

ConstructyVET

1 September 2015 – September 2018

INTERIM ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Erasmus+ strategic partnership project

BE – DE – ES – FR – IT – PL – PT – UK

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INTRODUCTION

ConstructyVET is an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project aiming at devising a transnational action plan for the development of middle management skills on building sites. The main objective is to adjust the vocational and educational training offer in the 8 countries of the consortium to the evolution of the companies' needs. The jobs targeted are worksite supervisors and team leaders. The project gathers 9 partners from Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain (2) and United Kingdom.

The ConstructyVET project is funded by the Erasmus+ programme – within key-action 2, it is a Strategic Partnership of Vocational and Educational Training (KA202). The application provided a quality management process including an external evaluation, all long its duration. The outlines of this accompaniment were defined by CCCA-BTP in the document used for the call for tenders implemented to select the consulting cabinet who would conduct this evaluation. PREFACE was selected after this tender to achieve this task.

This report will be given to the coordinator and the partners of ConstructyVET and transmitted to the French Erasmus+ agency together with the contractual interim report fulfilled by the CCCA-BTP.



Then, this assessment report is drawn up 12 months after the start of ConstructyVET and 24 months before its end. It is part of the quality monitoring performed by PREFACE and to a progress report conducted in July 2016. It derives from the work done in May and July 2016 in connection with the management team of the project: Marek LAWINSKI and Paola BOLOGNINI.

A – THE PERSPECTIVE OF THIS REPORT, DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES USED

The objective of this external evaluation process is to measure :

- the level of achievement of the activities and tasks provided in the project’s application, on the basis of the progress report (part B);
- the compliance of the first productions with the deliverables and results defined in the project’s application (part C);
- the progress of the dissemination actions in connection with the chances to attain the European added-value aimed by the project (part D);
- the quality of the partners’ involvement on the basis of the satisfaction questionnaires administered at the end of each transnational meeting (part E);
- the quality of the tools used for the management of the project (part F).

As a result of these analysis, we draw some conclusions about the progress of the project so far, give some recommendations and try to identify the key points to which the consortium could pay attention to to enter the second phase of the programme (part G).

The deliverables and results of the projects are referred to in this report following the appendix classification of the interim report delivered to the French agency by CCCA-BTP at mid-September 2016.

B – LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT OF THE ACTIVITIES

The conclusion of the progress report drawn up at mid July 2016 was a delay of at least 3 months for O1-A1 and O1-A3, which was already visible on the progress report of February 2016. The delays of production of the dissemination documents were about the same. Concerning the selection of paths provided in October 2015 (O1-A2) and the work on a common methodology for VET contents scheduled on January 2016 (O2-A1), the tasks were not completely done at mid-July. The website was still in progress too. Since then, it has been opened, in a still uncomplete version : www.constructyVET.eu.

FLC Madrid sent a draft version of a “joint methodology to define learning outcomes grid” on July, the 13th 2016. With the backing of the coordinator, they also sent a roadmap (dated on July, the 7th) asking for feedbacks on this document and listing the tasks to be achieved before the deadline of August, the 31st. On September the 13th though, some of the partners’ feedbacks were still expected.

This first year of the project reveals that :

* there has been a “chronological” delay at the beginning of the project, of about 3 months, which was still present in July 2016.

* It proved to be illogical to plan O1-A2 at the beginning of the project : it was necessary to have O1-A1 achieved first, to be able to select the paths.

* scheduling the methodological note for O2-A1 before O1-A1 was achieved was not accurate. This note could only be produced after O1-A1 was produced.

This was done in June 2016 and the methodological note went on July the 13th. The time between the two was very short, thanks to the work done by FLC Madrid with the help of CCCA-BTP. This strongly contributed to maintain the provisional work programme into control.

The interim report points out that an in-depth work on the methodologies proved to be necessary at the beginning of the project, so that all the partners could adopt common approaches and better get involved in the work to be done. This delay can also be explained by the fact that all the partners were not present at the first transnational meeting in Paris on November the 17th and 18th which came 4 days after the Paris terrorist attacks. 3 partners out of 8 cancelled their trip. As a result, this methodological “appropriation” really occurred in

Madrid at the end of February. There is 3 months between November and February, and the delays in the production of O1-A1 and O1-A3 are about 3 months.

