



MAKE IT

Let's Make It Happen – a Shift into Learning Outcomes in the
Welding Sector



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R5.4 ROUNDTABLES COMMON REPORT

English Version

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INTRODUCTION

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This report aims to provide an overview and final summary of the results of the **National Roundtable Sessions** and **National Roundtable Reports** held and fulfilled by the project partner organisation involved in the project. The participating countries were Portugal, Spain, Hungary and Norway. The roundtable sessions were conducted in May 2018 by VET providers and Sectoral Organisations (IEFP, IPS, MATRAI and HIOA), which were leading the pilots in each country. The participants in the roundtable sessions were the remaining internal partner organisations. The roundtable national report was addressed to guide the final assessment of the piloting activities concerning the overall quality of the project outcomes, including the methodologies, materials and results. The focus was to provide a clear understanding and identification of the project results that may need to be improved. Based on this, it was the participants in the roundtables that had to analyse, decide and agree on the aspects mentioned in the pilot questionnaires and identified in the national pilot reports (Annex 1- Links to National Roundtables Reports) that were relevant and critical to improve the overall quality of the proposed methodologies and resources.

A preliminary work was required to proceed the roundtables sessions in each country: the pilot activities as well as the national report on the pilot (i.e. is the summary of the results gathered through the evaluation questionnaires) needed to be completed. For the roundtables sessions the participants prepared a presentation of the pilots' results and conducted a discussion based on the topics and information of the Roundtable National Report. It was paramount to make clear decisions regarding improvements and recommendations for the EWP LOs (learning outcomes) standards and RPL (recognition of prior learning) scheme and finally the next actions to be clearly defined.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS: ACTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPROVEMENTS

1. EWP LOs STANDARD PILOTS

1.1 Level of knowledge acquired

In view of the results, it can be considered that both the level of acquired knowledge and the level of satisfaction with the acquired knowledge are high. The trainees gained knowledge of other materials and techniques.



1.2 Level of engagement

There was a hundred percent involvement in the exercises, especially in the practical ones. In general, the level of acceptance by trainees of the proposed content is high. “Something new to learn” got trainees engaged.

1.3 Enhancement of skills

The vast majority of the participants considered that the training received has met their expectations. The trainees had to work together and were given the opportunity to weld on other materials and in other welding positions than they normally do. The trainers emphasized that, after the pilots, the trainees were now able to approach several subjects with greater easiness, derived from the fact that they have got a better understanding of the subject taught.

1.4 Relevance of learning activities and materials, including the kit exercises and case studies

The teaching activities were liked by the majority of the trainees, with higher satisfaction in the case studies. The trainers also noted that the changes in the teaching tools have brought several new positive aspects, notably in the case study, with a better link between the taught subjects of the various modules. It resulted in greater attention, enthusiasm, active participation and assimilation. Most of the learning activities and materials were considered relevant, with some of them (e.g. change of gas tube) being also a bit too basic, where some more differentiation options might have possibly worked better.

1.5 Innovative aspects of learning activities and materials, including the kit exercises and case studies

The general opinion of the trainees was that the practicality of the exercises contributes to the improvement of the learning outcomes; most of them were generally highly satisfied with the innovativeness of the learning materials. The exercises problem-based (PBL- Problem -based learning), for instance, were recognised as tool that helps a lot in the understanding of the themes. According to the trainers’ opinion the distribution of the trainees in working groups results in a higher participation and deeper involvement of the trainees within each group. Subsequent discussion among the groups led to storms of ideas to arise, which facilitated the assimilation and understanding of the proposed subjects. A more enjoyable and effective learning process occurred, especially in those subjects with greater theoretical content.



1.6 Applicability and usefulness of learning activities and materials, including the kit exercises and case studies

The majority expressed great satisfaction with the resources developed. It is both the trainers' and trainees' opinion that this type of tools were beneficial and that one should bet on the construction of a kit with more exercises that could be applied and made available for the training on this field. In the opinion of the teaching team, and in view of the impressions collected from the participating trainees, the materials produced were fully applicable in this type of training and it would be very useful and interesting to have a higher number of exercises and cases to study. Despite the recognised relevance and usefulness of the Kit, the Norwegian roundtable highlighted that some adjustments were required to fit into the VET Curricula for upper secondary schools in Norway.

