internet based lessons
  - To transfer ethics for ICT use

The success of a KA1 mobility training course, as of any educational activity, is very much based on to what extent the course succeeds in creating a strong learning community – a community in which the learners and the trainer interact well and where the participants work well together to achieve aims of mutual interests.

The participants and the trainer must get to know each other, must have time to build consensus and to build a platform of mutual interest and aims. This will require personal and professional investments from both the participants and the trainer. Usually this learning community will result from the first phases of a learning activity.

The most important potential use of ICT in KA1 mobility training courses are:

- ICT as a networking tool
- ICT and multimedia as course material, used before, during and after the course, instead of traditional papers
- ICT as a learning tool, allowing the participants to work interactively with computer resources
- ICT as a platform of material and knowledge: the course provider should develop and maintain a website with course material, including the contributions from the trainers and the participants
- ICT facilitating a working community, the participants being requested to build their own knowledge and materials, instead of being taught in the traditional way
- ICT serving as role-model to the adult educators attending the courses and being inspired by the way the course uses ICT and perhaps using this inspiration in their training contexts

The worst case scenario is that no communication takes place before the course. Sometimes documents or other material are sent to the participants, along with a course agenda, but apart from that, nothing is happening.

The use of the simplest ICT tools can change this situation dramatically. A website with materials, background



Fig. 1 Example of Prezi's interface (online presentation tool)

material, ideas for the course, or a few mails preparing the participants for the course activities and their expected involvement may create important dynamics during the pre-course phase. Giving the participants access to web materials for further studies on recommended websites during the course can add even more dynamics to the course process. Making a mailing list during the course and helping the participants exchange experience after the course could add important energy to the impact of the course on the participants' practice.

Therefore the pre-course communication should not focus on technology (the access, the rules, the platform opportunities, and similar elements), but on the participants' personal and professional interests. ICT should be a tool facilitating the communication and not be the subject of the communication itself.

A more extensive use of ICT communication before the course would aim at establishing a strong learning community between trainers and participants prior to the face-to-face course and at having the course work days directly based on this learning community.



## What might be done in such a community building process?

- The trainer presents simple and motivating materials, some of them might refer to internet resources.
- The trainer invites the participants to take part in online dialogues prior to the course and asks for their interest in this, explaining the benefits of preparing the course days.
- The trainer asks the participants to join a mailing list or to sign up in an online platform, prepared for these activities. If only some of the participants are interested in these dialogues, the trainer has a problem and will have to discuss this openly with the participants to avoid a splitting of the group which might cause serious damage to the course work environment.
- Then the trainer might ask the participants to tell a few things about themselves, including perhaps a few pictures and stories; the trainer should encourage the participants to dialogues among themselves in a very informal and uncomplicated way.
- The trainer might further on ask the adult educators to start presenting some professional elements that could be used during the course work days: small cases, ideas, challenges identified, special requests for the course. The trainer should, as much as possible, allow the participants to discuss these elements among themselves, without interfering.
- The trainer might, at the end of this pre-course dialogue, involve the participants directly in adjusting the course days to what might have been discussed in the online dialogues.
- The trainer might also very well use the materials and online discussions to flexibly re-design the course agenda, balancing between the interests and needs of the participants and the pre-described aims of the course.

Such a mixture of informal personal dialogues and professional contributions might very well qualify for the name learning community. When the trainer meets the

participants at the first day of the course, the situation will be totally different from a traditional course, where nothing has happened prior to the course days. From the very beginning of the course, strong dynamics are present in the course room.

An extensive use of ICT communication before and after the course depends on the trainer's ability to motivate the participants! The ICT tools will not motivate the participants. Only the trainer and interesting work themes can do that. Adult educators are primarily concerned with their adult learners and their own pedagogical challenges. They are not concerned with technology, and some of them are even quite sceptical as to the benefits of technology in learning.

The use of ICT for communication during the face to face part of the course is not that important, but still the participants might build up their online forum with materials and discussions throughout the course, especially if this is seen as a preparation of post-course activities. The participants could improve the sessions with extra material and exercises, using, for example, a learning management system (e.g. Moodle).

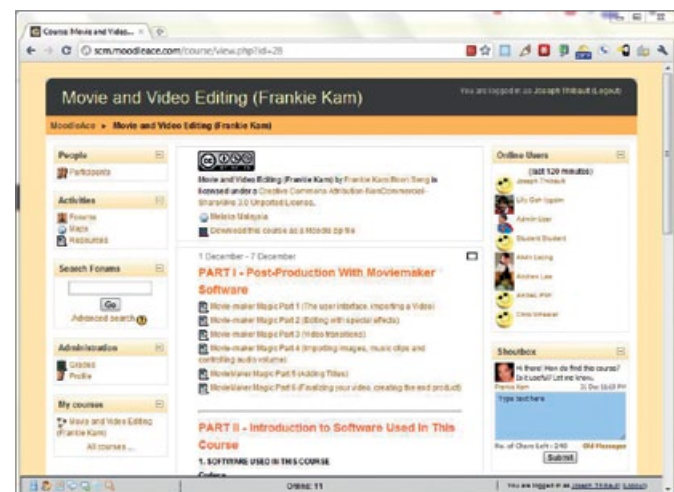


Fig. 2 Example of Moodle environment

The post-course activities are not dependent on the pre-course activities. Even if the course is not prepared by online dialogues, it is indeed possible to continue the activities in the learning community after the end of the course.

The ICT tools would be the same. But the aims of the ICT communication might be different, and this might cause some providers or trainers to consider using online tools like group dialogues, presentation of material, etc. In this case the selected ICT tool should be able to facilitate long-term dialogues and long-term networking, depending on the interest and resources of the participants.

Perhaps the pre-course dialogues are carried out in the form of a mailing list or in a Yahoo forum, but during the course the participants show a great interest in continuing the cooperation online after the course and in working in a better online platform. The provider and trainers must be open to such initiatives and facilitate them.

Different ICT tools for communication offer very different facilities and techniques, from very advanced ones to very simple ones, from mailing lists to advanced online platforms for e-learning. They should be selected in close connection with what it should be used for.

### **The following are some criteria for using ICT in KA1 Erasmus+ training courses:**

- The tools must be very easy to access;
- The tools must be easy to use, not requiring a long introduction;
- The tools must work on average computers and average internet connections;
- The tools should not imply financial contributions from the participants;
- The tools should not necessarily be learning tools, but facilitate the building of a learning community, thus focusing on communication;
- The tools should facilitate communication in a group of 10-20 participants, sub-group communication might be needed;

- The tools should allow upload of materials for the course and materials produced by the participants;
- The tools might include elements such as online evaluation;
- Only in special cases should the tools be able to display multimedia materials, as you would normally link to a website with such materials;
- Features like video conferencing would only be needed in very special cases; if such tools are needed the participants are normally aware of some of the most popular synchronic tools (e.g. Skype);
- The choice of ICT tools should not be based on the course providers' or society's fascination with technology, but on the learning community needs of the participants
- In general the simplest tools for communication in a small group should be preferred.

Today a variety of ICT communication tools are available. Many of them are free of charge, often based on open source, and many of them are suitable for smaller learning communities.

Different ICT tools would be appropriate for KA1 mobility training course didactics, as long as they are easy to access and easy to use: mailing lists, small forums in Hotmail or Yahoo, Facebook, Moodle – or more professional platforms like Fronter or First Class.

The need for online tools might change from very simple tools in the pre-course phase to more qualified tools in the post-course phase, if the participants show an interest in this.

The course provider might develop a policy for online communication that would make it easy for the course trainer to open up a communication platform for any group of learners.

What is more important than the specific choice of a platform or a tool is the fact that the course trainer will have to act as an *online facilitator*, which might be a new experience for many trainers.

