

**SIMOVET**



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**OUTPUT 3**  
**WORKING GROUPS**  
**REPORT**



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## ABOUT THE SIMOVET PROJECT

In recent years, the European economy has suffered from the deepest recession in decades with very high unemployment rates, the loss of millions of jobs and with a young generation now outside of the labour market. Economic recovery has been very slow and patchy. The Annual Growth Survey shows that the EU needs to learn from the crisis and to address, decisively, the issue of its global competitiveness so that it emerges stronger and builds a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity, competitiveness and social cohesion, in accordance with Europe 2020 Strategy.

Vocational education and training (VET) systems need to deliver the right mix of skills both to meet student needs and to match the requirements of the labour market. Skills mismatches in the labour market have been a growing concern in most Member States.

The project SIMOVET is has been designed to tackle the imbalance between the supply and demand of professional skilled workers in certain economic activities and sectors. It recognises that there is an oversupply of skills which manifests itself in high rates of unemployment in certain vocational training areas.

Even at the height of the economic crisis there was a persistent lack of skilled workers in certain sectors crucial to Europe's future and needed to sustain its economy which will come under renewed longer-term pressure due to the ageing society and the persistent skills mismatches in the labour market. The employment rates of certain professional categories remain very low and students and workers are still struggling to gain access to employment. The training agents, both decision makers and training providers, recognise that there is a lack of adequate information concerning the real needs of companies for adapting training to the work demands.

Due to imperfect information systems and structural rigidities, workers and businesses are not provided with the right level of skills for the labour-market, which damages competitiveness in European enterprises.

SIMOVET is a strategic partnership established to support the development, transfer and implementation of innovative smart information systems at local, regional, national and European level for reinforcing links between education training fields with the world of work.

## **APPROACH OF THE REGIONAL WORKING GROUPS**

One of the key outputs of the project has been the creation of regional working groups in order to establish a feedback mechanism between VET and the labour market.

This way, the SIMOVET project provides a new tool for interaction between VET providers and labour market stakeholders, to improve the information systems to give the opportunity to VET systems to renew themselves. One working group has been established per region in order to assess the usefulness of the methods and the information for the decision making process.

Given the type of stakeholders involved and the success of the workshops and focus groups conducted, the groups are expected to outlive the project's life.



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## Basque Country, Spain

### SIMOVET REGIONAL WORKING GROUP

**Authors: Javier Ramos (Lanbide),  
Eugenia Atin (Prospektiker)**

#### Rationale / Background

Changing occupation profiles affect policies in the fields of education, training, guidance, counselling and employment but also in immigration, mobility and social policy. It requires, therefore, effective governance and cooperation of all stakeholders, including the social partners. The labour market foresight requires collaboration between different departments (employment, education, economy, industry, ..) and public and private institutions (universities, socioeconomic agents, companies) and their different needs on information and knowledge from the future foresight model to be implemented in the Lanbide's Labour market Observatory.

#### *Description of the working group*

The aim of the Basque Working Group under SIMOVET project was to provide an assessment of the potential on related best practices collected by partners and to provide us a feedback during the pilot project development regarding their needs on information and knowledge from the future foresight model and skills observatory.

In order to meet these goals, the Basque Working Group has been comprised of an internal working group set up among the two partners from the Basque Country (Lanbide and Prospektiker) and of an steering committee set up among the external stakeholders. It has involved from the Basque employment service, technical staff from the area of Training for Employment, Labour market observatory and the policy level Policy level on Active Employment Policies and Vocational Training for Employment and from other government departments, technical staff from the Department of Education, Linguistic Policy and Culture (University and Vocational Training Board) and from the Department of Economy and Inland Revenue, Economy and Planning Board.



## Context and setting

The Basque Country is one of the regions most affected by the ageing process. As a result of the ageing population in the Basque Country, in the coming years, a sharp decline in the labour force is expected, which means a lower supply of labour which may affect the competitiveness of the economy. Thus, in the short to medium term it is expected that the active population in the Basque Country will be reduced by more than 8%, however by 2020 the decline will be even greater. In 2025, 175,000 people will turn to retirement age.

Moreover, the nature of jobs as we know them today will change in the coming decades mainly due to the technology progress and there are many projections that suggest that the technological unemployment will accelerate in the future. Along these lines, taking into account the decrease of the labour force, the future mismatch of professionals could be not only quantitative but qualitative. These challenges in the demographic structure and changing labor market demands arising from technological progress require a profound transformation and restructuring of the organizational model of social, economic, employment and training policies. It is necessary to forecast the needs for generational replacement which is easier to calculate considering the demographic factors which are difficult to modify and are less likely to change.

At present, in the Basque Country we are not conducting any systematic research on which job openings arising because of people leaving the workforce or their occupation and which job profiles may be more vulnerable to technological change or which new opportunities could arise to create new jobs. In addition to the difficulty of forecasting and considering the distribution of those leaving the labour market by sector and by occupation, the job opportunities cannot be identified precisely as we need to anticipate changes to skills and work profiles in order to develop updated training strategies that will provide the required work opportunities.

Linked to the ignorance of the real demands of enterprises and the future of jobs in the Basque Country there is a great lack of information for planning the training offer at the short, medium and long term. In the other hand, findings of our quantitative and qualitative foresight would help to develop new strategies based on vocational training to meet the challenge of growing and emerging vacancies from the replacement demand.

