



**EU.EM.NET: European systematic approach for employers' engagement to
anticipate skills requirements**

and support quality assurance (QA) in VET

Project No. 527838-LLP-1-2012-1-SK-LEONARDO-LNW

Grant Agreement No. 212-3793/001-001

EU.EM.NET Core Methodology Testing Report

WP4

Country: Croatia

Partner: HUP & HOK

Date: 31.3.2015.

Prepared by: Natali Komen Bujas

Contact: nkomen@hup.hr

Section 1: Organisation

1.1 Selection of the invited

As our task is to come with answer How to involve employers more in the process of skills anticipations; and the **key actors** in skills anticipation in Croatia are: **Sectorial Councils, Agency for vocational education and training, and chambers and employers' associations; we decided to invite:**

- **Employers' – members of CEA and CCC which are already active in the field of vocational training needs and other educational „problems“...**
- **Present members of Sectoral Council for Tourism and Hospitality, which are all important stakeholders (Councils consist of representatives of the social partners - employers and trade unions, and representatives of the Government (Ministry of Science, Education and**

Sports, and Agency for Vocational Education and Training), and educational system (schools, colleges ...).

Employers are involved in skills forecasting mainly **through the work of Sectorial Councils and by direct counselling to the providers of educational services (private), so we concluded that they would be a perfect focus group for our workshop.**

1.2 Preparation

The invited persons were approached first by phone talk as we knew them for many common activities, and then by email with prepared invitation form (with all exact information's about workshop: venue, program, specific goals ...) In addition we used a professional formatted invitation document which was based on the draft presented in the core methodology document.

1.3 Venue, logistics, duration

Venue: Seminar room in Croatian Employers' Association in Zagreb

Type of the workshop (2-day, 1-day, 3-hours): **3-hours**

Start (time and date): 12 h – 31.3.2015.

Finish (time and date): 16 h – 31.3.2015.

Comments: The choice of the venue was based on the free of charge opportunity and the nearness to the participants of the workshop. The free rooms' capacity of Croatian Employers' Association in Zagreb was very practical because it is situated right in the centre of Zagreb. So that was right choice because the minimal time resources were necessary to travel to the workshop venue.

For refreshment were offered coffee, some cookies and other non-alcoholic drinks to the participants during the whole workshop.

The selected duration of four hours was decided upon the opinion that for our focus group is difficult to find a whole day time for such type of workshop, and that 4 hours were the maximum duration possible. However the workshop itself showed that a longer duration might have improved the results of the workshop.

1.3 Attendance statistics

| | employers/employers representatives | VET providers/schools | policy makers | total |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------|
| invited | 20 | 4 | 8 | 32 |
| responded | 10 | 2 | 6 | 18 |
| attended | 4 | 2 | 5 | 11 |

Section 2: Content

2.1. Key question(s)

The main topic of workshop was: New skills for new jobs

The Key Question was: **How to equip people with the right skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow?**

There was no aim to discuss about concrete anticipation of skills, but about **how to improve skills anticipation practices on a system level?**

Specific Questions were:

- How to improve present national system of skills anticipation in T&H sector?
- How to include more and integrate employers in process of skill anticipation?
- What kind of system could bring us effective skills anticipation processes to meet employer's needs in terms of quantity, quality and types of skills needed in the future for example ...?

2.2 Critique phase

Regarding the present status in the field, many obstacles were highlighted as key issues:

- Incompatibility of the legislative framework,
- Inertia of the education system and too slow changes,
- Repeating the same projects, research, analyses ... (we have the results and, for example, 3 new qualification standards made in the tourism and hospitality sector which have not been implemented so far- why ?),
- Absence of a clearly defined system of communication of the businesses towards the educational system,
- Mismatches between the quota and the needs of the labour market, and the lack of political will for real and necessary labour market reforms,
- Problems with performance of apprenticeships and contents of the curriculum,
- Irresponsibility and incompetence of policy makers, unsustainability of the system.

