Methodology for implementing stakeholders' feedback within the ESCO community fora

MAI 29-05

26 March 2019

Employment,
Social Affairs
and Inclusion

Purpose of the document

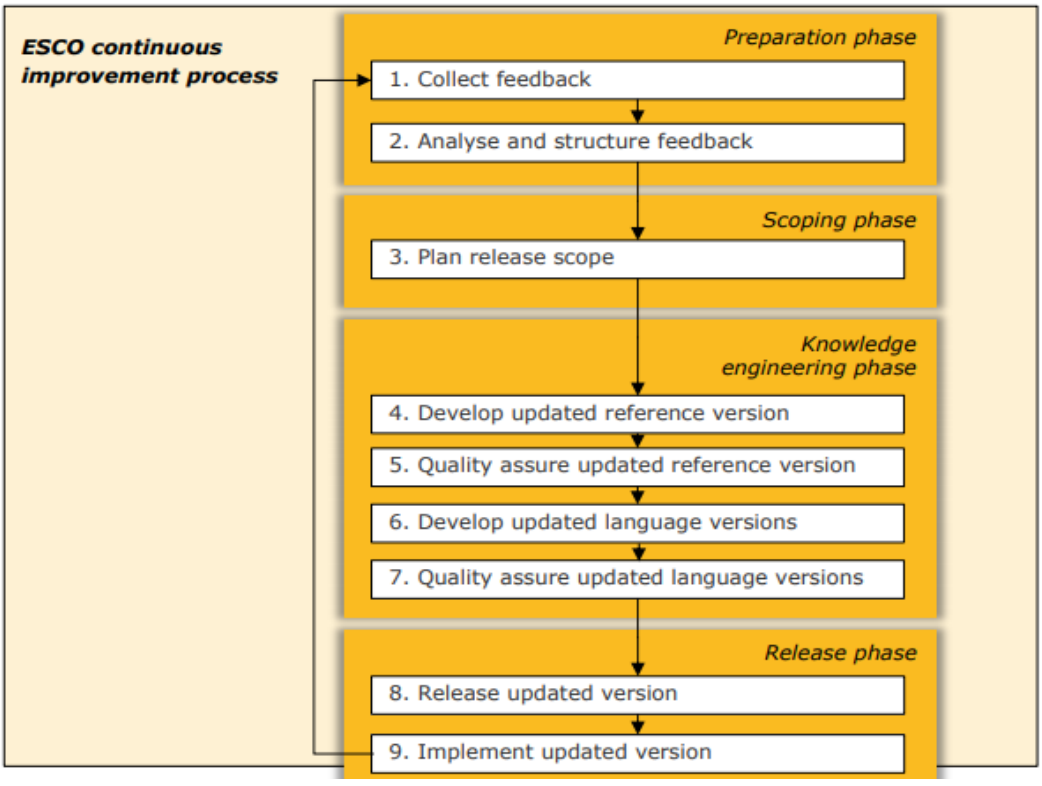
This document provides an overview of the approach developed by the ESCO team to implement the feedback provided by experts in the community fora.

The document serves as starting point to the discussion. The Commission invites the MAI to further elaborate on this approach and suggest improvements.

Background

The continuous improvement of the classification is fundamental in order to guarantee that ESCO will remain fit-for-purpose for use in various IT applications that aim at delivering quality services to end-users. There is the need to make sure that the classification follows the rapid evolution of the labour market and of the education and training sectors, reflecting new emerging occupations and skills requested by employers as well as changes in curricula and in terminology.

One year after the launch of ESCO v.1.1, the ESCO team has started the work on the next version of ESCO that will be published in 2021. The work on ESCO v.1.1 follows the process described in the document on the continuous improvement workflow for ESCO and foresees four different phases: 1) preparatory phase including the collection, analysis and structuring of feedback; 2) scoping of the new version of ESCO; 3) knowledge engineering of the reference version, including quality assured translation in all ESCO languages; and 4) release on the ESCO portal.



Using these phases as the core guiding principles, the ESCO team has developed a methodology to implement the feedback that comes through the community fora.

It is important to note that the forum is not to be considered as a mechanism for decision making itself but rather as a communication gateway. Its goal is to offer a single place for sharing comments, feedback and ideas, submitting proposals and discussing with other peer experts. Ultimately, the decision on the possible future implementation of the comments received is at the discretion of the Commission.

Steps in the implementation of stakeholders' feedback

Collecting and recording feedback from the fora

The feedback from experts in the forum will be expressed via comments and concrete suggestions for improvement of ESCO concepts. The suggestions can refer to the deletion of concepts, the addition of new skills or occupations, the change of relations of skills to occupations, etc. All these comments will be collected and recorded by the ESCO team in an internal ticketing system. This first step is crucial in ensuring that all comments are carefully analysed and provided with an answer from the ESCO team.

Analysing and structuring the feedback from the fora

Once the information is properly recorded, the ESCO team will proceed to analysing the change requests contained in the experts' comments.

The Commission envisages that the decisions on the elements to be implemented in the next releases should ideally be taken with the agreement of all interested parties, meaning that a consensus among stakeholders is highly desirable.