The progress report also stressed that a first “phase” of the project can be defined, comprising the 5 first activities : O1-A1 to O2-A2, that were scheduled from September 2015 to October 2016. Then, a second “phase” will start in November 2016 with O2-A3 and O3-A1.

As a result, the meeting in Liège will be a turning point for the project : the coordinator intends to validate there O1-A3 and O2-A1 and to adopt the methodology of the definition of the learning objectives and of the learning contents (O2-A2). If this can be done, the project would have drastically reduced the delays observed since the beginning of 2016, and begin the second “phase” at the time scheduled in the application’s work programme.

C – COMPLIANCE OF THE FIRST PRODUCTIONS WITH THE RESULTS DEFINED IN THE APPLICATION

Apart from the delays we mentioned, all productions and deliverables have been or are being produced, with only one exception : an analysis of Eurostat statistics on vacant jobs and recruitment was provided in the application, within O1-A1, but was not achieved. But this has no impact, since the analysis of job announcements (appendix 12 and 15 of the interim report) and the interviews and focus groups (appendix 14, 16 and 17) produced adequate and rich materials.

As a matter of fact, the delays we observe on the activities are offset by the quality and contents of the documents produced. The analyses made in the reports on the job announcements (appendix 15) and on the adequacy between skills needed by building companies and the available training offer compose a work of great quality (report in appendix 16 and its synthesis report in French in appendix 17 of the interim report). This work is completely in line with the objectives of the project since :

- it was based on an activity-related approach in most countries – the project is built on the idea of working on “qualitative identification of skills’ needs”, not on functions or jobs. This is in line with the learning outcomes’ approach;
- it also starts from the analysis of the existing training offer, which is both in line with the approach drawn up in the application, but also very useful for all partners, who are, directly or indirectly, training providers.
- what emerges from the interviews and focus groups is compatible with the classification made by the consortium of soft and hard skills, and of transversal skills for worksite supervisors and team leaders.

Finally, the synthesis report presented in the interim report in appendix 17 is a very valuable document. It goes beyond its initial purpose and contains the structuring elements necessary for the second “phase” of the project starting in November 2016. The stakes and essential issues are identified, the difficulties to carry out the objectives of the project too. It clarifies the possible choices in the adaptation or creation of the VET paths. Finally, it gives the outlines of the options possible for the pedagogical approach and teaching methods to be chosen for the future – or adapted - training paths.

Thus, the quality of the synthesis report of the interviews and focus groups may enable the consortium to gain momentum on the coming steps.

Finally, in accordance with the application approved by the Erasmus+ evaluators, all the final reports and dissemination documents have to be available in all the partnerships’ languages. This is still to be checked for the documents already produced that are concerned.

D – PROGRESS OF THE DISSEMINATION ACTIONS AND DOCUMENTS

At the date of the current report, the information brochure, the document presenting the project and the first newsletter are produced and available in English (and in French concerning the newsletter). The document presenting the proposed communication and evaluation strategies has been developed by CCCA-BTP and presented in details in Madrid in February. Moreover, information meetings with the board of directors and management of the partner organisations themselves have been held. The only negative point is the website, which is still in construction, only available in FR with some parts in EN ; the links to each partners' websites are not active.

At that time though, no multiplier event has been organised as it was provided:

- between the 6th and 24th months of the project, the application mentions E2 events : workshops or “widespread events” bringing together the professionals of the sector such as academic bodies, pilot organisations, company representatives, managers and trainers of training centres.
- Between the 12th and the 30th months of the project, the application provides E3 events : “transverse events” promoting the european recommendations and instruments to encourage the transparency of certifications and the acknowledgement of skills.

We are at the 13th month of the project, so the partners are still on time. What's more, multiplier events must be linked to intellectual outputs : the first ones are just being achieved and under validation.

Still, the surveys (O1-A1) and the work done on the identification of skills (O1-A3) enabled the partners to involve companies, training centres or other kinds of “intermediate bodies” in the project's goals and approach. In France, this exceeded expectations : 25 interviews and focus groups were conducted on companies instead of 10 by the BTP Centre de Formation des Apprentis of the 2 regions, Haute-Normandie and Aquitaine. Both companies and the CFAs are eager to continue and be involved in the project's programme. Other countries have given feedbacks of positive processes engaged with training centres or companies associated to this work lie Poland, and even with other kinds of partners such as a “Handelskammer” for BZB in Germany.