Changing occupation profiles affect policies in the fields of education, training, guidance, counselling and employment but also in immigration, mobility and social policy. It requires, therefore, effective governance and cooperation of all stakeholders, including the social partners. The labour market foresight requires collaboration between different departments (employment, education, economy, industry, ..) and public and private institutions (universities, socioeconomic agents, companies) and their different needs on information and knowledge from the future foresight model to be implemented in the Lanbide's Labour market Observatory.

## Objectives of the regional working group

The aim of SIMOVET project at Basque Country is to help Lanbide, Basque Employment Service to contributing to the transparency of the work market and decision-making on planning training for employment based on knowledge of current and future demand from the work market by means of

taking the helm compiling, channeling and forecasting the relevant quantitative and qualitative information. Under this goal, Basque project partners, Lanbide and Prospektiker, have worked on the development of two pilot projects to lay the strategic bases for a future Skills Observatory and a future foresight on labor market demands.

The aim of the Basque Working Group under SIMOVET project was to provide an assessment of the pertinence (transferability, potential, practicality) on related best practices collected by partners and to provide us a feedback during the pilot project development regarding their needs on information and knowledge from the future foresight model and skills observatory. Good practices in other regions have been evaluated by experts and meant to improve the current information system of the Labour Market Observatory are those related to labour market forecasting as well as those related to the monitoring of skills and the dissemination tools of these good practices to present the resulting information.

At the same time, participants serve as a key point for dissemination of the result and ensure its follow up. Working group identified the information needs of the region regarding LMI foresight and defined the main activities that will be considered in the future tools as strategic bases. This will lead to a shared vision between policy makers and stakeholders based on sound evidence and cooperation across different fields and levels

In order to meet these goals, the Basque Working Group has been has been comprised of an internal working group set up among the two partners from the Basque Country (Lanbide and Prospektiker) and of an steering committee set up among the external stakeholders.

This internal working group has taken responsibility for internal analysis of existing skills-based work tools and running interviews with the people in charge of them, drawing the relevant conclusions in terms of their potential transfer to Lanbide. In addition, this internal working group has joined policy decision makers on vocational training and employment actives policies.

- Lanbide - Technical department -Basque Employment Service: Javier Ramos, Maria Brella and Roberto Villate
- Lanbide- Policy level: the director of Active Employment Policies at Lanbide- Gotzone Sagarduy and the director of Vocational Training for Employment at Lanbide- Juan Ibarretxe.
- Prospektiker: Eugenia Atin Raquel Serrano

A Steering Committee has also been set up to assess the relevance, use and transferability of the best practices with agents from the Basque Government departments of Employment, Economy and Education.

- Lanbide –Area of Training for Employment
- Department of Education, Linguistic Policy and Culture - University Management
- Department of Education, Linguistic Policy and Culture, Vocational Training Board, Quality and Assessment Agency
- Department of Economy and Inland Revenue, Economy and Planning Board.

## Members of the group

First name	Surname	Organisation	Role
Alberto	Alberdi	Department of Economy and Finance (Economy and Planning)	Steering Committee Identification of information needs; Identification of main activities within the pilot projects; Assessment of best practices potential Participation on designing bases for future foresight model
Nacho	Jaca	Department of Economy and Finance (Economy and Planning)	Steering Committee Identification of information needs; Identification of main activities within the pilot projects; Assessment of best practices potential Participation on designing bases for future foresight model
Juan	Ibarretxe	Regional Authority on Basque Employment Service- director of Vocational Training for Employment	Internal working group Identification of information needs; Assessment of best practices potential Participation on designing bases for future foresight model
Gotzone	Sagarduy	Regional Authority on Basque Employment Service- Director of Active Employment Policies	Internal working group Identification of information needs; Assessment of best practices potential Participation on designing bases for future foresight model
M <sup>a</sup> Carmen	Vella	Lanbide -Training for Employment	Steering Committee Identification of information needs; Identification of main activities within the pilot projects; Assessment of best practices potential Participation on designing bases for future foresight model
Irantzu	Albizu	Universities, Department of Education, Language Policy and Culture	Steering Committee Identification of information needs; Identification of main activities within the pilot projects; Assessment of best practices potential Participation on designing bases for future foresight model
Luis	Zuanzo	Vocational Training, Agency for Quality and Evaluation - Department of Education, Language Policy and Culture	Steering Committee Identification of information needs; Identification of main activities within the pilot projects; Assessment of best practices potential Participation on designing bases for future foresight model

Eugenia	Atin	Prospektiker	Leading a working group; Identification of information needs; Identification of main activities within the pilot projects; Methodology defining; Working on the analysis and development of the strategic bases for future foresight model and skills Observatory
Raquel	Serrano	Prospektiker	Leading a working group; Identification of information needs; Identification of main activities within the pilot projects; Methodology defining; Working on the analysis and development of the strategic bases for future foresight model and skills Observatory
Javier	Ramos	Lanbide- labour Market Observatory	Leading a working group; Identification of information needs; Identification of main activities within the pilot projects; Methodology defining; Working on the analysis and development of the strategic bases for future foresight model and skills Observatory
Maria	Brenlla	Lanbide- labour Market Observatory	Leading a working group; Identification of information needs; Identification of main activities within the pilot projects; Methodology defining; Working on the analysis and development of the strategic bases for future foresight model and skills Observatory

## Meetings and workshops

Work of this group was coordinated by Prospektiker and Lanbide. Since there have been two groups within the Basque Working Group- working internal team and Steering Committee, the meetings between members has followed different work methodologies: focus groups, interviews, skype meetings and discussions in smaller groups. The first one aimed at the design of the pilot project and the second one aimed at discussion the result of pilot project. In addition to these common sessions several discussions with individual members also took place.

