HR
ACROSS EUROPE

Modern HR Management with ECVET and European
Transparency Instruments

A HANDBOOK

HR
across Europe

Modern HR Management with ECVET and European
Transparency Instruments

A Handbook

Sarah Land, Georg Müllner, Enikő Nagy, Adrienn Lengyel, Mojca Cek, Andreja Sever, Johannes Treu, Pia Winkler, Annamaria Cacchione, Marta Palacio, Javier Riaño

HR across Europe

Modern HR Management with ECVET and European Transparency Instruments

A Handbook
Graz, 2016

ECVET goes Business

From Push to Pull: ECVET and transparency instruments go Business - Modern Human Resource Management with European transparency instruments

2015-1-AT01-KA202-004976

7   Assess - Performance Management   135

8   Leadership Development   157

9   Summary   175

Introduction

Sarah Land

1

This handbook has been designed for use by HR managers and professionals who use or would like to use ECVET and other EU transparency tools in their HR practices. This handbook represents the core reference output of the Erasmus+ project, "From Push to Pull: ECVET and transparency instruments go Business – Modern Human Resource Management with European transparency instruments" or "ECVET goes Business" for short. The aim of the handbook is to act as a comprehensive reference book for HR managers, career guidance counsellors, business managers and supervisors so that ECVET and EU transparency tools can be easily understood, adapted and integrated into common practices in human resources across Europe.

The ECVET goes Business project aims to develop an approach to make ECVET and other European transparency instruments more relevant to the needs of HR managers and to encourage the integration of these tools in common HR processes and practices in local companies in each partner country. It is envisaged that by the end of this project, European companies and HR managers will be better equipped and informed to use these transparency tools in their practices which govern company recruitment; employee career planning; employee development through training; cultivation of leadership skills and performance management, as well as other common HR practices.

HR managers today are under increasing pressure; with declining budgets, and margin pressures and the introduction of HR technologies, social media and data analytics to recruitment practices, it is clear that the traditional ways of doing things are in decline. HR managers are now looking for more efficient ways of managing, sourcing and aligning the right talent with the new demands of their companies. The ECVET goes Business project proposes that using ECVET and the EU transparency tools for this purpose is a far more time-efficient and cost-effective means of recruiting new employees in today's modern world of business.

Human Resource Management in a modern business context means that HR professionals need to understand the implications of globalisation, work-force diversity, the contingent workforce, changing skill requirements, employee empowerment and the need for modern skill sets such as competence in foreign languages and digital literacies. All of these issues which can plague HR managers today can be answered by using ECVET and other EU transparency tools.

Turning first to the issue of globalisation, it is widely accepted that national borders do not contain the parameters of the available workforce in today's society. With the free movement of workers across Europe and with the rise of multinational corporations, recruitment in the modern business world is a global affair. As well as there being a worldwide pool of human capital for recruitment specialists to choose from, there is also pressure on the HR manager to ensure the company's employees have the right knowledge, skills and competences to deliver the company's goals in the global market; but also that there is cultural diversity in the workforce, as well as intercultural appreciation, adaptability and sufficient language skills in the company to meet any demands which the globalised business market makes of the business. What makes this process more complicated however is when a HR manager is not able to interpret or understand the skills and competences which workers from abroad can offer the company; this is where the EU transparency tools can help. ECVET makes vocational education and training programmes comparable across EU Member States, similarly ECTS ensures the accreditation and recognition of third-level qualifications across country borders, and tools such as the Europass CV and European Skills Passport can help jobseekers to format and present their qualifications, as well as their skills and competences, in such a way that they can be easily understood and interpreted by HR professionals in any European country.

Similarly these tools can be applied to meet the demands in terms of work-force diversity. In the past in Europe, work forces tended to be largely homogenous. In today's world, the work force is far more diverse and there is a demand for this diversity. Research shows that diversity in the workplace is a key driver of innovation and creativity and is of paramount importance if companies want to attract and retain top talent (Forbes, 2011). Through the use of the aforementioned tools which help to translate qualifications and experience attained abroad to make them understood in any EU nation, and through the use of recruitment sites such as EURES, HR managers can directly target individuals from diverse backgrounds and from other countries who have the skills, competences and literacies which their company's need.

EURES is the European Commission's bespoke job mobility portal. It is a cooperation network designed to facilitate the free movement of workers within the EU 28 countries plus Switzerland, Iceland, Liechten-

stein and Norway. In this context, as well as facilitating the movement of workers across the continent, EURES also has an important role to play in providing specific information on living and working conditions in all countries in the network and in facilitating placements for the benefit of employers and frontier workers in European cross-border regions. In practice EURES provides its services through the portal and through a human network of around 1000 EURES advisers that are in daily contact with jobseekers and employers across Europe. Through the online platform, HR managers can advertise vacancies to all workers across Europe through one portal or alternatively they can search for employees through their national EURES offices. The portal proves to be particularly useful where recruiting a contingent workforce is concerned.

Where skilled professionals are required for temporary contract-work, recruiting an employee from abroad who may wish to undertake a mobility-stay in the host country could be a good option for the company in question. This diversity in the workplace could bring with it a spark of creativity, innovation and new ways of thinking, as well as examples of best practice in business from another European country. EURES can help with this, as through this portal, HR managers can search for Europass C.V's, European Skills Passports and profiles which match the requirements of the company.   HR professionals can also use this portal to view, save and organise candidates to make recruitment easier, while at the same time, increasing the pool of talent available to them from potential employees in their region to all jobseekers spanning across the continent.

Another issue which can affect HR practices across Europe today is ongoing and changing skill requirements within the labour force. Companies today are demanding increasing levels of education and expertise when filling vacancies. With this demand, it is time that HR professionals began communicating with further and higher education institutions; informing them of where the skills gaps are, and instructing them on what graduates will need so as to enter into the work force once they have attained their qualification. When the worlds of work and education meet however, sometimes there is a language barrier, where one cannot fully interpret the other. This is where the EU transparency tools ECVET, ECTS and the European Qualifications Framework should be integrated into HR practices and policies. These EU tools act as a translation device,

making qualifications more easily understood and readable across Europe, but also making the knowledge, skills and competences developed at each level of education more easily understood to professionals who work outside of the education sector.

Furthermore, some aspects of employee empowerment can be addressed by using ECVET and the EU transparency tools mentioned in this handbook. Employee empowerment is an emerging trend in HR practices which stems from the modern employee's desire to have a part to play in making decisions which affect their current role and their future career progression. Some aspects of employee empowerment such as team work and delegation can be addressed through traditional HR practices; however in terms of progression, up-skilling and goal setting, the EU transparency tools can play a substantive role in ensuring employee development and satisfaction. Effective employee empowerment can require extensive training in all aspects of their current job, as well as the need to encourage and motivate employees with incentives. This being said, through the development of tools such as the Europass documents, ECVET and ECTS, the European workforce is liberated to undertake short or longer courses abroad. Where specialised training is required, employees may need to travel abroad to attain the desired qualifications or to develop the preferred competences. In this way, the transparency tools will help HR managers to find suitable training opportunities for their employees, to involve them in the process of planning their progression through up-skilling opportunities and to document and record the training which has been undertaken by the employee if a mobility-stay abroad is required.

By integrating modern technologies and the EU transparency tools into current HR practices, HR managers can ease the budgetary and time pressures which affect their own workload and the company they work for. For too long, ECVET and the other EU transparency tools have been solely utilised by the world of education; with the demands of modern business, the ECVET goes Business project team believes that it is now time that these tools were integrated into current HR practices and were widely used by HR managers, business owners, career guidance professionals and job coaches in the process of finding suitable employees for their companies. This project aims to oversee a paradigm shift in the use and implementation of these transparency tools in Europe;

from the 'push' of information written for and by the education sector which cannot be easily understood by the world of business to a 'pull' process where HR managers, business professionals and companies are approached to use these tools; but this time the tools are explained using their corporate language and case studies and examples are put forward which will allow HR professionals to access and integrate these innovative EU transparency tools into their every day practices. This is the overall aim of the ECVET goes Business project, and is at the heart of the design of this handbook.

ECVET & Transparency Tools

Sarah Land

2

To achieve the widespread adoption of the EU transparency tools into common HR practices, the ECVET goes Business project team have collaborated to produce this handbook; each chapter detailing the uses and suitability of the EU transparency tools to a particular practice which affects modern Human Resource Management. The project team understands that the world of work is changing. Factors such as globalisation, work-force diversity, contingent workforce, employee empowerment, as well as the requirement for up-skilling the workforce to develop modern skill sets related to IT, digital media and social media, all have an impact on HR practices in companies. Unfortunately, however, ECVET and other EU transparency tools are not being utilised fully in the world of work, either by the jobseeker or employee, or by the HR manager or recruiter, to help HR professionals to meet the modern business demands. This first chapter provides HR managers with an introduction and overview to ECVET and other EU transparency tools which can be adopted into HR practices to support the work of professionals in this field in Europe.

2.1 European Credit system for VET

The European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) helps individuals who are seeking to acquire a Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualification to move between countries and gain access to lifelong learning opportunities. Similarly, it also helps recruiters from across Europe to access members of the workforce from all Member States of the EU; targeting the specific skill set the company needs and helping to add to the company's human capital. This Credit System does so by making it easier to transfer, to have recognised and to accumulate assessed learning outcomes (CEDEFOP, 2015). In this way, ECVET is a useful resource for HR managers, especially those who are in the recruitment phase, as it makes work-related training which has been undertaken abroad in Europe more easily understood and readable.

ECVET achieves the transfer and recognition of VET by describing units of learning outcomes as parts of qualifications that can be assessed and validated. It gives an indication of the size of units and qualifications in ECVET points; where 60 ECVET points represents one full year of VET study. ECVET also offers a framework for making learners more mobile and qualifications more portable. It does so by laying down principles and technical specifications and by making use of existing national legislation and regulations.

ECVET aims to give people greater control over their individual learning experiences and makes it easier to move between different countries for work and pursue work-related training. Under this system the validation, recognition and accumulation of work-related skills and knowledge acquired during a stay in another country can be facilitated. The central criteria to assess and validate these qualifications are an individual's learning outcomes. Learners get 'credit points' for their learning outcomes which can be transferred from a qualifications system in one EU country to another and can also be accumulated over time, in different countries or in different situations.

2.1.1 Understanding ECVET Learning Outcomes, Points and Credit Transfers

Learning Outcomes in ECVET

To implement ECVET it is necessary that qualifications are described using learning outcomes. Learning outcomes can then be grouped to create units. A unit is a component of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competences that can be assessed and validated. Assessed learning outcomes constitute credit which can be accumulated through 'points'; credit points are the basis for enabling the transfer between learning contexts and for the accumulation of learning outcomes.

In ECVET, learning outcomes are used as a basis for credit transfer and accumulation. In this way, learning outcomes in the ECVET model, act as a good reference point for HR managers; they provide a description of training undertaken by potential employees abroad, allowing them to understand if the applicant has the core competencies required for the role being advertised.

- **ECVET Points**

ECVET points are a numerical representation of the overall weight of learning outcomes in a qualification and of the relative weight of units in relation to the qualification. Together with the descriptions of learning outcomes and information about the level of qualifications, ECVET points can support the understanding of a qualification. The number of ECVET points allocated to a qualification, together with other specifications, can indicate for example, that the scope of the qualification is narrow or broad. ECVET points are a useful and easy-to-understand means for HR managers to interpret employee vocational training which has been undertaken abroad. By attributing a numerical value to the training which has been completed abroad, it is easy to compare other European VET qualifications with domestic qualifications, by equating the ECVET points ascribed to each training programme.

- **ECVET Credit Transfer and Accumulation**

Credit for learning outcomes (i.e. assigned 'credit points') designates individuals' learning outcomes which have been assessed and which can be accumulated towards a qualification or transferred to other learning programmes or qualifications. Credit refers to the fact that the learner has achieved the expected learning outcomes which have been assessed positively and the outcome of the assessment was documented in a personal transcript.

In ECVET, credit accumulation is enabled by the use of units of learning outcomes that can be progressively assessed, validated and recognised. It is based on qualification systems' rules and requirements on accumulation. These rules define which learning outcomes are accumulated towards which qualification and how they are assessed and validated. In this way, the ECVET model takes the hardship out of recruiting employees from abroad because the structure of ECVET analyses the training which has been completed abroad, and filters it into a common European model which can then be easily interpreted by HR managers and professionals in all Member States.

2.1.2 ECVET Technical Components

There are certain elements of the ECVET model which are specific to the European education and training sector, and less applicable to the field of Human Resource Management. These include the Memorandum of Understanding and the Learning Agreement. A brief overview of these technical components of ECVET has been included below for information purposes only.

- **Memorandum of Understanding** is a framework agreement between partner organisations, from two or more countries, confirming cooperation arrangements and procedures.It outlines the roles of the involved parties and details the conditions through which learning outcomes can be achieved, assessed and potentially transferred from one country to another.

- **Learning Agreement** defines and describes the conditions for the mobility of an individual learner. While the Memorandum of Understanding contains information with regard to the learning outcomes to be achieved and provides a guideline as to how the transfer will take place, the Learning Agreement provides more detailed information on learning goals and content specific to what the learner aims to accomplish by undertaking the exchange.

Another technical component of ECVET is the Personal Transcript. The Transcript is an overview of the individual learners' academic achievements and provides detailed information on the learning outcomes which were positively assessed for an individual learner.
This transcript acts as a useful resource for HR managers and professionals, because it is a statement of what training has been achieved abroad and describes the competences the learner has developed. This is particularly useful for HR professionals to determine the employee's core competencies; especially where competency-based pay is used in the company.

ECVET has been designed as a means of encouraging individual learners from across Europe to undertake mobilities to other EU countries to complete vocational education and training programmes. The aim was that ECVET would be used in conjunction with other EU instruments such as Europass and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) to positively impact on the free movement of adult learners across Europe. A consequence of ECVET is that it also allows for the free movement of workers across the European labour market; as by making qualifications more readable across Member States, it also means that qualifications attained in disparate European countries are suddenly comparable and understood by employers in these countries. ECVET works hand in hand with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) to provide greater transparency in European qualifications, promoting the mobility of workers and learners, and facilitating lifelong learning.

2.2 The European Qualifications Framework

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) "*is a common European reference framework which links countries' qualifications systems together, acting as a translation device to make qualifications more readable and un-derstandable across different countries and systems in Europe*" (European Commission, 2008). It is a translation tool that helps communication and comparison between qualifications systems in Europe.

The EQF was established to support one of the primary goals of the European Union; the free movement of people in Europe. The interpretation and recognition of degrees, diplomas and certificates issued in the different national education and training systems of the 28 Member States of the EU acted as a barrier to achieving this goal. For this reason, the EU developed a translation device to make national qualifications more readable in order to promote workers' and learners' mobility across Europe. This translation tool is the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (European Commission, 2016). The EQF helps to compare national qualifications systems and enable communication among them. At the core of the EQF are eight common European reference levels, which are described in terms of learning outcomes and which highlight the knowledge, skills and competences associated with qualifications at each of the 8 levels. This makes it easier for an employer or manager to understand what a learner with a qualification benchmarked to the EQF knows, understands and is able to do. To understand the EQF, first you need to understand the 8 levels which are defined by a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and competences developed, as detailed in the following table:

EQF Level	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	In the context of EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.	*In the context of EQF, skills are described as cognitive and practical.*	*In the context of EQF, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.*
Level 1	Basic general knowledge.	Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks.	Work or study under direct supervision in a strucutred context.
Level 2	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.
Level 3	Knowledge of facts, principles, progress 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.

Level 4	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 or study activities.
Level 5	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.
Level 6	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.

Level 7	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.
Level 8	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.

| Level 9 | 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. | Demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research. |

(*https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/content/descriptors-page*)

As well as acting as a framework, the EQF offers a wide range of transparency instruments, supporting tools and initiatives that all aim to foster the mobility of workers across Europe. These tools include ECVET, Europass, EQAVET and European Credit Transfer System (ECTS); all aimed at enhancing the mobility of a wide cohort of people, from different economic sectors and industries.

2.3 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) makes qualifications in higher education more transparent across Europe and facilitates the recognition of all higher education qualifications by employers, and in other universities, across Europe. ECTS works by advocating that institutions which apply ECTS publish their course catalogues online, 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 by the end of the course) and workload (i.e. the number of contact and autonomous study hours students typically need to complete in order to achieve these outcomes). Each learning outcome is expressed in terms of credits, with a student workload ranging from 1,500 to 1,800 hours for an academic year, and one credit generally corresponds to 25-30 hours of work. This system is well developed and widely used in Europe, meaning that qualifications attained in Poland, for example, are comparable to those offered by Spanish universities; and degree programmes in Sweden are of the same value as those awarded by British universities.

This aids HR managers who seek to either attend university abroad for themselves, recommend a mobility period abroad for an employee's progression, or to recruit employees who have been educated to third-level in a university in another European country.

2.4 Europass

Europass is one of the most useful of all EU transparency tools for HR managers, as it has been developed with the intention of getting Europe's population moving; supporting individuals to work and learn abroad and to have their qualifications and experience recognised and understood no matter where they go in Europe. Europass consists of five documents to help make an individual's skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood an all EU Member States. These include:

- **Curriculum Vitae & European Skills Passport:** The CV helps job-seekers to present their academic, training and professionals achievements effectively and clearly when applying for a job. This template allows jobseekers to promote their skills and competences, meaning that by using this template their CV is more readable in responding to the core competencies listed in a job advertisement. The European Skills Passport (ESP) is an electronic portfolio, designed to support a jobseeker's CV. This portfolio can contain copies of the other Europass tools, as well as proof of qualifications, references from previous employers or transcripts from language courses completed, etc. As a HR manager, the ESP is a very valuable tool as it acts as an evidence base for what jobseekers have mentioned in their CV. This portfolio can help the process of short-listing, as HR professionals filter applications based on what competences are mentioned in the Europass CV, and how this is backed-up with content in the portfolio. When advertising a new position in a company, HR managers are encouraged to ask applicants to use the Europass CV so that they can have a clearer idea of the skills and competences of the applicants.

- **Europass Mobility:** The Mobility document helps individuals to describe a period they have spent abroad for education and training; it can also be used to describe volunteering work or work placements completed in another European country. This resource is of most use to HR managers if they are planning to send employees abroad to complete training and they want a document to record the skills and informal qualifications they have acquired in another EU country.

- **Language Passport**: This is a self-assessment document where you can describe your level of competence in a foreign language. This is linked to the Common European Framework Reference for Languages (CEFR), as those who complete the Passport template are asked to choose their level of language proficiency based on the CEFR's six levels. HR managers are encouraged to ask potential employees to complete the language passports if language skills are required for a new post in their company.

- **Certificate Supplement:** This document describes the knowledge and skills acquired by holders of vocational education and training certificates, providing they have achieved the VET qualification abroad. It is linked to the ECVET model and allows individuals to describe their skills and competences following this training.

- **Diploma Supplement:** The Diploma Supplement describes the knowledge and skills acquired by graduates of higher education. It offers employers more detail regarding what potential employees covered when completing their course at third-level and is linked to the ECTS model.

Europass makes the comparison of skills, competences and qualifications in different countries and different organisations possible; and is one of the most useful tools which can be integrated into HR best practices because it was designed to help citizens of Europe to communicate their skills and qualifications effectively when looking for a job or training opportunity and also to help employers understand the skills and qualifications of the European workforce.

2.5 EQAVET

The EU Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) tool invites EU Member States to use a series of indicative descriptors and indicators to support and develop their VET systems. This tool provides guidance on how to develop a quality assurance system and contains examples of different approaches used by Member States. EQAVET is a European Quality Assurance Framework for vocational training which was adopted by EU member states in June 2009 and is connected to other European tools, such as EQF and ECVET. The framework is based on a cycle of quality assurance and improvement that consists of four phases, namely: planning; implementation; assessment and evaluation; and review and revision. This model was developed to support the evaluation and quality improvement of a country's vocational training.

What makes EQAVET beneficial to HR practices is that prior to countries adopting this framework, VET providers used contrasting and often unequal quality standards when designing and delivering VET content. While ECVET allows VET qualifications to be comparable across EU Member States, EQAVET assures that the quality of teaching and learning is also comparable; this means that HR professionals can seek to send their employees abroad for quality specialised training if required, or similarly can recruit employees from abroad without doubting the quality of the training they have received.

2.6 CEFR

CEFR is the acronym given to the Common European Framework of References for Languages. This framework comprises the international standard for describing language ability and is used around the world to define and describe the language skills of an individual. This framework is applicable to both academic and professional realms, and is particularly useful for HR managers who are seeking to recruit employees with language skills, or to track the progress of an employee who is undertaking language skills training. The framework is designed in such a way that it classifies language proficiency on a scale which has six levels; A1 for beginners, up to C2 for full proficiency in a language. To progress to the next level on this scale, an individual is required to complete the corresponding assessment for that level. This model and simple scale makes it easy for employers and HR managers to understand the language proficiency of an employee, or potential employee, based on the assessment they have completed on this scale. It also means that HR managers can easily compare the language qualifications obtained by an individual abroad with similar language courses and exams in their own country.

2.7 NARIC

NARIC is composed of a network of National Academic Recognition Information Centres. These Centres have been established in all countries covered by the Erasmus+ Programme, i.e. all Member States of the European Union and all EEA countries. NARIC also has partner centres in Central European countries which are members of the European Higher Education Area. Through the work of these centres, diplomas, qualifications and periods of study undertaken in other countries can be recognised in all countries that participate in this network. Where NARIC differs from the European Qualifications Framework or Europass is that it acts mostly as an information resource; facilitating the exchange of information and best practice between countries and providing a means of undertaking a comparative analysis of the quality of qualifications from different countries in the network. Why NARIC is useful to HR professionals is that it provides non-educationalists with accessible information on the quality of education in countries right across Europe and North America. With national centres in 55 countries including Australia, New Zealand and United States, this means that HR managers have a contact point where they can seek further advice and better understand how national qualifications from around the world compare to one another. This can be very useful if HR managers are recruiting employees from abroad or with qualifications attained abroad, as they will be supported to make the best appointment for their company.

Plan - Personnel Planning

Georg Müllner

3

Particularly in today's world the workforce represents an extremely important, if not the most important, production factor for companies. Without people actively working within an organisation there would be no creative ideas and no innovation. This alone makes employees essential to a company. At the same time, significant costs are associated with the employment of personnel. As with other areas within a company it is vital to systematically plan human resources, in particular taking into account the factors related to the quality (qualifications, skills) and quantity of personnel.