As a conclusion on this aspect, we can say that the dissemination is a little bit behind schedule, but that an interesting dynamic has been created between the partners and the project's target groups in many countries. This aspect will be studied more deeply in the second assessment report to be drawn up in September 2017, when more will be done on dissemination.

E – QUALITY OF THE PARTNERS' INVOLVEMENT

Strategic partnership projects are based on partnership work, on exchanges of practices and experiences. The quality of the participation to the productions, of the partners' involvement in the work done in common is essential for the quality of the project's results.

Assessing this requires to collect the partners' feedbacks on the way they are associated to the project, and also to measure the way they contribute to the deliverables and activities.

The external evaluator was not present at the transnational meeting held in France in November 2015 because the tender was not achieved at that time. He administered for the first time in Madrid in February 2016 the satisfaction questionnaire. 17 questionnaires were fulfilled, anonymously if the participants wished to. Four appreciations were possible : ++ Fully, + Partly, - Insufficiently and – Not at all. The questionnaire proposed 7 questions, presented without distinction but divided *afterwards* by the evaluator in 3 categories : organisational aspects (coloured in blue), participation/implication of the partners (in red) and what they received from the meeting (in yellow). The overall results are presented here :

17 questionnaires analysed	++	+	-	--	Answers	Score	Grading
Are you satisfied with the organisation of the meeting ?	88,24%	11,76%	0,00%	0,00%	17	94,1%	Maximum possible score : 100% means everyone is fully satisfied.
The elements mentioned at the meeting agenda have been dealt with ?	17,65%	70,59%	11,76%	0,00%	17	47,1%	Excellent score : 88% or above means at least two thirds of the participants are fully satisfied.
Did you have enough time to express yourself ?	76,47%	11,76%	11,76%	0,00%	17	76,5%	Good score : 75,0% or above means a majority of participants are fully satisfied.
Did the meeting meet your expectations ?	58,82%	41,18%	0,00%	0,00%	17	79,4%	Acceptable score : 50% or above means a majority of participants are at least partly satisfied.
Does the meeting actually enriches your knowledge and thinking ?	41,18%	50,00%	8,82%	0,00%	17	61,8%	Bad score : below 50%
Are you satisfied with your involvement in this partnership work ?	47,06%	52,94%	0,00%	0,00%	17	73,5%	Very bad score : negative score
Were the tasks for the next meeting clearly defined and do they seem appropriate to you ?	41,18%	52,94%	5,88%	0,00%	17	64,7%	Minimum possible score : -100%
Blue colour : organisation aspects		Average :		68,6%			
Red colour : participation, what a participant gives to the meeting		Average :		75,0%			
Yellow colour : what the participants learns, receives from the meeting		Average :		70,6%			
						Grading : 2 points for ++, 1 point for +, -1 point for -, -2 points for --	
						Score : (nb of points) / 34 (%)	

We can see here that the results are giving just “acceptable scores” to blue and yellow categories. The red category receives the best average score, but this hides important differences within each category. We also note that the participants mostly gave positive marks, which shows that they are globally satisfied, but also maybe “polite” and respectful to the coordinator’s team. This encourages us to consider very precisely all the negative scores given and all the critics given in the comments (see below).

The poorest score was given to Question 2 measuring the satisfaction about the course of the agenda. This is explained by changes made in the provisional one. These modifications were decided unanimously as show the comments on this question (see below). The second poorest score was given to Question 5 with only 61,8% approval, questioning the knowledge received from the meeting. But as some participants put it, it was not the purpose of this meeting and they did not expect it.

A third question received a score below 70% : the last one (Question 7) : the tasks for the next meeting were not enough clearly defined. One comment says that “it’s a bit early to define them very precisely”, another one says “we have a lot of time”. Still, this is a point : 6 transnational meetings are scheduled in the 36 months’ time of the project. This is quite much and the Erasmus+ budget could hardly offer more, but this gives a wide time gap between each meeting. This is a difficulty for the coordination of the project since the tasks and activities that can be planned exactly from one meeting to the other and will inevitably have to be adjusted in the meantime. Till the end of the project, transnational meeting are planned in the application with 6 months’ gap – this seems to be a maximum with the current organisation. If this gap gets wider, it could be necessary to plan intermediate Skype meetings for example, to adjust and re-schedule the activities to be done.