DATE	ATTENDANTS	TOPICS OF THE WORKSHOP	CONCLUSIONS
<b>28 January 2015</b>	G. Sagarduy J. Ibarretxe J. Ramos. E. Atin R. Serrano	Kick-Off Workshop of the Internal Working group the SIMOVET project, Presenting the goals and involved activities, first opportunity for exchange of views and ideas, first get-together	Successful kick-off, raising the interest vocational training and employment political decisionmakers, giving the activities an official context and collecting ideas from decision level
<b>25 March 2015</b>	M. Brella J. Ramos. E. Atin R. Serrano	Internal evaluation on good practices by internal working group.	Selection of best practices related to prospective systems and skills monitoring (Wolliby, Regio pro, Working Futures, Skill Investment Plans)
<b>16 April 2015</b>	Al. Alberdi N. Jaca J. Ramos. E. Atin R. Serrano	Involvement of Department of Economy and Finance (Economy and Planning) on SIMOVET goals on future foresight system development	Interview with the Department of Economics to learn past experiences in the field of economic prospects and employment and get them involved in the Steering Committee
<b>6 May 2015</b>	M. Vella I. Albizu L. Sanzo M. Brella Al. Alberdi N. Jaca J. Ramos. E. Atin R. Serrano	External evaluation Workshop by Steering Committee	Assessment of best practices potential. Formulated priorities for action regarding foresight system and skill observatory design and the forthcoming activities regarding the visits to the best practices. Participation on designing bases for future foresight model
<b>24 June 2015</b>	G. Sagarduy J. Ramos. E. Atin R. Serrano	Internal Working group for planning the forthcoming activities regarding the visits to the best practices (Regio pro in Frankfurt and Wolliby in Bilbao)	Formulated priorities for action and questions to be solved regarding the forthcoming activities regarding the visits to the best practices.
<b>13 October 2015</b>	G. Sagarduy J. Ibarretxe J. Ramos M. Brella E. Atin R. Serrano	Internal Working group for to analyse the transferability of skills based on big data to the Basque Employment Service	The tool testing and its potential for impact in the planning of the vocational training system. It is concluded the need to further investigate tools more oriented skills assessment in order to improve labour orientation
<b>19 October 2016</b>	Al. Alberdi N. Jaca J. Ramos.	Working on the analysis and development of the strategic bases for	Cooperation with the Department of Economy and Finance (Economy and Planning) on needs of

	E. Atin R. Serrano	future foresight model	information of the future macroeconomic model for the foresight system bases
<b>29 October 2015</b>	J. Ramos M. Brella E. Atin R. Serrano R. Serrano	Internal Working group for to analyse the transferability of IWAK prospective tool (regio-pro) to the Basque Employment Service	The tool testing and its potential for impact in the planning of the vocational training system and the employment active policies. It is concluded the interest on developing a similar tool at Basque labour Market Observatory
<b>9 de junio de 2016</b>	M. Vella I. Albizu L. Sanzo M. Brella Al. Alberdi N. Jaca J. Ramos. E. Atin R. Serrano G. Sagarduy J. Ibarretxe	Final event for pilot projects results dissemination	Dissemination of

## Lessons learned

What would you do differently if you were to do it all over again?

Foresight is important at Basque Country context in order to plan the investment in human capital in the coming years, understood as an exercise of occupational projections and quantitative and qualitative forecasting of the production sectors. Labour market foresight allows clarifying which are the determinants of the changes in occupations, it allows to reflect on the most vulnerable jobs and professions due to the technological advances, as well as the need for generational replacement and the new activities and emerging occupations. It is also necessary to ensure some confidence and credibility in the projections. Foresight is important as well in order to adequately adapt the training offer, for example, initial vocational training requires between 7-8 years: *identify the technologies that alter the activities and occupations, convert it into training, train teachers, new curriculum and finally training future and current workers.*

Implementing the project did not encounter any problem, nor the participation of Basque stakeholders to the Basque Working Group. Thus there is no reason to change the process of implementation. If the next steps it would be necessary also to involve other relevant actors from Basque Country the social and economic context (business associations, development agencies) and those who are related to labour market analysis. Experience from this working shows some difficulties in gathering companies and business associations on for collecting information about their needs and to get their active participation in these working gropus.

## Follow up activities

On June 9th, 2016 it is scheduled a final event for the dissemination of the results of the pilot projects developed under SIMOVET where all the people who have participated in the Steering Committee and the Internal Working Group has been convened as well as other relevant actors from Basque Country the social and economic context (business associations, development agencies) and those who are related to labour market analysis.

In addition to presenting the basis for the development of both system, Skills assessment and monitoring Observatory and the future model of foresight, the next lines of work will be described: activities facing the implementation of both systems and again, it will be presented the cooperation needs from the various stakeholders, both as providers and consumers of information and knowledge, especially those in charge of planning of vocational training offer. Thus, it is intended to give continuity to future of Basque Working Group.

## Contact details

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## Ústecký Region, Czech Republic

### SIMOVET REGIONAL WORKING GROUP

**Author: Zdenka Matoušková**

#### Rationale / Background

Ústecký Region is one out of 14 Regions (NUTS 3) in the Czech Republic. In comparison with other Region Ústecký Region belongs to the largest regions, is the seventh largest one and covers nearly 7% of the total area. Region is located in the north western part of the Czech Republic and shares the border with Germany (Saxony) that provides some job opportunity for the labour force from the Region especially in the tourism sector.