## ICT and Didactics

The long-term vision of ICT based course didactics should be the interaction between theory and practice: theory as learning activities, and practice as the everyday work in adult education of the participants. The linking of theory and practice is a major challenge in all levels of education, but it is of special relevance in KA1 mobility courses, as these are taking place to cover geographic distance, thematic distance as well as cultural distance.

ICT can make it possible to establish simple communication between the trainer and the participants for didactical purposes and to follow up after the course in the form of a small online group. The trainer can identify the participants' interests, background, professional profile and learning style. It is indeed possible for the participants to get to know each other through brief presentations and to start exchanges from a professional point of view related to the course theme.

The above mentioned activities might enable the trainer to make important adjustments to the course agenda or even shift some of the elements towards identified mutual interests among the participants. They will at the same time establish the first elementary working community among the participants, on which the face-to-face community could be built.

### **From the didactical point of view:**

- The participants attend the courses individually or in groups (all individuals have to apply via the organisations they work for) and they come from different countries.
- Course participants are not always well prepared for the course, or they might not be invited or guided to prepare themselves.
- Most likely the participants have very different educational and personal backgrounds and their adult education practice can also be very different.
- The language level regarding the working language in

the course might be very different: some speak fluently while others have a rather passive knowledge of the working language.

- The participants' expectations may vary quite a lot: some are very focused as they need input for their professional work, others simply have a general interest in the theme of the course.

The use of ICT before, during and after the course cannot in itself guarantee positive and useful outcomes of a course. ICT does not lead to learning; it cannot replace learning communities and dynamic social learning processes. It is very clear though that ICT offers great potential for high quality course didactics by establishing a quality framework for the learning community via communication before, during and after the international training course in order to optimise the performance of this community during the course working days.

## ICT and Communication

In the new programme a common European training database no longer exists and eligibility requirements for organisers of the course have not been set. The training providers are in a free market situation. Grant holders have to contact directly course organisers and reserve a place at the course. This also means that the course organisers have to arrange the marketing and publicity for their courses themselves in order to allow grant holders to find the courses they need.

In these dynamics the use of new technologies could be a strategic added value and both basic (and static) ICT tools (web 1.0) and even more the advanced web 2.0 online tools should be considered.

Some important tools to optimise communication are presented below.

## Website

In this context it is assumed that each training provider has an institutional website. It is really important to have a clear website, with a high level of usability, that includes contacts, information about the organisation and content of the course. This tool will be the main reference point for potential learners. There are lots of free online tools available to create a website in a few steps (e.g. weebly.com).

To get some comment on free web design software google "free web design software".

On <http://www.top10bestwebsitebuilders.com> you will find a comparison of the 10 best free website builders.



Fig. 4 Example of a Weebly website (<http://prolearning.canyonsdistrict.org/>)

It is also important to optimise the visibility of the website through "search engine optimisation (SEO)" tools improving the ranking of a website on web search engines. The course organiser should constantly monitor the statistics of the website in order to improve traffic and visibility and address the readers to the most important pages of the course. A free online tool suggested is "google analytics".

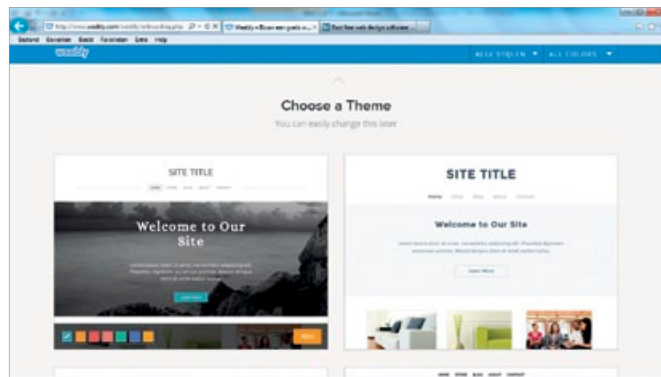


Fig. 3 Weebly.com – tools



Fig. 5 A Google Analytics screenshot <http://www.google.it/intl/it/analytics/>



## Blog

A blog is an ICT tool that could be a great alternative to a website. It can also support the institutional website adding information and contents. If compared with a traditional website, it is a more dynamic and interactive tool. A blog usually contains a main content area with articles listed chronologically, newest on top and organised in categories, an archive of older articles and the possibility for people to leave comments about the articles.

The course providers can constantly keep users updated and generate contents on a specific topic they are experts in. In this way, the grant holders can evaluate the competence of the training organisation, its activities and the areas it covers.

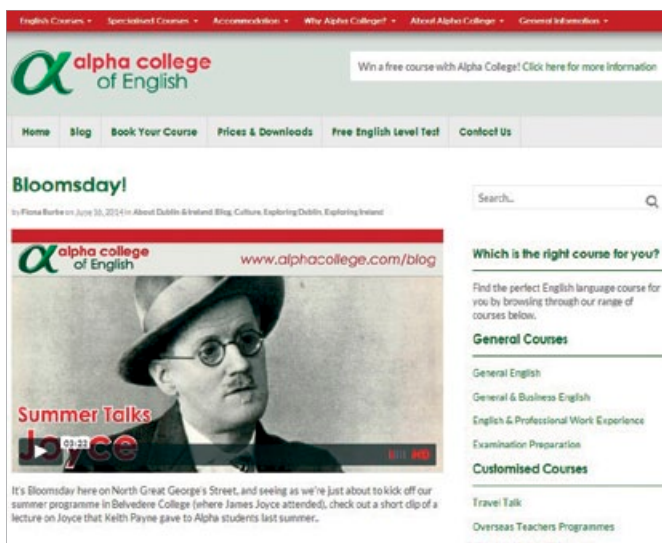


Fig. 6 Alpha College blog (<http://alphacollege.com/>)

## Social Networking

In a free market context without an institutional tool dedicated to the publication of course offers it is even more important to be part of a network of organisations able to support each other.

The most common social software like Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn could be very effective tools to create a network of people or organisations with common interests. It is an easy way to share activities, events and news and reach quite a number of interested people.

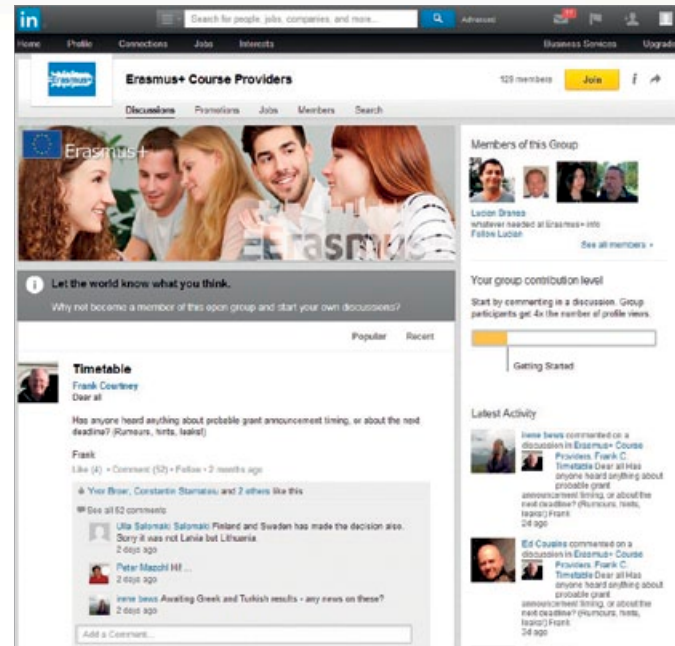


Fig. 7 A LinkedIn Group - Erasmus+ Course Providers (<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/Erasmus-Course-Providers-7472599>)

Social networks are also relevant to engage potential learners and establish an informal communication with them improving the visibility of the institutions.

