



ESCO (2011) BOA 004 FINAL

Document Date: 14/06/2011

MINUTES

ESCO 2nd Board meeting

31st May 2011

Adelphi building, 1-11 John Adams Street, London

Item 1 Opening of the meeting

The meeting was chaired by Mr Peter Thiele since Mr Jeremy Groombridge was not present due to illness.

Item 1.1 Adoption of draft agenda of the meeting

The agenda of the meeting has been approved unanimously.

Item 1.2 Adoption of the minutes of the 1st ESCO Board meeting

The Board members discussed the general question on how the minutes should be drafted:

- It was stated that the minutes should reflect discussions and serve as a point of reference for each topic that has been discussed.
- The ESCO Secretariat expressed that requests to make changes to the minutes should preferably be sent to the ESCO Secretariat with a proposal for a concrete phrasing.
- The ESCO Board agreed on the request of the ESCO Secretariat to have the meetings audio-taped in order to facilitate the creation of minutes.
- It was decided that the minutes can be high-level in general, while for crucial points a higher level of detail will be required (e.g. in annexes). The Board members will indicate whenever a certain discussion should be reproduced in the minutes in-depth.



Mr Peter Thiele noted that there is a need to add some points to the minutes of the previous meeting. It was agreed that the following three points should be added to the minutes:

- The members of the ESCO Board asked for a project plan for the next meeting, which should include a short description of the ESCO project, a respective timetable, budget plan, work load, cost-benefit-ratio, procedures (e.g. step by step testing of ESCO in occupations), sub-structures, estimated staff needed on EU and national level, organisational chart, milestones to be achieved until 2013.
- The members of the ESCO Board asked for an in depth comparison of the proposal for ESCO with the existing taxonomies in the same field such as O*NET. This could avoid duplicate work and helps to use existing experience and models as far as possible. O*NET should be presented at the next ESCO board meeting.
- The members of the ESCO Board asked for a transparent explanation of the operational cooperation for DG EMPL and DG EAC in the ESCO project. The Commission agreed and announced a respective Memorandum of Understanding for the next ESCO Board meeting.

It was noted that the minutes are approved with the mentioned amendments.

Item 2 The way towards pre-ESCO v0 and ESCO v0

Ms Katrien Vander Kuylen presented the status of the revision work and the way towards pre-ESCO v0 and ESCO v0.

The Board emphasised the crucial importance of the work done by Reference groups. It agreed that preparatory internal work needs to be done by the ESCO Secretariat before the review work executed by the Reference Groups can start. The weight of changes by the ESCO Secretariat is only minor since all of it will be reassessed by the experts in the Reference groups, as the Board considers the expertise input of Reference groups essential for both the enrichment and review process of ESCO. The Reference Groups would be the main operational instruments for reweaving the data and their expertise is considered essentially necessary. Mr Thiele expressed that this internal work carried out by the ESCO Secretariat will still require endorsement of the Reference Groups at a later stage.

Mr Danev stressed the importance of a general approach to linking the work conducted by the Reference Groups and other European groups such as the skills councils.



Item 3 Content and structure state of the ESCO skills/competences pillar

On behalf of the ESCO Secretariat Mr Jörg Markowitsch presented the proposal for the content and structure of the ESCO skills/competences pillar.

Following the presentation, the proposal of additional word lists covering concepts that are not part of the three ESCO pillars (e.g. work environments, basic action verbs, tools, etc.) was discussed. These were not yet covered in the proposal. Mr Markowitsch proposed to include such word lists soon, as they will, despite of their usefulness, require only limited effort. They could be subsumed under the skills/competences pillar without formally being a part of it (e.g. as an annex). Mr Boomgaert and Ms Goelen highlighted that for matching purposes, an additional word list covering work environments (e.g. large companies vs. SME) would be important.

Mr Markowitsch also expressed that while quite some things can be learnt from O*NET it will not be a useful source for developing a repository of skills/competences concepts and terms. With the primary purpose of matching in mind it would be advisable to stick to ESCO's key word approach rather than following the phraseological approach of O*NET.

Following a short discussion on gender-neutral and anti-discriminatory terms formulation Ms Goelen confirmed that experts in this field would be available at the European Commission.

It was explained that only those concepts and terms have been deleted that are obviously limited in their relevance to a national, Swedish level. It was clarified again that ESCO should have a clear focus on interoperability and thus not cover all concepts that are relevant on national/regional level. Richer national taxonomies could be mapped to ESCO or, where those taxonomies do not yet exist, ESCO could serve as a starting point that can be extended on a national level.

The ESCO Board agreed on the next steps towards ESCO v0 as they were proposed:

1. Take out of the skills/competences pillar all terms that are no skills/competences¹ or of national interest only
2. Introduce the DISCO structure by allocating ESCO's skills/competences terms to one or more of DISCO's level 1 or 2 terms
3. Add transversal skills from DISCO in pre-ESCO v0 as a first source and starting point to build upon as of ESCO v0

¹ Qualification terms will be kept outside of the skills/competences pillar since they can be used as a source of inspiration when creating the qualifications pillar.