Labour market is influenced by demography situation that is not favorable, the number of population decline continuously. This situation is caused by negative migration balance, especially young and well educated people leave the Region, as well as by negative natural demography development. Aging process troubled the whole Czech Republic is visible also in Ústecký Region.

As a result of traditional sectors restructuring and lack of new investments in Ústecký Region there is the highest unemployment rate in the long term. Unemployment is approximately 4-6 percentage points higher than the average. In the year 2014 the unemployment rate was 11%, there was 17 applicants per one vacancy. A negative trend is the high proportion of the long-term unemployed; more than 40% of the unemployed people are without a job for over a year.

The aim is to improve the quality of education at vocational schools, increase the relevance of education in relation to the needs of the corporate sector, and increase the number of students in technical and science-oriented universities.

#### *Description of the working group*

Please describe in detail the working group. When was it established? Why? SIMOVET project framework

The working group was created in relation to the external evaluation group and to the content of the pilot project. Two members of the external evaluation group become the members of the working group representing carrier counsellors (Zuzana Freibergová) and initiative, coordination and conciliation entity involved in economic and social development of Ústecký Region (Gabriela Nekolová). Newly the working group includes a representative of the Regional University as the scientific, pedagogic and cultural & educational centre of the Ústecký Region and a representative of Regional Office whose duty is among others complex development of the Region including educational system development. This group also includes three representatives of NTF. The total number of working group members is seven.

The aim of the working group is to provide feedback during the pilot project, to serve as a key point for result dissemination and ensure follow up activities.

## Context and setting

Ústecký Region formulated its vision in Regional Innovation Strategy as follows: “The Ústecký Region is economically growing and creates employment opportunities for educated people. Traditional sectors are modernising, increasing their added value and seeking new directions of development. There is an increasing number of companies that actively use knowledge and new technologies. This is made possible through the cooperation with a strengthened regional research and with research and development centres in the Czech Republic and Saxony”. This vision can’t be achieved without enhancing the quality of human resources. The low availability of technically trained, qualified and skilled labour force for companies and research organisation in the Region is one of the most significant barriers. The problem of shortage of technically trained, qualified and skilled labour force is reflected not only in innovation-oriented companies, but also in many companies in the manufacturing industry, and concerns not only highly skilled university graduates, but also technically educated secondary school graduates and skilled blue-collar workers. The lack of qualified applicants also affects the research and development facilities in the region.

The educational structure of the population is not a strong point of the Ústecký Region. There is one of the highest shares of persons with incomplete or only elementary education and those without any education, and one of the lowest shares of university graduates. Although the employment of university graduates in the Czech Republic has been growing, the dynamics of this trend is lower in the Ústí nad Labem Region than in most other Regions.

## Objectives of the regional working group

The aim of the working group was to provide feedback during the pilot project, serve as a key point for dissemination of the result and ensure its follow up. Working group identified the information needs of the region to complement the existing LMI and defined the main activities that will be implemented in the frame of the pilot project.

Working group broadly discussed the individual steps of the pilot project realization, and discussed content of questionnaires both for graduates from regional University and graduates from vocational education and training schools. The working group also decided on conducting the survey among graduates from the University in the form of on-line survey as the best form.

Members of working group also discussed the data receiving by survey and the conclusions of the analysis of these data. The attention of working group also aimed at evaluation of the process and results of job vacancies monitoring in Ústecký Region, and decided on the aspects which will be compared with the situation in other regions or with the situation in the whole country. Background materials for working group discussion and management of these discussions was ensuring by the NTF staff. Each of the members actively participated in the discussion, contribute to preparing a new LMI and evaluated how the complexity of LMI system in region was improved.

## Members of the group

First name	Surname	Organisation	Role
Gabriela	Nekolová	Economic and Social Council of Ústecký Region	Identification of information needs; Identification of main activities within the pilot project; Assessment of job vacancy monitoring results; Consultation with experts outside the working group
Alexandra	Zdeňková	Regional Authority	Identification of information needs; Identification of main activities within the pilot project; Participation in questionnaires preparing; Consultation with experts outside the working group
Jiřina	Jílková	Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem	Participation in questionnaires and survey preparing; Ensuring the contacts to graduates from the University; Assessment of the analysis based on data receiving from survey; Consultation with experts outside the working group
Zuzana	Freibergová	Guidance Service Support Unit	Participation in questionnaires preparing; Assessment of the analysis based on data receiving from survey; Assessment of job vacancy monitoring results
Zdenka	Matoušková	National Training Fund	Leading a working group; Identification of information needs; Identification of main activities within the pilot project; Methodology defining; Questionnaires creation; Working out the analysis based on data receiving from survey
Marta	Sobková	National Training Fund	Identification of information needs; Identification of main activities within the pilot project; Methodology defining; Questionnaires creation; Job vacancy monitoring and analysis of the data
Zdenka	Šimová	National Training Fund	Identification of information needs; Identification of main activities within the pilot project; Methodology defining;

			Questionnaires creation; Working out the analysis based on data receiving from survey
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## Meetings and workshops

Work of this group was coordinated by the National Training Fund. Because some members of working group live and work in Ústecký Region and the others in Prague it was decided that the discussion in smaller group will be organise in the form of Skype meetings and e-mail conversations. Two common meetings in Prague took place. The first one aimed at the design of the pilot project and the second one aimed at discussion the result of pilot project. In addition to these common sessions several discussions with individual members also took place.