The use of social media for enhancing learning provides a number of business benefits to the organisations:

- increased geographic and financial accessibility of learners/ increasing numbers of learners;
- new markets;
- improving visibility of the institutions;
- increasing attractiveness of institutions;
- savings in travel cost;



- potentially enhancing reputation;
- keeping pace with technology;
- facilitating the development of distance and mixed learning programmes.



Fig. 8 The Facebook Community dedicate to Erasmus + (<https://www.facebook.com/ErasmusPlusPorgramme?fref=ts>)



Fig. 9 Facebook partner finding tool (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/EU-PROJECTS-PARTNER-FINDING/110101895709424>)

## Needs analyses/surveys

Even before designing a course it is very important to carry out a needs analysis of the target group and an analysis of the current offer.

There are various online applications that can be used for this purpose that allow to perform statistical analysis, surveys, interviews and on-line data processing (eg. survey monkey).

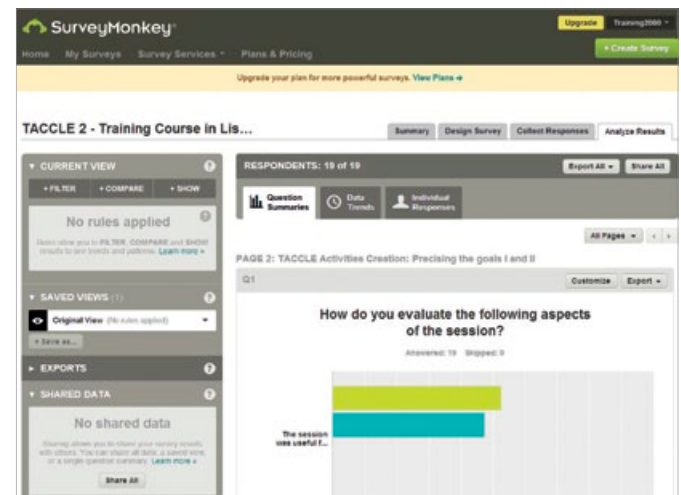


Fig. 10 Course Evaluation – Taccle2 project (<http://taccle2.eu>)

## ICT and Evaluation

ICT could also be used as an evaluation and quality assurance tool, allowing more systematic evaluation of many courses, providing evidence for the course providers, the National Agencies and the Commission.

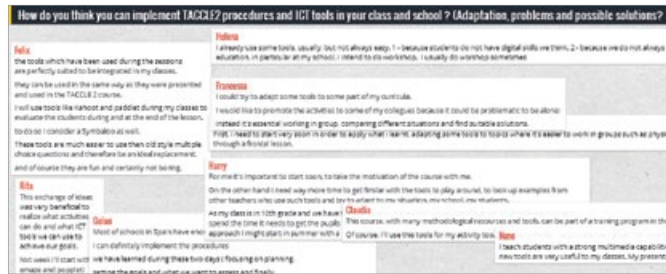


Fig. 11 Tacc2 Project - Course Evaluation using Padlet (<http://padlet.com/>)

## ICT and Project Management

ICT can support the project management process improving the communication with the staff, the creation and sharing of documents, the definition of tasks and roles. There are various online applications dedicated to project management (e.g. Basecamp, Trello). These tools allow to

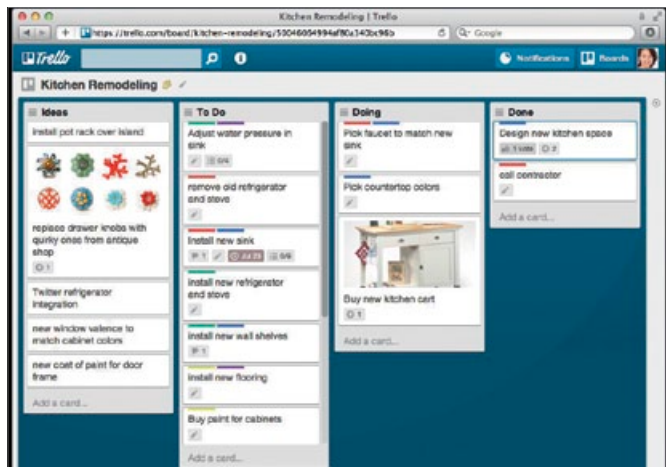


Fig. 12 Trello - <https://trello.com> - Example of simple project management

define the project phases, the different activities and roles, to monitor the progressions and deadlines etc...

## ICT and Administration

Other ICT tools can be implemented to facilitate the administrative tasks. These tools allow to create and share text documents, spreadsheets, presentations etc... Usually they are cloud based applications that do not require to be installed on local computers. The user can create, edit, save and share the documents directly online and in real time.

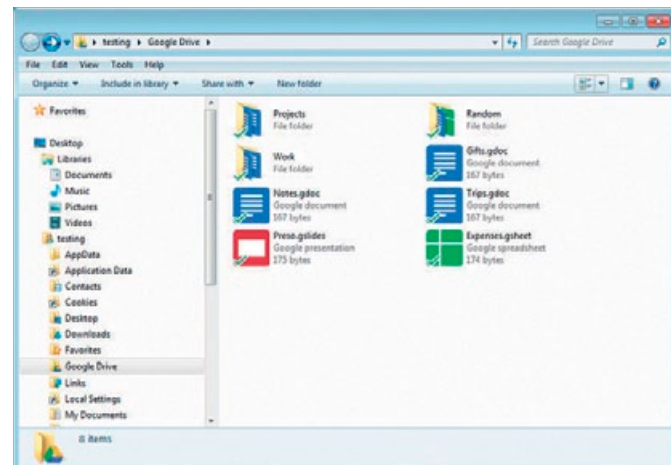


Fig. 13 Google Drive - <https://drive.google.com> – online free tool to create documents

## LEVEL 5 Reference System: Topic/Learning outcome: use ICT as a component of teaching and learning

	COGNITIVE/KNOWLEDGE		ACTIVITY		AFFECTIVE	
	2	3	2	3	2	3
L	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement
5	Know where else (knowledge for Transfer	To have a large background in using ICT in education. To know how to apply ICT in different sectors of work and life. To know how to support others to apply ICT for educational purposes.	Developing/ Constructing Transfer	To build knowledge and expertise, to construct related theory and practice. To help other trainers apply the right approach and tools.	Incorporated	To have an incorporated reflex to use ICT in your teaching and learning. To find it important that the sector adopts ICT based materials and activities To feel the need to help other people use ICT To feel the need to use ICT tools in other domains of life.
4	Know when (Implicit understanding	To know when to use face to face, mixed mode and e-learning approach considering learners (the target group) and objectives. To know when and how to apply different ICT applications for the different objectives of the course.	Discovering/ acting independently	To search for related theory. To create appropriate ICT materials and processes with learning conditions related to the competence development as envisaged.	Self-regulation	To feel the need to review the theories and practices about the ICT in education. To feel the need to share experiences and feedback. To find it important to be curious and creative.
3	Know how	To know how ICT can improve the learning and group cohesion in the different phases of a Grundtvig course.	Deciding/ selecting	Decide to use ICT resources considering the feedback, objectives and timing. Select appropriate applications and software.	Empathy/ appreciation	To value the use of ICT in education. To feel that the use of ICT is important for your role of educator.
2	Know why (Distant understanding	To know that ICT can improve the social sustainable development of Grundtvig courses To know that the use of the ICT in Grundtvig Courses improves the motivation, autonomy, collaboration and creativity of the learners.	Application, Imitation	To occasionally use existing ICT resources, materials, applications in your Grundtvig course.	Perspective taking	To be interested in using ICT applications for teaching and learning in your Grundtvig courses.
1	Know-what	To know what ICT implies. To know that ICT can play an important role as a component of teaching and learning.	Perceiving	To see that ICT is used in education. To recognise the importance of ICT use in Grundtvig courses.	Self-oriented	Feeling that ICT based teaching and learning can be beneficial for your own competence development.