All the other questions received a score above 73%, but Question 3 for example was answered twice with an “insufficient” (“-”) appreciation. To go further in the analysis, we have to examine the comments in detail :

17 questionnaires analysed	++	+	-	--	Comments						
Are you satisfied with the organisation of the meeting ?	15	2			Nice	Even after the agenda adjustment	Very good organisation, thank you !	Please, send the working documents more earlier before the meeting	The meeting was very well organised, however, sometimes I was a little unsure about what we were trying to achieve	Specifically logistical aspects, but also information given before the meeting	
The elements mentioned at the meeting agenda have been dealt with ?	3	12	2		Change was decided in accordance with all	But the necessary contents are fixed (already done)	We decided together to modify the agenda to make it more realistic	Some of the elements were not discussed in depth. More teamwork would be useful.	Due to the development of works during the meeting, some points were not done, with the agreement of the whole participants	No but capacity of changing / adaptation for the good ongoing of the project	Some aspects were left as the group decided that more work needed to be undertaken
Did you have enough time to express yourself ?	13	2	2		Too long sometimes	Yes	It is a good thing give the floor to all the participants	However, sometimes both questions and answers get somewhat lost in translation ! Unavoidable :)			
Did the meeting meet your expectations ?	10	7			Very clear	Because it was the first from any partner					
Does the meeting actually enriches your knowledge and thinking ?	7	8,5	1,5		From other countries experiences	But I didn't expect it to, as the topics covered were not new.	Sure, it gave a good (global) picture of what companies are waiting from the specialists		Sharing of the experiences from other countries was useful. There was little time to discuss details of methodology		
Are you satisfied with your involvement in this partnership work ?	8	9			More involvement would be welcome	Being new to the project I did not have a lot to say but I hope to be more involved next time					
Were the tasks for the next meeting clearly defined and do they seem appropriate to you ?	7	9	1		I would like more time for the financial aspect	It's a bit early to define them very precisely	These tasks still must be clarified with Javier	As yet this has not been detailed. Not a problem we have lots of time. We know what is required to finish Phase I – so this is fine			
Other comments					Good thing to work in two subgroups	Thank you for the organisation	All good :)	Since the group is very big, it is necessary to use group management techniques to collect the information in an easier way	I'm sure the fact that every partner was not present for kick-off meeting obliged the teamleader to adapt today's meeting in order to meet the expectations +++ We lost time on the first day and that's why we could not follow the agenda. THANK YOU !	Good understanding among the partners. Everyone intends to bring something to the project	

We underlined the positive comments in green font, put punctual requests in blue and negative or organisational requests in red. Several comments can be joined in 2 aspects :

- “too long sometimes”, “it is a good thing to give the floor to all the participants”, “more involvement would be welcome”, “it is necessary [...] to collect the information in an easier way”. The two first comments here are related to Question 3: they were written as a request from some participants to have more time to express themselves. (α)
- “Some of the elements were not discussed in depth. More teamwork would be useful” : this point is close to the first one and is about the need to have more teamwork to be able to express more in-depth elements. Another comment, left in automatic font says: “good thing to work in two subgroups”; it refers to a workshop organised during the meeting when participants were divided in two groups - and confirms this point. (β)

2 other comments are more specific :

- “sometimes, I was a little unsure about what we were trying to achieve”: this is more about the capacity to define the objectives of an activity, maybe to position it within the global work schedule (γ)
- “there was little time to discuss details of methodology”: this is close to the previous point γ and also to α but we chose to separate it because it is related to methodological issues, that can be essential. (δ)

It must not be forgotten here that :

1 the project is very ambitious, the work programme is quite important and complex, even for a 36 months duration, and it is impossible to check that all the partners agree on each detailed aspect at each step. At some moment, the most relevant type of management is a directive one.

2 The Madrid meeting was the first one gathering all the 9 partners, and the project was already delayed. There was a lot of things to say, a lot of work to be done, the next meetings will enable more discussions.

3 The scores and comments of the satisfaction questionnaire were largely positive. All the comments in green show that the partners approve in general the management of the meeting and that “everyone intends to bring something to the project”.