DATE	ATTENDANTS	TOPICS OF THE WORKSHOP	CONCLUSIONS
<b>16 September 2015</b>	G. Nekolová, A. Zdeňková, J. Jílková, Z. Freibergová, Z. Matoušková, M. Salavová, Z. Šímová	LMI used in Ústecký Region. LMI needed. Key activities of pilot project. Output of pilot project.	Ústecký Region lacks information about the employability of graduates and comprehensive information on the regional labour market demand. The pilot project will aimed at preparing suitable questionnaires and if the contacts on graduates will be provided by educational institution, the survey will be conducted and analysis based on receiving data will be prepared. Based on NTF know-how of job vacancies monitoring the study of complex demand in the regional labour market will be elaborated.
<b>8 October 2015</b>	G. Nekolová, J. Jílková, Z. Matoušková Z. Šímová	The content of questionnaire for graduates from regional University. Opportunity for receiving contacts on graduates. The best form of the survey.	Questions are OK. Two faculties of Regional University will provide e-mail address of their graduates. On-line survey will be conducted and the analytical study will be elaborated based on the survey results.
<b>9 October 2015</b>	A. Zdeňková, Z. Freibergová, Z. Šímová	The content of questionnaire for graduates from VET schools.	Questions are OK; good formulation, questions flow logically from one to the next, all important aspect are covered.
<b>12 October 2015</b>	G. Nekolová, A. Zdeňková, M. Salavová	Aspects of analysis of job vacancy monitoring.	Needed aspects: development of job vacancies in 2015 vs. 2014; regional comparison, ISCO

			structure of job vacancies; detailed structure of ISCO 2, a list of the most demanded jobs in Ústecký Region.
<b>19 October 2015</b>	J. Jílková, Z. Matoušková	Testing Lime Survey Questionnaire.	The pilot testing will be made by J. Jílková and her colleagues from the University
<b>10 March 2016</b>	A. Zdeňková, Z. Šímová	Testing Lime Survey Questionnaire.	The pilot testing will be made by A. Zdeňková and her colleagues from the Regional Authority
<b>23 March 2016</b>	G. Nekolová, A. Zdeňková, J. Jílková, Z. Freibergová, Z. Matoušková, M. Salavová, Z. Šímová	Discussion and assessing Questionnaire for graduates from the Regional University. Discussion and assessing Questionnaire for graduates from secondary vocational education and training schools. Discussion and assessing the Analysis of the results from survey among graduates from the Regional University. Opportunities for follow up activities. Discussion and assessing the study on job vacancy monitoring.	Questionnaires were assessed as a high quality product with an excellent potential for elaboration the analysis of graduates employability and the matching educational programmes with knowledge and skills demanded in the regional labour market. Regional University would like to conduct survey also among graduates from all faculties of University and repeat this survey every three years. Regional Authority will search the opportunity of receiving contacts on graduates from VET institution and will assess the opportunity to conduct these surveys among them. The job vacancy monitoring analysis was assessed as very interesting and useful LMI. Follow up activities will depend on the opportunity for further collaboration between the Regional Authority and NTF.

## Lessons learned

Implementing the project did not encounter any problem. Thus there is no reason to change the process of implementation. If the part of the pilot project would be also conducting the survey among graduates of secondary vocational education schools it would be necessary to enlarge the working group by the representatives of the secondary schools. Experience from survey among graduates of regional University shows some difficulties in gathering the contacts can be expected.

## Follow up activities

Created LMI were forwarded to users in the Ústecký Region. The users will decide on the extension of survey among graduates from other faculties of regional University and on conducting the survey among graduates of vocational schools.

The National Training Fund will continue to use the experience and know how gained in this project, experience in conducting on-line surveys and in monitoring and analysis of labour market demand.

## Contact details

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## Hesse, Germany

### SIMOVET REGIONAL WORKING GROUP

#### Author

**Daniel Kahnert**

#### Rationale / Background

The initiative ProAbschluss has been identified as an innovative and promising approach, due to its focus on unskilled personnel as an important target group and further education as an important tool within the Hessian strategic approach to secure supply of skilled professionals now and in the future.

Particularly interesting in the context of SIMOVET is the group of professional VET-coaches. This group of VET- and labour market experts is seen as

- a) important intermediaries in the complex field of different labour market actors and
- b) experts with highly relevant knowledge on VET and labour market issues on a local and regional level.

The VET-coaches and their specific knowledge and experience are a valuable contribution to improve existing labour market information tools and in consequence improve their contribution and relevance for decision-making processes in contexts of labour market and VET policy. They are also an important target group and consumers of already existing as well as specifically designed LMI tools by IWAK. Their feedback and need information is a valuable source for improvement of those tools.

#### *Description of the working group*

The working group consists of VET-coaches operating in the different regions and municipalities in Hesse, Germany. Their goal is to promote professional trainings for unskilled employees. This goal follows the general strategy to provide and secure skilled labour in Hesse. In addition, the VET-coaches have unique and valuable labour market and VET-related knowledge, which can help to improve existing LMI products of IWAK.

The working group was formed with the initiative ProAbschluss in mid-2015. SIMOVET supports communication, exchange and networking of group members and with external actors with workshops, best practice exchange and a structured approach to information and knowledge exchange between the coaches and IWAK.

SIMOVET



## Context and setting

The initiative ProAbschluss specifically targets the group of unskilled workers. The role of SIMOVET in this initiative is to support establishing a cooperation of VET-Coaches as important strategic actors in the field with unique knowledge of the labour market and its regional actors involved.