## Chapter 5

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# Paying Attention to the European Dimension of the Course

[www.ginconet.eu/content/attention-european-dimension](http://www.ginconet.eu/content/attention-european-dimension)



The European dimension is a very important aspect in an international mobility training course. It deals with the added value of a European course, compared to a national course. It answers the potential participants' question: "Why should I go abroad for this course instead of taking a similar one in my own country?" Therefore it is very important that course organisers pay attention to the EU dimension of their course.

An international course must be relevant for and answer to the needs of an international audience. Why should other nationalities join your course? We are not only talking about content (topics) but also about learning and teaching approaches, transfer and applicability of outcomes, validation and recognition of competences developed, intercultural aspects etc.

KA1 course organisers should reflect on these issues, provide enhanced awareness for the positive and challenging aspects of international course provision. They should seek to develop their practices with the aim to improve the following competences:

## Course organiser competence profile

### Strengthen the European dimension of the course

#### This competence area involves competences to:

1. Design the course to serve multinational application opportunities
  - To develop products that can be used in many training settings
  - To help develop competences that are relevant in other national education systems

2. Create multinational certification relevance
  - To link the IST training to official certification organisations
  - To create certificates that are linked to official national or European frameworks
3. Use the local situation for cultural and didactic purposes
  - To link course activities with local training organisations
  - To include local cultural elements for didactic purposes
4. Link to European education priorities
  - To pay attention to European education priorities
  - To link up with European Erasmus+ opportunities
5. Promote the multinational synergy in the group
  - To include input from participants from different countries
  - To further multinational networking in the group
  - To manage the diversity in a common frame

### Focus on the European dimension of the topic

Since the European countries are economically and socially linked to each other a number of trends in education and training have a European level. A common European approach to 'a problem' or an 'innovative didactic trend' could be desirable. In order to gain relevance for a European audience one needs to ask the question how the approach or the themes of a course are perceived at this European level.

Since education and training is a national matter, Europe can only work via common goals, guidelines, indicators and



standards in order to entice the member states to reach a common level (open method of coordination). One of these common standards is the European Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. A competence driven approach with references to the European Framework of Key Competences would add to the European dimension of the IST courses. A special GINCO T&T chapter and set of competences is dedicated to innovative didactics and competence oriented training in IST.

### **Link up with European educational priorities**

Education and training also has a 'European dimension' referring to education policy and priorities at European level (e.g. ET 2020 and Erasmus+ priorities). Europe has tried to steer a number of innovative educational trends by presenting them as priorities in the yearly call for projects and as such has offered preference funding opportunities. Course organisers can link up with European policy and/or European education and training priorities as a way to enhance the European dimension of their courses. However, this does not imply that courses should be restricted to the existing policy agenda; there is no need to squeeze courses in the policy box but they should foster existing policies and provide new steps for developing them.

### **Transferability of course outcomes and materials**

An organiser of an international course should also be aware of the fact that teaching and learning approaches and organisational conditions can differ from country to country. In order to be relevant for an international audience it is imperative that the course outcomes and/or materials can be applied in the different 'home organisations' and education systems of the participants. A course therefor should offer international transfer & application opportunities. In this respect it is important

to start from the learning needs of the participant. This identification and articulation of learning needs should start before the course (on-line contacts) but should be an ongoing process during the course.

It is also important to take the expertise of the participants into account. All participants are professionals in their national system. The course theme/topic should start from the home situation of the participant: "How do you do this in your organisation, what is the meaning of this 'term' for you, how is it used in your context?" Don't try to create 'distinction' but emphasise context and approach. Flexibility, reciprocity, constructivism are key.

### **Validation processes and multinational certification relevance**

The aim of validation is to evidence and value an individual's competence development, irrespective of where these have been acquired. Formative validation reveals individual strengths, weaknesses and particular learning needs and can be used as a basis for further training. Summative validation on the other hand should result in formal recognition (for example through a certificate or diploma). There are strong arguments for Grundtvig course organisers to validate the learning outcomes of the participants at their course. Grundtvig courses are run in an international context and – from the perspective of the participant – always in a foreign country. How can a participant get evidence of what he/she has learned and acquired at this course and how can it be recognised in his/her home country? It is also clear that especially adult educators, proven to come from a variety of backgrounds, would benefit from evidenced professional development. A learning outcome validation system would therefore considerably increase the value of a Grundtvig course for its participants.

A special GINCO T&T chapter and set of competences is dedicated to course organisers validating the learning outcomes of their course participants.

## **Networking and international project and mobility opportunities**

The essence of international IST courses is the presence of participants and trainers from different countries, all professionals in their field. This offers opportunities for international networking, exchange of expertise and future cooperation. Make sure that networking is part of the approach and time frame. Promote international cooperation and international mobility actions in the Erasmus+ programme, make sure that this information is available.

## **Take the intercultural dimension into account**

An international course is characterized by mixed nationalities of participants and these courses may be organised by an international team of trainers (would be ideal but is not a requirement any more in the new programme). Course participants will have different individual attitudes, values and norms related to their cultural backgrounds. Take advantage of the international diversity in the group. Trainers should have basic awareness of intercultural issues. Also be aware of language issues in the group, not all participants will master the working language equally. Provide training material in advance in order to let people prepare for the language, to allow them to get acquainted with the terminology etc.

A quality Grundtvig course not only focusses on professional competence development of the participants but also on their personal and social competence development. The European added value of an international course is exactly this intercultural competence development since international courses offer the ideal context for learners to become more competent in intercultural skills. This aspect should be part of the course objectives and course programme.

## **Link up with the locality, social elements, local educational systems.**

From the perspective of the participants Grundtvig courses always take place 'abroad'. This offers opportunities for encounters with the local (national) education system and 'in situ' visits or trainings.

This offer also applies to the social and cultural aspects of the host country. A course should not take place in a confined 'enclave' but interaction with the local culture should be built in in the programme. It is up to the course organiser to find an appropriate balance for training, professional visits and social programme in the light of the objectives of the course and the needs of the participants.

## LEVEL 5 Reference System: Topic/Learning outcome: Competence to design the course to serve multinational application opportunities

	COGNITIVE/KNOWLEDGE		ACTIVITY		AFFECTIVE	
	2	3	2	3	2	3
L	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement
5	Know where else (knowledge for Transfer	To master the European dimension of your topics and approaches. To know European education policy. To know how to link it with international training. To know how to help other people include the European dimension in their courses.	Developing/ Constructing Transfer	To develop techniques for introducing European level info. To develop transfer techniques.	Incorporated	To have an incorporated reflex to address multinational course application needs. To find it important that international courses pay attention to the multinational applicability of the learning outcomes. To feel the need to help other people in this respect.
4	Know when (Implicit understanding	To know when and how to include transfer techniques, European level info, multi-national info from the different participating countries in your courses.	Discovering/ acting independently	To introduce European level info, to take multinational application fields into account, to try out transfer techniques. To search for theory and techniques.	Self-regulation	To find it important to build expertise on the European dimension of your topics and courses.
3	Know how	To know techniques to include European and country related info. To know what the European dimension of your topics involves. To know how to transfer your topics in different education systems.	Deciding/ selecting	To apply existing techniques to introduce the European dimension of your approaches and topics in your courses.	Empathy/ appreciation	To value the European dimension of your course topics. To find it important to pay attention to the multinational applicability of your course topics and approaches.
2	Know why (Distant understanding	To know that your course topics and didactic approaches may need adaptations to be applied efficiently in the different education systems in European countries.	Application, Imitation	Paying attention to the European dimension of your course topics and approaches. Occasionally apply techniques to introduce European matters and broaden the application scope of your course.	Perspective taking	To be interested in the European dimension of your job. Feeling the need to look for International and European level information on the topics you deal with.
1	Know-what	To know that European countries have different education systems and different 'education and training cultures'. To know that a European course needs to address this European reality.	Perceiving	Perceiving that international and European education approaches and material need adaptations and transfer to be applicable in your own work.	Self-oriented	To feel the need to obtain approaches and material adapted to your education system.