4. Perform quality check of the translation of the existing terms (first only in English, German and French), translate new term and draft terminological rules for all languages.

Furthermore it was decided, that the key word approach of ESCO should be maintained.

Item 4 Evolution of the ESCO qualifications pillar

Mr Jens Bjornavold (Cedefop) gave a presentation of the ESCO qualifications pillar. He also informed about the EQF web portal, which is currently being released with the functionality of comparison between national qualification levels and EQF levels. The EQF web portal will also include a search function giving common access to the large variety of national qualifications.

The question was raised if the skills/competences pillar of ESCO will be consistent with the EQF philosophy. This consistency still needs to be determined as well as the link to the other ESCO pillars. While in some cases the link between occupations and qualifications is strong (e.g. where access to and practice of occupations are linked to particular qualifications), for the majority of qualifications it is not that clear.

Mr Joachim James Calleja expressed that 3 important groups of stakeholders should be represented in the Learning Methodology Reference Group:

1. People with experience in working with NQF
2. Sectors Skills Councils, since they are not only experienced in defining what type of qualification belongs to which specific sector, but also in determining how qualifications fit in the overarching NQF and EQF
3. Silent partners with in depth knowledge on the regulated professions.

Mr Gorm Johansen pointed out that at this moment in time we have to focus on qualifications as currencies and gateways to actual professions. Besides that he expressed the need to take a closer look on how the qualifications pillar will be related to the EQF.

Therefore, it was decided that there should be a document prepared for 3rd ESCO Board meeting which will explain how the EQF web portal will serve as a gateway to provide access to the national qualification registers.

Mr Jeff Bridgford expressed the need for a paper to be prepared on the relations between the 3 pillars.



As concerns the definition of general qualification terms on which the Learning Methodology Reference Group will work, Mr Peter Thiele recommended to provide this Reference Group with general guidelines and strongly monitor the process. He proposed to have this point taken up in the papers on the qualification pillar to be drafted for the next Board meeting.

The Board agreed upon the development of the qualifications pillar as proposed in the qualifications paper.

Item 5 O*NET

Professor Esther Winther (University of Paderborn) presented the Occupational Information Network (O*NET). The presentation of Professor Winther and the paper "Lessons to learn from O*NET" of Mr Markowitsch illustrated that ESCO and O*NET are following different approaches and are serving different purposes. There was some discussion on what are the lessons that could be learnt from O*NET and if it could be used for ESCO apart from being a source of inspiration.

A document analysing the lessons that could be learnt from O*NET further and proposing concrete steps should be prepared for the next ESCO meeting. The document should elaborate on chapter 3 of the document "Lessons to learn from ONET" (ESCO(2011)SEC 021 FINAL) and include proposals how to integrate advantages of O*NET into the ESCO approach and a concrete agenda of taking up these points.

It was stated that in future there would also be an opportunity to have a meeting with the colleagues from the USA to discuss their experience and to exchange views, if required.

Mr Joachim James Calleja expressed his wish to further explore the philosophy behind O*NET. In his opinion, the planned ESCO can be considered as a gateway into employability and is worker-oriented, while O*NET is rather a gateway out of employability and is rather employer-oriented. This difference in philosophy behind the two tools should be explored further.

Item 6 Discussion on the presentations

During the discussion following the various presentations the Board decided that:

- The way outlined for the development of ESCO v0 should be followed.



- Transversal skills/competences of DISCO shall be imported into ESCO and used as a first basis for further development (through the Learning Methodology Reference Group) that may take into account a variety of sources.
- The ESCO Board should be kept informed of the developments of the EQF portal.
- The Glossary document (ESCO (2011) SEC 0013 FINAL) is a good starting point for the discussion on defining key terms within ESCO. The ESCO Secretariat will verify whether clear definitions have already been agreed upon at EU level.

Item 7 Current state of the ESCO project management plan

Mr Martin Le Vrang presented the Meta plan of the ESCO project explaining how the project could be managed. He highlighted the complexity and the specific characteristics of the ESCO project.

The Board highlighted that it would need more details on all proposed steps for the ESCO project. The ESCO Board reminded the ESCO secretariat that it expected already for the second Board meeting (see minutes of that meeting) an overarching ESCO work programme including a project plan, a timetable, a budget plan, a definition of expected workload and estimated staff need on EU and national level, an organigramm, a cost-benefit-ratio and a definition of procedures and milestones to be achieved until 2013, which are to be agreed by the Board and are the basis for any Board decisions on future ESCO developments.

The board highlighted, that the meta plan of the secretariat under Item 7 in its second meeting did not meet these requirements and asked the secretariat to present these documents in the third ESCO board meeting in October 2011. The board also repeated the expectation of a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of DG EMPL and DG EAC in the further development of the three ESCO pillars which should finally be submitted to the next board meeting.

Item 8 ESCO Job Matching Demo

It was proposed by the Chairman to postpone the presentation to the next Board meeting. All attendees of the meeting agreed with it.



Item 9 ESCO Portal: restricted release of pre-ESCO v0.