Human resources planning aims primarily to provide companies with the right number of sufficiently qualified people in the right place at the right time. In addition, other employee-specific aspects and dimensions within the context of human resources planning need to be considered, such as job security or opportunities for individual professional advancement.

Human resources planning forms part of the overall corporate planning process and should therefore be considered and implemented alongside other business planning elements and dimensions (such as production planning, financial planning, sales planning, investment planning, etc.). In view of this, human resources planning can be applied either at the same time (simultaneously) as other corporate planning measures or following them (successive, consecutive planning). To gain insight into how EU transparency tools can be applied to human resources planning practices, consider the following example.

The procurement process for awarding the contract to build the first section of the Brenner Base Tunnel, 55km in length, saw the authorities, who were responsible, select the Austro-Italia Rail Construction Ltd. consortium as the best bidder. This construction and installation work will be implemented simultaneously on both the Austrian and Italian sides. This undertaking requires huge levels of human resources, which has the following consequences; it:

a. Can definitely not be covered locally;

b. Places high demands on the quality, comparability and immediate deployment of staff;

c. Needs to be available quickly, avoiding lengthy skills assessments and recognition procedures;

d. Must ensure high levels of intercultural communication, understanding and cooperation;

e. Recruits personnel with a wide range of skills at different levels.

As the person responsible for the project's human resources planning within the Austro-Italia Rail Construction Ltd. consortium your role is to ensure that all personnel requirements are covered and that personnel deployment is effectively planned. High levels of planning and action are required to find these employees swiftly and with the highest possible degree of quality.

In order to support the human resources planning processes within the company the following European transparency instruments, fully developed and ready to be implemented, are at your disposal:

- **Competency descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework;**
- **Competence descriptors of national qualifications frameworks;**
- **Credit points of the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training;**
- **Learning outcome descriptions and descriptions of competences of the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training;**
- **Europass curriculum vitae;**
- **Europass certificate supplements;**
- **Europass diploma supplement;**
- **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.**

Planning Activities and available European Transparency Instruments

HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING ACTIVITY		EUROPEAN TRANSPARENCY INSTRUMENT
Current Workforce Planning		EQF descriptors
		Learning outcome descriptions (ECVET)
		The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)
Job descriptions		EQF descriptors
		Certificate supplement and diploma supplement
		The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)
Qualitative workforce measures		EQF descriptors
		Learning outcome descriptions (ECVET)
Trends is human resources planning	Internationalisation	EQF descriptors
		Certificate supplement and diploma supplement
	Fragmentation – Individualisation	Learning outcome descriptions (ECVET)
	Key Competences	EQF descriptors
		Learning outcome descriptions (ECVET)

3.1 Human Resources Planning
– Requirement Planning

Personnel requirement means, in basic terms, determining the number and qualification (skills) level(s) of the employees required to fulfil an organisation's working tasks, either long term or over a limited time period. The analysis or planning of personnel requirements is concerned above all with comparing the current personnel needs with the current and future personnel composition, thus identifying any potential surplus or shortfall of personnel.

A surplus refers, in this context, to a situation where there are more employees available than is actually necessary. This can be caused, for example, by fluctuating order levels, or in many cases through the introduction of new technologies that require fewer personnel to operate them. In many of these cases increased training needs can arise, as existing employees require appropriate skills to meet new technological challenges.

As a result of the personnel requirement planning process and associated measures the staff composition should ultimately correspond to the actual personnel requirements. This aspiration is not at all obvious, because some factors of uncertainty would need to be considered and a high demand for information exists that cannot always be adequately met.

For this reason, it is necessary to differentiate between:

   a.   Operational,
   b.   Tactical and
   c.   Strategic human resource planning.

Whilst the operational personnel requirement planning level is more employee and job oriented and concentrates on individual personnel measures, tactical personnel planning orientates itself more towards clustering employees into groups (e.g. technicians, accountants etc.) and is therefore geared to be group and activity oriented.

Within the framework of strategic human resources planning there is a departure from these levels, with the long-term existence of the company being considered alongside the future challenges.

The human resources requirement analysis is undertaken at the operational level; aimed on the one hand at requirement, qualification and skills profiles (qualitative), and on the other hand considers time requirements (quantitative). At the tactical level, the results and data about job categories obtained from the operational level are compressed (qualitative) or specific key indicator models are used (quantitative). At the strategic level the long-term requirement structure (qualitatively and quantitatively) can be determined using various other methods. These three process levels should work together effectively and follow both a top-down as well as a bottom-up approach.

It should also be mentioned however that only very few companies undertake all three levels of human resources planning simultaneously and in close coordination with each other. In many cases nowadays the approach used is orientated more towards addressing acute staff shortages, with only those planning areas being dealt with that are identified as requiring urgent action. Therefore, it is necessary to present a number of methods in order to provide approaches for the purpose of determining personnel requirements.

3.2 Methods for assessing workforce composition

The informational basis for any human resources planning exercise is first to assess the current workforce within a company in terms of both quantity and quality. It is essential for a company to possess an up-to-date and comprehensive overview of its personnel.

As a minimum the following information would need to be recorded: profession, gender, age, length of service, salary, working hours, etc. The topic of personnel statistics and European transparency instruments will be addressed by the following chapter in greater detail.

The analysis of the current workforce composition is then updated for the future (e.g. for the next quarter, next year, etc.) and is simultaneously adjusted to take account of already known and agreed changes. These include company-initiated changes or autonomous changes which the company can only influence to a limited degree.

Autonomous and company-initiated changes to personnel composition (according to Olfert and Steinbuch: „Personalwirtschaft", Ludwigshafen, 1995) are described as follows:

Autonomous changes:

a. Additions: e.g. return of staff from long-term holiday, educational leave, maternity leave, parental leave, military or civilian service or other reasons;

b. Departures: e.g. termination of employment, retirement, health-related, death, extended holiday, military or civilian service, maternity leave, parental leave and other reasons for long-term time off work.

Company-initiated changes:

a. Additions: e.g. recruitment, employment of fully trained apprentices

b. Departures: e.g. redundancies, long-term training.

The formula for calculating future workforce composition is thus as follows (excluding the impact of the resultant human resource planning measures):

> **Future workforce composition = current workforce composition + additions - departures**

3.3 Methods for assessing workforce requirements

The personnel requirements of a company can be determined by factors that are influenced in part by the company itself (internal factors) and by factors which are outside of the company's control (external factors).

- **Internal factors** would be, as expected, workforce productivity, level of organisation within the company, the degree of mechanisation and automation, the planned products and services that are offered (according to type and quantity).

- **External factors** include, for example, legal requirements concerning staffing and worker participation, health and safety regulations, changes within the market (to a certain extent).

Against this background, the challenge is to **constantly, steadily** or **in a structured manner** predict development.

By constantly developing the business environment and structure the result will include good levels of planning and the enablement of forward projection of worker numbers according to job category or area of expertise (see Drumm, Hans Jürgen.: „Personalwirtschaftslehre", Berlin, 1995, page 206). The steady development of the business environment and structure can also guarantee, in principle, good levels of planning. The applicable methods can be roughly divided into time-dependent, production management and organisational approaches. An example would be the Job Planning method or the Key Indicator method.

However, if the development of the company or service spectrum is characterised by unexpected structural disruptions within the business environment, then the planning capability in existence will range from poor to almost impossible. If structural disruptions are completely unpredictable (which on closer inspection rarely occurs) then quantitative human resource planning is not really feasible. If structural disruptions are at least, by their nature, foreseeable (e.g. a new competitor enters the market) then different impact scenarios, for example, can be predicted, towards which personnel planning can then be oriented.

Below, two of the most common methods for determining staffing requirements are presented. The Job Planning method focuses on the operational level of human resource planning, whilst the Key Indicator method concentrates on the tactical level. Other important tools used in human resources planning are, above all, the staffing plan, the job description, and workplace analysis and job profiles. A closer examination of the potential of European transparency tools to complement these methods and tools further is addressed in more detail within the following chapter.

3.3.1 The Job Planning Method or Workplace Method

The Job Planning method is particularly suitable for predominantly bureaucratically structured organisations such as public authorities. This method can also be also used to plan requirements for technical personnel, research and administrative staff, managers, support and care staff or security staff. In this case, on the basis of:

a.   the organisational structure chart (representation of organisational units and their vertical and horizontal connections within the entire company; referred to as an organigram);

b.   the respective job plan;

c.   the existing job descriptions (including the require ments for the post holders).

Future staffing requirements can be anticipated. Often this takes place firstly at the departmental level, with the relevant department heads being requested to provide estimates of staffing needs and thereby of the quantitative and qualitative personnel requirements. These requirements are then agreed with the respective senior line manager and forwarded to the coordinating planning unit. By this process the Job Planning method follows an operational workforce planning course with a bottom-up approach.

Due to the complexity of overall planning it is necessary to ensure ongoing communication and sharing of relevant information between the individual planning units and the coordinating body. As such, human resources planning demands knowledge and information that does not exist at the level of the individual department or planning unit; but which could exist in the future. The following information is particularly relevant:

- **The future organisational structure (planned changes at the structural level or organisation developmental changes);**
- **The tasks (production and service programmes of the company, offers, services, priorities);**
- **The workload (capacity and schedules, time required for completing individual tasks etc.);**
- **The distribution of tasks within the company (within de partments or planning units as well as across departments);**
- **Alternative working procedures;**
- **The estimated amount of downtime (absences, sickleave, training, etc.);**
- **Staff turnover;**
- **Personnel changes (e.g. resignations, leave of absence, retirements etc.);**
- **Other relevant information.**

A closer look shows that some of this information can be relatively easily and accurately estimated, whilst other information involves a high degree of uncertainty. This basically always leads to the problem that there is never enough accurate information available to aid workforce planning, and in general, any staff planning exercise is characterised by a large degree of uncertainty. Therefore, the qualitative personnel planning approach is based more upon qualitative information and circumstances from which it's planning stages and outcomes can be derived. This contrasts starkly to quantitative personnel planning methods.

3.3.2 The Key Indicator Method

The Key Indicator Method is a commonly used quantitative method of human resources planning. Key indicators, within this context, refer to benchmarks with which dependencies or relationships for the personnel requirements of different business indicators can be represented (cf. Büdenbender/Santos: Personal: (Personalwirtschaft", Wiesbaden, 1996). The Key Indicator method begins with the actual current workforce. By means of statistical (stochastic) forecasts, future personnel requirements can be generated by determining the posts required.
It is assumed that there is a stable relationship between personnel needs and their influencing factors. These factors can be, for example:

- **The quantity produced or sold;**
- **The degree of mechanisation;**
- **The production programmes;**
- **The operational organisation;**
- **The company size;**
- **Performance result factors during the planning period;**
- **Social factors;**
- **Other factors.**

The Key Indicator method is a suitable process primarily for human resources planning where personnel requirements are largely determined by the number of produced or processed quantitative units (e.g. the production of cars, installation of specific units, etc.). It aims to express the relationships between personnel requirements and the factors listed above using key indicators. Thus with a change to one of the factors and the resulting key indicator change the revised personnel needs can be quickly determined.
There are different forms of key indicator models, most of which are based on the following overall equation:

Personnel requirements = amount of work: performance per employee

The most common key indicators are based on time. However, other key indicators can be defined that represent the dependence of personnel requirements upon order volume, the number of units produced, turnover, productivity or other business-related factors. Further key indicators include, for example:

- **Ratio of skilled to unskilled workers;**
- **Production level of employees with certain qualifications;**
- **Ratio of manpower to turnover, retail space, transport distances etc.**

Certainly, quantitative indicators can be linked here with qualitative information (e.g. dependencies based upon qualifications).

An important prerequisite for planning using key indicators is that the relationship between the development of key indicators and personnel requirements remains stable. In addition, the relationship between personnel requirements and determining factors must not necessarily be constant, but rather there can be a variable relationship. For example, personnel requirements with increasing production rates could fall relatively, so that the key indicator „staff requirements per unit of production" increases. In such cases key indicator series should be deployed. An example of a stable relationship between manpower and determinant would be the assumption that a hairdresser needs half an hour per customer. An example of a variable relationship between manpower and determinant is as follows: annually a toy shop requires on average one sales person per 25m² of sales area, however during the pre-Christmas period, due to increased customer numbers, the shop needs to plan for three sales persons per 25m² of sales area.

3.4 Human resources planning, ECVET and European transparency instruments - synergies and symbioses

Human resource planning represents a particular challenge to HR professionals due to the need to forecast future requirements and demands. It is undoubtedly difficult to make reliable predictions for future situations and requirements, regardless of whether quantitative or qualitative methods are used. The complexity of influencing factors, their interdependence and the generally dynamic nature of the business environment makes the planning process difficult.

On the one hand, this can often lead to a highly reactive form of personnel planning, which lags behind actual developments within many companies, thereby losing its tactical and strategic value – to the detriment of business development. On the other hand, this can lead to higher costs in relation to human resources planning processes.

In order to simplify and standardise many different areas within human resources planning a series of tools and methods are available, which will be presented and explained here. Depending on individual perspectives and planning scenarios within the context of operational, tactical and strategic personnel planning, the following synergies and even symbioses can be produced by using vocational education instruments that currently exist in Europe:

    a.   Methods for determining the current workforce composition (workforce statistics);

    b.   Methods for coherent, efficient and skills-based job descriptions (as a basis for personnel planning);

    c.   Methods to support qualitative planning models within personnel planning.

In addition, during recent years, personnel planning have been confronted by a number of trends and developments that have made effective planning more difficult and that have further increased the complexity of planning models. Particularly significant are:

- **Internationalisation:** not only has global competition and entrepreneurial thinking and action become more international, but also nowadays the origin, educational background and skills of workers have a much greater international character. In Austria the classic image of the worker trained according to the Austrian general and vocational education system has become largely outdated and antiquated.

- **Fragmentation or Individualisation:** education and training is increasingly not taking place during one continuous period of time. People acquire skills on the one hand fragmentally (in individual small units, for specific skills, in certain specialist areas) and on the other hand highly individualistically. The days are long gone when you could accurately assess what a certain professional qualification means or which skills a person possesses. A person's vocational education and training profile is a collection of individual fragments, and thus presents one of the greatest challenges to planning and placement at a qualitative level.

- **Specialist skills are obsolete - or not?:** working tasks, challenges, new activities, innovations, changes etc. demand that staff possess entirely new sets of skills, knowledge and qualifications. The term 'key competences' refers to the range of knowledge that is appropriate for a wide, dynamic and ever changing area of activity. Simultaneously, the risk of losing specific skills will be discussed, as this represents a high risk to a company. Personnel planning, which takes into account the need for professional and key competences, is discussed here as a third challenge to the modern planning processes within the area of human resources. A more detailed discussion of these recent developments is to be found in section 3.5. below.

a) Methods for determining the current workforce composition (workforce statistics)

To determine the number of staff (status quo) in terms of up-to-date and meaningful personnel statistics there are statistical or quantitative methods at hand for presenting individual indicators and key basic statistical data such as:

- **Age;**
- **Length of service;**
- **Pay structure ranking;**
- **Collective agreement membership;**
- **Compensation provisions;**
- **Working hours;**
- **Sick leave records;**
- **Training records;**
- **Other data.**

In addition, however, personnel statistics should also give clear information about the skills and qualifications of each individual employee. This can be achieved by recording qualifications, training achievements etc. in terms of their broader comparability. Three instruments, or methods, are recommended from the list of European transparency tools to aid the rapid deduction of required skills (qualifications) in relation to personnel recruitment:

1. Skills descriptors from the European Qualifications Framework (or a suitable national qualification framework);
2. Learning outcome descriptions from the European Credit system for VET (ECVET);
3. Language level descriptions from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

1. Skills descriptors from the European Qualifications Framework:

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) represents the skills and performance levels of individuals according to their educational background with a total of 8 levels (for more detailed information about the European Qualification Framework see the glossary and introduction of the handbook). It is a comprehensive system for comparing professional qualifications between European countries. The distinctions between the 8 levels are primarily based on skills descriptors that can also be applied to personnel statistics and personnel planning.

Upon closer inspection of the individual descriptors it appears both simple and advisable to measure each employee in relation to their EQF level (1 to 8) and record it in the personnel statistics in order to define the degree of independence of the professional activity. At the same time this definition represents the individual job descriptions, which will however be addressed further in the next point. Further deductions and potential uses with regard to staff appraisals and performance reviews at the operational personnel development level can also be achieved. Personnel statistics could be presented as follows:

Staff number	
Family name	
First name	
Address	
Date of birth	
Department	
Collective agreement scheme	
Weekly working hours	
Sick leave / year	
Qualifications	
EQF Level of qualifications	
Current position	
EQF Level of current position	
Knowledge required	
Skills required	
Competences required	

Task:

Try to expand the personnel statistics of 3 or 4 employees using the elements of the EQF skills descriptors.

In addition, it should be mentioned that the European Qualifications Framework represents a comparison tool that is valid and that functions Europe-wide. This means that the definition of EQF levels in personnel statistics and in job descriptions can compare and rank qualifications from different European countries. For example, a training course at EQF level 4 anywhere in Europe follows the same skills descriptions and degrees of independence as in your own country; EQF level 4 is EQF level 4 across Europe. This is a significant advantage and simplifies recruitment and workforce evaluation, and for this reason expanding personnel statistics to include this information is definitely very worthwhile.

2. Learning outcome descriptions from the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)

European transparency tools offer a huge advantage when it comes to the documentation of training activities and additional qualifications in personnel statistics and the associated optimal usage of attained learning content. However, training activities are simply documented within personnel statistics (personnel files) far too often as follows:

Activity	Date	Qualification / Training
Activity 1	03.03. - 05.03.2016	Microsoft Office (Word / Excel)
Activity 2	05.05.2016	Presentation techniques using presentation software
Activity 3	06.06.2016	Teambuilding 1
Activity 4	07.06. - 08.06.2016	Teambuilding 2
Activity 5	10.06. - 15.06.2016	Leadership training 1

Regardless of what format the individual training activities are documented in, or with what software they are presented,. the difficulty is that the terms used do not allow for any further explanation about the actual skills acquired. At best, a seminar programme can be broken down into its various training content elements (e.g. in this seminar participants will learn... to create a formal letter, to create charts, to make animated PowerPoint slides, to work as a team, to perform individual team roles, to learn basic management styles, to develop their own management style etc.). However, this information is only about the learning content and is not about actual skills acquired or learning outcomes. This contradicts therefore the fundamental logic that the learning content, from the staff development perspective, is relatively unimportant, but rather the learning outcomes are of primary importance. This means that only the learning outcomes achieved at the end of the learning or qualification process are what matters.

The European Credit system for VET (ECVET) provides a perfect method for this approach. ECVET provides a number of different ways to describe learning outcomes. The following principles should always be taken into account when formulating and describing learning outcomes:

- **Use of active, clearly understandable verbs:** verbs should describe measurable or observable actions, e.g. „explain", „represent", „apply", „analyse", „develop", etc. It may prove useful to develop a taxonomy table. Verbs such as „to be familiar with" should not be used.

- **Specification and contextualisation of the active verb:** it should describe what the knowledge and ability refers to in concrete terms, or what type of activity is involved. The learning outcomes formulations should consist of a verb and the related object as well as an additional (part of a) sentence describing the context.

- **Avoid using vague, open formulations:** learning outcomes should be described briefly and precisely, complicated sentences should be avoided, learning outcomes should not be formulated in too general or in too concrete terms; clear (simple and unambiguous) terminology should be used as far as is possible. For example, don't use: he/she knows the regional products and is able to prepare simple meals.

- **Orientation towards minimum demands for achieving learning outcomes:** learning outcomes should comprehensibly describe the minimum demands for achieving and validating a unit of learning outcomes, i.e. all learning outcomes which are necessary for fulfilling the tasks in the sense of a complete vocational activity should be listed.

- **Qualifications and/or competence level is described comprehensibly:** formulations, particularly verbs and adjectives should reflect the level of qualification and/or competence (EQF) of a unit of learning outcomes. The learning outcomes description should comprehensibly depict whether the vocational competences can for example be applied under supervision, autonomously or responsibly and competently.

With respect to the type of language used to describe specific learning outcomes, the so-called Bloom's Taxonomy - Learning in Action can be a great help. This collection of appropriate terms for formulating learning outcomes, developed by the educational researcher Benjamin Bloom in 1956, is still valid today:

Bloom, B. S.; Engelhart, M. D.; Furst, E. J.; Hill, W. H.; Krathwohl, D. R. (1956). Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals. Handbook I: Cognitive domain. New York: David McKay Company

Benjamin Bloom also developed a graphical representation of the cognitive benefits that are associated with different levels of learning outcomes:

Analyze	Evaluate	Create

Apply

Understand

Remember
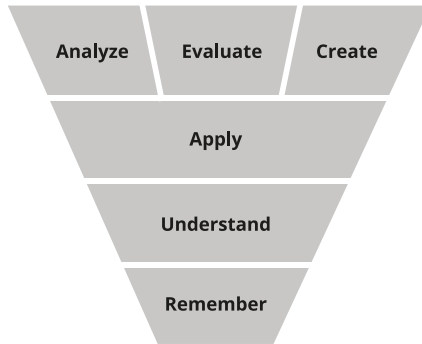
At the bottom of the cognitive performance requirements is the „simple" recalling of content from memory. At the next level is the concrete understanding of learning content followed by implementing it within a working context. At the top of the cognitive performance model is the analysis and evaluation of learning content plus the creation of new learning content. These levels can also be used to assess training content within staff statistics (competence statistics). Also the fact that they are valid and used across Europe (in the case of Bloom's Taxonomy even worldwide) is an advantage that should not be underestimated.

Task:

Try to complete the learning outcome information for the training activities undertaken by 3 or 4 employees during the last 6 months, thereby creating the basis for the comparison and optimal use of learning outcomes within the company. Learning outcome oriented descriptions are also useful within the context of job descriptions, and this will be explained further in the next section.

3. Language level descriptions from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

Foreign languages are an indispensable element of the personal skills of individual employees working at certain organisational levels in many companies. Therefore, in terms of personnel statistics as the basis for personnel planning, foreign language skills of individual employees are an important criterion. However, this is not only relevant to know for individual employees, but it is vital to know how many employees speak, for example, English at an intermediate, good or very good level, and who have a basic knowledge of Spanish, or business-level French or who speaks Russian. The inclusion of language skills within personnel statistics is a very important aspect, which can be simplified and improved by making use of the European transparency instrument, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

This instrument is based on 3 main levels, each with 2 sub-levels of proficiency, and is a very simple tool for estimating and identifying foreign language skills. (For more detailed information about the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages please see the glossary and annex of the handbook).