To ensure a smooth decision process, the ESCO team proposes the following decision-making pathway:

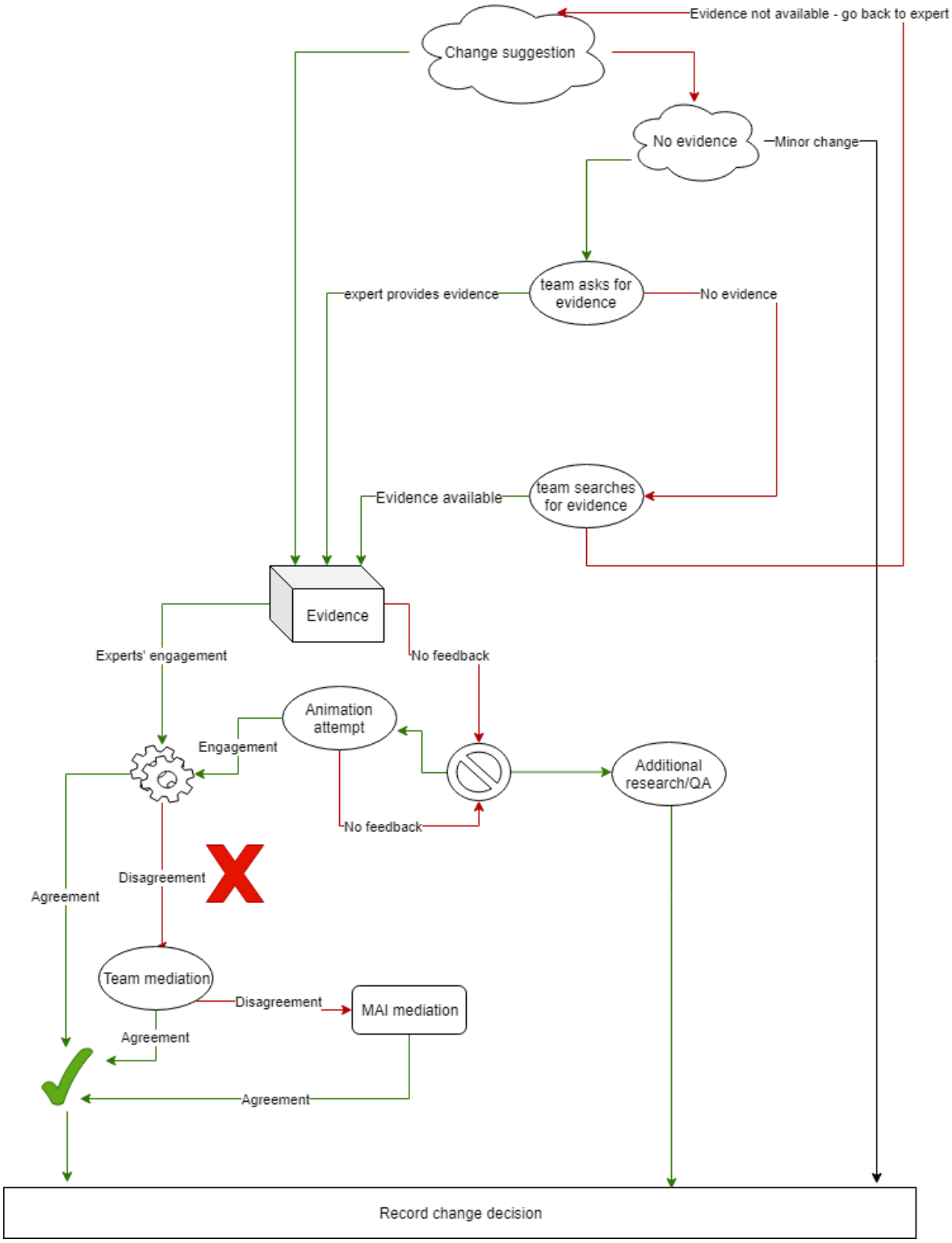


Figure 1. Decision-making process for the ESCO forum feedback

The diagram highlights that for each change request, there should be clear evidence from the labour market or the education sector that this change is needed.

If the evidence is available, then the topic is open for discussion with the other members of the forum, to collect feedback and create consensus on the matter discussed.

If there is no evidence provided by the experts, then the ESCO team will do the research to find available proof at EU level and then open the discussion with the community of experts to collect supporting feedback.

Moreover, once the experts are engaged in the discussion but there is disagreement on the suggested change, the ESCO team will mediate in order to reach an agreement. Should this fail to work, the ESCO team will bring the topic to the MAI for advice on how to proceed further.

In the scenario where an expert has suggested the change request and has provided relevant evidence but the community of experts is silent on the matter, the ESCO team will conduct further research to gather data at EU level. If such data exists, the ESCO team proceeds to record the change decision and implement it in the next release of the classification.

Prioritising bundles of feedback to be implemented

As the last step, the ESCO team will perform a value analysis in order to determine which potential updates would have the highest added value in relation to the effort and costs for these updates (scoping phase).

For example, minor changes such as spelling mistakes or changing relations between concepts can be easily planned and implemented. On the other hand, more serious changes such as creating new occupations and skills, correcting translations, rationalising the attribution of skills throughout the classification, etc. need to be properly assessed, planned for and quality assured.

In cases where the feedback received is more general and involves structural changes to the classification (e.g. change the structure of occupations in a specific sector), the implementation process will be more lengthy and will require evidence from the labour market to support the change required (as mentioned in the previous section).

Once the priority assessment is done for all the change requests received in the forum, the ESCO team will start processing them. The result is a list describing candidate groups of issues (bundles) that can be treated in one ESCO update cycle. Once the scope of a new ESCO version is decided, the team will determine the quality requirements and how quality will be managed during the improvement process.

From here onwards, the process fits into the general approach of quality assuring the classification and the work described in the continuous improvement of ESCO and preparing the v1.1. For more information on the latter, please see the document MAI-29-07.