Guidelines for active moderation of the ESCO community forum for domain experts

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Employment,
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Purpose of the document

This document provides an overview of the approach developed by the ESCO team for an active moderation of stakeholder fora and the successful engagement of domain experts in the revision of ESCO.

The document serves as starting point to the discussion. The Commission invites the MAI to further elaborate the approach taken by the ESCO team, to submit proposals and suggestions and to share best practices on how to moderate stakeholder fora.

Background

The continuous improvement of the classification is fundamental in order to guarantee that ESCO will remain fit-for-purpose for the 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.

In order to facilitate the collection of feedback on the content of the classification, to channel the communication with the different stakeholders and to support the dialogue between experts, the Commission has launched an ESCO forum dedicated to domain experts.

With the term "domain experts" the ESCO team refers to organisations with a deeper insight into the knowledge, skills and competences needed in specific economic sectors or specific occupations or into cross-sectoral knowledge, skills and competences. Such organisations can provide valuable information on how an economic sector evolves or what new occupations or skills requirements emerge in the market and point out quality issues. They include *inter alia* specialised recruiters, education and training professionals, social partners, industry associations, professional associations, sector skills councils and networks.

The community forum for domain experts is intended to be the main tool for the collection of feedback on the ESCO classification. It is important to note that the forum is not to be considered as a mechanism for decision making 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 peer experts. However, the decision on the possible future implementation of the comments received is at the discretion of the Commission.

The community forum for domain experts is organized around 27 economic sectors reflecting the configuration used during the development of ESCO v.1. The list of all economic sectors is available on the ESCO portal.

The sectors are defined following the criteria established in NACE rev2, and each page contains a short description of its scope. The ESCO team assigned each ESCO occupation to one sector following the criteria of economic activities in order to offer a first guidance to experts in the revision exercise.

However, occupations in ESCO are not sector specific, because many of them can be linked with more than one economic sector and stakeholders can have a specific expertise in different fields: the allocation of the existing occupations to specific sectors therefore only aimed at facilitating the work of experts. That is why all ESCO occupations allow an entry point to the forum, so that experts will be able to access the forum also when searching for a particular occupation by clicking on a dedicated icon.

The ESCO team has invited several organisations to participate in the forum, building on the expertise and organisations already involved in the development of ESCO v.1.0. The Commission will also ensure the active contribution of organisations and experts active at European level, such as EU agencies other Commission Directorates General.

Domain experts therefore will represent the full community of ESCO stakeholders: sectoral umbrella organisations, universities and higher education institutions, VET providers, large, medium and small sized enterprises, NGO, social partners, public employment services, public bodies and research centres.

The forum is already active and available on the ESCO portal.

How to ensure an active participation in the forum

Domain experts have the opportunity to provide feedback on the content of the classification.

This includes reviewing the structure of the Occupation Pillar, analysing in detail the existing occupations and skills, working on the different metadata of an occupation or skill concept and providing feedback on the existing translations. Domain experts are therefore encouraged to provide their feedback on:

- the formulation of the preferred term,
- alternative labels,
- the formulation of the description,
- the mapping to ISCO,
- the essential and optional skills and knowledge foreseen for an occupation,
- the relations between occupations and skills,
- the translations of ESCO concepts
- spelling mistakes

At the same time, with the new version of ESCO, the Commission aims to capture the evolution of the labour market and to add new profiles currently not displayed in classification. The Commission therefore invites the experts also to suggest new occupations, skills and knowledge emerging in a particular sector or across sectors.

The effort of the moderation will depend on the active participation of experts.

Given the uptake of ESCO by public and private operators and the growing interest around ESCO in Europe, the ESCO team expects that domain experts will actively participate in the forum and autonomously present their proposals and suggestions.

Nevertheless, the ESCO team will ensure an active moderation of the forum. To this end, each economic sector is assigned to a member of the team responsible for monitoring the forum activity and steering the discussion between experts.

Once an expert has submitted their comment, the ESCO team will follow up on the input received by asking the expert to provide evidence from the European labour market supporting that proposal. This is also important in order to avoid that the forum is used to convey positions reflecting the individual agenda of each organisation and not corresponding to the reality of the European labour market.