When looking at unskilled workers in the Hessian context, two different groups of employees are covered by this term. The first group is those workers that do not have a formal vocational education at all and never completed a relevant professional training officially approved by for example a trade or industry chamber. The second group consists of workers that have such an education but now work in an industry or a job, in which that education is not relevant. Workers in the second group although often very well trained in a certain occupation typically do jobs with fairly low skill requirements, but often have better career chances due to their better general education and the sheer fact that they obtained an official certificate. Nevertheless, workers in both groups are labelled unskilled.

The Hessian labour market policy sees unskilled workers as great potential for securing a supply of skilled labour in the future. Training these workers in fields of great demand by the employees therefore is an important part of the general concept for securing skilled workers in Hesse.

## Objectives of the regional working group

The goal of the cooperation in and with the working group of VET-coaches is a bi-directional information and knowledge exchange to improve the work of the coaches in the field and to improve the LMI products of IWAK.

The working group supports these objectives by providing a platform for exchange of good practices and success factors, from which all coaches will profit. The improved LMI provision of IWAK includes an increase in transparency within the VET and labour market landscape in the regions. Thus, further and better cooperation with other actors is fuelled by the activities of the working group.

Through the improved work of the coaches, the theme of professional training for unskilled workers will rise on the agenda of local and regional employers and VET-providers.

By professionalising the work of the coaches, the success-rate and number trainings for unskilled workers will rise and a good contribution to closing the gap in supply for skilled personnel in the future can be made.

## Members of the group

Involved organisations include:

- Berami berufliche Integration e.V.
- BZ Bildungszentrum Kassel e.V.
- c/o VHS Rheingau Taunus e.V.
- Eigenvertrieb Volkhochschule
- FRESKO e.V.
- GAB
- Gesellschaft für Wirtschaftskunde e.V.
- GWAB mbH
- Handwerkskammer Frankfurt Rhein-Main
- IHK Darmstadt Service GmbH
- IHK Frankfurt
- Kreishandwerkschaft Hersfeld-Rothenburg
- Qualifizierungsoffensive Landkreis Fulda
- Team Ausbildung
- Technologie und Innovationszentrum Gießen GmbH (TIG)
- Vogelsberg Consult GmbH
- Wirtschaftsförderung und Regionalmanagement Waldeck-Frankenberg GmbH
- Wirtschaftsförderung Wetterau GmbH
- Zaug GmbH

These are the organisations, which employ the VET-coaches. It is obvious how heterogeneous the field is, with that many different organisations involved. What it makes even more difficult is the different institutional background the organisations have. While some are private companies, others are public. Very important actors here are the Chambers of Trade and Crafts (IHK). These are the official stakeholders responsible for the organisation of initial and much of further professional education in Hesse. Thus, it was important to have this group involved in the working group activities.

## Meetings and workshops

DATE	ATTENDANTS	TOPICS OF THE WORKSHOP	CONCLUSIONS
<b>27. April 2015</b>	VET-Coaches, VET-Providers, Employers, Members of the Chambers of Trade and Crafts, Representatives of the regions, Hessian Minister of Economic Affairs	Kick-Off Workshop of the Initiative, Presenting the concept and involved actors, first opportunity for exchange of views and ideas, first get-together	Successful kick-off, raising the interest, giving the activities an official context
<b>30. June 2015</b>	VET-Coaches, Weiterbildung	Working group meeting of involved actors, exchange and	IWAK will provide data on "mapping" of demand

	Hessen, IWAK, Hessian Ministry, WI Bank, IQ Network	information on current state of implementation, current fields of action, strategies and solutions for problems	and supply, compile dossiers and provide support for communication with the coaches and other actors
<b>26. October 2015</b>	VET-Coaches, Weiterbildung Hessen, IWAK, Federal Employment Agency, Job Center, WI Bank, IQ Network	Working group meeting of involved actors, exchange and information on current state of implementation, current fields of action, strategies and solutions for problems	A first presentation of the “mapping” gives first ideas of demand and supply for professional trainings in different regions and branches, first dossiers
<b>30. November 2015</b>	VET-Coaches, IWAK	Reflection Workshop, exchange of work in progress in the project, need for support for the coaches, which problems and what possible solutions, how can the coaches and IWAK support each other better and profit from each other’s efforts	Improving the dossiers with better information directly targeted at the coaches incl. information on networks and regional actors involved; writing and exchanging good practice examples from the coaches incl. success factors
<b>26. January 2016</b>	VET-Coaches, Weiterbildung Hessen, IWAK, Hessian Ministry, WI Bank, IQ Network	Working group meeting of involved actors, exchange and information on current state of implementation, current fields of action, strategies and solutions for problems	Regional workshops in the future: “regional expert days”
<b>8. March 2016</b>	VET-Coaches, Weiterbildung Hessen, IWAK, Hessian Ministry, WI Bank, IQ Network	Exchange workshop on three specific topics: successful strategies for approaching employers with the topic of professional trainings for their unskilled employees; improving cooperation with the regional chambers; improving cooperation with VET-providers	Industry/branch-specific approaches could be more successful

## Lessons learned

An important success factor to overcome an initial scepticism from the VET-coaches towards the project was to set up workshops and addressing the coaches as an important *group* of actors. Most of the coaches did not have a sense of belonging to a specific group in the beginning. Realising that they shared similar problems and needs in terms of support and information and providing the coaches a setting to express those also helped to develop solutions for these needs. The coaches were also directly involved in the working process with helped to overcome the scepticism and a widespread feeling of being largely unsupported until then.