Task:

Try to assess the language skills of your employees based on the 6 levels and consider the inclusion of this information within the personnel statistics. Should you or your managers have any difficulty in assessing the foreign language skills of individual employees, then make use of the short self-test provided by the European Commission, which can be found in the appendix.

b) Methods for coherent, effective and skills-based job descriptions (as a basis for personnel planning)

The job description, together with the personnel statistics, constitutes the prerequisite and basis for forward-looking personnel planning at the operational and tactical levels. An adequate description of the different positions within a company facilitates the recruitment of high-quality people and the definition of responsibilities etc. It is particularly useful to create job descriptions in a way that is consistent with the terminology and structures contained within the vocational education system. It would make sense, for example, if qualification requirements are described for a particular job in such a way that qualifications from vocational education providers can describe these skill needs exactly. With this in mind there are three transparency tools that can support the creation of job descriptions:

1. Job descriptions with reference to EQF levels and descriptors;
2. Job descriptions using certificate and diploma supplements;
3. Job descriptions using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

1. Job descriptions with reference to EQF levels and descriptors

Similar to the preparation of personnel statistics and the personal files of individual employees the job description for specific roles and positions should also be created using the EQF levels and descriptors. On the one hand the assignment of the respective EQF levels (1-8) can provide a clear statement about the level of autonomy and independence required for each position, whilst on the other hand it allows for the assignment of EQF levels in relation to targeted recruitment for individual job vacancies. By utilising the EQF levels all vocational qualifications in all European countries can be accurately assigned in one step, because the EQF, with its 8 levels, acts as the reference system for all European vocational education and training systems. Thus qualifications from countries that do not use an 8-tier education system can also be assigned.

In many European countries, and soon in all European countries, a train-ing or qualification-associated EQF level will be stated on the respective certificate awarded. Thus, if a job description for a particular job states the EQF level required, then it will be easy and quick to match suitable candidates.

Moreover, EQF descriptors should be used to formulate job descrip-tions in terms of knowledge, skills and competences, because the de-scriptors are based on individual certificates and qualifications. If job descriptions are created in this form then suitable candidates can be identified and matched more easily, efficiently and quickly. At the same time this option allows potential training needs to be identified and then, later on, actioned. Thus, a job description could look as follows:

Task:

Try to create job descriptions for 2 or 3 positions within your compa-ny (if possible with quite different areas of responsibility). Pay atten-tion to the correct description of knowledge, skills and competences (see previous chapter).

Job title	
Ranking in the company structure (membership of a department, unit, team etc.)	
Deputy (if applicable)	
EQF Level (1-8)	
Purpose of the position	
Tasks and responsibilities of the position	
Knowledge required	• • • •
Skills required	• • • •
Competences required	• • •
Training opportunities	
Performance indicators / Review points	
Administrative information (distribution copy, next update, signature)	

2. Job descriptions using certificate and diploma supplements

Certificate supplements are a European transparency instrument that complement individual certificates and that describe the skills profile and curriculum of qualifications. In addition, certificate supplements contain information about possible occupations and access to the next educational level. Certificate supplements are available for all officially recognised qualifications in all European countries, and they can be accessed via a national database[1]

Essentially the same also applies to diploma supplements, which are explanations of academic qualifications. The diploma supplement provides a clear and internationally comparable overview of the person's individual course of study, including standardised information about the respective higher education and course system to facilitate comparison and thus enabling academic and professional recognition.[2]

Given the fact that supplements are issued consistently throughout Europe with both vocational training as well as with academic qualifications, it would definitely make sense to include an appropriate reference to certificate supplements within job descriptions. If, for example, a job description addresses the level of the required knowledge, skills and competences for entire occupational profiles or for the profile of individual jobs, then it would be useful to state the name of the job profile and, when required, the corresponding certificate or diploma supplement, in order to facilitate adequate and rapid recruitment for the particular position.

> ## *Task:*
>
> *Select two positions within your company that require particular vocational qualifications (e.g. such as a carpenter, plumber, mechatronics engineer etc.) and search for the respective certificate supplements on the website of your national reference point. Decide whether it is important to record the terms used or additionally store the certificate supplement in order to create a more accurate and effective job description. Now try the same exercise with an academic qualification and its corresponding supplement (if relevant to your company).*

---

1 https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/european-skills-passport/certificate-supplement
2 http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/diploma-supplement_en.htm

3. Job descriptions using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

As well as language skills being important at the level of personal statistics and individual employees within a company, it is important to state the required proficiency in one or more foreign languages when creating job descriptions. The necessary foreign language proficiency for specific jobs should definitely be stated in job descriptions, and it is highly recommended to align this, right from the start, with a standardised European model - the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (as previously described in the section about personnel statistics).

For each job the respective language level, from A1 to C2, needs to be given. This simplifies recruitment enormously in terms of the level of language skills; also when preparing job advertisements, a clear indication of language proficiency levels can increase their effectiveness. It is even recommended to use the self-assessment tool for foreign language skills within companies for job interviews, CV analysis, as well as appraisals and training needs meetings etc. It is therefore advisable to expand job descriptions to include the following:

Language skills required for the position in accordance with the CEFR (Common European Framework of References for Languages)						
Language:	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Language:	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Language:	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2

Bear in mind too that your native language may be a foreign language for a new person and that the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is designed to help integrate non-native employees into your company and to define what level of proficiency in their second language they should or must have. This means that the above specified language could very well be your native language!

c) Methods for supporting qualitative planning models within personnel planning

As shown previously, the job planning method is a particularly important and common approach to determining staffing needs at a qualitative level. With this bottom-up approach, at the departmental needs level, staffing needs are predicted within the context of the workforce composition, the job descriptions and the expected future developments; these needs are then passed up to the next level within the company hierarchy. The total staffing requirements are collected by the HR department, and then appropriate actions to address these staffing requirements or changes are set in motion.

European transparency instruments have considerable potential, particularly in the area of the job planning method and qualitative personnel planning, to increase the quality of forecasting and efficiency within the planning process. At the departmental level the job planning method approaches can take the following elements of the European transparency instruments into account:

- **EQF descriptors**
  EQF descriptors which encompass the 8 different EQF levels should be used to estimate staffing needs. It is important to assess at which of the 8 EQF levels the required staff member should work. The table showing the 8 EQF levels and the associated knowledge, skills and competences acts as the basis for this. By stating the required or necessary EQF level on the job profile, the process of covering all job requirements can be considerably simplified, as in the future all certificates from vocational education and training will include the respective EQF level. An initial selection can be efficiently carried out by matching EQF requirements from the job planning and the EQF level of the references and certificates of potential candidates.

- **Learning outcome descriptions from the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)**
  In addition to the EQF descriptors it is also useful to develop job planning using learning outcome formulations, because increasingly there are no training courses or courses of study that cover exactly the skills, knowledge and competences required for a specific job. In fact, it has become more common that an entire portfolio containing many different individual educational parts (courses, apprenticeships, study, further training, short courses, e-learning courses, etc.) is necessary for specific jobs. Within this context, it is particularly useful to define, above all, knowledge, skills and competences in a result oriented (learning outcome oriented) manner. If you use the correct wording for your personnel planning (see annex and Blooms' Taxonomy for help) then it will be considerably easier to recruit the right person. The specific and detailed competences, skills and knowledge of candidates are more important, than the title of the training course, apprenticeship or course of study.

Task:

Create a job plan for a newly required job in your department or area of operation. Describe the job using EQF descriptors, including the EQF level and the learning outcomes-based description of the required knowledge, skills and competences. Ask another person to assess how easy or difficult it would be to create a job description based on these job requirements, or in fact whether it would be at all possible to do so. Discuss your experiences and views.

3.5 Trends and developments as challenges for personnel planning models

To bring this chapter on personnel planning to a close three developments and trends will be addressed that are particularly relevant to the demands of personnel planning as well as how European transparency tools can potentially offer practical support. In addition to the generally uncertain and extremely dynamic business environment and economic situation in Europe and beyond, the following trends have been shown to be particularly challenging in terms of personnel planning:

a.   Internationalisation - just being national is not enough!
b.   Fragmentation - individualisation - the sum of the parts is greater than the whole.
c.   Key competences or professional expertise - or both?

a) Internationalisation - just being national is not enough!

An international focus is for most businesses today vital in order to remain competitive. However, it poses significant challenges to European industries and businesses due to cost pressures triggered by international competition as well as the saturated state of domestic markets.

If a company wants (or needs) to increase its international focus, then a possible starting point could be the internationalisation of its employee base. This can, for example, be achieved by employees of the parent company or employees of any subsidiary companies being posted abroad (classical deployment), as well as by recruiting foreign employees through internationally focused training measures etc.

If the decision is made to create a more international workforce, then this presents enormous challenges to personnel planning and goes beyond the more classical approaches. In this respect there are three basic approaches that can be pursued:

1.   The ethnocentric approach: key positions are only occupied by senior staff from the parent company; thus the corporate strategy is shaped by the parent company.

2.   The polycentric approach: senior staff are recruited and employed within the host country and are possibly trained at the parent company; the corporate strategy is thus derived from the host country.

3.   The geocentric approach: employees are recruited primarily due to their qualifications, regardless of their geographic origin; the importance of geographic distinction decreases in relation to the corporate strategy.

Individual analysis and research has shown that in recent years, ethnocentric approaches have diminished in favour of the polycentric and particularly geocentric approaches. This means that the engagement of workers and senior staff is primarily based on qualifications and is less related to national or cultural origin.

Therefore, this now requires the assessment of qualifications on the basis of job descriptions for workers and senior staff. At this level the central European transparency tools also provide an effective solution to these challenges - at least at the European level. Two approaches for support are presented here:

- **EQF descriptors**
  If it is possible to provide the „qualification" requirements for senior staff and workers with the relevant EQF descriptors, and thus clearly define the minimum requirements of knowledge, skills and competences plus the degree of independence and responsibility, then a significant prerequisite for the assignment or assessment of qualifications of individual employees can be accomplished. In terms of introducing EQF descriptors into job descriptions for international staff, it can be ascertained, for all European countries and their vocational training systems, where individual qualifications meet the required EQF level.

For example, a senior manager with a technical background is sought for a subsidiary company in Belgium in the area of mechatronics at EQF level 5, because this person:

- •   Requires comprehensive, factual and theoretical knowledge both in the field of mechatronics as well as beyond the limits of their own specialised subject;

- •   Needs extensive cognitive and practical skills in their area of expertise for the creative development of innovative and abstract problem solving strategies and;

- •   Can carry out management and supervisory duties within the workplace, particularly with regard to unforeseen changes or the evaluation and development of their own performance as well as that of others.

It can be assumed that qualifications with reference to EQF level 5 reflect these competences, skills and knowledge, and that people who have attached a qualification at EQF level 5, possess these skills. On this basis, the importance of EQF descriptors for recruitment and filling vacancies, particularly in an international context, can be demonstrated, as they facilitate and simplify the staff recruitment process.

- **Certificate and diploma supplements:**
  In terms of assessing the existing „qualifications" of potential candidates within the context of a company's internationalisation process, there is a high probability that HR departments come into contact with educational qualifications and training content from other countries, which complicates the assessment procedure (not only due to language issues). Having said this however, the databases for certificate supplements can prove to be particularly useful. Every European country has a designated agency responsible for the development, maintenance and updating of the certificate supplement database.[3]

  Here HR staff can access detailed explanations of vocational education programmes in all countries, thus providing a basis for making decisions about the appropriateness of a candidate's „qualifications." The same applies to academic qualifications, with diploma supplements providing accurate descriptions of educational content and course structures. For more information about the diploma supplements visit:
  http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/diploma-supplement_en.htm.

b) Fragmentation - individualisation - the sum of the parts is greater than the whole
In recent years, educational biographies have changed significantly throughout Europe. Just a few years ago it was entirely normal to follow a complete vocational education pathway, from basic education via vocational training to a professional qualification; however today much more complex pathways are appearing. Complete „vocational training" exists only in very few cases.

HR professionals are frequently faced by fragmented and highly individualised educational biographies of employees or applicants. Certain parts are acquired through short courses, supplemented by individual seminars, then refreshed through e-learning courses or rounded off through practical experience. The „training portfolio" is a complex collection of individual fragments and it is becoming increasingly difficult to assess whether a portfolio (and thus the skills portfolio of the person in question) is suitable for a specific job.

---

3 https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/european-skills-passport/certificate-supplement

At the same time, it is difficult within personnel planning, on the one hand, to illustrate the „qualifications" of current staff, as these no longer exist in the form they had been defined in, and on the other hand personnel requirements planning is difficult, because it is increasingly impossible to conceptually define the identified personnel requirements (e.g. two carpenters are required) or to successfully recruit appropriate staff, because educational biographies have become so fragmented. We need to identify the value of individual educational parts and no longer look for the whole (to strive for the planning level), which does not exist anymore.

In order respond appropriately to this challenge, the pursuit of an entire and complete qualification, vocational training pathway, or profession (e.g. engineer, plumber, car mechanic, etc.) needs to cease. The focus must be on defining the knowledge, skills and competences required of a new employee or for a specific position, which needs to be covered by individual educational fragments. Therefore, the approach of using learning outcome-based descriptions of knowledge, skills and competences (also from settings) from the transparency tool - European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training - is the most appropriate method. If the required skills are represented at the level of the learning outcomes, as shown in the following example in the field of Mechatronics, then is ultimately irrelevant what educational pathway has taught these skills. This is the only way to deal with the trend towards fragmentation.

c) Key competences or professional expertise - or both?
During the last few years there has been much debate within the vocational training sector about the importance of specialist and key competences. Whilst initially the emphasis was on specialist skills, the focus over the last 10-15 years has shifted more towards key competences.

The discussion's central argument was that the professional level of action has become so complex and dynamic and that the concept of expertise has now been overtaken. During this phase reference was often made to the „half-life of knowledge", which is extremely short within individual sectors of the economy. This means that acquired expert knowledge in a certain field can be overtaken very quickly and become

no longer up to date. All developments in areas or sectors influenced by technology and IT are subject to a very rapid half-life of knowledge. This applies to medical or pharmaceutical professionals also. To combat this trend of the devaluation of knowledge, the focus is now on key competences or cross-cutting skills.

Flexibility, problem solving capabilities, technological skills, language skills, mathematical proficiency and so on have shaped the debate around competency during recent years. For this reason, the European Commission has published a set of recommendations concerning a total of 8 European key competences[4], which defines the following 8 significant key competences:

1. Communication in the mother tongue;
2. Communication in foreign languages;
3. Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology;
4. Digital competence (IT skills);
5. Learning to learn;
6. Social and civic competences;
7. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
8. Cultural awareness and expression.

It is recommended to take these 8 European key competences into account within personnel planning and also to specifically ask job candidates for them.

At the same time the debate around key competences, as a response to the issue of the rapid half-life of knowledge, is currently undergoing a change of direction. Against the background of the importance of specialist work and knowledge and the importance of knowledge-intensive industries that are seen as the only future for production in Europe, the key competences currently at the centre of the debate will fade into the background a little. Their importance is still visible within the debate; however the demand for specialists and expert knowledge in Europe, particularly in the Western industrialised countries, is enormous and at present cannot be met within many industries and countries.

---

4 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/ALL/?uri=uriserv:c11090

This means for personnel planning, particularly in terms of qualitative planning, e.g. the job planning method, that both specialist and multidisciplinary skills need to be defined (also when mapping the current workforce) and ultimately a combination of both elements needs to be applied to the respective job plan. Therefore, once again, the method of learning outcome-oriented skills descriptions, provided by European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), is the most appropriate. By using this method, the following parameters for each new position can be defined, thus defining both specialist and multidisciplinary skills:

- **Knowledge:** define the specialist knowledge and the required basic knowledge for the respective field of work. It is also recommended to use learning outcome-orientated formulations (e.g.: the successful candidate is able to ...)

- **Skills:** define the application oriented dimension of knowledge. This means that people are able to apply basic knowledge in relevant work contexts, carry out working operations, check working results, etc. Using learning outcome forms of wording with active verbs is advantageous (see also Blooms' Taxonomy.) as the focus is on actual existing skills rather than simply on qualifications.

- **Competences**: define cross-sectional oriented competences that overlap and combine individual area of expertise. Competences broaden the scope of applying and utilising knowledge and skills, expanding the spectrum of uses that specific knowledge and skills can have. At the competence level learning outcome oriented descriptions are generally recommended, which set them in an appropriate practical context (e.g. to be able to assess instructions within a working environment, interpret and break down general instructions into individual working steps, plan activities, define and check milestones etc.). The more precise the competence level is described in a working context using the job planning method, the more efficient the subsequent recruitment process will be.

Finally, in order to satisfy particularly the demands and the debated importance of key competences, expanding the job planning approach to include a fourth descriptive dimension is under consideration. This is quite controversial and is currently being hotly debated at the European level: *attitudes.*

Attitudes refer to describing, at a very general level, key competences that are ostensibly not embedded within a precise working context. Descriptions of attitudes, such as; does the person display flexibility in prioritising working tasks; does the person have an open and positive attitude towards change; does the person have an active approach to problem solving or does the person have a corporate oriented mentality, demonstrate key competences that are unrelated to precise working activities. Depending on the importance of these key competences to your company, or to activities contained within a job description, this dimension could be also considered, thus raising the importance of cross-sectional competences.

3.6 Summary

In this chapter, individual elements and the basis for personnel planning within companies have been presented and discussed. A number of useful methods and instruments, taken from the current range of European transparency tools, for specific personnel planning activities and approaches, are presented and their practical uses in relation to personnel planning tasks are demonstrated. Subsequently three current developments and trends are discussed that have actual impact on the human resources planning. Methods are presented from the range of European transparency tools that meet the challenges of these developments effectively and in a forward-thinking manner. A series of specific tasks, exercises and examples complement the theoretical explanations.

At a glance, the following table highlights how personnel planning within a company can be supported by the various European transparency instruments:
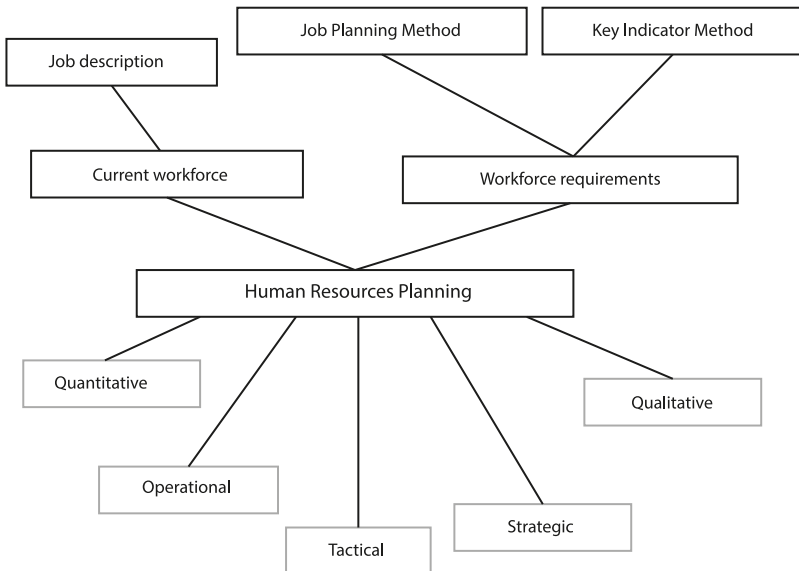
Allocation of human resources planning activities/tasks and European transparency instruments:

| HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING ACTIVITY		EUROPEAN TRANSPARENCY INSTRUMENT
Current Workforce Planning		EQF descriptors
		Learning outcome descriptions (ECVET)
		The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)
Job descriptions		EQF descriptors
		Certificate supplement and diploma supplement
		The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)
Qualitative workforce measures		EQF descriptors
		Learning outcome descriptions (ECVET)
Trends is human resources planning	Internationalisation	EQF descriptors
		Certificate supplement and diploma supplement
	Fragmentation – Individualisation	Learning outcome descriptions (ECVET)
	Key Competences	EQF descriptors
		Learning outcome descriptions (ECVET)

Attract - Recruitment and Seletion

Enikő Nagy and Adrienn Lengyel

4

Have you ever faced the challenges of selecting the most able candidates for a position in your company? Have you ever needed to compare candidates either to make long lists, short lists or decide about the finalist? In this chapter you can learn how to make your procedures more systemized by applying tools

'Attracting' in this chapter means that companies need to address and attract employees which match their needs the most.

Europass CV	EQF/NQF	Personal transcript
ECVET learning	ECVET learning	
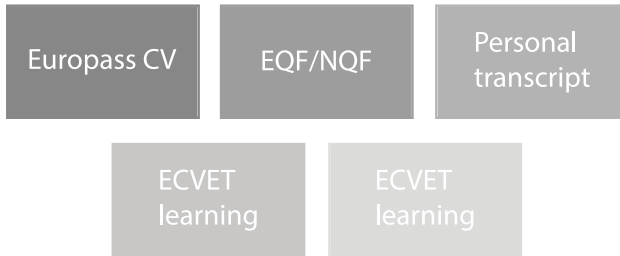
To maintain their competitiveness it is important that companies employ people who are well-skilled and well-qualified for the job and who have the potential to increase innovative measures and productivity within the company. As such, recruitment and selection are the main issues discussed in the chapter.

Recruitment plan	Responsible	Advertising	Develop short list	Selection methods	Finalize recruitment
LU	ECVET training	LU Europass CV Personal transcript	Europass Personal transcript	ECVET system LO EQF	NQF
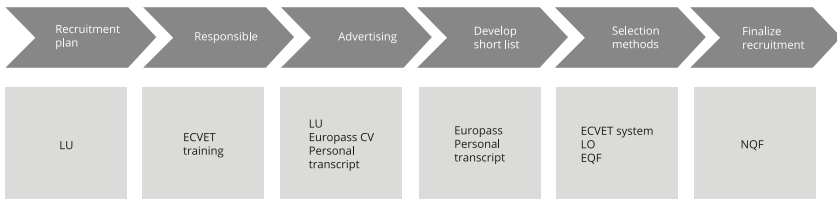
4.1 The Recruitment Process

The steps in order to recruit effectively are as follows:

1. Develop a Recruitment Plan or Strategy
A recruitment strategy must be devised including topics such as: the type of recruitment method to be used, the timeframe for the whole recruitment process, sourcing channels to be identified. It is very important to establish the recruitment plan according to the type of the position being recruited for, especially the required qualification and competences. HR managers can use the following ECVET tools and transparency instruments at this process step to make it more efficient.

Using the ECVET Learning Units structure, you will be able to specify the tasks & activities that employees holding certain positions should carry out. Moreover, learning outcomes, where knowledge, skills and competencies are defined, will help to meet the needs of the employer and qualities of the employee in a systematic way. Learning outcomes should be measurable, so that they can be assessed. After the requirements of the qualification are identified it is easier to choose the most suitable recruitment plan to the vacancy.