## Chapter 6

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# Providing Social and Personal Support

[www.ginconet.eu/content/providing-social-and-personal-support](http://www.ginconet.eu/content/providing-social-and-personal-support)

The GINCO network focuses on how to organise and deliver international courses for adult educators. This chapter, as all others, is about courses attended by adult educators. We are reflecting on what kind of support these learning professionals would need while attending a course. The first part of the chapter focuses on the programme/environment characteristics of a course that would be perceived as supportive and helpful by participants; the second part emphasises the kind of support that not always can be scheduled, but is more a matter of being there when support is needed.

## Course organiser competence profile

### Providing social and professional support

**This competence area involves competences to:**

1. provide personal and social mentoring and coaching
  - To motivate participants to take part
2. give personal emotional support
  - To help participants feel well in the group
3. to manage group dynamics
  - To solve conflicts in the group
4. support the learning process
  - To give advice to participants on their learning steps
5. provide professional consultancy and counselling
  - To contribute to transfer of learning outcomes into the home situation
  - To give advice on perspectives for future career opportunities

The success of a course is to a large extent depending on the way participants feel. Their well-being is a crucial condition for learning and vice versa learning adds to their sense of well-being. That is why we devote a particular chapter of this manual to the issue of social and personal support. Three pillars support the well-being of course participants.

### Competence

One is the idea that the course actually adds to one's competence. What we mean here is that taking part in the course will lead, and already leads to better performance in relevant situations in the participant's life.

### Influence

The second condition for well-being is the belief that the learning process is in the participant's own hands. This self-directedness or inner locus of control is an important condition for well-being and as such indirectly for learning.

### Belonging

The third pillar is a sense of belonging. Participants need to have the feeling to be part of the group, they need to feel welcome, heard and accepted.

In international courses we are facing a lot of circumstances that may affect these three pillars negatively, if we do not intentionally organise things, or communicate in such a way people feel comfortable as participants.

## Some barriers to overcome

### Language barriers

In international courses participants may be facing language problems. That is why it is important to consider what can be done to deal with these problems. Some important texts with terminology and definitions can be sent to the participants beforehand or discussed in the online sessions. Also our suggestion is to consider to work alternately in groups of the same/similar languages and in mixed groups.



In that way the possible frustration of not having been able to express oneself properly, or understand others fully in the multi-lingual group, can be expressed, or clarified afterwards in the mono-lingual group.

### **Cultural barriers**

In many ways cultural differences may affect the processes during a course. People may have different habits, religions, convictions, traditions. These backgrounds affect day to day life. A course organiser must be aware of this and know how to respect the differences and seek to find the added value they may have for the course. The best way to do that is to make the cultural aspects as transparent as possible. It may concern the food people wish to eat or not wish to eat; it may refer to ways in which people talk to each other, views on politeness and respect, it may affect the way people dress, whether or not they need time to be on their own etc. Course organisers need to make time for this part of the intake procedure for a course and during the course it is good to make the cultural aspects part of reflection. This is good for the course itself and it also adds to the insight of the participants on how they may deal with these issues in courses they will deliver themselves later on.

### **Sector barriers**

What applies to the cultural backgrounds of participants is also true for their professional background. Within the sector of adult education we may distinguish a lot of sub sectors such as crafts education, second chance education, arts education, language education, civic education, ICT education etc. These and other sectors often show big differences in focus, culture and style. These differences are often taken for granted. Still adult educators all experience these differences and they see that what works in one sector does not necessarily have success in another sector. That is why it is recommended to approach these differences in exactly the same way as other cultural differences by making them explicit and by reflecting on these differences and discuss the pros and cons in various contexts.

### **Generational barriers**

Courses for adult educators attract people of different ages. Different ages, or even generation also bring a kind of diversity in a group that a course organiser may need to take into account. It affects the things that may be done with the complete group, or in subgroups. Not all people may be physically fit, or mobile to the same extent; interest and experiences may differ. These differences sometimes are barriers, but often they are also an enrichment in the course. The challenge is to be aware of them, to share them and to learn from them.

The differences as mentioned above, affect the work of the course organiser in all phases. It starts with how you approach the target groups. It affects the written and oral communication about the course, it influences the delivery of the course, the way participants are grouped, what kinds of social programme you choose etc.

## **Educational process support**

### **Adult learners' needs**

Adult learners, maybe even more than other learners, need to feel acknowledged. They are filled with experience of many kinds so they want to be heard, not only talked at. In adult education participants feel the need to speak up, to share things and to be part of a communication. This does not imply that nobody is shy, or in other ways reluctant to have an input, but basically every learner wishes to be seen, to be heard and to be appreciated. This applies to the course content areas but it also means that people feel a need to be taken seriously in many fields of interest in their professional and private life.

In many activities during a course these needs may be fulfilled. Partly this is done during course activities, but also during breaks, evening programmes, cultural events, outdoor activities etc.

## Welcome

Course organisers will have to see to it that people feel welcome. Giving a welcome speech is one part of it, but this feeling of being welcome needs to be started already before the course and maintained during the whole delivery of the course. The sense of being welcome is a wide concept which includes elements such as:

- A safe and secure learning environment in which you may express yourself, in which your inputs are respected and accepted (though not necessarily agreed upon).
- A course environment that makes a learner feel welcome must also be flexible in order to meet various needs.
- The learners will need space, room to move, and freedom to do things their way.
- At the same time and equally important is the necessity of making participants responsible for what they do.

This mix of freedom to make choices and responsibility for individual and group processes/products and progress are vital elements to be included in a course for adult educators. Feeling taken seriously, feeling appreciated and feeling included are important aspects of the concept of feeling welcome. Such feelings only arise when people get opportunities to show something of themselves, or about themselves. In the choice of course elements this may be a consideration. It will affect the choice of icebreakers; the kind of social activities, the kind of settings to be included in the course.

## Adult educators are practice oriented

Adult educators are practical people. They are experienced educators; they have seen a lot and studied a lot, dealt with many groups and with a variety of learners. They themselves attend courses in order to increase their professional level of competence. They want to gain from it and to be convinced that they will come home more competent than before the course. And they wish this competence to be practical.

This practical need has great implications for the design of a course or a learning event. The offer must include a

mix of theory and practical elements. Various aspects of learning will have to be included. In order to become more competent the learner will need to develop cognitively, socially (social and communicative skills, network of contacts), affectively (motivation, persistence, confidence) and behaviourally (performance).

Practical issues tend to be multidisciplinary. Problems and tasks seldom are subject based. That is why a multidisciplinary approach is almost a necessity in the course we consider in this manual.

Another related set of aspects to keep in mind is the intellectual, emotional and the physical aspect. Here again the search is for balance. At first glance it may seem as if the course content is either intellectual or more physical or more about emotions, but in second instance the challenge is to find a balance between all three dimensions. A competence is a holistic concept in which all the components mentioned are brought together. They are brought together in order to become part of the person acquiring the competence. The person needs the knowledge, the skills and the attitudes, in order to be capable and feel motivated to perform in real life situations. That is practical.

## Balanced programmes

International courses tend to be very intensive. They take some days in a row; there is no escape. For a number of days participants get a lot of information, meet a lot of new people, get numerous impressions, communicate in other languages or try to understand the languages other people use. These conditions in the end reduce the effects of the course. That is why it is recommended to seek to establish a balanced programme that allows people to take part without getting exhausted.

A balanced programme has a rhythm of:

- concentration,
- (co-)creation,
- reflection and
- relaxation.