The experts will be therefore asked to submit data and evidence backing their suggestions, such as: statistical data; studies and researches; evidence from the labour market (for example job vacancies posted on job boards active across Europe); interviews from HR manager/CEOs of private companies active across Europe; or official acts at national level (such as an amendment to existing national classifications of occupations and skills).

At the same time, the ESCO team will trigger the debate by inviting other experts to discuss the particular topic, with the goal to reach consensus on the proposed modification. The ESCO team will play an active role in such discussions by posting on the forum results of its own research on the discussed topics.

In the most difficult cases, the ESCO team will seek the advice of the MAI, that will subsequently be reported on the forum.

Whenever the ESCO team registers a lack of interest in a (sub-)sectoral page, or if the number of comments received cannot be considered as a valuable sample for scoping the next version of ESCO, the ESCO team could apply some of the following techniques on the basis of the specific case:

- Asking for the revision of specific sub-sectors within an economic group: the ESCO team could ask experts to focus on specific sub-sectors of the economy or on a small sample of occupations within a given deadline (2-3 weeks). The particular structure of NACE allows in fact dividing an economic sector by field of economic activity: other criteria could also be explored, upon suggestion of the MAI.

- Posting related articles/research on emerging skills and occupations, future of work and future jobs to stir discussions. The ESCO team could use existing literature at European and international level in order to stimulate interest by experts to review existing skills and to propose new skills and occupations.

- Posing questions directly to the experts: the ESCO team could trigger the discussion by asking questions related to new trends in the industry, new

emerging technologies etc. in order to stir discussions. This would give a preliminary idea of the current gaps of ESCO in terms of occupations and skills.

- Migrating feedback received by email on the community forum: if relevant, feedback received via email will be shared through the forum, following acceptance by the parties that have sent such feedback to the Commission.

- Asking and posting information on results obtained from other projects: the ESCO team could share with the experts different sources of information, such as: the ESCO KPIs; the results from the mappings between national classifications and ESCO; the contribution coming from stakeholders' projects (such as the Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills, the Sectoral Skills Alliances and other ERASMUS + projects); sectoral analysis; and Commission reports.

These activities would serve to actively engage the community of stakeholders, at the same time with collecting input directly from the labour market in a bottom-up approach.

Moderation rules

The Commission expects a respectful communication in the fora and an open and polite interaction between different stakeholders: inadequate and/or illicit comments will not be allowed.

Below you can find a list of basic principles for running the forum.

How to post content on the forum

The Commission invites the experts to comply with the following rules when participating in the forum:

- Make the discussion title or question as descriptive as possible.
- Proof read the post in order to avoid spelling mistakes, typos, and incorrect grammar.
- Use minimal formatting.
- Allocate posts in the right category and use tags.
- To stimulate the debate, when possible ask for feedback or replies from other experts.
- Add documents to support or better explain the comment.
- Mention other experts when building on their previous comments or when seeking to draw them into a discussion. To this end, an "@" is to be placed before a username to mention someone.
- Take ownership of the initiated discussion by responding to comments promptly and thoughtfully.
- Be responsible for your own posts: one is responsible for any content one posts and for making sure such posts are accurate and appropriate.
- Do not dominate the discussion and avoid behaviours deterring other experts from engaging in a fruitful discussion.
- Use private messages to chat with moderators or other members in private.

Inappropriate content

The Commission considers as inappropriate content the use of foul language, attacks on individuals, spamming of links for personal purposes, links to executable files, comments or thread not directly linked to ESCO.

Deleting threads

In case of inappropriate content, the ESCO team will contact the authors and ask them to edit or remove the thread.

In this regard, the ESCO team will perform the following actions:

- Comments that are outside the scope of the forum will be tagged as off-topic.
- Duplicate threads from the same author will be deleted after posting a reply with a link to the original thread. If the duplicate comes from a different organization, the ESCO team will invite the author to join the thread previously opened by another expert.
- Threads that have completely degenerated will be permanently deleted.
- Spam threads will be marked as spam and deleted.

Deactivating user accounts

Following two requests from the ESCO team inviting an author to comply with the rules of the forum and if no action is taken within one week, the ESCO team will deactivate that author's account. A formal email explaining the reasons for that decision will be sent to the organization where the expert belongs.

The ESCO team will deactivate accounts that post personal attacks or profanity or that are clearly used for spam purposes.