2. Select a Hiring Team for Recruitment
When choosing the hiring team – such as the hiring manager and interview panel team – it is important to consider who will be responsible for the whole hiring process. The task of each team member needs to be clarified.

It is very important that the hiring team members have thorough knowledge about how the ECVET system works. In order to implement the ECVET approach, team members can be trained in how to use ECVET tools and transparency instruments; so that they can carry out the whole process in a unified and structured way, where all of the steps of the process are linked to each other.

3. Advertising

Creating an advertisement plan is essential for the recruitment process. It is important to consider which channels you will use to find the right candidates: will you advertise internally, or externally, and how long will the advertisement period last?

You will get much better results in your recruitment process if you advertise along specific criteria referring to the application:

- *You can mark the specific, position-related activities, as well as the required knowledge, skills and competences in the job description ensure that only applicants with the right skill sets apply.*
- *You can ask for the following information and documentation from the candidates to get relevant and comparable data from them:*

a.   ***Europass CV***, *which makes the recruitment process easier for you and saves you time. It's a very well structured CV format; you can review the candidate's most recent experience with ease using this template. It can be very useful; especially if you have a large number of candidates to short-list as its unified structure could be the basis of comparison of the possible candidates.*

b.   ***ECVET Personal transcript***; *this can give you additional information about candidates who took part in a mobility programme and thus you can get information about their learning or work-related skills acquired in other European countries.*

4. Review applicants and develop short list

Before starting to review CVs, it is essential to define the ideal candidate. You can make two lists – one for primary criteria and another for desirable criteria. The next stage will be simply excluding those CVs that do not comply with your essential criteria list. Then you should go through the rest of the CVs and assign the candidates' scores against each item in your criteria list. In the final stage, you can review and score the best candidates against your desired criteria; this will help to single out the candidates that will adapt more quickly to this role and contribute more to your organisation.

    a. *Europass CVs; using this tool you will be able to compare candidates work and learning experiences, qualifications and competences easily. You can also use it to score the CVs easily according to the essential and desirable criteria that you drew out before.*

    b. *Personal transcript; you can review the candidates with mobility experiences using this transcript. The data of this document can be very informative regarding the candidates' learning and work-related experiences and it includes the evaluation of the candidate from the host organisation.*

5. Selection Procedure

The key purpose of a recruitment interview is to assess the skills, experience and general background of the applicants in order to make a decision on which candidate is the most suitable person for a particular position. The selection procedure consists of two main parts:

- *Interview - You can build up your interview process according to the ECVET system assessing candidates' **Learning Outcomes** and compare them with the requirements of the position defined at the beginning of the recruitment process in the Learning Units.*
- *Testing methods - You can create on your own, or choose from the available tests to measure candidates' competences according to the **EQF levels.***

6. Finalise recruitment

It is important to keep in mind that the best candidate for the position is chosen based on qualifications and the candidate will help to carry out the company's mission. In case the candidate is lacking some skills or knowledge additional training can be provided by your company following the learning outcome and learning unit-based approach in the recruitment.

- **Making the offer**

Upon completion of the recruitment process the offer to the selected candidate is made. When offering this candidate the position, make sure you have discussed the total compensation package (in addition to salary) such as paid time off and retirement benefits, etc.

For further information please visit:
https://hr.ucr.edu/recruitment/guidelines/process.html

4.2 New challenges in attracting employees in the automotive supplier sector - A practical example

Overview of Case Study

PlaSup experienced increased employee turnover, and as a result, a higher level of recruitment activity. This case explores the recruitment and selection strategies used by the company. The first part of the case study introduces the company and the system that was initially used and concludes by identifying some of the system's weaknesses. The second part of the case study discusses the improvements that were made following a system review by the HR team and introduces new methodology adopted, with the application of European transparency tools.

Introduction

PlaSup, a supplier in the automotive industry in Hungary, specializes in manufacturing plastic products by primarily focusing on thermoplastic parts. The company is committed to advanced technics and processes since it was founded and makes a special effort to ensure continuous innovation planning and implementation. In operation for 25 years, the company has had a growing number of employees, totalling at present approximately 120 people. They have been selling their products just for home market until now, but due to increasing competition in the automotive and plastic industries they decided to expand and would like to sell their products in foreign markets, also. Therefore, they need to recruit additional employees with the right skills to address the increasing production demand. The HR division have to face the following challenges in the next period regarding the hiring of a large number of additional employees:

1.   Presence of multi-national companies in the region: as the number of multi-national companies has grown enormously which has created competition among companies in the region in attracting employees.

2.   Transmigration of professional workers: considering the two facts mentioned above, there is a lack of qualified workers which are needed for the expansion of the company. Therefore the management has decided to develop a new HR and first of all a new recruitment strategy.

Recruitment procedures so far

Recruitment within the company was managed by the managing director and the HR manager. Advertising the vacant position was the task of the HR manager and advertising was mainly done through internal channels and in the local newspaper. The advertisement normally contained a few words about the company, a brief job description and an outline of the required knowledge and experiences. The pool of applicants, who these advertisements mostly attracted, were from the region and did not have very high qualifications.

The first step involved creating a long list of potential candidates by reviewing the CVs and eliminating the applicants who did not fulfil the minimum requirements. This was completed by the HR manager with the supervision of the managing director. Once the long list was ready a short list was created for inviting these applicants to an interview. The interviews were carried out by the HR manager and the managing director.

Challenges

During the economic crisis, it became clear that only company with more efficient and effective production could remain competitive as an automotive industry supplier. One of the means to increase effective production and implement innovation was the employment of highly-skilled and qualified people. As the market shrank and competition increased it became harder and harder to find, and retain, good employees.

Also, the market of the national car industry – as one of the strongest economic powers in the country - attracted more and more suppliers; these became additional competitors for the company.

The company had unused capacity for production and with the given technology they had the potential to supply external markets. To achieve this, they did not only have to explore demands abroad, but also needed new staff with experience in the given country and also people who spoke the language. With the expansion of production they needed bigger numbers of employees, possibly with higher qualification or skills and also with knowledge of foreign markets and foreign languages. All of these challenges meant that a new HR strategy was required, to reform the recruitment and selection procedures. The plan for the change included the following points:

- **Establishing a new recruitment plan (specifying required skills and competences);**
- **Making the company more attractive to attract a larger pool of candidates;**
- **Setting up a HR team;**
- **Developing a more structured programme for selection;**
- **Developing a system for the comparison of skills and competences of the candidates;**
- **Attracting employees with experience abroad and/or foreign language knowledge.**

Solutions

It became clear that a more structured recruitment procedure needed to be put in place. The reforms were initiated in various areas, including:

> **1.**   Specifying the requirements for candidates more clearly by listing the essential and desired skills, competences and knowledge which were required for the vacant position.

This action was preceded by the HR team studying of the definitions and descriptions of learning outcomes in the field.

> **2.**   Setting up a trained and competent HR team became essential to achieving effective recruitment.

This HR were given additional tasks such as considering the candidates' language competences, professional skills and competences with the help of transparency documents including Europass CV, language passport, etc.

In addition, the HR team was advised to encourage the candidates to submit or bring along to the interview any transparency documents they might have received which would prove relevant to the given position. The HR team was encouraged to include these suggestions when the post was initially being advertised and were encouraged to familiarise themselves with these documents and learn how to use the relevant systems for the selection and comparison of candidates.

As the company had wished to extend its production abroad and also to apply know-how and experience gained by people working abroad, they placed special emphasis on language competences, and working and learning experiences abroad. For this reason, use of the instruments such as the European Skills Passport, the Language Passport, the Europass Mobility, the Certificate Supplement and the Diploma Supplement, was encouraged.

Moreover, as recruiting employees from abroad was a new venture for the company, the HR team studied the systems of EQF and the various NQFs to better understand the different levels covered in various countries.

3.   Developing a new system for receiving applications to encourage increased transparency of qualifications and comparability of candidates.

As the company sought to make itself more attractive to talented and highly-skilled candidates, and considering the increased efforts to appeal to a large audience of potential candidates, the company's system for reviewing, scoring and sorting applications needed to be reformed as filtering larger volumes of candidates would require a bigger effort from the HR team than they were used to..

Firstly to many the company more attractive to potential employees, the managers decided to create a sub-page on their corporate website where applicants could read more about the company and its achievements, review sample career paths for the company and browse available vacancies.

However, with this came the higher volume of CVs. One of the challenges of this increased volume was that CVs that were submitted as an attachment to an email with an accompanying cover letter had various forms, designs and structures. Therefore a HR professional needed to have good attention to detail in order to scan them thoroughly and highlight specific information that was relevant to the vacancy. At a later stage as well, when it was the time for interviews and further selection, the CVs were studied again. The management decided to go for a more transparent system in terms of analysis of CVs.

To overcome this challenge, the company decided that they would include a ready-made CV template, which applicants could complete online through the webpage of their website where they advertised their vacancies. Using this CV template, applicants could input personal and professional data into an electronic CV template. When deciding on which template they should use for this electronic CV, the management and HR manager agreed that they wanted to have a uniformed format which already had users and examples. After some discussion, it was decided to use the Europass CV format as it is one of the most used CV formats across Europe. The structure of the Europass CV was flexible enough to allow the company to make some slight modifications when creating their own electronic CV template.. The various elements of this CV allowed the candidates to attach additional documents at various

stages, such as the language passport where language competence is mentioned, for example. The system for evaluating these CVs was developed in such a way that the evaluator from the company's HR team could make comments and give feedback at various points in the CV. This helped the HR team to plan the interview to better support their recruitment decision-making and selection practices.

The electronic CV proved to be very successful, particularly for highlighting those applicants who were skilled or highly skilled. It gave a more objective picture about candidates and enabled the HR team to select the most suitable applicants for the positions. The company was successful in embedding experiences from abroad, attracting more local talent and also, attracting more foreign workers which all helped them to expand to foreign markets.

4.3 Summary

As demonstrated in the practical sample above, companies can build a much more successful recruitment strategy using the European transparency instruments presented, namely the EQF and Europass tools. They are easy to use and understand, and they provide simple templates which can be easily integrated into standard HR practices. HR experts can apply them one at a time, or can also use multiple tools together. In order to get the best results out of it, it is worthwhile benchmarking all elements of the recruitment process to the structure of EQF system, so that the steps will support each other and there will be useful resources which can be implemented at each step.

Your company can use the European transparency instruments, especially in the following cases:

- **If you wish to filter the applications when a large number are received during the recruitment process;**
- **If you need to recruit well-qualified or highly-skilled employees;**
- **If you are seeking applicants who have learning and/or professional experiences abroad;**
- **If you wish to measure if the applicants are aware of the required competences for the position(s) being advertised.**

Here we summarise the most important information about how and where to use the EQF system, and the corresponding European transparency instruments mentioned in this chapter, in bullet points:

- **The Europass CV ensures a well-structured template which can be used to effectively compare the qualifications, professional experiences and competences of applicants;**
- **The Personal Transcript document provides HR teams with a detailed overview of applicants' experiences abroad;**
- **According to the structure of Learning Units, the required skills and competences for the position can be identified;**
- **The information contained in the Learning Outcomes helps to compare the company's requirements with what applicants can offer;**
- **EQF and NQF levels provide additional information about applicants' qualification levels.**

These EU transparency tools, especially Europass resources, can be used as a guide to create the company's own recruitment and selection strategies. These are accessible resources which can be integrated into HR practices immediately, providing a new approach for HR professionals.

Motivate & Develop
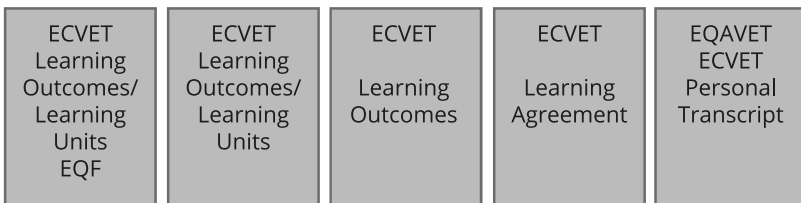
Mojca Cek and Andreja Sever

5

5.1 Case Study

Miha has been employed in the company for 5 years and works as a Purchasing Clerk. He has a degree in IT engineering. His work so far has shown that he is proficient in applying his knowledge in IT which has proven to be useful in his work as a Purchasing Clerk. As a result of his well-developed communication skills, and the fact that he speaks two foreign languages, he has been successful in his work and his manager has proposed to prepare an individual career plan for him to transfer him to another position.

The Human Resources Unit presented Miha with a proposal to transfer him to the position of Marketing Manager. The Unit also prepared some tools to help him to evaluate his competence in relation to the required competences associated with the new position. At the same time, he is asked to explore his desires and check the possibilities of how to include them in the objectives of the organisation.

Human resources managers are dealing with lack of employee motivation on a daily basis; however their work is not just to motivate employees, they also have to find a good way to motivate employees towards personal development.

ECVET Learning Outcomes/ Learning Units EQF	ECVET Learning Outcomes/ Learning Units	ECVET Learning Outcomes	ECVET Learning Agreement	EQAVET ECVET Personal Transcript

In the context of economic restructuring, when certain jobs are disappearing and new ones are being created, while there is a lack of suitably qualified workers there is also an increased demand for a flexible workforce. At the same time it is also expected that people are given opportunities for career development and to upgrade their knowledge, skills and competences. Lifelong learning is expected to help individuals in the transition between different employment opportunities, within the same company or between different sectors, as well as in the transition from unemployment to employment, etc. Lifelong learning should also improve an individual's chances of developing the knowledge, skills and competences which the match the needs of the labour market.

ECVET can be used for lifelong learning in order to improve the transfer, recognition and accumulation of knowledge that individuals have already acquired in the past through vocational education and training. It can facilitate the development of individualised lifelong learning pathways and the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences contributing to an individual's progress in education and in the labour market. ECVET principles would facilitate the identification of the achievements of individuals transitioning from one system to another as well as to the labour market.

Strategic Planning	Self-assessment	Gaps Identification	Individual Career Plan	Training
ECVET Learning Outcomes/ Learning Units EQF	ECVET Learning Outcomes/ Learning Units	ECVET Learning Outcomes	ECVET Learning Agreement	EQAVET ECVET Personal Transcript
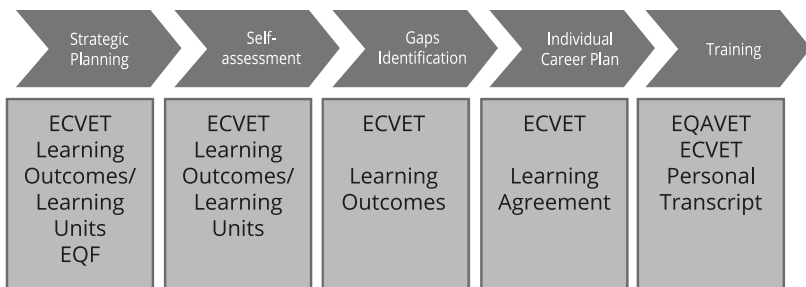
5.2 The planning of the personal and professional development of employees

5.2.1 Introduction

In the current market, organisations achieve competitive advantage mostly through their employees. Employees are an essential condition for the existence and management of every organisation. Employees are the first to come into contact with customers and they get information primarily from the market. Only a fast and properly targeted response to this information will result in the organisation beating a competitor to a sale, for example. In order to achieve a state where employees are sufficiently skilled to manage this response, we need to consider that it is not enough that the employees merely do their job well, but they should be prepared to do more for the organisation. The efficiency and effectiveness of every organisation depends on the enthusiasm, ingenuity, creativity, experience, abilities and skills of employees (Bizjak 2006, p. 1)

One of the biggest challenges in employee management is the coordination of employees' personal ambitions in line with the objectives of the organisation. Over the last decade, lifelong career orientation has received more attention since it is a crucial dimension of lifelong learning and aims to improve the efficiency and quality of education and supplementary training in the labour market. The organisation is supplied with workers from internal and external sources that are chosen on the basis of their knowledge and skills, success and references. "Although every employee is solely responsible for his or her personal development, a successful organisation will offer him or her support and directives; guidance to excellence is just as important as the authorisation and control of the behaviour of interest that is not in accordance with the objectives of the organisation" (Tavčar, cited in Bizjak 2006, p. 1).

Organisations have strategies and visions they want to achieve, but in order to do so, they need employees. But employees within an organisation have goals they want to achieve also. Career management requires a dialogue between the organisation and individuals. It is thus even more important that the organisation and its employees plan the development path together. This way they will achieve the objectives that are important to both sides at the same time. Individuals have to be aware that they are responsible for their personal and professional development and so they cannot put this responsibility on the organisation. However, the organisation has to know that employee management is important and that it can be successful when the objectives of the organisation can be at least partially linked to the objectives of individuals; despite the fact that not every individual's subjective decision is always fully realisable in the context of the strategic direction of the organisation.

The process of career planning takes place on two levels. On one hand, employees, through self-assessment, receive a critical insight into their skills, set goals, understand values and assess their strengths and weaknesses. Individuals think on their own about how their desires and ambitions can be integrated into the plans of the organisation. On the other hand, individuals are evaluated by the organisation. At the end, individuals define their short- and long-term goals in reference to their desired position within the organisation.

However, human resources management must not only be connected to the commercial performance of the company. In this regard, the management of human resources has two main goals: first is to direct the personnel and their abilities to increase efficiency and productivity in the company and second is to satisfy the needs of employees to the utmost. ECVET and the other EU instruments to support transparency and mobility can help HR managers to achieve these goals.

The following table presents the 5 phases used in planning the personal and professional development of employees in connection with ECVET and other EU instruments to support transparency and mobility.

1. The strategic planning of the company's development and vision ECVET – learning outcomes and learning units

The organisation defines its needs based on the understanding of the current situation. Every activity can then be incorporated in a systematically prepared action plan; however, it is not possible to predict what the organisation will need in a few years, especially in times of rapid change, nor can the career management programme ensure that the organisation will get what it wants. But this is more likely to happen if the organisation uses appropriate methods.

The strategic development of the organisation, its objectives for the future, especially the need of human resources, have to be written clearly, so that employees who design their career development can set goals they will follow.

ECVET – learning outcomes and learning units

When using the ECVET principles, learning outcomes can be used at this stage. They serve as a way to record knowledge, skills and competence that the company will need in the future.

Learning unit as an integral part consists of a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competences that can be assessed and evaluated. This definition assumes that the units are structured so comprehensive that they enable the testing of knowledge, skills and competences. A unit can be specific to one workplace, business unit or competence, or it can serve a multiple of different purposes. It can be used as an integral part of a training programme.

In the description of the learning unit, learning outcomes are used as a way to record. The records have to be short, one has to avoid general, non-specific records and consider the degree of autonomy and responsibility.

	EQF – European Qualifications Framework – National Qualifications Framework
	The European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) acts as a tool for transformation, which should ensure the qualifications between different systems and European countries to be easier to read and more understandable. It has two main aims: to promote citizens' mobility between countries and to enable lifelong learning.
	The company can use the Framework for human resources planning in this way that it includes the EQF levels in its strategy. The framework can thus help to place foreign qualifications in the systematisation of the company. At the same time, the company can use the level descriptors defined in the NQF to define knowledge, skills and competence that are desired and expected in the company.

2. Self-assessment, the testing of own potentials and their comparison with opportunities within organisation	
Individuals gather information about themselves and their work; they develop the image of their talents, interests, values and thereby shape their lifestyle. A formal self-assessment including a variety of assessment instruments can be made. On the basis of these instruments, individuals find out what they want in their career, how they are seen by other staff and people, and what they can offer the organisation. Every individual should coordinate his own interests with the objectives of the organisation as this is a key factor to achieve a career path within the organisation.	***ECVET – learning outcomes and learning units*** Learning outcomes and learning units can be as well used in self-assessment. A clearly written list of knowledge, skills and competence needed in the company facilitates the identification of individuals' current abilities and future goals.

3. The assessment of individuals' competences and their comparison with the competences required by the organisation, the identification of gaps	
The identification and recognition of competences for work includes (Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, 2015): 1. The assessment of the required / necessary and significant compe tences in the workpla ce that is based on the job competency profile or the competences expected by the manager and organi sation. 2. The identification of gaps in competences – establishing the differences between the existing competen ces of individuals and the competences required on the level of the workplace. According to the analysis of deviations of existing competen ces from required competences, a competence deficit or a competence surplus in the workplace are identified. On the basis of the difference between the required	***ECVET – learning outcomes*** Learning outcomes are understood as the things someone should be able to do, understand and know at the end of the learning process. A learning process is understood in the broadest sense; the acquisition of skills in the workplace is also a learning process. The definition of the required competences for specific areas or jobs by the company can be the basis for the identification and recognition of competences for the job.

and actual competences, areas for further development are determined. On the basis of these areas, career goals and the areas of development potential in the organisation are determined.	
4. Creating individual career plans	
The final version of a career plan is always designed by the employee and his superior or some other representative of the company. It is important that the employees are adequately prepared for an interview. Career goals are formulated on the basis of the interview where the self-assessment and the superior's assessment are coordinated and on the basis of challenges and desires for further career development and gaps in competences which are identified on the basis of preliminary elements.	**ECVET – learning agreement** Learning agreement is designed for each employee separately. This is an agreement on the implementation of activities to achieve the objectives set out in the career plan. The learning agreement defines the liabilities of employees and the company. A plan for implementation is clearly defined. The core of the learning agreement is formed by the learning outcomes that can be in a form of one or several learning units. Learning units have to be written clearly and known to the employee and adapted to his abilities. The learning agreement has to contain an agreement on the mode of assessment or the method of the termination of the training programme.

	It is recommended to use the modes of assessment that actively involve employees / participants, including self-assessment and the writing of a work diary. Most often, the following modes of assessment are used: 1. An evaluation sheet 2. The writing of a work diary and a conversation 3. Observation in the workplace 4. The presentation of a product or a service From the very beginning, employees have to be aware of the training requirements and conditions for the successful completion of the training.
5. The implementation of the training	
One of the ways to keep good employees is therefore a career plan for each individual. This is a systematic and planned process of staff development strategy that includes the prediction of necessary education and training for employees, the prediction of necessary knowledge, and the	***EQAVET*** The EQAVET framework includes a four-stage cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation/estimation and review/revision of the vocational education and training. (PLAN – DO – CHECK –ACT)

planning of succession. The organisation should encourage employees' progress and development, and direct the selection of employees' objectives. Of course, employees have to cooperate and clearly express their expectations and opinion. Only in this way can the organisation and employees plan the future path that will lead them all to a higher level of their development.