The concentration means that the programme includes elements in which people are really concentrating on particular content or issues. This may be attending a presentation, self-study, paper, working on assignments.... Apart from such studious activities there are group activities in which the participants work together to create something (an idea, a model, a design, a product).

The programme also includes moments of reflection during which participants develop thoughts about the things they have heard, studied or created. These reflective sessions may include discussions, debates, evaluations, or reflective assignments. During the reflection sessions the learning process is made explicit and participants are invited, or challenged to describe the insights they gained and the competences they developed. The reflection is needed in order to harvest the fruits of the learning process. Without moments of reflection learning outcomes often vanish in the long run.

In a balanced programme there is also need for relaxation. Many programmes tend to be packed not allowing enough time for relaxation. There should be moments to be on your own, with fresh air while taking a walk, moments of rest. This is not a plea for laziness; it is a plea for effectiveness and efficiency.

Another aspect of balance is related to the modes/channels through which the programme is delivered. In an international context with all the complexity as sketched above (language, cultural sectorial and generational issues) it is important to see to it that the course is provided in a multisensory way, so not just words, but also pictures, models, drawings, materials, etc. If one channel of communication is not enough other channels may compensate for that.

### **Give and take**

Adult learning and particularly competence oriented adult learning requires interaction. Participants are indeed participants, they take part. The course trainer, as well as

the attendants are adult educators. This emphasises even more the need to interact. It is a kind of peer to peer education. That is why participants should be challenged, invited or allowed to have input, to share thoughts and to enrich their thoughts together. Mutual learning is a necessary feature of the courses and learning activities we are considering in this manual.

### **Challenge and Support**

Learning is facilitated in many ways. In this chapter so far we focused on the conditions learners need. The suggestions made may give the impression that learning should be made easy. When asked about important learning experiences in their professional lives, people often mention periods in their lives that were not easy. They felt pressed, challenged, they invested a lot of energy and now, looking back, they experience it as highly rewarding. The conclusion here is not that we should push people, but it is wise to consider options as to how challenges may be included in the course. A metaphor used to illustrate this is that we often try to create a learning activity as a warm bath for the learner, while in reality often a cold shower may be more effective (and refreshing).

### **Rules of the game**

During adult education courses a lot of things are being discussed and some of them are really personal. That is why it is necessary to agree on particular rules on how everyone will deal with the information that is exchanged. It is crucial that this is explicitly explained and discussed. A course provider needs to guarantee that privacy is respected; also the participants need to agree on these rules. A sense of trust, privacy is a basis for a safe learning environment. Specific attention has to be paid to privacy and exposure of data on the Internet.

### **Individual support**

The conditions mentioned so far mostly referred to the course programme. During a course however, often situations arise in which individual participants need individual attention and support. This personal element

in a course needs careful planning. Since things arise as they do it is impossible to anticipate all needs in detail. Nevertheless it is possible to include in the programme opportunities and moments for individual consultation, coaching or help. This may be needed for many reasons:

- Because of things that happen during the course (conflict; sad events, misunderstandings etc.);
- Because of a personal issue that pops up in the context of the course (a sense of insecurity; a need to speak up about something that is bothering in one's private or professional life at home);
- It may be something related to the learning process (a need for further explanation, suggestions in how to approach a task; talk about an assessment result etc.);
- The participants take part on behalf of an organisation, what they learn will have to be brought home and affect the work there. Coaching often concerns this process of serving like a change agent in the home organisation (it focuses on implementation and dissemination issues).

It is recommended to provide staff time for such supportive interventions. To some extent they may be scheduled as consultation/coaching or mentoring hours, but these activities may also be flexible, only to be provided when needed. It is important to try to anticipate the kind of issues that may surface during a course. However, many things will just come as they come.

### **Hobbies, interests and talents**

The reasons mentioned above are problem oriented. However in order to support people there is no need to await problems first. In the set-up of a course there are plenty possibilities to allow people to show things they are interested in, or proud of. Participants may like to bring musical instruments, may like to prepare some food, do some games, or acts, do sports together, some may enjoy singing etc. When the programme allows such opportunities, the mutual communication, the sense of connectedness, professional friendships will benefit from it. This is not only good at the moment itself, but it also

adds to the sustainability of the group as a professional learning network.

### **Location**

The place where the course is delivered offers, apart from the learning environment/accommodation, also the site in the wider sense of the word. It may be a town setting or a more rural setting. The site may offer many opportunities for getting acquainted, for mutual learning, shared activities, informal chats.... In order to feel at ease and ready to learn it may be wise to also explore the area a bit. Since we are not focussing on the core content of the programme in this chapter the reader by now may feel that there isn't any programme left. The point we are trying to make is that for a safe, secure, focused and effective learning process to take place people need to know where they are, with whom they are dealing, what are the rules of the game, the possibilities to escape (freedom) and the nature of the back-up (support) system. The location/site/area, may well be used to facilitate this.

### **Action planning support**

A specific aspect of the social and personal support concerns the process of transferring the things learned to the home organisation situation. People attending courses are often facing obstacles once they return to their work. They wish to spread the news of what they have learned and how that may be used to the benefit of the organisation. The participants are in a way to be considered change agents. They represent their organisation and as such they are supposed to bring back to the organisation the competences and the tools to support the development of the organisation.

This implies that already during the course attention must be paid to the process of action planning for the dissemination and active transfer of the acquired insights to the home situation. Participants will need to inform their colleagues, they will have to plan a process of

implementation of the newly acquired competences and developed ideas, tools or products.

The support needed in this process cannot all be given during the course. Part of it will have to be made available during the follow-up phase in which the participants and the trainers among each other may provide support and advice. This mutual sharing of the post course experiences keeps the participants aware of the plans they made, creates a sense of commitment and a help line in case of problems.

Overlooking the whole educational process we see an initial phase in which the learning outcomes are defined and linked to the organisation based European development of the organisation. Then we go through the process of establishing a learning agreement. During the course the agreed learning activities are carried out and transferred into an action plan for the implementation of the innovative ideas, actions, tools etc. The trainers and the other participants support that process. This is followed by activities in the own organisations, during which the trainers and the participants keep in touch and provide each other with feedback, support and advice. All is done for the optimisation of the eventual impact of the learning processes and their spin off.





# Conclusion

**GINCO**

The KA1 action in Erasmus+ deals with international professional development of educational staff. The rules in this action have drastically changed the relationship between the stakeholders involved: the individual (candidate) participant can only act through his/her organisation, this sending organisation has to come up with a European development plan in order to get the grants, the NAs keep an eye on quality and policy priorities through the KA1 application assessment process, the course providers are in a project relationship with the 'sender' or are in a free market situation.

### The sending organisations

The sending organisations in the KA1 system are all kinds of educational and training organisations spread over Europe. They apply for a KA1 grant and, if successful, look out for appropriate courses (abroad) to suit their training needs, send their staff out and (try to) profit from the new competences acquired by those members of staff.

### The National Agencies

The NAs decide on grants: they approve or disapprove the KA1 projects of the organisations who sent in their KA1 application based on their staff development plan and training needs. The assessment criteria are related to clarity of the plan, staff development needs, dissemination and impact, European priorities etc. This assessment process is the only phase in the grant system where direct quality control comes in: the quality of the application and the plan of the 'sender'. Once the application is approved the sending organisation selects the courses and sends its teachers out. At this stage feedback on the courses will only reach the NA one or two years later when the KA1 project report of the sender comes in.

### The course providers

Since the sending organisations, after approval of their application, can pick any course that suits their needs, the group of course providers consists of a large variety of organisations: public training organisations as well as private bodies offering education related topics and content.

- Some of these providers used to be in the former LLP training database, others were not,
- some of them are used to work with grantees, others are new, just picked out by a sending organisation, even unaware of the KA1 grant system and European priorities,
- some of them come out of former LLP projects and others don't,
- some of the courses are specially created for a grant based audience and are flexible to respond to needs, others are fixed courses only picking up an occasional grantee
- some of them are in a mobility project with the sending organisation, others aren't.
- 

These different (types of) providers have different objectives and different needs. This group also is scattered over Europe and 'hard to reach'.