2.3 Phantasy & Realisation phase

Following the emphasized problems and obstacles in the system, the participants through the creative phase and generation of new ideas and suggestions as to how the system of anticipation of labour market needs should be organized in ideal conditions, have come to the following **WORKSHOPS CONCLUSIONS:**

a) Aimed at improving the system of anticipating necessary knowledge and skills

- It is important to establish a "central communication point" for communication of businesses with the education system - to clearly define who is responsible for the communication and "address" to which concrete proposals and the needs of the business sector can be sent (and from that central point same proposals would be further communicated to the Sectoral Council),
- To ensure working conditions to the Sectoral Councils, Regional Centres and Centres of competence, as places for connecting employers and the education system, in order to establish effective communication,

- To coordinate and define more clearly legal framework, and to bring political decision - if we want to standardize and have flexible legislation in the field of education,
- To implement best practices from the European Union in a way that the specificity of the educational system is respected, and at the same being innovated,
- To introduce education system accreditation in a way that public funding is redefined, and a system of validation, control and monitoring is established to ensure the quality of the system,
- To introduce a system of educational of mentors and teachers,
- To introduce financial incentives for employers who invest in professional training and learning, and for teachers who invest in their own development ...
- To strengthen intra-governmental communication and ensure competencies of policy makers,
- To develop the society of knowledge and encourage lifelong learning ...

b) Aimed at stronger involvement of employers in the process of assessment and planning of new skills in the sector

- The purpose of engagement of employers and possibilities for their impact - the implementation of the necessary changes - should be clearly noted, as well as communication channels (whether these are Sectoral Councils or?)
- Raising awareness of the importance of their involvement and the indirect benefits among employers (through different workshops, conferences, etc.)
- Organising conferences, events to present new knowledge in particular areas - by professions and in collaboration with professional associations
- Launching web portal, on which daily needs for certain professions, knowledge and skills would be able to be registered, and deficits and deviations monitored (networking of different institutions and stakeholders and daily "up-to-date" communication...)
- Professionalization of and support to the work of Sectoral Councils

Section 3: Feedback

3.1 Feedback report/analysis

- 1. Has the today's discussion been helpful for you in understanding in which way employers and education providers can be better engaged together with the aim of better understanding employers' needs?**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7x1 (10%) 8x3 (30%) 9x3(30%)
10x3 (30%)

Not helpful at all

Extremely helpful

Comments:

- good choice of participants, heated discussions, many ideas
- very constructive discussion
- learn to listen each other

- 2. Do you find the workshop methodology useful to express opinion, encourage discussion, exchange of experiences and problem solving?**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8x1 (10%) 9x4 (40%) 10x5
(50%)

Not at all

Very much

Comments:

- there is still room to "fee" oneself of bureaucratic way of thinking

- 3. The methodology includes several phases: critics, fantasy and realisation. Do you find this way useful/productive way of discussion?**

Yes x 10 (100%)

No

- 4. Are there any parts of the workshop that you consider extremely useful and meaningful?**

- communication links
- discussions and small groups work
- suggestions
- work group and panel discussions
- discussion, recommendations, conclusions
- defining the next steps
- legal framework – beginning of solution
- use good practice of EU countries

- 5. Is there some part of the workshop which you find is not good and could be improved?**

- no x 5

- training of VET teachers

6. How would you rate the selection of room, location, organisation, and host?

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9x2 (20%) | 10x8 (80%) |
| Poor | | | | | | | | Excellent | |

Comments:

- a little tight, working in groups at the same table

7. If you have any additional comments, please write them down.

- we need more workshops like this one
- I would like to see at least one person from the Parliament taking part in the workshop , they raise hands for adopting laws
- very good facilitation – Mrs. Natali

3.2 Partner's (organiser's) experience

It would be important to invite employers separately, and with them make a full-day workshop which would certainly resulted in more concrete proposals and ideas for improving the system of skills anticipation and assessment ...

Section 4: Recommendations

4.1 Recommendations towards the Core Methodology/ Future Skills Workshop

EU.EM.NET project is aimed at achieving a system which will allow companies to have employees with the right skills for competitiveness and future development of T&H sector. Employers know best what skills are needed for their labour force in order for businesses to be successful and to accomplish their entrepreneurial vision.