1.7 Other

In order to get the most effective results of these teachings sessions, some points should possibly be paid better attention to, for instance:

- Homogeneity of the group of trainees rather than different rhythm of learning of the trainees (heterogeneity of the groups)
- Duration of the proposed exercises, namely a greater duration for the practical demonstrations and tests
- The planning of the work groups requires a detailed information about the framework and purpose of the project
- Technical English should be mandatory in the guideline
 - In the overall of the exercises applied in the Portuguese pilots (which addressed the modules 1 and 3, current Competence unit 1,2 and 5) some of the trainees considered that the workload should be increased
 - A recommendation for Module 3 (current Competence Unit 5 – Design and Construction) was that the didactic means should be interactive and practical, avoiding PowerPoint presentations and word documents
 - The kit should be completed with themes and topics and not covered by the exercises built – noting that all modules / competence units of the Training Referential were not tested in this pilot
 - LOs associated with numeracy should be prepared and become part of the EWP



2. RPL TOOLS PILOTS

2.1 Clear understanding of the RPL process and tools

The vast majority of the candidates were very satisfied with the overall process. The flow chart provided a good overview of how the process was carried out and which documents to be used. The questions of the Self-assessment grid, however in the opinion of the candidates, were rather difficult to understand.

2.2 Relevance of RPL tools

The RPL process and tools, were considered of high relevance for career progression as well for enabling the embracing of new professional challenges, etc. However, the Self-Assessment Grid was considered not necessarily relevant due to its subjectivity, and it also contains repeated information that can be obtained from the application of the different forms filled in by the candidates preceding the Self-Assessment Grid. The relevance of the Technical Interview depends on the interlocutor, meaning the level of acceptance is high from the perspective of the tutors, trainers and VET experts, but the perspective of the candidates is different, they considered the level of the Technical Interview too high.

2.3 Applicability and usefulness of RPL tools

The applicability of the RPL tools was considered as a string point due to its flexibility and for it is easily adaptable to the conditions of the candidates. The tools were considered to add new value and its results are market-oriented. On the other hand, as per some of the feedbacks, it was possible to apply, but the documentation to be used should still be better adjusted. Some candidates found difficulty in understanding the process and in understanding the self-assessment grid – in terms of technical complexity and language, greater objectivity in questions, extension/number of questions. Due to high technical level, the Portuguese roundtable recommended that the interview should be conducted always by a welding technician. The tools are useful to distinguish between those with and without former welding experience.

2.4 Applicability of the RPL Model for Welding Sector

The applicability varied from country to country. In Spain all participants considered that the RPL system developed was applicable to the welding sector. In Norway, the public authorities are



responsible for the RPL process, but the tools are considered relevant. There are many welders in Portugal that need to be converted into welding coordinators / practitioners, but it is difficult to obtain their participation outside the business context, and it is also necessary to have a minimum level of qualification (12th year of schooling) – which they might not hold.

2.5 Other

- Other aspects mentioned were the need to determine the welding demonstration more precisely, because currently the trainer has the authority to decide which welds are to be done. This decision strongly depends on the trainer, so it isn't a factual topic. It would be a good practice to establish the welding demonstration according to the access requirements.
- Important tools that improve the RPL process
- In some of the countries the adaptation of the RPL process into the national legal system is yet to be solved, i.e. the implementation process is yet to happen.

3. SWOT ANALYSIS

3.1 Strengths

EWP LOs Standard

- Better attendance
- More participation
- More interaction



- Improves understanding of materials
- Less tiring
- More trainees' interest
- Practical contents
- Materials highly liked by the trainees
- Good learning facility
- High applicability
- The possibility of improving the qualification based on the experience
- Focus on welding
- Raised issues and new perspectives
- Describes a vocational education at EQF level 4 LOs