### Outreach

At this moment many sending organisations face the problem of finding the right course. In the absence of a database they have to refer to previous contacts or search the internet. For the provider the market is situated all over Europe except in his home country as KA1 grants only cover mobility training abroad. Therefore the provider's publicity and outreach must aim at a foreign audience. This is difficult for an individual course provider. So the two parties in the system, both scattered over Europe, have difficulties in finding each other.

## Quality

Course quality is a big issue but the present system does not support a direct impact on the providers and the quality of the course offer. The course providers are in a competitive free market system and are asked to offer value for money. But in the 'KA1 field' there is no normal system that 'regulates' the market. Providers and 'clients' live far from each other. The providers hardly know each other and also the future clients don't know each other. Courses are not directly evaluated and so far there is no public feedback system.

The KA1 action in Erasmus+ calls for competence development, a needs oriented approach, an international profile, validation, strives for working with learning agreements and puts forward a number of priority themes. Most of these elements are reflected in the criteria of the KA1 applications of the sending organisations. These applicants are looking for the courses answering their needs and fitting their European development plan. The European policy is present on the demand side so it must also be present in the course offer.

So for GINCO the course quality criteria are clear. Courses should:

- be innovative and competence oriented
- care for quality and have a self-evaluation system on board
- link up with European education priorities
- include a European dimension and exploit the European added value
- engage in learning agreements and validation of the individual learning outcomes
- use ICT in an appropriate way
- take care of transfer and impact
- A possible GINCO quality label would be based on these criteria.

## Competence development of course organisers

In order to promote and support these quality elements GINCO T&T offers support material for the competence development of course organisers willing to create a quality offer for the 'KA1 market'. The GINCO competence profile of the course provider pays attention to all competences related to the development and delivery of a quality course. In February 2014 the GINCO Tools & Training team also organised the first pilot Grundtvig course on competence development for international course organisers and trainers in Alden Biesen, Belgium. The course was based on the approach, methods and material created during the GINCO T&T project. Since competence based teaching and learning is one of the key elements of a quality course the GINCO T&T course was conceived as a competence driven course. A number of working methods fostering competence development were used: open space, work on cases, exchange experiences, demonstrations of tools, tool market, peer learning, co-creation of tools and methods based on an issue/problem, learning by doing, self-assessment, feedback sessions, assignments, dilemma's ...

Input and presentations were reduced to a minimum. In view of the new European education programme a first presentation dealt with "How do ERASMUS+ rules and opportunities affect the organisation of your international training course? Other topics for input were: quality care & evaluation, competence driven didactics, PR & marketing, validation of learning outcomes and the European dimension of international education staff training.

As for the needs of the GINCO course participants (running IST courses themselves) it became clear that quality care and self-evaluation seem to be rather well established in in-service training practice. On the other hand it turned out that courses are hardly ever described in terms of competences and learning outcomes and are usually not structured as competence driven courses. Also validation of individual learning outcomes is unknown territory for most course organisers. There still

is a long way to go before these elements will be common practice in European staff training courses. The pilot course paid special attention to these elements.

The 'hottest' item at the course was PR and marketing. The fact that the 'database' is no longer active, places the course organisers for the problem of international outreach. Therefore a lot of course organisers opt for the creation of consortia or networks to bundle their outreach efforts.

The course had a very high level of 'practice what you preach': all course elements were active examples, directly applicable in the course proposals of the participants. It was competence driven, Europe oriented, with a number of self-evaluation techniques and opportunities for validation of individual learning outcomes. From the start participants were asked to work 'on a case': a course they had been running in the past but wanted to improve, or a new course

they planned to organise in the future. All input was to be applied on their 'case'. Trainers were available to some extent as trainers, but also as experts, moderators, mentors etc. Specific needs and demands were met in open spaces.

A second pilot course took place in September 2014 and the GINCO team will continue to organise these courses. For new dates please look at [www.ginconet.eu](http://www.ginconet.eu) > activities.


## Networking and branding

GINCO is a candidate to support the networking of the providers and their outreach efforts but definitely wants to link this to a quality label and a validation process. In 2014 the GINCO e-Portfolio was created on the my-VITA platform ([ginco.my-vita.eu](http://ginco.my-vita.eu)) which is a rich (Mahara based) collaboration and learning environment.

### GINCO-NET

by GINCO Network

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#### GINCO - European Network of IST course providers


The GINCO network provides a network for European educational institutions which both seek and offer courses and other learning events for educational professionals. Based on long term experience in the Lifelong learning programme the institutions gathering in the network follow a clear quality charter and correspond to all criteria requested in the new ERASMUS+ programme. GINCO offers a market place for courses and services, an open learning environment for its members and competence oriented courses with interfaces to validation and the European certification systems (EQF, EUROPASS).

By clicking on the buttons below you get access to:

- In Service Training courses offered by our members
- European IST providers
- Educational institutions from all sectors interested in continuing professional development (CPD) for their staff members







#### GINCO News

**New course on environmental education in Apulia, Italy**

There is a brandnew course offer called ReWild provided by the EU-LINK partner Paradiso Ritrovato...

Tim Scholze (Tim Scholze - tscholze02)


**GINCO IST Providers course**

The GINCO course for IST providers will start 16th of February in the beautiful premises of Aiden...

Tim Scholze (Tim Scholze - tscholze02)

[Go to forums >](#)

[LINK to the GINCO learning space for course providers](#)





It has three main functionalities:

1. The **GINCO learning space** is the virtual home of the GINCO courses. Parallel to the courses in Alden Biesen and at the partner locations all over Europe GINCO offers an „open learning environment“ for its competence oriented learning offers.
2. Through the **Networking area** one can liaise with likeminded organisations, find course offers or interested institutions (AE-institutions and schools), develop their European development plans for ERASMUS+ and establish a sound validation system including individual e-Portfolios of their educational staff. In the future it can serve as a virtual market place on which course providers find “client” educational organisations and vice versa.
3. Eventually it includes an **e-Portfolio** which facilitates the collection of all relevant documents and evidences (like CV, certificates, proofs, pieces of work) related to the own professional development. Individuals can organise everything online and give access to those people that may be interested in it. Of course one can also keep all that confidential.



## Envisaged IMPACT:

The GINCO platform can support KA1 stakeholders (course providers, sending educational institutes and their professionals) to achieve the goals set by the European Commission, namely:

1. to reach the objectives set and give evidence of the competence development described in the European Development Plans (EDP) by the sending institutions and to evidence (validate) the competences of the trained professionals
2. to provide a professional development tool for the educational staff (e-portfolio) in which the validation certificates can be included and connected to the EUROPASS or even with ECVET and EQF tools through the connection with the LEVEL5 software system
3. To provide a validation of competences in the KA1 course which is crucial for the course providers.

Hence the GINCO platform offers, additionally to an attractive market place for KA1 course providers and their clients, an instrument to validate learning outcomes and competence development, which is a precondition for a successful application in KA1.

Support material, training, networking opportunities and a GINCO label are all products of the GINCO T&T project and help GINCO focus on quality of the KA1 offer and the delivery of the courses. The sector also needs visibility at European level. Hopefully bigger structures (e.g. EPALE) can play a role in this.