So, the workshop is a good platform for discussion, stakeholders were willing to share their opinions and follow the structure, which enabled them to think in a slightly different way. On the other hand, they would expect some follow-up action coming from the Methodology, and some concrete steps further.

4.2 Recommendations for action in the field of future skills needs

The main purpose of the workshop was to give certain recommendations to main question: What formal approaches/practices are needed in order to anticipate future skills demand in the T&H sector?

Opening discussion was about the current state of play about our national system of skills anticipation.

Do we have a formal approach and connection between employers - required knowledge and skills in the tourism and hospitality sector, and schools - their outcomes; in relations to educational system – and planning of labour market needs?

Following the emphasized problems and obstacles in the system, the participants through the creative phase and generation of new ideas and suggestions as to how the system of anticipation of labour market needs should be organized in ideal conditions, have come to the following proposals:

a) Aimed at improving the system of anticipating necessary knowledge and skills

- It is important to establish a "central communication point" for communication of businesses with the education system
- To ensure working conditions to the Sectoral Councils, Regional Centres and Centres of competence, as places for connecting employers and the education system, in order to establish effective communication,
- To coordinate and define more clearly legal framework,
- To introduce education system accreditation in a way that public funding is redefined, and a system of validation, control and monitoring is established to ensure the quality of the system,
- To introduce a system of educational of mentors and teachers,
- To introduce financial incentives for employers who invest in professional training and learning, and for teachers who invest in their own development ...

b) Aimed at stronger involvement of employers in the process of assessment and planning of new skills in the sector

- The purpose of engagement of employers and possibilities for their impact - should be clearly noted, as well as communication channels (whether these are Sectoral Councils or?)
- Raising awareness of the importance of their involvement and the indirect benefits among employers (through different workshops, conferences, etc.)

- Launching web portal, on which daily needs for certain professions, knowledge and skills would be able to be registered, and deficits and deviations monitored Professionalization of and support to the work of Sectoral Councils

Section 5: Summary

Please provide a brief summary (approximately one page) about the workshop for dissemination purposes.

Within planned activities of the EU project "EU.EM.NET", in HUP Zagreb was held "The future skills workshop" on 31st of March 2015. With this workshop we actually tested the Core Methodology assessed by the project activities to improve the skills anticipation processes in the tourism and hospitality sector.

The workshop is jointly organized by the Croatian Employers Association and the Croatian Chamber of Crafts, partners in the EU.EM.NET project.

The one-day workshop was oriented on all aspects of "New skills for new jobs", and its participants were discussing "**How to equip people with the right skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow?**" "As the second main task was to come with answer „How to involve employers more in the process of skills anticipations“; and the **key actors** in skills anticipation in Croatia are: **Sectorial Councils, Agency for vocational education and training, and chambers and employers' associations; we decided to invite: employers – members of CEA and CCC which are already active in the field of vocational training needs and other educational „problems“ .. and the present members of Sectoral Council for Tourism and Hospitality. The fruitful discussion and plenty of good recommendations give us a right to conclude that this choice of invited persons was a right choice.**The workshop was attended by employers, representatives of educational system and vocational schools, the main labour market stakeholders in the tourism sector: the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Labour and Pension System, Ministry of Education and Sports, the Agency for Vocational and Adult Education, representative of Chambers ...

The objectives of the workshop were focused on creative participants' discussion with the aim of getting out with new solutions and mechanisms to improve the existing system.

So we become ask and become lot of ideas and recommendation's on following questions:

- How to improve present national system of skills anticipation in T&H sector?
- How to include more and integrate employers in process of skill anticipation?
- What kind of system could bring us effective skills anticipation processes to meet employer's needs in terms of quantity, quality and types of skills needed in the future for example?

Above mentioned findings confirm the importance of holding such workshops, as they bring new proposals and solutions aimed to improve the system and to involve employers more strongly, and mostly important, they contribute to the understanding and better and easier communication between employers and the education system on the labour market. Therefore, the conclusions will be referred to relevant ministries and Sectoral Council for tourism and hospitality sector, with the aim of improving and achieving such a system in the future that will allow the companies to have employees with appropriate knowledge and skills.

Section 6: Annexes

List of participants

Invitation

Presentation(s)

Photographs