The company is allowed to use the four-stage EQAVET cycle to provide quality in-house trainings, as long as it does not use other quality standards.

ECVET – certificate (personal transcript)

After completion of training it is recommended, that each participant receives a certificate or a personal transcript which contains personal data of the participant, the duration of training and information about the method of examination and the acquired skills.

The certificate containing more information allows the recognition of competences in different companies, sectors or in formal education, which gives the participant an opportunity for mobility in the labour market.

5.3 An example of the use of the ECVET principles in the planning of employee's career

A company has identified a position that is important in the company context and will have to be developed in the next years. For this position the company has developed a competency profile. When preparing the competency profile, HR managers proceeded from the description of professional activities, the analysis of the work process, the analysis of the funds required for the work, the analysis of the information required to complete tasks, and the short-term development strategy of the company. The analysis of the future development of the company revealed that the positions of Marketing Manager and Software Developer are in need of new employees or existing employees who can be transferred to these roles.

The competency profile of the Marketing Manager is described as follows:

1. Independent communication with colleagues and business partners in Slovenian and two foreign languages, taking into account the principles of effective communication and business etiquette;

2. Processing, analysis and interpretation of information for business-decision making with the use of ICT and specific computer programmes;

3. Proactive monitoring of the market situation and market developments and trends, and forwarding them to the relevant departments;

4.   Proactive monitoring of customers' activities and trends, and competition at home and abroad, looking for new niches and markets;

5.   Comprehensive and responsible sale of product and/or services and client counselling;

6.   Comprehensive and responsible maintenance of the buyer – supplier relation;

7.   Comprehensive and responsible organisation and monitoring of after-sales service;

8.   Independent planning, preparation and evaluation of their own work;

9.   Seeking solutions to achieve results on their own initiative;

10. Ability to work in a team, awareness of mutual responsibility and interdependence;

11. Ability to solve conflicts in the team.

As stated above, Miha has worked for the company as a Purchasing Clerk for 5 years. As a result of his IT skills and competences, his well-developed communication skills, and the fact that he speaks two foreign languages, the Human Resources Unit (HRU) presented Miha with a proposal to transfer him to the position of Marketing Manager. The HRU prepared some tools to help Miha to evaluate his competence in relation to the required competences associated with the new position.

On the basis of assessments made by Miha, by his superior and his co-worker, the HRU is able to analyse the gaps in competences. Once the differences between Miha's existing competences and the competences required for the new role are identified, the HRU can identify the areas of competences for further development. On the basis of this, Miha's career goals will be determined.

On the basis of the tools developed by the HRU, Miha as well as his superior prepare their own proposals for further career development within the organisation based on the development and establishment plans of the organisation. Preparing an individual career plan is a very important, but also a very challenging task. Planning and forecasting for the future requires a broader view and an in-depth reflection about oneself, during which an employee needs the help of experts who will guide him through the entire process of preparation and will help to interpret the results generated by various tools used during the process.

The final preparation of a career plan is always a matter of reaching an agreement between the employee and his superior. The superior leads an in-depth career interview where he has the opportunity to listen to Miha about his career objectives and activities he plans to complete in order to achieve these goals. The superior listens and gives feedback regarding the estimated strengths, development areas and the evaluation of his skills. The employee and his superior form career objectives based on the interview, where the self-assessment and assessment by the superior are coordinated, the challenges and desires for career development in the future, and the gaps in competences, that are identified on the basis of all preliminary elements.

On the basis of the career plan, the HRU prepares a learning agreement which applies to up-coming training which Miha will attend so that he can achieve or improve those skills which proved to be less developed during

the assessment phase. The learning agreement defines the obligations of the employee and the company in relation to the training, and from this a plan for implementation is clearly defined. The core principles and terms of the learning agreement (example of the learning agreement content is in the annex) is formed by using the learning outcomes which can be in a form of one or several learning units. Learning units have to be written clearly, presented to the employee and adapted to his or her abilities. The learning agreement has to contain an agreement on the mode of assessment or the method of the termination of the training programme.

The training is conducted in accordance with the learning agreement. After the completed training, Miha receives a certificate or equivalent for successfully completing the training. A certificate documenting the completed learning unit gives information on whether an individual has achieved the learning outcome or not and how the knowledge was tested. At the end of the training programme or course, the training provider issues a certificate showing the acquired knowledge and skills. The provider has to be careful to name the knowledge, skills and/or competences acquired by the learner. In the certificate, it has to be stated if the training was assessed through continuous assessment and coursework or through examination, or both. The content of a certificate should include:

1. Information about the participant;
2. Information about the training provider;
3. Information about the training;
     The name of the learning unit;
     Duration in hours.
4. Learning outcomes;
     Achieved competences;
     Methods of examination;
     The results of examination.
5. Signatures;
     The contact person or tutor from the training provider.

This certificate serves as a proof of competences attained by Miha as part of the training. The certificate is quality assured; therefore it can also be used outside of the company if the company decides Miha should acquire an additional formal qualification. This can also be used as Recognition of Prior Learning when pursuing a formal qualification; if the national accreditation system permits it.

5.4 Summary

In this section we wanted to present the usefulness of some of the ECVET and EU transparency tools as an aid to lifelong learning that is implemented in a company, in particular with a view to improve the transfer, recognition and accumulation of knowledge acquired by individuals in the company. The ECVET principles (learning outcomes, designing transparent learning units and assessment) would facilitate the identification of the achievements of individuals transitioning from one system to another as well as to the labour market. They can facilitate the development of individualised lifelong learning paths and to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences contributing to one's progress both within qualifications systems and the labour market. They can be also used for the purposes of career development of employees in companies.

One of the biggest challenges in employee management is the offsetting of employees' personal ambitions with the objectives of the organisation. Over the last decade, lifelong career orientation has received more attention since it is a crucial dimension of lifelong learning and aims to improve the efficiency and quality of education and supplementary training in the labour market.

Retain company staff - How could ECVET instruments be used for a HR development and training process?

Johannes Treu and Pia Winkler

6

6.1 Case Study

Hans Gerhard, CEO of "Avegia Personnel Services", is facing the situation that it is particularly hard these days to manage all the technological growth, speed of changes and increasing competition. As his company is constantly suffering from a high rate of staff turnover, he has employed Franziska Ehrlichmann as his assistant. Her task is to find out more about factors which influence staff satisfaction and ways to keep employees. She is truly concerned with adding value to the organisation. On the other hand she is constantly looking for new opportunities and companies to share her increasing knowledge with. She is also eager to expand her know-how as best as possible. Hans wants to keep the talented new employee, but he's afraid of giving her training as she might leave the company as well. Franziska found a wonderful training opportunity in Greece, but she's afraid that her training request will not be approved by Hans.

6.1.1 Possible ECVET Tools and European Transparency Instruments

As not every instrument is suitable for the process of retaining staff, a selection of the most suitable instruments has to be made. The following table presents a list of possible ECVET Tools and European Transparency instruments that could be used for the purposes of employee retention and HR development:

• European Skills Passport • Language Passport • Europass Mobility	• Diploma Supplement • Learning outcomes & units of learning outcomes
• Certificate Supplement • ECVET Learning Agreement	• ECVET Memorandum of Unterstanding

6.1.2 HR Development and training process

Human resource development (or training and development) can be described as an educational process which involves the sharpening of personal skills and traits, changing of attitude and gaining additional knowledge to enhance the performance of employees (Qureshi 2016). Important benefits of training and development could include, for example:

1. Increased productivity;
2. Reduction of turnover;
3. Job satisfaction;
4. Employee retention.

6.1.3 Overview of HR Management and the possible use of ECVET

The following chart provides an overview of the HR process as a whole. It is shown as a value chain; the part of HR development being a subsystem of it.
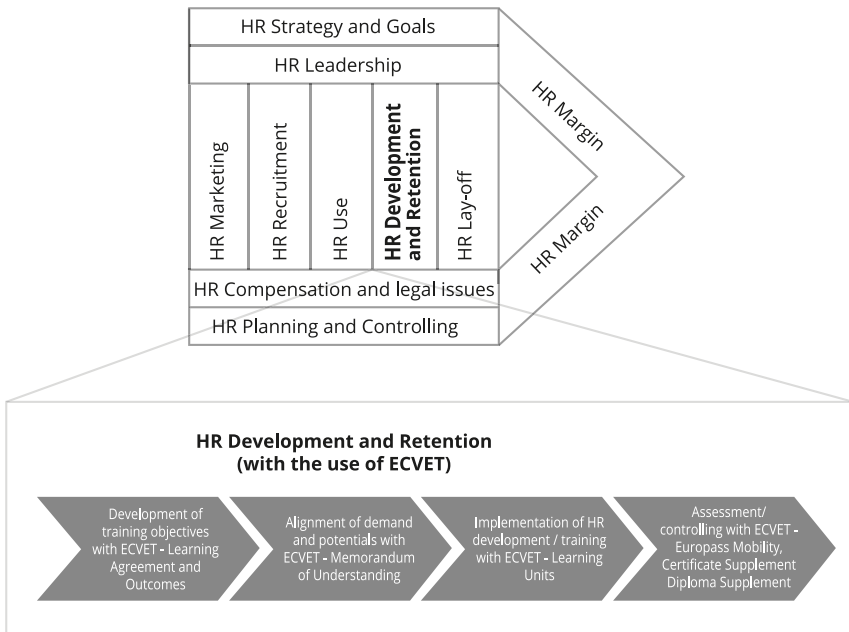

Figure 1: „HR Process as value chain including detailed HR Development steps"

6.2 Introduction

One of the greatest challenges in today's business world is to keep pace with technological growth, fundamental changes and increasing competition (Levis / Sequeira 2012). Such fundamental changes are taking place in the work force and this is sometimes called "war of talents" (The Economist, 2008). Therefore we can state that in the information age, knowledge and knowledgeable workers are the new critical raw material and source for creating value (Carleton 2011). To secure this new raw material for the company, the HR management has to find new ways to develop and to retain these employees. One possibility refers to the opportunities presented by lifelong learning and the enhancement of individual learning experiences in different countries. In order to facilitate the process in the EU and to give the HR Management a toolkit to help them to oversee employee training in other countries, the ECVET framework was developed. However, a recent research study shows that in many different EU countries the ECVET framework is commonly unknown and has little or no relevance in the field of HR management (ECVET goes Business Research Report, 2016). In order to address this gap between the ECVET model and HR practices, this chapter will focus on answering the question: How could ECVET instruments be used for employee retention?

6.3 Theoretical Background

Human resource management (HRM) can be understood as a compre-hensive and varied approach to the employment and development of people (Armstrong/Taylor 2014). Keeping this in mind, HRM can be seen as a philosophy, as a management process or a as contribution of both which improves the organisational structure of a company. Therefore, it is no surprise that many different definitions exist. In simple terms, HRM is as a process of making efficient and effective use of human resources to reach the strategic companies' objective (Khanka 2007). In contrast to this, a more detailed definition states that HRM is a process of procuring, developing and maintaining the best human resources in the organisa-tion so that the overall objectives of the organisation could be achieved in an efficient and effective way.

Keeping this definition in mind, in order to contribute to the overall company goals, the following sub-objectives or HRM goals can be de-rived (Khanka 2007 and Armstrong/Taylor 2014):

1.   Ensuring the availability of human resources;
2.   Deploying and utilising human resources;
3.   Contributing to the development of a high-performance culture;
4.   Increasing employee satisfaction and creating a climate of mutual trust; merging individual employee goals with organi-ational goals.

These objectives make it easy to develop the necessary HRM process steps and to combine them in a HR value chain (see figure 2). The fol-lowing primary process steps are possible (e.g. Boxall/Purcell 2011 and Khanka 2007):

1. HR Marketing;
2. HR Recruitment;
3. HR Use;
4. HR Development and Retention; and
5. HR Lay off.

Support activities could be:

1. HR Strategy and Goals;
2. HR Leadership;
3. HR Compensation; and
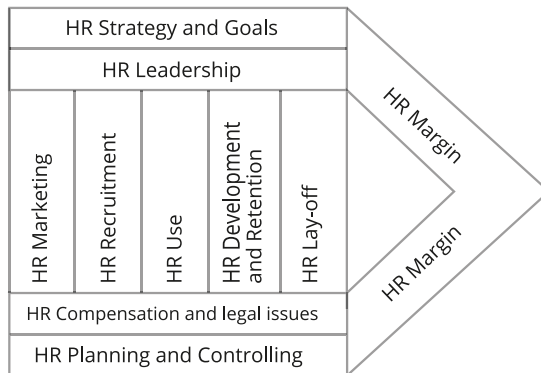4. HR Planning and Controlling.

Figure 2: „HR Process as value chain"

As this section of the handbook deals with only one HR process, namely HR Development and Employee Retention, some further thoughts are necessary to understand what HR Development means. Human resource development, i.e. employee training and development, can be described as an educational process which involves sharpening personal skills and traits, changing attitudes and gaining additional knowledge to enhance the performance of employees (Qureshi 2016). Important benefits of training and development could include:

1. Increased productivity;
2. Reduction of staff turnover;
3. Job satisfaction;
4. Employee retention.

An important part of this HR function is career development, especially for workers who are willing to learn and up-skill. Here, research has shown that some types of career development are necessary for job satisfaction and this has an impact on employee retention rates (Cedefop 2008).

6.4 How to use ECVET for HR Development and Training: Some Practical Examples

This section is dedicated to providing a practical example which gives a good, real-world advice on how to integrate ECVET tools into HR practices which promote employee retention. As such, this section offers:

- **An case study which is pertinent to daily business;**
- **An application of instrument(s);**
- **An overview of the benefits of using ECVET.**

In this section, three different practical examples of using ECVET will be shown and explained in detail. Each case aims to retain company staff with the help of HR development and training processes combined with ECVET instruments. In the long-term, the turnover rate shall be stabilised to the point that a well-balanced working atmosphere will be established, in which employees are enjoying working.

- ## First Case Study:

Franziska Ehrlichmann, the assistant of Avegias CEO mentioned in the case study at the beginning of this chapter, would like to be given more responsibilities in her job. Yet, she is lacking adequate leadership skills and needs some further training in this particular field. She explained this to her CEO. Now, Hans wants to keep staff and also increase workers' satisfaction, so he decides to offer his staff members some possibilities for training and development as well as vocational education and training abroad in order to retain his employees to the company and to keep the best qualified workers. To achieve this objective, Avegia Personnel Services is looking for a suitable partner abroad who can facilitate this training and ensure that the training is properly recorded.

The first step is to search for a suitable partner. Support is offered through the project portal ADAM (http://www.adam-europe.eu). When searching for partners, it is advisable to consider partners and training companies who you may have worked with in the past. Search for training companies that are offering various programmes for employees seeking to increase their knowledge with regard to their leadership abilities. When this training centre is found, Hans can easily select the responsible person to help facilitate the exchange. In this case, Hans has selected the Institute of Further Education in Koper, Slovenia and the contact person will be Jakov Horvat, the HR manager in the institute. This is a reliable partner who Hans has worked with for a long time. Jakov will be responsible for supporting Franziska to plan training opportunities abroad for staff of Avegia. He can also recommend other people in his institute so that she can work with the most appropriate person.

After getting an appropriate partner, the preparatory work can begin. The first ECVET instruments that could be used here are the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and the Learning Agreement (LA). The MoU sets the structures and principles of how the partnership will operate. When preparing and using the MoU the following questions should be answered (ECVET Users' Group 2012):

- **Do the partners (Avegia Personnel Services represented by Hans and Institute for Further Education represented by Jakov) understand and agree on their roles and tasks?**
- **Are all agreements that are associated with acquiring and assessing knowledge, skills and competence abroad and their transfer to the home institution specified in writing?**
- **Do the partners (Hans and Jakov) communicate in an open manner?**
- **Does each of the partners have clear and explicit objectives for participation in the partnership?**
- **Is there a clear agreement among the partner institutions about expected achievements?**
- **Are all actors concerned aware of the content of the MoU and the issues they have agreed upon?**
- **Is the information included in the MoU sufficient to outline the general framework of cooperation?**

As Hans has quite a specific understanding of the content in the MoU, he develops a first draft of the document. A practical example of a completed in MoU can be found on the following websites: *http://www.ecvet-info.de* and *http://www.ECVET-projects.eu*.

The Learning Agreement on the other hand sets the framework for the HR development and training process. When preparing and using the Learning Agreement the following questions should be addresses (ECVET Users' Group 2012):

- **Does the Learning Agreement identify the learning outcomes to be achieved, how these will be assessed and how learners' credit will be validated and recognised?**
- **Does the host institution (in this case the Institute for Further Education) agree with preparing the learner for the achievement of these learning outcomes?**
- **Is there an agreement about how the host institution will document the results of the assessment (assessment grid, written statement)?**

There are many benefits for the company in using these tools. First of all, **mutual trust** is established between both institutions and this is facilitated through **international networking**. **Secondly**, there is **legal certainty** as well as **opportunities and motivation** for employees to **improve competences** and to get the opportunity for HR development and training abroad. There are benefits for all involved:

o Hans benefits from ensuring a formal process governs the learning partnership. He can directly specify the needs of his company and thereby can declare which training his employees require. All conditions can be mutually agreed on so that no misunderstandings happen when communicating across borders. The CEO can also be sure that his employees are assured to acquire the right content through this training, as this is detailed in the Learning Agreement. Individual objectives of the employee, as well as demands of the CEO, can both be recorded in this Agreement. This way, there will not be any "bad surprises" after the training commences or once the employee returns from the training. Generally, Hans will benefit from the expertise of the Institute of Further Education in Slovenia, as his staff will be getting an international perspective and new inputs for dealing with leadership.

o Franziska, as a potential participant for the training and a representative of the staff members, will have legal security and clarity with regard to the content of the training. She can also decide upon specific needs she sees in the training, therefore she is really willing to do the intercultural exchange. Thanks to the new possibilities, she will work even harder to also implement and apply the new gained knowledge.

o Jakov is able to use his knowledge he gained throughout the years; and so in this way, he can also establish a sustainable and long-lasting partnership with Hans' company. In this way, new synergies will get visible when exchanging knowledge with the foreign staff members and the CEO Hans. Both sides can then profit from this intercultural exchange.

● Second Case Study:

After establishing a partnership, Avegia Personnel Services identified another employee, besides Franziska, wanting to attend a VET programme abroad. Luis Krankow wants to improve his abilities in leading teams, especially in an intercultural perspective. As Franziska and Hans both recognise the interest in such areas, the CEO decides to use this training opportunity to motivate further staff as well. Therefore, Avegia offers employees the opportunity to attend in such training programme abroad.

To integrate the ECVET model into this learning partnership *learning outcomes & learning outcome units* can be used by Hans and Franziska when designing the training programme in partnership with the Institute of Further Education in Slovenia. In this case, learning outcomes cover competences, skills and knowledge which are achieved through the training. Franziska and Luis want to expand their abilities in leadership. Therefore, they need to know how teams are lead in order to establish themselves within Avegia. So, how can this be written down? Hans and Jakov are discussing about the training and identify several learning outcomes, as follows:

Title of the unit: Leading and developing your own team – how to get more self-confidence in your profession

Description of the unit:
Participants are undergoing a self-analysis which is introduced and explained by the trainer. After assessing their own personal strengths and weaknesses, they will get to know different leading types (e.g. authoritative, laissez-faire or democratic leadership styles) and will practice each form on their own. Doing this, participants will also understand why a leader is necessary to increase productivity within a team. They will get to know themselves better when having to choose their own leadership style; afterwards they will have to lead a team on their own in practice.

Knowledge (Learning outcome 1)
At the end of this programme, participants will be able to:
- o **Differentiate between the different leadership styles;**
- o **Describe the necessity of a leader for effective teams;**
- o **Name different leader types throughout history and also of modern companies**

Skills (Learning outcome 2)
At the end of this programme, participants will be able to:
- o **Apply leadership styles to their daily business;**
- o **Test the various leadership styles in different kind of teams;**
- o **Develop a strategy to increase productivity within a team**

Competence (Learning outcome 3)
- o **At the end of this programme, participants will be able to:**
- o **Apply problem solving strategies;**
- o **Reflect on their own leadership style;**
- o **Manage intercultural teams effectively;**
- o **...receive and evaluate feedback from teams or supervisors**

There are many benefits for the company in using these tools. First of all, in relation to **retaining staff** to the company and **acknowledging HR training abroad,** the European Transparency instruments are **practical tools for learners** to use to achieve the *learning outcomes* in different countries with different VET or educational systems abroad. Using these tools also established **a basis between all partners** regarding setting **a common objective and reducing uncertainty** for all partners in general. Furthermore the *learning outcomes* achieved in another country can be described in a way that is **easily understandable throughout Europe.**

Thanks to the learning outcomes, all participants (Hans, Franziska, Luis and Jakov) know exactly what the training should cover, how it should be assessed and recorded and what the employees should know and be able to do by the end of the training. As competences, skills and knowledge have a sustainable and long-lasting effect, the training results can be assessed more easily. Training programmes are not bound to any borders, as staff members can easily participate in any training through-out Europe and still ensure the quality of the training, and have their knowledge, skills and competences documented accurately.

- ## Third Case Study:

During the coordination and delivery of the training abroad, Luis and Franziska acquire the knowledge, skills and competences that were agreed between Avegia Personnell Services and the Institute for Further Education. At the end of the training, the results of this HR measure need to be documented. The European Transparency instrument which can help here is *Europass*.

When completing this, the following principle is important: "The more concrete the sheet is, the greater its benefits." Thereby, general job descriptions or lists of tasks are not helpful. In order to fill out the *Europass Mobility* correctly, the following method is general accepted:

Learning outcome = to know + to understand + to do

A more practical way to describe the results of the training using the *Europass Mobility*, might be the best to answer the question: What and how, in which context, on which level is the employee or learner able to do?

Next to a general description of both partner institutions (including names and addresses of institutions and participant[s]), the "Description of the Europass Mobility Experience" and the "Description of Skills and Competences developed during the Europass Mobility Experience" are the most important elements of this document. The following is an overview of what each section should include.

Description of the Europass Mobility Experience:

- o Objective of the Europass Mobility Experience, i.e. to acquire new abilities in leading intercultural teams.
- o Initiative during which the Europass Mobility experience is completed, if applicable, i.e. further education and training (non-compulsory);
- o Qualification (certificate, diploma or degree) to which the education or training leads, if any, i.e. not applicable (no certificate, diploma or degree after a one-day training)
- o Community or mobility programme involved, if any, i.e. none.
- o Duration of the Europass Mobility Experience, i.e. from 01.09.2016 to 02.09.2016.