RPL Tools

- The full career path of the candidate could be objectively monitored and evaluated through the Welding Professional and Training Registration Form, the Welding Professional and Personal Motivations Form and the Self-Assessment Grid
- The documents created were well-organised hence easy to follow
- User-friendly
- Straightforward
- A method not yet applied before
- The RPL process provides a very detailed and objective information on the candidates' professional skills and possible shortcomings
- Highlights the difference between diploma and certificate

3.2 Weaknesses

EWP LOs Standard

- A 4-module pilot course was completed in 40 hours that Hungary also evaluated, it cannot reliably be compared to the 2-module pilot results of the other partners; the overall information can be regarded not more but a trend.
- PowerPoint exercises
- Exercises only with images
- Heterogenic profile of the trainees



- Some of the tasks were too basic to be on EQF level 4

RPL Tools

- During the prior learning assessment, the candidates often did not understand the questions of the Self-assessment grid of it being rather complicated
- Too many documents needed to be filled in
- Too much time was required to be spent on evaluation
- Resistance to new forms of training-accreditation
- Subjectivity of some tools
- The cost of the Certification

3.3 Opportunities

EWP LOs Standard

- Based on the well-organised learning programmes with a topic by topic structure, the trainees' knowledge and understanding can be extended and further developed on to other procedures and professional areas
- Career progression
- Wage increases
- Training requires greater preparation of Trainers at the level of tools
- The autonomy of the trainees and the interest for their own learning are strengthened
- Enjoyable learning by this method
- Needs of lifelong learning
- Higher status of the Norwegian certificate of apprenticeship
 - Upscaling to other countries / wider audiences

RPL Tools

- There were many Welding demonstrations (WDs) and Welding Procedures (WPSs) that provided excellent opportunities for a tailor-made training of the candidate
- Development of new skills
- In Portugal, school and professional RPL are interconnected, which can be a threat to the process implementation, but can also be an opportunity to increase the qualification of the candidates
 - Motivation for the type of accreditation



- Encourages trainers to leave their comfort zone and get on this process

3.4 Threats

EWP LOs Standard

- It would be advisable that the EWF become the main caretaker of the system once the project is closed
- Planning of work groups very important for success
- If working as a team, cooperative problems may arise with the participants

RPL Tools

- Rigidity in national qualifications systems
- Focus on certificates may cause us to lose the overall perspective
- The process to possibly become over-bureaucratic
- The host institutions are not prepared enough and in depth to make use of and exploit the results of the MAKE-IT Project
- If it is not incorporated in the national educational training system
- The RPL process is time-consuming and bureaucratic, which makes it difficult for candidates to join
- In Portugal, school and professional RPL are interconnected, which can be a threat to the process implementation, but can also be an opportunity to increase the qualifications of the candidates
 - Duration of the long process

CONCLUSION

Based on the the fruitful discussion held during the roundtables sessions in each country, the consensus between the participants was that the RPL process provides detailed information on the candidates' professional skills and possible shortcomings and that the LOs are suitable for assessing the candidates' current level of knowledge. It is, however, crucial that the application process is carried out by specialist technicians / welding evaluators. Minor changes might be necessary in some of the countries due to the local / national specialties and differences. Some of the countries may also face a challenge in the implementation of the EWP curriculum, thus related to national procedures and requirements from the VET systems.



In terms of implications for the project results, the MAKE IT partners agreed to introduce the following improvements to the training materials, RPL tools and methodologies:

- In the EWP LOS Standard, Welding terminology should be harmonised according to European Standards.
- The Cases studies, developed under the scope of the Pedagogical Kit of trainers, are not suitable to be applied after 40 hours of training;
- A remark should be added to the exercises, developed under the scope of the Pedagogical Kit of Trainers, referring that a general knowledge is achieved through the exercises, while a specific knowledge should be left to specific branch/industrial application;
- The level of detail in some questions of the technical interview is not appropriate (e.g question 1.13 addressed to electron beam);
- The usefulness of the self-assessment grid is questionable, therefore its use in the RPL process is optional;

APPENDIX

Annex 1 - Links to National Roundtables Reports

[R5.4 Roundtbles National Report Portugal](#)

[R5.4 Roundtbles National Report Spain](#)

[R5.4 Roundtbles National Report Hungary](#)

[R5.4 Roundtbles National Report Norway](#)