This challenge of widespread actors across the whole state was addressed by organising regional or local activities with regional subgroups. This way, many of the coaches could be involved and the regional network building among them could also be improved. This is also an important lesson to learn from such an activity. It is very difficult to work with actors widely spread, as all meetings and workshops always mean a large effort for some actors within the group. This can also lead to some of the participants losing interest in the activities.

It is very important in such efforts as the here described working group, where building networks for cooperation is the main goal, all possible actors should be addressed and involved from the very beginning. Involving them later is much more challenging and causes numerous issues to be solved.

## Follow up activities

Most notable follow-up activities in the short-run will be regional expert-days and trainings for trainers. The regional expert days will build on the now more established regional network structures and will bring together regional experts from all relevant institutional backgrounds. The goal of the expert days is not only exchange and information, like in the earlier stages of the project, but to develop and actually implement concrete strategies to increase and improve activities in training of unskilled workers. IWAK has gained great experience with such formats in the regio pro project, where initiating, coordinating and supporting regional strategic implementation processes was one of the biggest success factors for the acceptance of the project and its relevance. This experience and the lessons learned will now be transferred to the ProAbschluss initiative. The expert days will be a series of events in the regions, hosted by IWAK, where the strategic implementation of the work of the coaches and the cooperation of the different actors will reach a higher level of structure, coordination and professionalism.

The trainings for the trainers will target the group of the VET-coaches. The goal of the trainings will be to increase the counselling competences of the coaches and further professionalise their work. These activities will be coordinated by "Weiterbildung Hessen", the main organisation under which many of the Hessian VET-providers are organised. Content of the trainings will be specific issues that occur to the coaches in their everyday work, which have previously been enquired about at the workshops.

Further follow-up activities will be regular meetings in the regional networks, which now have a more stable structure as well as updates of the regional dossiers based on up-to-date LMI from the different sources named above and targeted towards the needs of the VET-coaches and cooperating actors.

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*Working Groups Report*



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## South West England, Greater Exeter sub-Region, UK

### SIMOVET REGIONAL WORKING GROUP

**Dr Andrew Dean**

#### Rationale / Background

According to IBM, 90% of the data in the world today has been created in the last two years. Businesses are increasingly collecting and analysing data to enhance their productivity. Policy makers are considering how best to use data to transform public service delivery. Researchers are using data to advance scientific research and engineering.

The potential value of data is far reaching. However, the capacity to understand digital data has become critical to competitive advantage to the extent that e-skills recently termed big data 'the 'new oil' that will fuel our economy in the coming decades'. However, all this data is useless, unless we have the skills to turn it into insight and action.

The aim of data analytics skills escalator is to deliver these skills.

The Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEPs) 'region' occupies the centre of the South West Peninsula. Covering the administrative areas of Plymouth, Torbay, Somerset and Devon, it is home to 1.7m people. The region is renowned for its natural and cultural heritage, including two national parks, two world heritage sites, and a biosphere reserve. Tourism has been an important mainstay of the economy. These assets fuel the largest tourist economy of any LEP, with 26.7m visitor nights/year<sup>1</sup>.

#### *Description of the working group*

The Innovation Exeter Forum, which brings together the leaders of educational, public and private institutions from across the city, has committed to making Exeter a centre of excellence for data analytics.

As discussed in our country report, in order to achieve this vision, Innovation Exeter has committed to creating a 'Data Analytics Skills Escalator'. This includes VET provision at varying levels and settings and will link traditional VET College provision to a new joint higher level VET provision with Higher Education engagement.

The case for focusing of data analytics as an area of fast growing and changing skills is articulated in a wide range of research and policy documents.

The working group is ideally placed to give leadership in the practical application and development of the Pilot Project and brings together experts from different sectors including commercial, research and local government.

<sup>1</sup> GBTS, 2010-2012. Visit Britain



internationally recognised businesses such as Agusta Westland, Flybe, Honeywell Aerospace, Babcock Marine, the Met Office, Princess Yachts International, Yeo Valley Organics, EDF Energy and IBM.

The majority (75%<sup>4</sup>) of Heart of the SW businesses, particularly in rural areas, are SMEs with fewer than five employees, providing an entrepreneurial heartland rich in diversity and potential to grow.

The region also has world class knowledge base includes three universities; Exeter, Plymouth and University of St Mark and St John, two medical schools, ten FE colleges and specialist research centres such as the UK Met Office, the Rothamsted Research centre at North Wyke, Plymouth Marine Laboratory and the World Research centre for Greenpeace based at the University of Exeter. Indeed, Exeter's concentration of climate and environmental science experts provided more contributors to the UN IPCC report than any other city on Earth; the Russell Group University has world-leading expertise in agritech, water security, mathematical modelling and advanced materials.

Together with the potential arrival of Europe's most powerful supercomputer at the Met Office and expertise in big data analysis, Exeter is emerging as a cutting edge place for enviro-technology and modelling. The Marine Institute at Plymouth University is one of the biggest in Europe. To realise high growth in its knowledge economy, capitalise on doorstep opportunities, while addressing the comparatively low productivity and wages of its main employment sectors; the key challenge for the Heart of the South West LEP is to secure higher value employment across the area, ensuring conditions for growth are in place.