Description of Skills and Competences developed during the Europass Mobility Experience

Activities and/or tasks carried out

1. Completing a self-assessment on one's own leadership style

2. Leading an intercultural teams on one's own

Job-related skills and competences acquired

1. To establish a leading strategy for intercultural teams:
a) Analyse of the team members skills, etc.
b) Identify the appropriate leadership style.
c) Adapt individual leadership style.
d) Interpret different behaviours and reactions of team members;
e) React quickly to changes in team atmosphere;
f) Complete a task by leading a team successfully and efficiently.

Languageskills and competences acquired (if not included under "Job-related skills and competences")

1. Communicating with team members from different nationalities

Computer skills and competences acquired (if not included under "Job-related skills and competences")

None.

Organisational skills and competences acquired (if not included under "Job-related skills and competences")

1. Good capacity in organising and leading teams, when carrying out the tasks .

Social skills and competences acquired (if not included under "Job-related skills and competences")

> **1. Excellent communication, analysis and reflection skills in contact with team members, including:**
> **a) Fits in well with members of the team**
> **b) Adapts individual leadership style to changing environment within the team**
> **c) Reflects own behaviour and expressions of others**

Other skills and competences acquired

> **None.**

The template for the Europass Mobility can be found at the website: https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu. Here, you can also find completed examples of the document.

The effectiveness of a training programme abroad can sometimes be difficult to assess, as there are different education structures and also various training objectives in different cultural backgrounds. Still, somehow the **training has to be assessed** to give proof of what the participants actually learned. In this way, by using the transparency instruments mentioned, **mutual trust** can be established across borders and all participants are also assured that they understand and will get credit for **the training they completed.**

In this example, Hans wants to find out what Franziska and Luis actually did during the training. Apart from testing their skills in leading teams, he is curious to understand the content of the training after it was implemented. The Europass Mobility contains all information about the training, so Hans can get an overview of what Franziska and Luis learned from Jakov. This way, he can easily see the link to their job positions and can further rely on their increased knowledge, skills and competences.

6.5 Summary

This chapter was dedicated to showing how ECVET Tools and European Transparency instruments can be used in the employee retention. Here, the focus was to show what kind of ECVET and European Transparency instruments could be used in order to retain staff to the company. For this reason three simple case studies were created and the use of possible ECVET instruments were described.

In the first case, Hans, the CEO of Avegia Personnell Services, wanted to find a suitable partner for facilitating training abroad. He wanted to have assurance that the training would really be useful and that all paries understand their roles and tasks within the partnership. Here, the best ECVET Tools were the MoU and the Learning Agreement. The MoU outlines the structures and principles of how the partnership will operate. Furthermore, it specifies the conditions for achieving learners' credits in the partner institution as well as regulating the validation and recognition of the learning. The Learning Agreement on the other hand sets the framework for the delivery of the training abroad, outlining what the employee is expected to achieve by the end of the training. Some practical examples of MoU and Learning Agreements can be found at the following websites: *http://www.ecvet-info.de* and *http://www.ecvet-projects.eu*.

After finding a suitable partner and also agreeing on specific details of the training, Hans and Jakov, his partner from the Institute for Further Education, had to find a way to specify the content of this one-day leadership training seminar. In the second case study, the best European Transparency instruments were the learning outcomes & learning outcome units. Learning outcomes are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence. A unit of learning outcomes is a component of a qualification consisting of a set of knowledge, skills and competence that can be assessed and validated. When precisely defining the Learning outcomes, the outcomes of the training are better understood. They are actually assessable, as they can be compared to the true abilities the participants have after completing the training programme. This is mutually beneficial to the CEO and the employees, as all parties can understand what the training will be about and which knowledge, skills and competences

the participants are going to develop as part of the training. Practical examples and templates can be found on the websites mentioned above.

Finally, after actually attending the training, the employees and the CEO have to undertake a "before-and-after" comparison to ascertain the success of the training. This means, they should somehow assess the training course in terms of learning units. In the last case study, the European Transparency instrument Europass was described. The best document for recording knowledge and skills acquired abroad is the Europass Mobility. Here, learning units are described as activities and tasks which were carried out during the training. Also, job-related, language or organisational skills are documented using this temples, and therefore also become measurable. ‚When completing the *Europass Mobility* the following principle is important: "The more concrete the sheet is filled in, the greater its benefits." The template and some examples can be found on the website: *https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu*.

All in all, there are several ways to actually retain employees within a company and to develop their professional skills. Communication is the most important factor in this situation as both the CEO and employees should be aware of the possibilities the European Union can actually offer to them. Staff training abroad is just one way to actually keep employees satisfied as they can improve their knowledge, skills and competences. Similarly, the company can also benefit from such an exchange. The ECVET Tools and European Transparency Instruments can effectively support this exchange and thereby increase the satisfaction of the staff members as well as the CEO.

Assess - Performance Management

Annamaria Cacchione

7

7.1 Case Study

A group of non-EU citizens, from Africa and Eastern Europe, arrive in Italy searching for a job as agricultural workers and caregivers. They have previous and newly-acquired knowledge and competences that they would like to have acknowledged and recognised in Italy. At the same time, their possible employers would like to have proof of their skills. A local VET provider has been entrusted with assessing their skills and competences and certifying them within a limited time and with limited resources. The solution adopted was that of a performance-based assessment, basically, a simulation of the some tasks related to the job, to be validated and certified by a small set of transparency tools. As a result, ECVET and similar tools have proved to be a suitable and reliable practice for assessing skills within a Performance Management System that can be easily adopted even by SMEs. The ECVET and transparency instruments which are used include:

- **ECVET competence and learning outcome descriptions;**
- **ECVET points;**
- **EQF and NQF levels and competence descriptors;**
- **Personal online portfolios.**

The HR process concerned here is related to the evaluation of the human resources of a company in relation to the company's corporate growth, development and productivity. Specifically, it is the Performance Management Process (PMP), which is an ongoing process of communication between supervisors and employees, supporting the accomplishment of the strategic objectives of the organisation. The Performance Management Process is a cycle, composed of 4 stages:

1. (Performance) Planning: setting performance targets;
2. Monitoring and Coaching/Development: observing employees' performance and providing feedback;

3.   Evaluation: evaluating employees' performances and
          competences;
4.   Rewarding and Development: linking performance
          with reward and recognition.

The third stage, evaluation, is where PMP can integrate best practice
in innovative performance-based methods of assessment; offering good
and affordable solutions for all organisations, including SMEs, which are
too often excluded from the adoption of these methodologies because
of their complexity and cost. The following graphic presents an overview
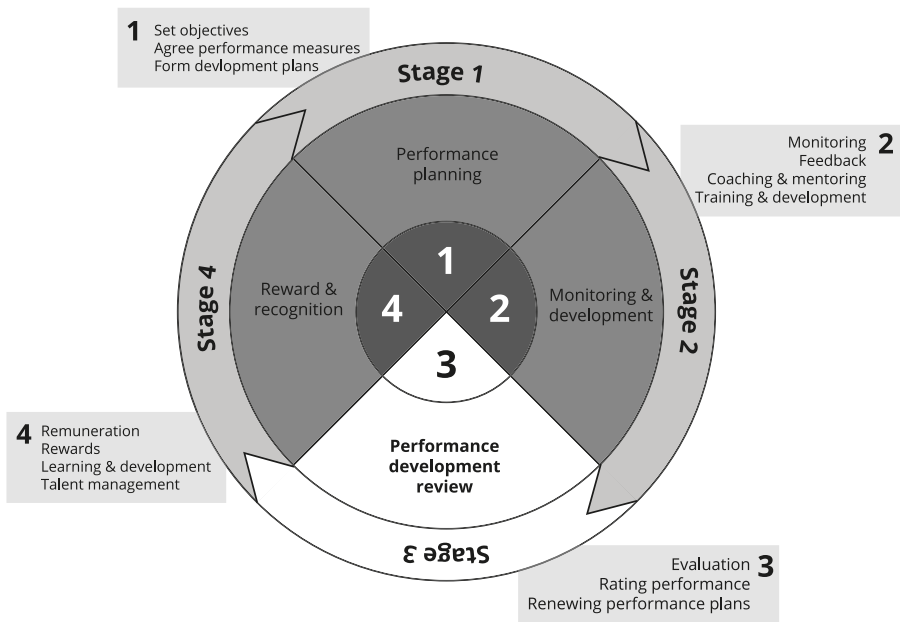of the Performance Management cycle:

*Figure 3: the 4 stages of PMP, highlighting the 3rd, where ECVET-based
methodologies can be integrated. (Source: www.hrinform.com.au)*
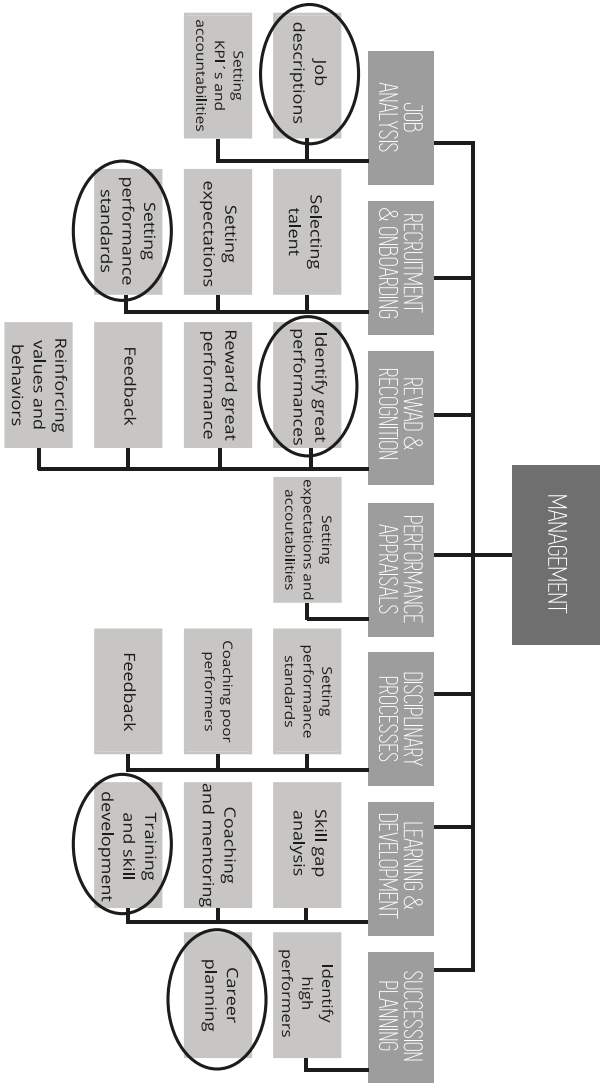
Figure 4: relationship between PMP and other HR activities within the organi-sation. Specific points of convergence with the proposed solutions are circled. (Source: www.ahri.com.au)

7.2 Performance Management

Performance Management is an ongoing process of communication between a supervisor and an employee, supporting the accomplishment of the strategic objectives of the organisation. The Performance Management Process (or System) is a cycle, including clarifying expectations, setting objectives, identifying goals, providing feedback, and reviewing results. Performance Management usually includes four stages, as is shown in the following picture.

Stage 4.
Performance
Rewarding &
Development
Planning

Stage 1.
Performance
Planning &
Commitment

**PMS
CYCLE**

Stage 3.
Performance
Review &
Evalution

Stage 2.
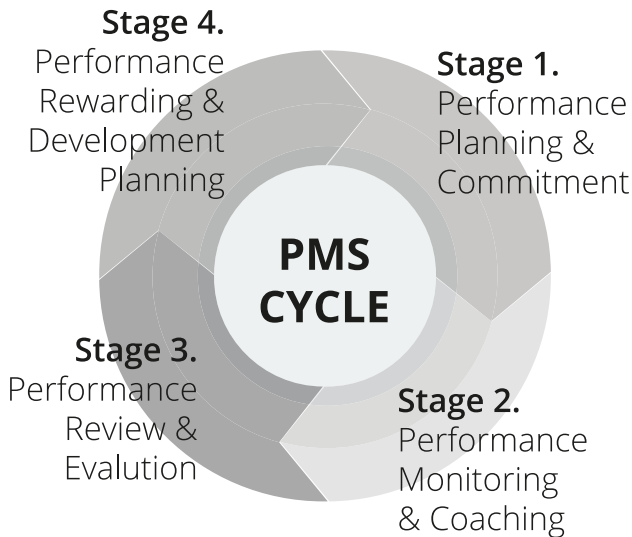Performance
Monitoring
& Coaching

Figure 5: overview of the PMS Cycle

As pictures show, terms can slightly differ but their meaning is always the same. The four stages can be described as follows :

1. Performance Planning: setting performance targets.
Employees and managers meet to clarify expected outcomes for the year (or other established periods of time) and set objectives that link the employee's job to organisational objectives. Objectives define what employees are expected to accomplish. Managers and employees should aim to define S.M.A.R.T. objectives[5].

2. Monitoring and Coaching/Development: following and supporting the implementation process - observe employees' performance and check-in with them regularly, feedback.

Once performance objectives are set, managers should check-in regularly with employees to discuss the status of objectives and to provide feedback based on observations of an employee's performance. It is equally important to provide feedback on areas of success as on those requiring improvement. A check-in also provides the opportunity to adjust objectives. Coaching is an effective method of providing feedback. It helps shape performance and increases the likelihood that the employees' results will meet expectation[6].

---

5 We remember that S.M.A.R.T. is the acronym of Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time scaled. This PMP stage definition is adapted from
http://hr.berkeley.edu/performance/performance-management/cycle/planning
6 This PMP stage definition is adapted from:
http://hr.berkeley.edu/performance/performance-management/cycle/check-in

3. Evaluation (or Performance Development Review) evaluating the performances and competencies of employees.
The Performance Management Review, sometimes referred to as a Performance Appraisal or Evaluation, evaluates the overall performance and development of staff during the PMP and applies a performance rating as well as assessing past, current and future performance development needs. The primary objective of PM Review is to support the employee in achieving their highest level of performance by creating awareness as to their strengths and areas that require development[7].

4. Rewarding and Development (or Review and Evaluation): linking performance with reward and recognition.
In this stage, high performance is rewarded, for example with a salary bonus and/or other benefits, and further developments are planned.

Two more aspects of Performance Management worth mentioning for our purposes include:

1.   The application of PM in different job career stages;
2.   The application of PM in small companies.

Regarding the first point, Performance Management is usually applied in large industries, while SMEs are mostly prevented from adopting such methodologies because of their complexity and cost. SMEs often function without a dedicated HR team, so PM can seem like an administrative overhead. In this way, SMEs have limited access to a practice that could strongly improve their productivity.

---

7 **This PMP stage definition is adapted from** www.hrinform.com.au

Professionals and experts agree that an effective and affordable application of PM processes is feasible even for SMEs and can provide them with valuable benefits. The question is to simplify the process and make it flexible enough to be easily adapted to their specific needs. The solution can be found in reducing the process to its core, which is made of three fundamental practices that every company could and should put into practice regardless of their size. These include: planning, check-in and review; these broadly correspond to the first 3 stages described above.

Regarding the second point, PM is usually carried out with people who are employed by the company and who are working towards the organisation's goals. This does not imply that it cannot be implemented in different situations, i.e. whenever it could be useful to assess performances and improve strategies, practices or company plans, etc. Experts suggest, for example, to use it for the evaluation of new employees[8] (prior to the end of the probationary period to confirm employment or extend a probationary period), or within a pre-employment assessment process[9]. This latter aspect is based on the definition of skills and competences for a working environment, as in CEDEFOP 2006 Study "Typology of knowledge, skills and competences"[10].

For the purposes of this handbook, we strictly integrated those aspects in order to propose a comprehensive and flexible instrument for conducting PM and especially performance appraisal in different situations and organisations.

---

8 „New Employee Performance Evaluation INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS" by North-eastern State University (U.S.A.) available at:
https://offices.nsuok.edu/portals/34/documents/new-employee-performance-evaluation.pdf
9 References are mostly professional blogs such as:
https://resources.workable.com/blog/skills-assessment
10 "[they] are associated with job performance (Herman and Kenyon, 1987; Nitardy and McLean, 2002), whether this is just adequate achievement of work objectives (Green, 1999) or high performance (Mirabile, 1997). Since competence [...] is specific to an occupation, it is 'by definition, related to the technical aspects of performance' (Stewart and Hamlin, 1994, p. 4) and 'assessment of competence should be grounded in performance in the workplace' (Norris, 1991, p. 4). (page 44)"

7.2.1 Theory References

A good general introduction is available on the Berkeley University, HR team's website (see below). For a useful literature review, see Fauske, Busi & Alfnes which is available at: *https://www.sintef.no/globalassets/pro-ject/smartlog/publikasjoner/2008/jomsav2-paper.pdf*

7.2.2 Instruments

There are several reliable free PM tools and resources on the Internet. As part of this handbook, we will highlight the following:

- Tools by the HR team at University of Berkeley, California, available at *http://hr.berkeley.edu/performance/performance-management*
- Tools by the HR Council for the Non-profit Sector Community - Foundations of Canada, available at *http://hrcouncil.ca/hr-toolkit/keeping-people-performance-management.*cfm

7.3 The CERTLAB project case study

Our case study is taken from the CERTLAB project, funded by the European Fund for Integration for Third-Country Nationals and carried out in Italy by *ARES scarl* in partnership with the Public Employment Centres of the Province of Campobasso in 2012[11]. The project aimed to provide career guidance, skills assessment and certification to a group of about 70 individuals from developing countries in order to enhance their employability by making their competencies more recognisable. The target group was composed of caregivers (mostly women from Eastern Europe) and agricultural workers (mostly men from central Africa). A small group of caregivers, approximately 10, and a smaller group of agricultural workers, approximately 3, were already working, while many others were in contact with potential employers. Others were just in the jobseeking process. The project main activities were as follows:

1. 1st level career guidance (information, recruitment, welcoming, data collection, establishing communication channels);

2. 2nd level career guidance (individual meetings aimed at re-defining objectives, attitudes and aspirations);

3. Skill and competencies assessment and certification;

4. Dissemination for potential employers through online networking, websites and networking events.

Through dissemination activities, a group of about 15 employers declared their interest in hiring some of the candidates, but they also asked for support in assuring their competencies through assessment, and therefore entrusted ARES to check them. As competence assessment and certification is not a standardised process, especially when addressed to migrants and concerning competencies acquired in informal

---

11 A methodological manual was produced and made freely available at the project website at www.progettocertlab.it (in Italian), hosting all project resources and also working as online job candidate database.

contexts, it constituted a real challenge for ARES employees. They had to imagine and implement a whole process starting from very few standpoints – basically, their experience within a previous Lifelong Learning Programme Project about Transparency Tools[12] and as career guidance services providers for local public Employment Services.

Taking into consideration what they had learnt about EU credit systems and their competencies in the field of employment support, ARES designed a strategy that could strictly integrate career guidance and ECVET-based certification. The strategy was successful: all the people involved improved their skills and attained their certification. More importantly, they enjoyed the activities very much, including the assessment phase: this means that the testing session was perceived as a useful and enjoyable thing, not a boring and/or scary examination to face. In terms of employability, success was measured by the fact that more than 30% of candidates were pre-selected by employers and 12 were hired just after the end of the project.

7.3.1 What was the benefit of using ECVET?

ARES identified CERTLAB as a key case study because it represents an example of how the principles of competence assessment and certification, according to the EU credit systems, can be applied in a flexible, modular and smart way; so as to be easily and productively incorporated into wider and more complex assessment processes – such as, for instance, a Performance Management System. In this perspective, the main points of convergence are the following:

---

12 Lifelong Learning Programme Leonardo da Vinci Partnership "Tri-Lamp-Transparency Instruments in Education and Labour Market Policy" – 2011-2013 (coordinated by ENTER, AT)

a.   The assessment and certification process was to be applied to two different kind of jobs both characterised by a very low level of structure: this implies that, a fortiori, the resulting methodology can be potentially applied to a wide range of jobs, including the less structured ones (for which more standardised descriptions are not available);

b.   The assessment and certification process was not directly linked to mobility, but of course could promote it;

c.   The assessment and certification process was designed so as to be easily implemented with limited resources of time and people – thus fitting the needs of many companies, especially SMEs.

7.3.2 How it worked – part 1: Description of units of learning outcomes and ECVET points

This section provides an overview of the core CERTLAB project assessment and certification phases, which are particularly relevant for the purposes of this handbook. In order to identify the knowledge, skills and competencies to be assessed and certified, ARES made a preliminary analysis of the core elements of the two job profiles in question – agricultural worker and caregiver. In the absence of any formal and official description, the core working phases were broken down (i.e. the most common and relevant to define the jobs in question as those specific jobs) into a small set of procedures and tasks. The description of each procedure allows the identification of an associated set of knowledge, skills and competences that were then gathered into broad packages (units), as follows:

Job profile: Agricultural Worker
Unit 1: Olive Tree Pruning

Knowledge:
- x Learner is able to differentiate between different tools and corresponding procedures;
- x Learner is able to identify the right tool to perform a certain task;
- x Learner knows the technical names of the tools (in particular: guillotine and   lopping shears);
- x Learner knows the safety and hygiene requirements and the relevant actions for their specialty.

Skills:
- x Learner is able to receive orders and plan own procedural steps;
- x Learner is able to recognise different tools and select the most appropriate ones to perform the required tasks (in particular: guillotine and lopping shears);
- x Learner is able to handle with expertise the required technological equipment of their specialty;
- x Learner is able to perform the required tasks in the correct way;
- x Learner is able to work both alone and in team.

Competences:
- x Learner is able to reflect upon his/her own actions and give an evaluation of the results;
- x Learner is able to communicate and discuss the results.

In addition to this unit, another 3 units, namely vineyard pruning; orchard pruning; sowing and potting were identified and correspondingly described. As a whole, the 4 units were intended to describe the core components of the corresponding qualification of Agricultural Worker[13]. A different weight was also attributed to each unit to highlight the most important parts.

---

13 In Italy the definition of the qualifications (EQF level 3) is in charge of Regions so that there is no standard national definition. Here there is the link to the description by Emilia-Romagna Region http://orienter.regione.emilia-romagna.it/orienter/exec/portale;jsessionid=rDMLUSJznJ563MFl+-jCSXfPs.undefined?actionRequested=performShowSchedaDettagliQualifica&qualifica=4-10

This was as follows:

> **Unit 1 and 2**: 30% each;
> **Unit 3:** 25%;
> **Unit 4:** 15%

That differential could be quite easily converted into ECVET points (describing in numerical form the 'overall weight' of a qualification and the importance of individual units in relation to the overall qualification): if we assume that the entire qualification course corresponds to 60 ECVET points (one year, full time), and given that we are addressing its core parts, the following proportion could be adopted: given that 4 units = 36 ECVET points (60% of the total), the resulting distribution is:

> **Unit 1 and 2** = 10.8 ECVET points each;
> **Unit 3** = 9 ECVET points;
> **Unit 4** = 5.4 ECVET points

Regarding the corresponding EQF level, given that professional qualifications are level 3, the 4 units could be between level 1 and 2, possibly integrated into a level 3 path.