A proposal for a restricted release of pre-ESCO v0 was presented by Mr Henric Stjernquist. It was proposed to use a registration procedure in order to identify the stakeholders accessing the classification via the ESCO portal. A warning message would be displayed explaining that pre-ESCO v0 is work in progress and a preliminary version only. A registered user could browse and download pre-ESCO v0 and contribute to its development by sending proposals regarding its content.

In the following discussion Mr Thiele, Mr Boomgaert, Mr Pennel and Mr Johansen stated that the proposed registration procedure would not serve the purpose of restricting the release. The number of users accessing the preliminary version should be reduced more strictly since the risk is high that users mix up the contents of different ESCO versions or redistribute information. Mr Bridgford proposed to provide background information on the ESCO classification on the ESCO portal for all other users.

Mr Lock and Mr Danev expressed their viewpoint that the access to pre-ESCO v0 should not be restricted at all as this would decrease transparency and hinder other stakeholders to provide input for the development of ESCO.

It was decided that the ESCO Board members will send proposals regarding the criteria and conditions for granting access to pre-ESCO v0 by 15 June. The ESCO Secretariat will prepare a revised proposal on that basis and e-mail it to the ESCO Board members by mid July.

Item 10 ESCO Management structures: Appointing the members of the ESCO Maintenance Committee

The ESCO Secretariat proposed a list of candidates for the ESCO Maintenance Committee that was based on the proposals received through the stakeholder survey, from the PES and from the Board members. It was explained that this was a selection of the full list of candidates in order to ensure balanced expertise and that all short listed candidates have been approached by the ESCO Secretariat in order to verify their availability.

Mr Thiele and Mr Boomgaert expressed that they were surprised that not all candidates proposed by the ESCO Board members were shortlisted. Candidates that have not been shortlisted should be informed by the ESCO Secretariat. Mr Baut proposed to not count the lead translator of DGT and the expert of Eurostat as permanent members of the ESCO Maintenance Committee. Mr Lock



clarified that Mr Wass would be the candidate of the Swedish PES. The Board agreed that Mr Diekmann should be added to the final list as well.

It was decided to proceed in the following way:

- The ESCO Secretariat will prepare a final list of candidates taking the changes into account.
- The ESCO Secretariat will draft a reply to candidates that have been proposed by ESCO Board members or by the PES and that have not been shortlisted. It will send the letter to the chairman and the vice chairman for approval.
- If the ESCO Board members do not express their disagreement after receiving the final list within three working days, it will be endorsed and the ESCO Secretariat will start to establish the ESCO Maintenance Committee.

Item 11 ESCO Management structures: Proposal for first Reference groups

The ESCO Secretariat proposed to establish the following first Reference Groups:

- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
- Healthcare
- Accommodation and Food Service
- Learning Methodology Reference Group (horizontal)

The three sectoral reference groups have been proposed because there is already relevant work done at sector level (Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing and Accommodation and Food Service) or for their particular sensitivity (Healthcare characterised by professions regulated at European level). Mr Danev stated that there should also be Reference Groups with a stronger focus on industry, especially on export-oriented industry. Mr Thiele added that these three sectors are not the main fields of EU industry.

Mr Pennel expressed his full support for the chosen sectors, as these are all sectors with severe skill shortages.

Mr Bridgford suggested that when choosing the next Reference Groups it should be taken into account whether European sector skills councils already exist for the respective sector.

The ESCO Board agreed to the initial proposal made by the ESCO Secretariat.



Item 12 Concluding Remarks

It was decided that the next ESCO Board meeting would be held in London in the second half of October 2011.

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Participants

ESCO Board Members

Boomgaert, Wilfried	Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, Deputy Director - Departement Onderwijs en Vorming
Bridgford, Jeff	European Trade Union Confederation, Special Advisor
Calleja, Joachim James	Maltese Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Chief Executive of the Malta Qualifications Council
Danev, Bojidar	Bulgarian Industrial Association, Chairman/Executive President
Goelen, Wallis	DG EMPL, Head of Unit - Employment Services, EURES
Johansen, Gorm	Danish Chamber of Commerce/Representing Eurochambres, Senior advisor
Lock, Claes-Göran	Swedish PES (Arbetsförmedlingen), Senior Manager
Pennel, Denis	Eurociett, Managing Director
Thiele, Peter	German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Head of Division- Vocational Training Policy Issues

Permanent observers of the Board

Baut, Michel	DG Translation, Head of Unit - Translation
Lettmayr, Christian	Cedefop, Acting director

ESCO Team

Bjornavold, Jens	Cedefop
Le Vrang, Martin	DG EMPL
Scatoli, Carlo	DG EAC
Stjernquist, Henric	DG EMPL
Vander Kuylen, Katrien	TenForce



External experts

Markowitsch, Jorg
Winther, Esther

3s Unternehmensberatung GmbH
University of Paderborn, Professor

Excused

De Vriendt, Karel
Groombridge, Jeremy
Šteinbuka, Inna (EU)
Teutsch, Michael

DG Informatics, Adviser
Jobcentre Plus, Director - Transformation/Product Management
Eurostat, Director Economic and Regional Statistics
DG EAC, Head of Unit - Lifelong learning: 2020 strategy