## Pilot course in Alden Biesen




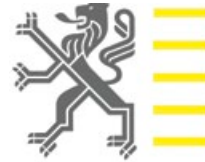






## Ginco T&T partners

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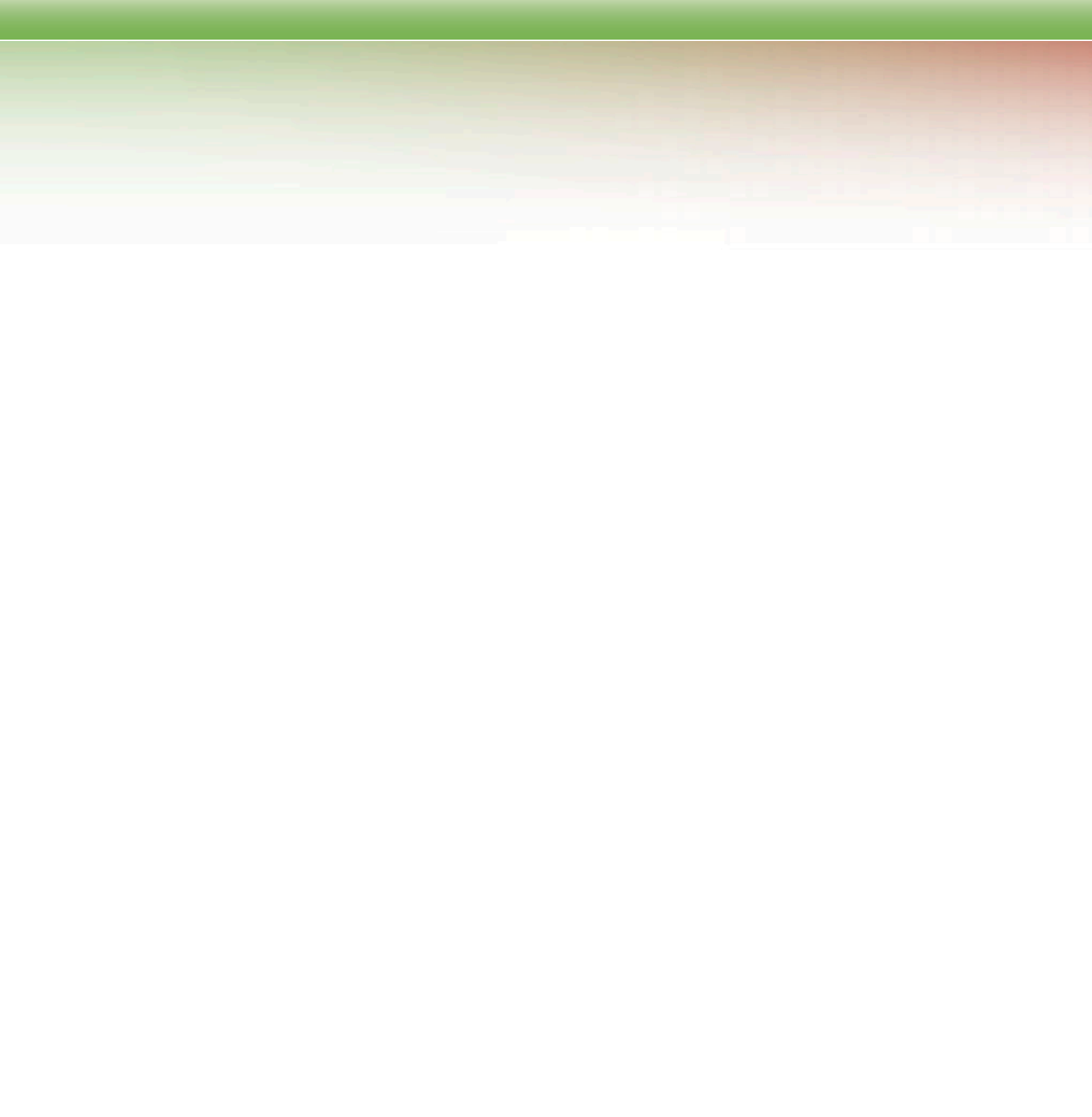
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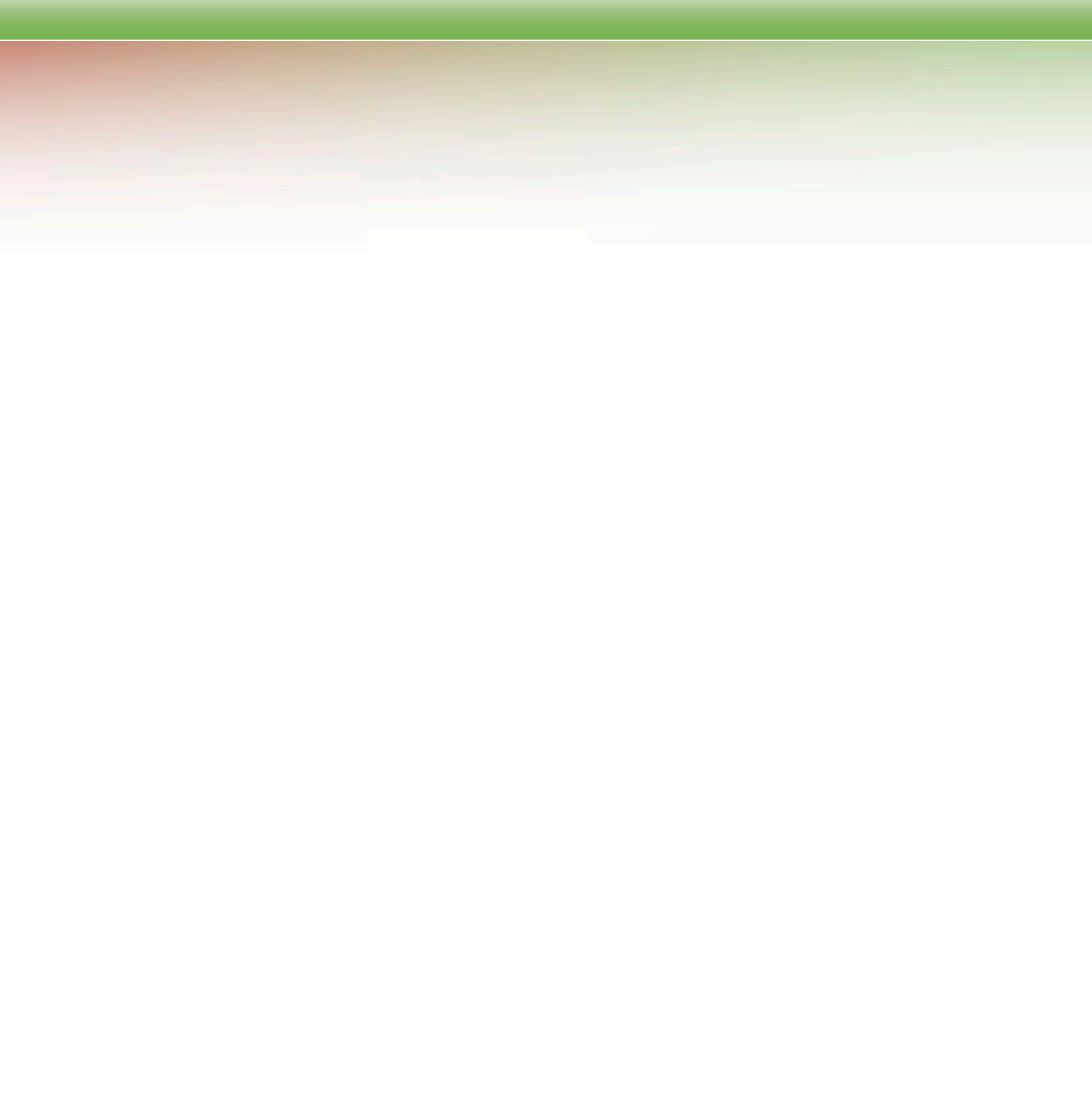


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# GINCO

## Tools & Training

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*Translations of this manual in French and German are available on the project website:*

***[www.ginconet.eu](http://www.ginconet.eu)***

Project co-ordinator

Alden  Biesen

Vlaamse overheid  KUNSTEN  
EN ERFGOED



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