We realize here that Question 1 was understood differently : the word “organisation” can be heard as practical organisation or as the way the meeting is held. We wish here to focus on the conduct of the meeting. And question 6 is ambiguous because of the double meaning of “involvement”: it is necessary to specify that what we want to know is the feedback about the way they are associated in the project.

Drawing conclusions from the divergent understandings that aroused from those questions of this questionnaire, we decided to modify them (and correct a typing error) to make it clearer. This is the adjusted version, with the modifications in bold :

	++	+	-	--	<u>Comments</u>
Are you satisfied with the conduct of the meeting ?					
Have the elements mentioned at the meeting agenda been dealt with ?					
Did you have enough time to express yourself ?					
Did the meeting meet your expectations ?					
Does the meeting actually enriches your knowledge and thinking ?					
Are you satisfied with the way you are associated in this partnership work ?					
Were the tasks for the next meeting clearly defined and do they seem appropriate to you ?					

F – QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT TOOLS

The reporting tools produced by CCCA-BTP for the project have been well adopted by the partners and they use it as required : the activity and financial reports are fulfilled each term, the time sheets are sent regularly and

the dashboard used to follow the budget consumption is updated for each transnational meeting as provided in the application.

The gantt diagram has not been adjusted and updated after the Madrid meeting as it would have been necessary. This diagram is part of the application, it is a well-known document, very visual and understandable. Its use would contribute to the clear vision by the partners of the work to be done on the project.

G – CONCLUSIONS AND KEY-POINTS

Concerning the way the meetings are conducted, we propose here some practical suggestions about ways to encourage creativity, raise the involvement of the partners - and answer the requests presented in part E.

From a general point of view, it is difficult for the person(s) coordinating a one-and-a-half day meeting, to hold the different necessary roles. We will focus on 5: chair the meeting, follow the agenda, collect the feedbacks, moderate the interventions and present herself/himself some documents.

An idea could be to share these tasks and have for example one person dedicated to follow the agenda and respect the “timing”, or one person to pay attention to the participants who wish to express themselves and make sure they can do it.

Another suggestion is to separate more distinctly the ‘presentation times’ when information is given or documents are detailed and the ‘feedback times’ when it is necessary to collect information. The first type of sequence requires a chairman, the second one needs a moderator. During the first one, the chairman still must pay attention to the participants willing to say something. But during the second one, the moderator has to forget he is a part of the consortium : he starts the topic, re-formulates, asks for precisions, regulates if necessary, pays attention to give the floor to the partners who do not naturally express themselves. If a proposition is made by a participant, the moderator may propose to adopt/vote for it and register it as a common decision.

Finally, we can resume the requests of the partners after the Madrid meeting:

- α more time to express themselves, to collect feedbacks;
- β more teamwork;
- γ define the objectives of each activity, maybe to position or re-position it within the global work schedule;. The gantt diagram should help for that;
- δ it can be necessary sometimes to interrupt the course of the agenda to have a specific discussion (and decision) on a “detail of methodology”.

We wish to add here some other suggestions:

- clarify more the decisions taken in common during the meeting, by asking the partners for their approval (through a rapid vote for example);
- have a specific moment at the end of the meeting to recall the common decisions and the engagements/activities for the next one;
- rely more on management documents such as the gantt diagram to create common references and landmarks for everyone (see δ).

KEY-POINTS :

The Liège meeting will be a turning point for the project. It will be the occasion to:

- validate O1-A3 and O2-A.

- At least adopt the methodology of O2-A2; maybe through a formal validation by all the partners, if it is possible on the basis of the document proposed by FLC Madrid.
- Clarify the choice made for O2-A2 : is the selection of VET paths made in all countries or if it is not the case, when will it be made ?
- Deal with the learning outcomes and the methodological issues or choices to be made on that subject.
- Make a point on the progress of the website, and on its structure and functioning : will the partners get administration rights, will they have to translate documents in their languages and send them to the developer, to the French team, or enter them themselves on the website.
- Make a point about the use of the social networks that were mentioned in Madrid.

The last key-point we wish to stress upon is to maintain the motivation and involvement of the companies/training centres/intermediate bodies or other kinds of partners who got involved in the interviews and focus groups. It is very important for the logic of the project and its compliance with the application, to make it last and place these target-groups at the center of ConstructyVET.

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