7.3.3 How it worked – part 2: assessment and certification

Once the learning outcomes have been described, ARES had to find an appropriate way to assess and certify them. To solve this problem, they relied on two main reference points: the general concept of performance-based assessment and the Lifelong Learning, Leonardo da Vinci ICARE project[14] model of validation and certification.

A performance-based assessment, in general, measures students' ability to apply the skills and knowledge learned from a unit of study[15]. Typically, students have to perform a task or a set of tasks. Tasks can range from a simple constructed response (e.g., short answer) to a complex design proposal. The best form of performance-based assessment is requiring students to perform a task that closely mirrors the responsibilities of a professional. Even if it varies in form and structure, it has key characteristics, such as authenticity, being process/product-oriented, open-ended and time-bound.

---

14 Our CERTLAB project partner, Province of Campobasso, was directly involved in this project and actively contributed to develop the model (see more at www.icareplatform.eu/).
15 For a general overview see for example materials from Stanford University at https://scale.stanford.edu/system/files/performance-assessment-era-standards-based-educational-accountability.pdf

7.3.4 The Testing Session

All the above mentioned features and functions were taken into consideration when designing the assessment procedures and, concretely, the testing session. It was decided to form a commission of three members: one expert from the business sector (in this case, one farmer), one education expert in the agriculture sector and one VET trainer. The testing session was designed to be composed of two parts:

1. A multiple choice written test[16], to test knowledge;
2. A performance-based test session to assess skills and competences.

The written test was composed of 25 questions, each related to a picture. Each question had three possible answers. The 25 questions covered all the 4 units described above. Candidates had 30 minutes to complete it.

The performance-based test was arranged at a local technical upper secondary school, in the orchard of the Istituto Agrario "G. Pittarelli" in Campobasso. Candidates were requested to perform 4 different procedures, corresponding to the skill and competence sets previously defined (i.e. 4 units = 4 procedures). While observing them acting, the commission took note and filled in the test-sheet, where, for each unit, two main items were provided: one with regard to the tool mastery level and another related to technical dexterity. The rating scale was composed of three levels: poor, sufficient and good. At the end of the session, a consensus judgement about passing the test was expressed by the committee.

---

16 The test is included into the handbook as attachment at page 55, see footnote n. 6.

TEST DI CERTIFICAZIONE DI COMPETENZE PER BRACCIANTE AGRICOLO

Prova eseguita il 31 marzo 2014   «nome»

POTATURA ULIVI: Utilizzo degli attrezzi: cesoia e svettatoio

Padronanza degli attrezzi

Scarsa ☐   sufficiente ☐   buona ☐

Manualità

Scarsa ☐   sufficiente ☐   buona ☐

POTATURA DELLA VITE: Utilizzo attrezzi : cesoia e seghetto

Padronanza degli attrezzi

Scarsa ☐   sufficiente ☐   buona ☐

Manualità

Scarsa ☐   sufficiente ☐   buona ☐

Figure 6: first two parts of the performance-based test session (units 1 and 2) for agricultural workers.

The session was recorded with pictures, like this one:

1) potatura e legatura della vite

Figure 7: picture taken during the testing session – unit 2 – vineyard pruning.

7.3.5 Using Portfolios

A portfolio is a tool for assessing work competence, made of a compilation of work and other forms of educational and/or competence-based evidence. Less structured than other transparency tools like Europass CV, it can be compared to the Europass Portfolio and European Skills Passport and its implementation can differ from one country to another in the way it is composed and validated[17].   European guidelines[18]   for competence evaluation suggest using a portfolio – an organised collection of materials that presents and verifies skills and knowledge acquired through experience – as a useful tool. A portfolio might include summaries, performance appraisals, references from current and past employers, supervisors and colleagues, and photographs of completed work certified by a referee. It can be useful for collecting as much information as possible about candidates, and also for promoting their self-assessment.

In this case study, ARES adopted the personal portfolio as a global transparency tool, including all useful evidence, including: the description of the learning outcomes and competences, the ECVET information (credit points), EQF and NQF data, the records of the testing sessions (written test and performance-based test), pictures and any other relevant information. The personal portfolios were created as a soft copy and given back to the candidates in electronic format on a USB pen. Some of the portfolios were uploaded to the CERTLAB project platform.

Potential employers were informed about them and those who were interested were provided with the access to the portfolio files for a first screening of the candidates. Subsequently, where one or more of the portfolios were positively evaluated, a meeting was arranged with the employer and the pre-selected candidates, to support them both in defining possible strategies to support candidates into employment   by setting targets and identifying possible future training opportunities for their development – a kind of short version of PMP.

---

17 CEDEFOP 2014 "Validation of non-formal and informal learning Inventory".
18 See "European Guidelines for validating informal and non-formal learning", at:
http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/4054_en.pdf , p. 61.

7.4 How it could work within Performance Management? Lessons learnt from out case study

The case study presented in this chapter can be seen as the outcome adapting the ECVET model to make it more flexible and effective. Independent from the 3rd Pillar (transfer process) about mobility (pillars are central elements of ECVET[19]), and with the 2nd Pillar (ECVET points) only optionally implemented, the model is focused on the 1st Pillar, i.e. on competence clarification, assessment and certification.

Within the Project Management Process, this case study can be effectively adopted for:

1. Performance assessment of staff in relation with previously established goals – this aspect is more related to corporate performance;

2. Competence assessment of staff – assessment of competences acquired outside and inside the workplace, in the perspective of personal and professional development.

Moreover, this case study presents a series of positive characteristics that make this model particularly suitable for incorporation into the PMP, for an optimal implementation of all activities connected to the assessment and certification of competences. The model shows to be in fact:

- **Theoretically valid and methodologically robust, being scientifically based and validated by many national and EU projects;**
- **Highly flexible from the operative point of view, and easily adaptable to any kind of similar situation;**
- **Economically affordable and highly cost-effective, so that it can be carried out in a limited period of time and with few resources.**

---

19 They are: 1. units of learning outcomes; 2. ECVET points; 3. transfer process.

7.5 Summary

In this chapter we explored the convergence between practices of corporate Performance Management and ECVET performance-based methodologies to assess and certify competences. A general overview of what Performance Management is has been provided, giving particular attention to the specific needs of SMEs and to Performance Management core components most related to competence evaluation.

This chapter also includes a good case study of the CERTLAB project, which aimed to assess and certify competencies for migrants for employment purposes. Within the CERTLAB project, a flexible and reliable methodology integrating basic performance-based with ECVET principles was developed to carry out a performance and competence appraisal process, in the perspective of (a) short term employment and (b) mid- to long-term professional development.

Taking into consideration the four main stages of PMP, it is clear that those functionalities and activities correspond to core PMP phases. Therefore, the solution developed can be proposed as a flexible, affordable and reliable methodology to conduct Performance Management activities in any kind of organisation, regardless the size and resources available; by adapting to the specific situation in question a set of integrated performance-based and ECVET principles and tools. The methodology proposed can be implemented by a small team of experts or even by one only professional.

The main points to consider from this case study are as follows:

1.   A preliminary, detailed and careful analysis of roles, functions and tasks is key for any kind of assessment;

2.   The outcomes-oriented ECVET approach supports a complete learning outcome description, that provides, in turn, the path for an effective evaluation process;

3.   The ECVET approach includes the possibility to assign different weight to different components of outcomes, so as to make evident the relevance of units of learning and competences to specific job roles;

4.   In the Performance Management perspective, assessment is an ongoing process, so regular and continuous appraisal and feedback feeds a continuous improvement process;

5.   If properly understood, the core principles and tools of the described methodologies and practices can be implemented in any kind of organisation and therefore contribute to the growth of both the organisation and of the individual.

Leadership Development

Marta Palacio and Javier Riaño

8
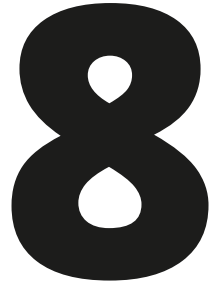
8.1 Case Study

Toro, the lawn equipment manufacturer, is accustomed to lawsuits, due to the inherent hazards associated with using its machinery. During the late 1980s, the company was facing major financial troubles and put Ken Melrose in place as CEO. One of his first successes was reducing the cost of these lawsuits to the company, by implementing a new mediation policy, and invoking an important leadership trait: empathy.

Prior to Melrose's tenure, Toro faced approximately 50 lawsuits every year involving serious injuries. He decided to switch to mediation to address product liability claims. This approach included sending a company representative to meet with people injured by Toro products, as well as their families. The goal was to see what went wrong, to express the firm's sympathy and to attend to the family's needs. One result of the new mediation policy was a 95% rate of resolving the company's claims, along with significant cost savings.

> *Great leaders recognise problems and do what it takes to overcome them. They are open and empathetic, and let their values guide their actions.*

We can define **Leadership development** as „an intentional effort to provide leaders and emerging leaders with opportunities to learn, grow and change", by teaching leadership qualities, including communication, ability to motivate others, and management. Its purpose is „to produce individuals over time with the skills to function effectively within the organisation"[20].

---

20 http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/leadership-development.html#ixzz4BdDaYmKX

The next chart illustrates the leadership development process and shows the relations of each step with ECVET and European transparency instruments:
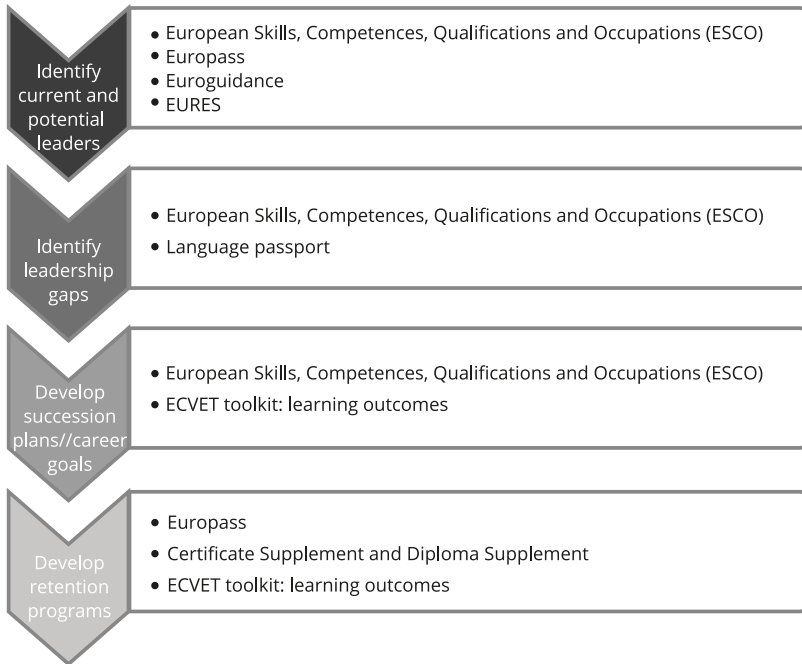
Identify current and potential leaders	• European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) • Europass • Euroguidance • EURES
Identify leadership gaps	• European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) • Language passport
Develop succession plans//career goals	• European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) • ECVET toolkit: learning outcomes
Develop retention programs	• Europass • Certificate Supplement and Diploma Supplement • ECVET toolkit: learning outcomes

Figure 1 - Leadership development process and the possible use of ECVET and European transparency instruments (Own elaboration).

8.2 Leadership Challenges in Business

The importance of business leadership is well articulated by this observation: *A good leader can make a success of a weak business plan, but a poor leader can ruin even the best plan.*

Effective leadership is all about making the right decisions and knowing how to solve problems to positively impact on the future of the company. Effective **problem solving** and **decision making** requires us to understand how to apply our thinking and knowledge in a way that maximises the chance of success going forward and enables **innovation**.

Companies face two major challenges in finding and developing leaders:

1.   They need to **identify qualified candidates** to fill current and future leadership roles, and

2.   They need to develop a **comprehensive leadership programme** to cultivate and develop the leaders of tomorrow.

This is the reason why developing effective leadership by using a consistent talent management programme at all levels across the organisation, can return significant business value. To identify, attract, fill, and retain corporate leadership talent, companies need leadership development programmes which prioritise recruitment strategies, employee development, as well as career planning.

The leadership challenges which companies face include:

- **Building and retaining good leadership: in the "2008 IBM Global Human Capital Study," found that more than 75 percent of the suwrvey respondents identified building leadership talent as their current and most significant challenge.**

- **The overall talent shortage: according to a global Taleo Research survey, more than 80 percent of the 930 companies surveyed stated that talent shortages were hindering their leadership development efforts.**

- **The baby boomers retiring: according to PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Saratoga's "2008/2009 Human Capital Effectiveness Report," 19 percent of managers and 29 percent of executives are eligible for retirement by 2015. This anticipated baby boomer drain should raise a big red flag and propel succession planning to the front lines in the quest for future success.**

Therefore, delivering on **leadership development programmes** to fill these ranks will be a critical challenge in the next one to three years. So how do we recognise leadership potential and distinguish a good leader from a good manager? Successful organisations need both leaders and managers, but there are fundamental differences between a manager and a leader. Whereas leaders influence, inspire, and drive people to a common goal, the role of a manager is to keep the day-to-day operations of an organisation running smoothly. Employee development must reflect these differences and provide development of both sets of skills. The following table presents an overview of the fundamental differences between the roles of manager and leader within a company or organisation.

Fundamental Differences between the role of a Manager and a Leader	
Managerial Functions	**Leadership Skills**
⬤ Plan and budget ⬤ Coordinate, control and execute activities ⬤ Organise and staff ⬤ Work with existing structure	⬤ Create vision and exitement ⬤ Set a direction, and motivate and inspire people to follow ⬤ Align people ⬤ Build new relationships and structures

Table 1 - Fundamental differences between the role of a manager and a leader[21]

The following is a list of the typical functions undertaken in order to design an effective leadership development programme:

- **Recruitment: to source leadership talent;**
- **Assessments: to evaluate leadership capabilities both internally and externally;**
- **Performance management: to monitor and make course corrections in developing leaders;**
- **Succession planning: to avoid future leadership gaps;**
- **Career planning: to enable employees to understand their leadership options and set development goals**
- **Development: to create a roadmap to fill skills gaps.**

A successful leadership development programme begins with the alignment of leadership development with company strategy and an understanding of the type of leadership style(s) needed to execute that strategy. A continuum of steps, outlined in the following table, positions an organisation to satisfy current and future leadership needs.

---

21 Source: Seven Steps for Effective Leadership Development, An Oracle White Paper June 2012

Leadership Development Checklist	
Steps	Checklist for Leadership Development
1	Determine the best leadership style for your organisation.
2	Identify current and potential leaders within the company.
3	Identify leadership gaps.
4	Develop sucession plans for critical rols.
5	Develop career planning goals for potential leaders.
6	Develop a skills roadmap for future leaders.
7	Develope retention programms for current and future leaders.

Table 2 - Leadership development checklist [22]

As Karl Popper[23], one of the most influential 20th century philosophers of science, once eloquently stated, "All life is problem solving." The best leaders are the best problem-solvers. They have the patience to step back and see the problem at-hand through broadened observation. They are said to have circular vision, in that they see around, beneath and beyond the problem itself and they see well-beyond the obvious. The most effective leaders approach problems through a lens of opportunity. A leader must never view a problem as a distraction, but rather as a strategic enabler for continuous improvement and opportunities previously unseen.

---

22 Source: Seven Steps for Effective Leadership Development, An Oracle White Paper June 2012
23 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Popper

8.3 Some Practical Examples for Leadership Development

This part of the chapter is meant to be dedicated to three practical cases that give good hands-on advice as it offers:

1. An exemplary case in daily business related to leadership development;

2. An example of an application of ECVET or another EU instrument;

3. An overview of the key benefits of using these tools and instruments in leadership development.

- **First Case Study:**

The challenge in this first case study is to determine current and future leadership requirements and compare those requirements with the current leadership team; and to identify and evaluate potential leaders in the organisation by setting the required skills and competences for leading roles.

To address this challenge, we recommend the application of the European Classification of Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO):

o **ESCO is the multilingual classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations. It identifies and categorises skills, competences, qualifications and occupations relevant for the EU labour market and education and training, in 25 European languages. The system provides occupational profiles showing the relationships between occupations, skills, competences and qualifications. For further information please see:**
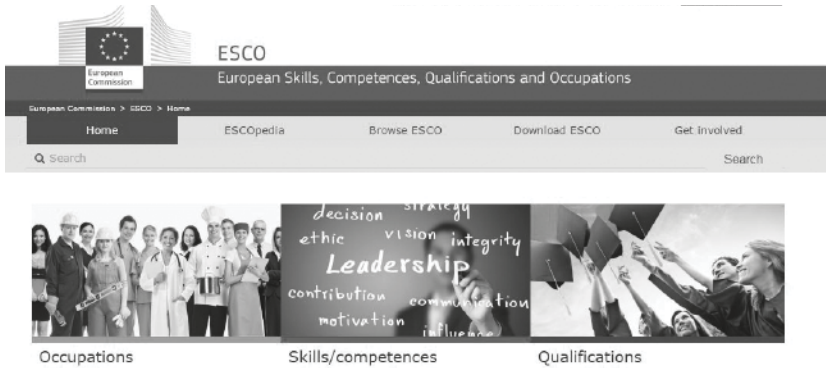
In the website, we have access to a description of 2 kinds of competences, namely:

1. Transversal skills and competences. "Transversal skills and competences are relevant to a broad range of jobs and occupations (e.g. negotiation, generating new ideas, working as part of a team, etc.)".

2. Job-specific skills and competences: "Job-specific skills and competences are usually specialised and relevant for jobs within a specific economic sector, context or occupation (e.g. biomedical analysis, fashion hairstyling, CNC programming)".
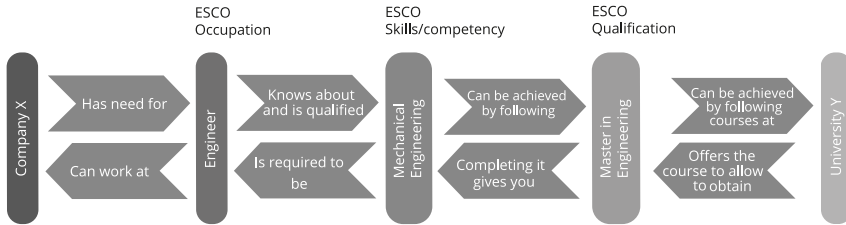
ESCO in practice
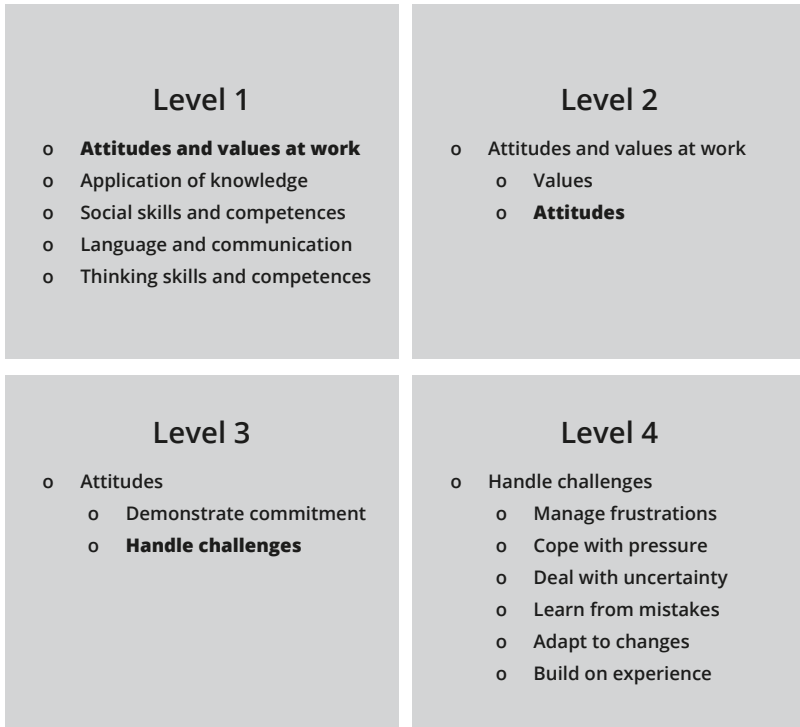

Figure1 - ESCO in practice[24]

If we go deeper into Transversal skills/competences, the next level shows the detailed skill and competence groups in which these transversal skills are divided. Five groups of skills and competences appear. These include:

  o **Attitudes and values at work;**
  o **Application of knowledge;**
  o **Social skills and competences;**
  o **Language and communication;**
  o **Thinking skills and competences**

Clicking on each group we go one step further in the structure of these skills and competences, to find a more detailed breakdown of the specific skills and competences associated with each one, as follows:

24 Source: https://ec.europa.eu/esco/portal/home

- **Example 1**

<table>
<tr>
<td>

Level 1

o **Attitudes and values at work**
o Application of knowledge
o Social skills and competences
o Language and communication
o Thinking skills and competences

</td>
<td>

Level 2

o Attitudes and values at work
   o Values
   o **Attitudes**

</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>

Level 3

o Attitudes
   o Demonstrate commitment
   o **Handle challenges**

</td>
<td>

Level 4

o Handle challenges
   o Manage frustrations
   o Cope with pressure
   o Deal with uncertainty
   o Learn from mistakes
   o Adapt to changes
   o Build on experience

</td>
</tr>
</table>

These are the specific skills and competences associated with the more general competence, referred to here as "Handle challenges", that, as we can see in this chapter, is a valuable competence for leadership development. If an employee acquires and shows they have these skills and competences, then the company can identify him/her as a potential leader.

- **Example 2**

Level 1

- o   Attitudes and values at work
- o   Application of knowledge
- o   **Social skills and competences**
- o   Language and communication
- o   Thinking skills and competences

Level 2

- o   Social skills and competences
  - o   Working with others
  - o   **Leading others**

Level 3

- o   Leading others
  - o   **Exercise responsibility**
  - o   Build relationships

Level 4

- o   **Exercise responsibility**
  - o   Foster quality
  - o   Facilitate groups
  - o   Support colleagues
  - o   Support change
  - o   Decide priorities
- o   **Build rlationships**
  - o   Encourage staff and colleagues
  - o   Mentor
  - o   Motivate staff and colleagues

These are the specific skills and competences associated to the more general competences, here referred to as "Exercise responsibility" and "Build relationships"; which are both directly linked to leadership development. In classical HR management, „handle challenges", "empathy" and „build relationships" were not taken into account as a key element for good leadership, but control and strict procedures were synonymous with running an organisation. As it is shown in the case study presented at the beginning of this chapter, in modern times and in companies which aim to endure, be profitable and grow in the future, these competences and skills are synonymous with good leadership.