## Objectives of the regional working group

Innovation Exeter is a programme being developed by a partnership of key players in the region (Exeter City, East Devon, and Teignbridge District Councils, Devon County Council, the Met Office, the University of Exeter, Exeter College and the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital Foundation Trust) with a common goal to drive business growth and create higher paid employment through innovation, developing existing and potential business clusters. It builds on the area's strengths including the knowledge economy in environment, data science and health and education/training creating a culture where skills development and application is core.

Innovation Exeter has six themes to support transformational growth. Highlights are:

1. An active and supportive innovation infrastructure - including a proactive Science Park and Innovation Centre, business support services and access to investment funds for tech businesses, supporting a thriving start-up and entrepreneurship culture and encouraging scale up of businesses.
2. Research to support innovation:
  - A high-profile national and international (visitor) research Institute to tackle cross disciplinary problems critical for the UK economy and well-being building on key themes such as the environment and health where the area has acknowledged strengths attracting widespread specialist interest and engagement.

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<sup>4</sup> UK Business: Activity, Size and Location, 2012, ONS

- A centre for data science – building research and skills in data science to realise the potential of regional strengths in environment and health etc. to drive innovation.
3. Innovation and data exploitation is at the heart of Innovation Exeter. Key elements are:
    - An environment catalyst to establish the South West as a magnet to facilitate wider UK economic growth using environmental data. This will include open innovation (MetLabs), interactive training and innovation (Impact Lab).
    - Establishing the city and the wider area as the ideal test bed and laboratory for evaluating the problems and challenges facing urban areas and their interdependent hinterland.
  4. Strategic skills to support innovation - establish Exeter and the surrounding region as a skills escalator. Data analytics will be a central theme and are essential to our ambitions. Skills in this are in short supply across the whole UK economy. There will be an expansion of apprenticeships (particularly at level III and higher) and technical and professional qualifications to improve the availability, recruitment and retention of affordable skilled staff and develop higher skills across the workforce.
  5. Local environment to support transformational growth and innovation: coordinated housing, transport and local infrastructure development to support new ways of working, attract and retain skilled people, whilst retaining affordability and addressing aspirational needs.
  6. Establishing Innovation Exeter as a strong supportive partnership including a proactive Board and Chair, an aligned investment strategy, a high profile brand and the delivery of an effective place based strategy. Transformational growth

Innovation Exeter will build on the already successful private- public sector partnership in the area to develop and realise this exciting economic opportunity. Working across administrative and other boundaries it will maximise business, investment and employment growth for the benefit of the area.

## Members of the group

Professor Mark Goodwin, Deputy Vice Chancellor University of Exeter  
 Karime Hassan, Chief Executive, Exeter City Council  
 Richard Ball, Assistant Director Economy Exeter City Council  
 Chris Evans, Assistant Director Regional Impact University of Exeter  
 Vicky Pope, Head of Integration and Growth at the Met Office  
 Jenny Leach, Director of Innovation at Exeter College

## Meetings and workshops

Innovation Exeter is being led by Professor Mark Goodwin, Deputy Vice Chancellor University of Exeter, supported by Richard Ball, Assistant Director Economy Exeter City Council seconded into the post of Innovation Exeter Programme Director from Exeter City Council.

Steering Group meetings occur monthly base around measuring and driving progress in the development of the attached programme summary. The Steering Group comprises Richard Ball, Exeter

City Council, Chris Evans, Assistant Director Regional Impact University of Exeter, Vicky Pope Head of Integration and Growth at the Met Office and Jenny Leach, Director of Innovation at Exeter College.

Progress with the initiative is reported to and discussed by the partnership of local authorities meeting as the Greater Exeter Visioning Board. Examples of events are given below:

DATE	ATTENDANTS	TOPICS OF THE WORKSHOP	CONCLUSIONS
16 November 2015	Innovation Exeter Steering Group meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High Level Economic Diagnostic</li> <li>• Emerging Ideas for Innovation Exeter Strategy</li> <li>• Devolution</li> </ul>	Formulated priorities for action regarding escalator design and the forthcoming workshops with business.
20 November 2015	Business Community from Exeter Area	Digital and technology skills consultation workshops to identify need for new courses (VET and non-VET)	Informed design of future data analytics and related VET. Also informed the development of the escalator and Business Plan
27 November 2015	Business Community from Exeter Area (rpt)	Digital and technology skills consultation workshops to identify need for new courses (VET and non-VET)	Informed design of future data analytics and related VET. Also informed the development of the escalator and Business Plan

## Lessons learned

The main problems in implementing the project have been in relation to the need for quick policy support and backing and the need to engage a large number of organisations from a variety of backgrounds and settings all of whom are used to working to differing deadlines and timescales.

The Steering Group is composed of the right organisations needed to make the Pilot a success but they are handicapped by a rapidly evolving devolution agenda that is resulting in changes to the way they operate at strategic levels and consequently changes to what they prioritise. This has been unavoidable as the changes have been driven from central government.

The objectives set for the Skills Escalator are very challenging and demanding and go far beyond what can be resourced through SIMOVET. It may have been simpler to have a more limited set of aims and objectives, but that would not have offered the major long term impacts that the Skills Escalator offers.

## Follow up activities

The working group is a long-term group that will continue to coordinate and advise the Skills Escalator as well as a broad scope of innovation and research-led activities that will continue for the foreseeable future. The work has informed a raft of developments, including a new Satellite Applications Centre of Excellence to be launched in April 2016 and a series of bids to ERDF in the HotSW sub-region seeking to build both infrastructure and skills/capabilities. Importantly the work has been incorporated and costed within the Innovation Exeter Business Plan.

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