So what is the benefit of using ESCO and other EU transparency tools for this purpose? HR managers, and people offering career guidance, can use ESCO to enhance their planning and to help them to create procedures and tests to assess aptitude or ability, skills and interest among employees more accurately.

- **Second Case Study:**

The challenge in this second case study is to allow potential leaders to accurately describe the knowledge, skills and competences they have acquired in their previous work experience, no matter which country it was attained in. According to that, the company can provide the necessary complementary training (traditional and non-traditional learning) to develop career planning goals. To address this issue, we recommend using the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

- o **The EQF aims to increase the comparability of levels of qualifications across borders. The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a translation tool that helps communication and comparison between qualifications systems in Europe. Its eight common European reference levels are described in terms of learning outcomes: knowledge, skills and competences. This allows any national qualifications systems, national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and qualifications in Europe to be**

benchmarked to the EQF levels. Learners, graduates, education providers and employers can use these levels to understand and compare qualifications awarded in different countries and by different education and training systems. (*https://ec.europa. eu/ploteus/search/site?f%5B0%5D=im_field_entity_type%3A97***).**

Once national qualifications levels are referenced to the EQF, it will be much easier compare and assess national qualifications in the process of recognition of foreign qualifications when people move to another country. The goal is that all new qualifications, diplomas, certificates and Europass supplements will carry a reference to an appropriate EQF level.

The most important principle of the EQF is the **learning outcomes** approach. The learning outcomes approach shifts focus to what **knowledge, skills and competences** the learner has acquired by the end of the learning process. To formulate learning outcomes, you can find more examples in chapter 6 "Retain company staff".

Considering we are focussing on the level of leadership within a company, in the annex you can find the Descriptors defining levels in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

So what is the benefit of using the EQF for this purpose? The benefit to companies in using EQF can be seen when companies seek to find leaders with suitable skill sets from abroad. It is also beneficial when companies want to advertise their vacancies across Europe instead of just advertising locally. Using the EQF as a benchmark allows companies to provide candidates and employees with an overview of the necessary training (formal and/or informal) a leadership candidate is required to have so as to meet the leadership needs of the company.

- **Third Case Study:**

  The challenge in this third case study is that once the leadership require-
  ments have been determined and the potential leaders within the or-
  ganisation have been identified and evaluated, and the leadership gaps
  are recognised; it is then time to develop certain skills roadmaps for
  leadership development and to find suitable education and training op-
  portunities throughout Europe.

  To address this issue, we recommend using the European Job Mobility
  Portal (EURES)

  o **EURES is an online portal which offers a directory to find learn-
    ing opportunities filtered by education level, subject and loca-
    tion. It also allows companies to share their vacancies at a Euro-
    pean level and reach out to workers beyond national borders.
    Using this portal, an employer or HR managers will be able to
    search for CVs matching their requirements and view, save and
    organise candidates to make recruitment easier. The only com-
    pulsory thing is to be registered as company to make use of all
    the services. (*https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/en/homepage*).**

The benefit of using it EURES is that it provides information, advice, training, recruitment and placement, or job-matching, services for the benefit of workers and employers as well as any citizen wishing to use the principle of the free movement of persons across the EU. EURES has a human network of more than 850 EURES advisers that are in daily contact with jobseekers and employers across Europe. In European cross-border regions, EURES has an important role to play in providing information about employment opportunities and companies across border, and also in helping to solve all sorts of problems related to cross-border commuting that workers and employers may experience.

8.4 Summary

This chapter provides an overview on how a company and its HR managers can use and apply the European transparency instruments, ESCO, EQF and EURES, to create a consistent talent management programme at all levels across the organisation and to develop an effective leadership programme for the company.

A well-designed leadership development programme is the key to identifying, attracting, filling, and retaining corporate leadership. The elements of the programme should include a strategy and execution of the seven-step process outlined in the leadership development checklist in Table 2.

Leadership development is a critical aspect of attaining optimum output from organisational talent management and requires the effective execution of many talent management practices. The European transparency instruments mentioned in this chapter can provide the enabling tools to help the company to develop their leadership strategies, including recruitment, assessment, performance management, succession and career planning, and development programmes, as it has shown in the practical examples described above.

The benefits of an optimised leadership programme include:

- **A pipeline of leadership talent;**
- **Talent aligned with corporate goals;**
- **Improved morale;**
- **Increased rates of employee retention;**
- **Improved leadership skills;**
- **Consistent measurement through development and performance management.**

All organisations need strong leaders in order to be successful. The European transparency instruments introduced in this chapter offer valuable tools to implement talent management practices and act as a great support to effectively identify and develop, at all levels of the workforce, the leaders who will best drive business performance.

Summary

Sarah Land

9

This handbook began by outlining its aim to make the ECVET model and toolkit, and various other EU transparency tools, more user-friendly for HR professionals and more applicable to common HR practices. This handbook was designed to allow professionals and managers working in HR across Europe to easily understand and use these transparency tools to be able to reform and revise their HR practices; making their companies' processes more adaptable to the changing demands of the European economy and labour market. As such, the aim was to design this handbook so that it could act as a comprehensive reference book for HR managers, career guidance counsellors, business managers and supervisors so that ECVET and EU transparency tools can be easily adapted and integrated into their every-day practices.

The handbook has been successful in providing HR professionals with a useful and comprehensive introduction to using EU transparency tools. It has achieved this by combining a theoretical overview of all tools which can be implemented in their companies in Chapter 2, with practical examples, case studies and tips on how to use EU transparency tools in chapters 3 to 8. In these chapters, the following HR processes are covered: personnel planning; recruitment and selection; employee motivation and personal development; employee retention; HR development; employee training and leadership development.

In the past, it has been difficult for HR professionals and companies to integrate the EU transparency tools into these HR processes for the simple reason that much of the literature and guidelines which have been written to guide professionals in using these tools have been written with education professionals in mind only. These previous guidelines have been written using technical language and concepts which are often not fully understood by professionals working outside of the education and training sectors, and including case studies and examples which are often only applicable in an education setting. The ECVET goes Business project team appreciate the fact that often this 'language barrier' between the worlds of work and education can hinder progress in integrating ECVET and other EU transparency instruments into HR processes and practices; a development which would ease the pressures on HR professionals and support them to reform their HR practices and strategies to be more responsive and attractive to the increasingly competitive

labour market. For this reason, the project team were committed to use language and examples which are common to the world of business; ensuring that this handbook is practical, relevant and applicable to HR professionals across Europe.

These chapters each follow a logical structure, which has helped to present technical and abstract concepts most often associated with education and training in such a manner that the information is manageable and that the integration of these tools into HR seems attainable. For example, each chapter begins with a case study which introduces a problem or issue commonly faced by a HR manager or a company in general. Following an explanation of the problem, a list of EU transparency tools which could help to support the work of the HR manager in overcoming the problem is presented. The chapter then includes advice and tips, charting a way for HR managers to use these readily available and accessible tools and resources, to solve this very practical and relatable problem which could affect HR in their companies.

So for example, in chapter 3, which deals with the topic of personnel planning, the chapter begins by giving an overview of common personnel planning techniques and strategies employed in companies in Europe and a case study of an Austro-Italian rail company who have been awarded a contract and need to plan to recruit highly-skilled, expert employees from abroad. The chapter then identifies current trends and challenges which can affect HR managers in Europe, and includes practical advice on using the tools to respond to trends in human resource planning. The three current developments and trends which are discussed can have an actual impact on human resources planning in companies. The methods presented are from the range of European transparency tools and have been identified as being the most effective tools in meeting the challenges of these developments effectively and in a forward-thinking manner. So, for example, to address the issues of internationalisation of companies and their workforce, this chapter recommends that HR managers use descriptors from the European Qualifications Framework and require applicants to submit Europass instruments such as the Certificate and Diploma supplements when making an application, with the aim of better understanding qualifications attained in other European countries. Similarly, to respond to the trend towards fragmentation of

qualifications, where applicants increasingly possess a suite of short, specialised training qualifications instead of one homogenous degree, for example, the recommendation is that HR managers use the learning outcomes descriptions contained in the ECVET model when advertising a position, to describe the exact learning which applicants will need to have in order to execute the requirements of the job. Finally, the trend towards key competences in personnel planning is introduced. There has been a shift towards key competences in recent years, because increasingly, employees are expected to possess a range of skills, knowledge and attitudes to be able to effectively perform tasks related to their role and also to be able to adapt and respond quickly to change. The term 'key competences' has been used as a catchment phrase for the range of knowledge that is appropriate for these wide-ranging, dynamic and ever-changing areas of activity. To ensure that applicants with the right key competences are identified and sourced, this chapter recommends that HR professionals use the descriptors from the EQF and descriptions of learning outcomes related to the ECVET model.

Similarly, in chapter 4 we see an example of an automotive company who want to diversify and sell to foreign markets. As demonstrated in this practical example, companies can build an innovative, new recruitment strategy using the EU transparency instruments as a guide. In this example, we saw how the company used the Europass CV to create their own online CV template which helped to streamline their processes for reviewing and short-listing CVs for interview. In this example we can see that the resources associated with the EQF and the Europass toolkit can be applied by HR managers wishing to filter applications when a large number are received during the recruitment process or in the case where companies specifically need to recruit highly-skilled or specialised employees, employees with specific competences, or employees who have some experience of learning or working abroad. In this chapter, we see practical examples and applications of the Europass tools, the CV and the Personal Transcript, the use of EQF and how it can be compared to National Qualifications Frameworks and how these resources can be used as a guideline for reforming a company's recruitment and selection processes.

In chapter 5, some of the EU transparency tools are presented as a means of improving employee motivation and personal development through providing opportunities for training, continuous professional development and lifelong learning for employees. In this instance, the case study details the career planning and increased motivation of an employee named, Miha, who is given the opportunity to up-skill and gain a promotion in work. In this particular case, ECVET and other EU tools are shown to be useful in capturing the learning of employees; improving the transfer, recognition and accumulation of knowledge acquired by individuals in the company. Due to the fact that these learning resources are based on common principles, such as defined learning outcomes and transparent learning units and assessments; these elements can add structure and can facilitate the development of individualised lifelong learning pathways and plans for individual employees. Using these resources as a guide, HR managers can discuss on an individual basis the plans, desires and ambitions of individual employees, can set concrete goals for them to achieve in terms of the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competence and can plan a pathway for the employee to achieve this while also contributing to the development of the company and its human capital. In this way, these tools and resources can be used for the purposes of career development of employees in companies.

This follows on to chapter 6 which deals with the issue of employee retention and explains how ECVET and other EU transparency models and instruments can help companies to retain talent. To introduce HR professionals to using ECVET and other EU transparency instruments to aid in employee retention, one simple case study is presented and the use of these instruments is described at various points in organising employee training opportunities abroad. In this case study, a CEO of Avegia Personnel Services, named Hans wants to identify opportunities for employee training abroad but wants to ensure that the training company, who will become the host organisation in a foreign country, offers quality training for his employees. Hans also wants to ensure that both his employees and his company benefit from this exchange. In this scenario, we see that Hans elects to use the Memorandum of Understanding document from the ECVET toolkit as an instrument to ensure quality training opportunities will be delivered by the host organ-

isation by specifying the conditions of achieving ECVET credit points as part of the programme, as well as regulating the assessment, validation and recognition of these points. Similarly, Hans uses the ECVET Learner Agreement as a template to ensure that employees take the training seriously and adhere to achieving set learning outcomes on completion of the programme. Next, Hans works with the host organisation, an Institute of Further Education in Slovenia, to define the content of the training programme. To achieve this he uses the ECVET descriptions of learning outcomes and learning units; as these both relate to the knowledge, skills and competences to be developed as a result of the employee training, with additional information in the learning units pertaining to how they will be assessed and validated. By using these documents to plan and deliver the transnational training, all parties involved in the learning are mutually informed of what the training will achieve; so the CEO, the employee and the host organisation are all on the same page in terms of learning outcomes to be achieved and competences to be developed. When the training has ended, we recommend that in this case Hans would advocate using the Europass instruments, namely the Mobility document and either a Certificate or Diploma Supplement if applicable to the training, to document the learning which has taken place. In this instance, communication between the CEO and the employee is fundamental to employee retention; as both are able to agree on the best career path for the employee, improving the employee's personal development by identifying suitable training opportunities in other European countries and then using the relevant transparency tools to facilitate, assess and validate the training abroad. Sending employees abroad for training opportunities is just one means of working to retain employees and motivate them as it helps to ensure their job satisfaction, to progress their personal and professional development while also improving their knowledge, skills and competences which can positively impact on the work of the company as a whole.

The next chapter explores the convergence between practices of corporate Project Management and ECVET performance-based strategies and tools to assess and certify competences. To discuss this topic, this chapter presents the example of the CERTLAB project. This project was instrumental in assessing and certifying the competences of migrant

jobseekers in relation to two jobs roles; for agricultural workers and for care-givers. In this case study, the ECVET model was used to develop a flexible and reliable methodology which incorporated some basic performance-based assessments but which was benchmarked and validated using the ECVET principles. In this example, the ECVET model was chosen to undertake this assessment for the reason that it is based on learning outcomes which themselves act as a framework for undertaking an effective evaluation of performance in this regard. This case study represents an example of how the principles of competence assessment and certification, according to the EU credit systems (ECVET), can be applied in a flexible, modular and clever way to undertake an assessment of competences attained informally abroad. In this way, this case study presents how these practices and assessments can be integrated into Performance Management Processes in companies; to chart the progress of employees through their level of competences in executing work-related tasks.

The final chapter deals with the HR practice of leadership development. In this chapter, the case study presented highlights how HR managers can use the EU transparency instruments of ESCO, EQF and EURES to create a consistent talent management programme at all levels across the organisation; to develop a strategy for the company towards developing effective leadership. These European transparency instruments can provide guidance and useful information, web portals and templates to help the company to develop this leadership programme; either by directly recruiting new employees from abroad who have the desired leadership skills and competences, or by identifying potential in a company's current employees and using these tools to plan a pathway to improving their leadership capabilities. The resources and toolkits which are available through ESCO, EQF and EURES, in this instance, can help to develop the all components of the leadership development programme including the recruitment of new employees or the identification of employees within a company, the assessment of their potential as leaders, a review and ongoing management of their performance as leaders, building a succession plan for the company so that the company is never left without a steady supply of leadership talent and finally to aid in the process of career planning for individual employees with regard to their lead-

ership potential. As highlighted by this case study, all companies need strong leaders in order to be successful. These European transparency instruments offer valuable tools to improve talent management practices and to develop these leaders. These tools act as a great support to effectively identify and develop the leaders who will best drive business performance across all levels of the company.

Throughout these chapters we can see how integrating ECVET and other EU transparency tools into HR practices can not only bring benefit to the HR managers, as they offer models, best practices and useful templates for introducing innovative new HR processes; they can also have positive impacts on employees and the company as a whole. Through the practical examples provided, we see how these tools and resources can be effectively mapped onto current practices in human resource management. As shown, these European transparency instruments have a variety of uses and applications which can effectively streamline all practices related to human resource management; from personnel planning right through to employee retention and the development of leaders at all levels of the company. As such, this handbook highlights the how these intsruments can be used as effective tools and resources for recruiting, managing, motivating, developing and retaining highly-skilled and qualified talent in the increasingly competitive European labour market.

Term	Meaning of term/short description
European Qualifications Framework	The European Qualifications Framework is a common European reference framework which links countries' qualifications systems together, acting as a translation device to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe.
Qualification Framework	An instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims to integrate and coordinate national qualifications and subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society. There is a European Qualification Framework (EQF), which serves as a reference point for the comparison of National Qualification Frameworks, but the two are not necessarily identical in structure.
European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)	ECVET stands for the "European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training". It is a set of principles and tools which supports the recognition of learning in one context, so that it counts towards a qualification in another. The principles can be applied flexibly in different countries and in different educational contexts. Some countries have decided only to use ECVET in connection with transnational learning mobility, whereas others also use it nationally in connection with lifelong learning strategies.

Term	Meaning of term/short description
European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training	EQAVET is a community of practice bringing together Member States, Social Partners and the European Commission to promote European collaboration in developing and improving quality assurance in VET by using the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework.
Europass	Europass is a new initiative which aims to help people make their skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood in Europe, thus facilitating the mobility of both learners and workers.
Learning Outcomes	Learning Outcomes are statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do upon completion of a learning process. Usually, qualification frameworks indicate the overall level of learning outcomes in a qualification. For ECVET purposes the European Qualification Framework (EQF) is used as a reference for levels. Learning outcomes can be used for various purposes such as to establish descriptors of qualifications frameworks, define qualifications, design curricula, assessment, etc. Learning outcomes are set out in various levels of detail depending on their purpose and context. Learning outcomes are developed in the process of designing qualifications. There are different approaches to identifying and describing learning outcomes depending on the qualifications system. Learning outcomes may be acquired through a variety of learning pathways, modes of delivery (school-based, in-company, workplaces etc.), in different learning contexts (formal, non-formal and informal) or settings (i.e. country, education and training system …).

Term	Meaning of term/short description
Credit	A set of learning outcomes that an individual has achieved, and which have been assessed and recognised. They can be accumulated towards a qualification or transferred to other learning programmes/courses or qualifications
ECVET points	Numerical representation of the overall weight of learning outcomes in a qualification, and the relative weight of units in relation to the qualification. One year's full-time VET corresponds to 60 ECVET-points. Yet, not all countries use ECVET-points.
Unit of learning outcomes	It is a component of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competences that can be assessed and validated.
Memorandum of Understanding	A Memorandum of Understanding is an agreement between competent institutions which sets the framework for credit transfer. It formalises the ECVET partnership by stating the mutual acceptance of the status and procedures of competent institutions involved.
Learning Agreement	A learning agreement is an individualised document which sets out the conditions for a specific mobility period. It specifies, for a particular learner, which learning outcomes and units should be achieved together with the associated ECVET points.

Term	Meaning of term/short description
Personal transcript	A record of a learner's learning achievements. It contains information regarding: the learner's assessed learning outcomes; units and ECVET points awarded (in cases where they are being used). The document belongs to the learner.
Knowledge	Knowledge means the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. It is described as theoretical and/or factual knowledge
Skills	'Skills' means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. They are described as cognitive (logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments)
Competence	Competence means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and methodological abilities in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. It is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy
Portfolio	A tool for assessing work competence made of a compilation of work and other forms of educational/competence evidence.

Term	Meaning of term/short description
ESCO	ESCO is the multilingual classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations. ESCO is part of the Europe 2020 strategy. The ESCO classification identifies and categorises skills, competences, qualifications and occupations relevant for the EU labour market and education and training. It systematically shows the relationships between the different concepts. ESCO has been developed in an open IT format, is available for use free of charge by everyone and can be accessed via the ESCO portal.
EURES	EURES (the European jobs network) set up in 1993, is a cooperation network to provide information, advice and recruitment/placement (job-matching) services for the benefit of workers and employers as well as any citizens wishing to benefit from the principle of the free movement of persons.

Armstrong, M. / Taylor, S. (2014): Armstrong's Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice, 13th ed., Kogan Page.

Bizjak S, MA thesis, Analiza uporabe planov osebnega razvoja v multi-nacionalki SHV GAS, 2006, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics.

BMBF - Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (n.d.): Guidelines for describing units of learning outcomes, (Available at BMBF: http://www.ecvet-info.de/de/249.php)

Boxall, P. / Purcell, J. (2011): Strategy and Human Resource Management. 3th ed., Palgrave Macmillan

Carleton, K. (2011): How to Motivate and Retain Knowledge Workers in Organisations: A Review of the Literature, in: International Journal of Management, Vol. 28, No. 2, p. 459-468.

Cascio, W. F. (2006): Managing Human Resources: Productivity, Quality of Work Life, Profits, 7th ed., McGraw-Hill.
xw
Cedefop - The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (2013): Monitoring ECVET implementation strategies in Europe, Working Paper No. 18.

Cedefop - The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (2008): Career development at work. A review of career guidance to support people in employment, Cedefop Panorama series 151

Council of the EU/ European Parliament (2009): Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)

Europe 2020, 2010, European Commission; http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_sl.htm

ECVET Users' Group (2012): Using ECVET for geographical mobility (2012) Part II of the ECVET Users' Guide - Revised version including key points for quality assurance.

Internal materials of a Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia project that was implemented within the framework of the operation named »Career platform for employees«, 2015.

Khanka, S. S. (2007): Human Resource Management, S. Chand Publishing.

Levis, A. / Sequeira, A. H. (2012): Effectiveness of employee retention strategies in industry (Available at SSRN: http://ssrn.com/abstract=2167719) Meath Partnership (2016): ECVET goes Business O1 - Research Study (Available at http://de.ecvetgoesbusiness.eu/produkte/)

Mondy, R. W. / Bandy, J. (2014): Human resource management, 13th ed., Pearson Education Limited.

Qureshi, H. (2016): Benefits of Training & Development in an Organisation (Available at https://kashmirobserver.net/2016/opinions/benefits-training-development-organisation-3983).

The Economist (2008): Talent wars. The struggle for tomorrow's workforce - A report from the Economist Intelligence Unit

Using ECVET to Support Lifelong Learning, 2012, CEDEFOP; http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/using-ecvet-support-lifelong-learning

Modern economic development, with all its dynamics and uncertainties, is creating considerable challenges for Human Resource Management professionals and practices in European companies and organisations. Global markets and competition, complex competence requirements, especially in a knowledge-driven society like Europe's, make Human Resource Management and Development a wide-ranging task. At the same time, Europe and the European Union have developed a number of instruments and tools which have huge potential to support and streamline HR processes in companies.

Concerned with the core HR processes of planning, attracting, retaining, developing and motivating, as well as developing leadership in company employees, this handbook introduces a number of European instruments and tools which can be used in conjunction with the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) and other transparency approaches which, if implemented accurately, can support HR practices and processes. Written under the co-authorship of HR and education experts from 7 European countries including Austria, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Hungary, Spain and Slovenia, this handbook gives a robust and practical introduction to the use of these instruments to better tackle the challenges and demands of modern Human Resource Management. It is targeted at HR professionals, but at the same time, it is also relevant and applicable to the needs of managers of companies, line managers, career guidance coaches and all individuals with HR functions and responsibilities.